
SAIZU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSDISCIPLINARY RELIGIOUS STUDIES (SAIZU ICON-TREES)

ISSN 2964-5859, Volume 1, 2021, Pages 7-16

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24090/icontrees.2021.5>

Proceeding of 1st Internasional Conference on Empowering Scientific Religious Studies in Post Pandemic Era

Ideologization of Gender in Social Media: The Digital Activism of Mubadalah.id and Ngaji_KGI

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Abstract: This research discusses the process and strategy of gender ideology carried out by digital activists in the midst of the strengthening of gender contestation in the media. The media is a space for discourse exchange as well as a contested space. This study focuses on examining two media that are actively engaged in digital activities, namely mubadalah.id and ngaji_kgi. Therefore, the researcher tries to answer three questions, 1) what is the meaning behind gender ideological efforts in social media, 2) how are the strategies played by the two accounts in mainstreaming the understanding of gender equality 3) how far the ideological process affects the discourse of equality in the media. This research is qualitative research with a discourse analysis method. Researchers use digital hermeneutic theory to read the meaning behind the narratives conveyed in the media. Based on the research, the existence of digital activities carried out by the two accounts is a counter discourse to the strengthening of the current understanding of gender inequality by other accounts or media. Various strategies are used to dominate the discourse on equality, including by delivering quotes, posters, short videos, seminars, essay articles, to organizing training and advocacy for equality.

Keywords: *ideology; gender; digital activism*

A. INTRODUCTION

The media is one of the important spaces for the dissemination of discourse in the contemporary era. In the modern era, space is no longer just a physical-material form, but has shifted and turned into a media space. In fact, the media became a new contested space. This is because modern humans are very close to the media. In fact, an anthropologist and Indonesianist, Slama (2018) assesses that

the influence of the media also has an impact on human religious activities, including Muslims in Indonesia who are considered highly dependent on the media (Slama, 2018)

The shift in space also has implications for changes in the landscape orientation of religious and gender discourse. The power of the media necessitates a new authority in the discourse. This can very well be



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determined by the extent to which the account has mass (followers) and is also greatly influenced by the charismatic figure who is used as an icon. The Paradigm followers is a new phenomenon where the parameters of scientific authority are measured by the number of followers on social media (Yusdani, Sanaky, Safitri, Machali, & Juliansyahzen, 2019) The paradigm shift also marks the shift of authority from the traditional to the impersonal. Initially religious authority rested on ulama and kiai based in Islamic boarding schools, or scholars based in universities, now everyone can choose the fatwa reference in the media according to their own tastes. Which opinion is considered relevant and in accordance with the conditions and situations they are experiencing (Jinan, 2013)

The development of discourse in the media is very dynamic and fast. Digital media is not only used to seek pleasure and entertainment, but also becomes a means of accessing and disseminating religious discourse, including gender discourse. There are many studies related to gender discourse on various digital platforms. His studies also varied, ranging from conservative to liberal perspectives. However, it turns out that based on Kirana's study (2020) that the discourse that develops in the media is more dominated by conservative groups. This can be seen from the understanding of the dynamic pattern of relations between men and women in gender discourse which places women in a subordinate position. In addition, discourses on heaven and hell are associated with the power of male relations over women (Kirana & Garadian, 2020)

This understanding is an example of gender inequality. The position of women is placed in a second-class position (subordinate) (Mansour Faqih, 1996). The

discourse of gender inequality is widely spread on social media with various variants. Women in subordinate positions were not only conveyed by men, but also many voiced by women themselves. This is conveyed by accounts such as the Muslimah Media Center (MMC) which have 160,000 subscribers on Youtube and 64,800 followers on Instagram. Discourse against gender equality can be found in studies entitled "Gender Equality Destroys Women (Kesetaraan Gender Merusak Perempuan)", "The Idea of Gender Equality Attacks Islam (Ide Kesetaraan Gender Menyerang Islam)", "Criticism of The Gender Equality Narrative (Kritik atas Narasi Kesetaraan Gender)", and so on.

Discourse about gender bias in the media are to be reviewed by Muttaqin (2020) that displays many media studies, gender bias, and even tend to lead to a form of propaganda theme of gender. In addition, gender-biased religious studies on social media are not only understood as a form of textual-fundamentalistic understanding of religious texts, but also as a form of commodification of religion. To support his argument, Muttaqin studied a number of media featuring figures such as Ustadz Felix Siauw, Ustadz Khalid Basalamah, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, and Ustadz Abdus Shomad (Muttaqin, 2020).

Therefore, in the midst of the strengthening of religious discourse that discriminated against gender, a massive media emerged that carried out by digital activism as a counter to the dominant discourse in the media. Among digital activists who are concerned with mainstreaming equality discourse are mubadalah.id and ngaji_kgi. Both have quite a growing number of followers in the media. Mubadalah.id has 31,100 followers on Instagram, while ngaji_kgi has 5,570 followers, apart from

Instagram, both of them actively share ideas through Youtube. In addition, the two accounts also have charismatic figures as role models. Mubadalah.id has a charismatic figure, namely KH. Husein Muhammad and Dr. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, while the ngaji_kgi are Dr. Nur Rofiah, Num. Uzm.

Based on these facts, this article focuses on answering three main issues, namely 1) what is the meaning behind gender ideological efforts on social media, 2) how are the strategies played by the two accounts in mainstreaming the notion of gender equality 3) the extent to which the ideological process affects discourse equality in the media.

B. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is qualitative research with a critical discourse analysis method based on the discourse conveyed by the two accounts, namely mubadalah.id and ngaji_kgi. The two accounts were chosen based on the activeness of the media in disseminating discourse on social media. In addition, the two have quite a large following in the media. Of course, this affects the construction of the discourse of his followers on social media.

In the process of this research, the researcher uses the theory of digital hermeneutics as an analytical knife related to the dynamics of discourse that develops in social media. The stages of data analysis consist of collecting data from the two accounts, reducing data by eliminating the same themes and topics, presenting and drawing conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018)

1. Theoretical Framework

a. Digital Hermeneutics

The current digitalization brings changes and shifts in discourse from

traditional based on books, ulama, kiai, to independent media-based discourse. The development of the media as a new arena in religious discourse also affects the issue of religious authority (Haryadi, 2021). Whereas in a religious context, the issue of authority is a very important issue because it involves the validity of an interpretation of religion (Abou El Fadl, 2014). Therefore, the development of the media on the other hand has a positive impact on making things easier, but on the other hand it also affects the issue of religious authority. Jinan calls this phenomenon a form of impersonalization of Islamic religious authority, which shifts traditional authority towards openness of authority which actually has the opportunity for "wild" religious understanding (Jinan, 2013). Even so strong the role of the media in human life, Happer and Philo (2013) state that the media is able to change a person's religious construction, may turn into an extremist-fundamentalist and also become a tool for social change (Happer & Philo, 2013).

In responding to the dynamics of gender discourse and religious authority on social media, the researchers looked at this phenomenon with the theory of digital hermeneutics. Digital Hermeneutics itself can be seen from two important aspects, namely digital and hermeneutics. Hermeneutics itself is an attempt to understand, interpret, and also analyze the possibilities and basic assumptions of something being studied. The basic assumptions in hermeneutics are more plurality assumptions, thus necessitating the presence of various interpretations

and understandings (Juliansyahzen, 2019). Furthermore, hermeneutics as a method of trying is also used to understand Islamic scholarship with the aim of finding definitions that can be easily understood by readers (Sya'bani, 2019). Meanwhile, digital is a new space for various discourses and interpretations. The digital space is more open and provides opportunities for anyone to participate actively and collectively. But on the other hand, often digital has characteristics that can be manipulated (Jinan, 2013). In certain contexts, as a new contested space, discourse in digital media is highly dependent on who controls it (Ridho, 2017).

Digital hermeneutics as a theory began to receive attention starting in 1986 by Malley, Hurwitz, and Duffy in their article entitled *Hermeneutics: From Textual Explication to Computer Understanding?* (Mallery, Hurwitz, & Duffy, 1986). Recent studies related to digital hermeneutics, for example, were carried out by Lukman (2018), Rahman (2020), Ven and Nuenen (2020). Lukman explained that digital hermeneutics emerged as a continuation of popular interpretations that looked straightforward and simple. In addition, digital hermeneutics also marks the equality and democratization of the process of interpreting the Qur'an, anyone can interpret the Qur'an so that it becomes a challenge to authority. Furthermore, in the era of digital hermeneutics, anyone can produce an interpretation of the Qur'an, regardless of their scientific capacity (Lukman, 2018).

Rahman explained the urgency of digital hermeneutics as an analytical method to understand a narrative and discourse spread on social media. Now, discourse is not only contained in books or books, but is also widely spread on various social media. In addition, Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest active users of social media. Digital hermeneutics is a reading and a search for the hidden meaning behind the narratives conveyed on social media (Rahman, 2020). Therefore, a deep understanding of the dynamics of the related issues also needs to be understood in depth, such as the dominance of discriminatory ideology in social media and its contestation with moderate ideology. Ven and Nuenen emphasize the character of the dialectical process aspects that occur to various entities such as digital media characters, individual narratives, dialogical motivations, and social worldviews (van de Ven & van Nuenen, 2020).

b. Gender Approach

The concept of gender refers to a concept of differentiating roles, attitudes, duties and responsibilities that are more flexible and develop in accordance with social-society changes. Therefore, the concept of gender is the fruit of the social construction of a society with values that are understood and lived in everyday life. This is different from sex which is more permanent, fixed, unchanging, and not interchangeable (Rahmawati, 2020). Sociologically, this understanding is not yet familiar in the Muslim community. Most people think that gender is always associated with women, so discussions about gender are only about women's issues. This is due to

an understanding that places gender as gender. In fact, gender and gender are two different things (Nurbayanti, 2020).

As a social construction, changes and dynamics regarding gender always occur. Therefore, the researcher uses the perspective of Mansour Fakih in looking at the aspect of equality between men and women. This aspect becomes an indicator to assess whether the discourse delivered and implemented contains the principle of gender equality. There are 5 things that become indicators, namely marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and double workload (Fakih, n.d.). Therefore, an equal discourse certainly tries to act as a counter-narrative based on these five things.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Ideologization of Gender in social media

According to An Encyclopedia Britannica Company, ideologization is a process to change or interpret something related to sociopolitical ideology which is often considered biased or limited ("Definition of Ideologize," 2021). The ideologization of gender is an attempt to construct an equal gender discourse order from a discriminatory order. Currently, the gender ideological contestation is getting stronger in the midst of media openness. In fact, Kirana and Garadian in their academic work found the fact that the religious discourse that developed in the media was dominated by conservative groups (Kirana & Garadian, 2020).

Open access in the media necessitates the birth of various schools of understanding related to religion as

well as gender issues. There is a gender ideological contestation in the media. First, there is a group that agrees on an equal position between men in all respects. Second, there are those who agree that men and women are balanced and equal beings, but not in all respects. Third, there are those who think that men and women are not equal. The three typologies of thought are classified by Saeed into three groups, the first is called the textualist group, the second is called the semi-textualist group, and the last is called the textualist (Saeed, 2005). According to Husein Muhammad, there are at least two schools, namely the flow that places women in a subordinate position and the next flow is the group that places the position of men and the second equally (Muhammad, 2019).

The process of discourse construction on social media is strengthened when it is delivered by ustadz who have a mass base of followers and fanatics. There are at least 7 (seven) speakers who have a lot of fame and followers, namely Abdul Somad, Khalid Basalamah, Adi Hidayat, Subhan Bawazier, Syafiq Reza Basamalah, Hanan Attaki, and Felix Siau. The speakers used a number of media such as Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram to convey their understanding of the concept of gender relations.



For example, one of the famous speakers in the media, namely Dr. Syafiq Riza Basalamah, MA delivered a lecture on the polemic of the issue of gender

equality broadcast through the Youtube account "Surabaya Mengaji" which already has 159,000 subscribers. Through this account, she talks a lot about gender such as broadcasts entitled "Gender Equality", "Gender Equality Issues (Isu Kesetaraan Gender)", "When Women Become Leaders (Ketika Perempuan menjadi Pemimpin)", and etc (Basalamah, 2021). Other accounts such as the "Khalid Basalamah Official" account which has a total subscriber count of 1.98 million. Ustadz Khalid in his account discussed a lot of issues related to gender, even related to women's discussions, he presented in a discussion entitled "70 Mistakes of Women (70 Kekeliruan Wanita)" (Khalid Basalamah, 2021). In addition to the two accounts, there are still many accounts that feature speakers as mentioned above.

Therefore, the dominance of unequal gender discourse in the media has given rise to the awareness of contextualist progressive groups to provide a balanced discourse regarding gender relations. Among the accounts that represent this group are mubadalah.id and ngaji_kgi. Although the two accounts are relatively new, and have fewer followers than the first group, these two accounts are also actively involved in conveying the discourse of equality through popular media such as Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, and even has an official website.

Both accounts convey an understanding of equality with various strategies. Mubadalah has several program activities such as the mubadalah festival, one of which is holding intensive classes. Intensive class is a program that is intended to introduce the principle of mubadalah (mutuality) in placing the relationship between men and women. In addition to intensive classes, the mubdalam festival also mobilizes citizens to disseminate the discourse of equality

through popular media, namely by holding a tiktok competition containing the message of the mubadalah principle.

In addition to the mubadalah festival organized by mubadalah, a similar program is also carried out by the ngaji_kgi initiated by Dr. Nur Rofiah, Num. Uzm. The "ngaji_kgi" account gave the name of the program with the term "Lingkar Ngaji KGI (Islamic Gender Justice/Kesetaraan Gender Islam)". In addition to these programs, this account transforms discourse and ideas through podcast programs. In fact, a list of materials discussed were presented, including the Perspectives of Women Victims of Violence, Women's Identity, and Awareness of Gender Justice: Arab or Western First, Islamic Revolutionary Changes to the Humanity of Women, PKS Bill on Islamic Perspectives, Islam and Gender-Based Violence against Women, and Image of Women Ideal in the Qur'an (@Ngaji_kgi, 2021).

The various activities presented by the two groups or accounts are an attempt to ideologically gender identity to counter textualist group discourse in the media. Ideology of equal gender discourse. Gender is different from sex, and gender is a socio-cultural construction, and Islam strongly affirms equality between men and women. Reading of religious texts is not only based on the pronunciation of written texts, but develops readings with various approaches such as philosophical approaches, hermeneutics, sociology, etc.

2. Tafsir Populer on Gender

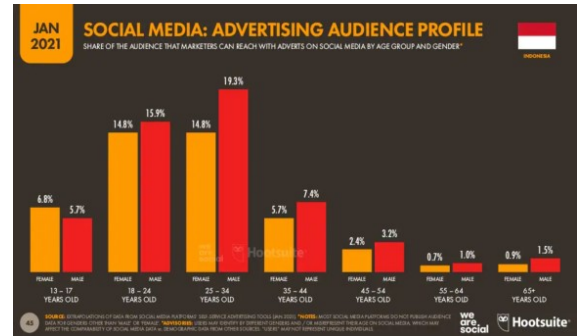
Digital Hermeneutics as a theory requires an effort to read the text contained in the narrative in the media, but it does not stop at what is written, but tries to reveal the meaning behind the narrative conveyed (Rahman, 2020). In capturing the meaning behind the

narrative, it is necessary to capture the discourse that develops in the media, read the characters behind the media, and observe the trend of discourse that is always conveyed. Thus, the meaning intended by the author can be known.

Furthermore, Lukman captures the purpose of the development of digital hermeneutics as a scientific tool. According to him, the presence of digital hermeneutics is a continuation of popular interpretation (Lukman, 2018). The aim is to make it easier for readers to understand serious debates about gender relations. Gender discourse is packaged with a straightforward appearance, simple as well as attractive, and varied according to the needs and developments of the times.

Based on DataReportal that of the 274.9 million population in Indonesia, there are 202.6 million as internet users, and 170 million recorded as users who actively use social media. Meanwhile, if observed based on the age of social media users, the majority of digital users are the millennial generation called Generation Y and Z, namely between 18-24 years old and 25-34 years old (social media: Advertising Audience Profile; Share of The Audience That Marketers Can Reach with Adverts on social media by Age Group and Gender, 2021).

At this millennial age, Sunesti and Hasan (2018) are a period of developmental age that is commonly associated with identity formation (Sunesti, Hasan, & Azca, 2018). This search for identity is heavily influenced by the media, even salafism. This is because the teachings conveyed tend to be conveyed in a straightforward and firm manner. The millennial generation tends to be difficult when faced with choices and differences of opinion on an issue.



Straightforward, simple, attractive, and firm character is the entrance to the process of gender ideology. This is what the two accounts do. Serious gender debates are packed with various strategies such as posters, podcasts, talkshaws, short lectures, and so on. In addition, the media used are also diverse, adapting to trends that are widely used by the millennial generation.

3. The Digital Activism of Mubadalah.id and Ngaji_kgi

Digital activism presented by Mubadalah.id and Ngaji_kgi seeks to counter the discourse that currently dominates the media. Both media display a moderate and balanced view with a method that is more in line with the character of the millennial generation as the majority of media users. In addition to substance, the two accounts feature figures who scientifically depart from traditional scholarship, such as KH. Husein Muhammad, Faquhuddin Abdul Kodir, and also Nur Rofiah.

The second interprets gender in an interesting way. Often the discourse that is conveyed is the result of sociological reflection in society which turns out to have theological justification. This is like the conception of reward (reward) for men who believe and are pious will get angels from heaven. The question presented then is, then what will women of faith get? Understanding the reward that becomes an angel (women's representation) as a

gift is a portrait of gender inequality. This is included in the stereotype category (Fakih, n.d.). Because of the acceptance of this meaning and institutionalization as an ideological interpretation, it becomes a separate problem. Mubadalah.id provides answers to these questions with illustrations that are easily understood by readers.

Based on the picture above, mubadalah.id wants to provide a perspective to understand a text, namely reading with a historical approach. The text that becomes the reference of a discourse needs to be read from various perspectives. In the context of the problem above, mub is emphasizing reading by understanding social structures and facts when a text is present. It is intended to reveal a proportional and contextual meaning.

Disproportionate understanding of religious texts will lead to gender biased understanding. In addition to religious understanding, gender-biased understanding is also influenced by the level of awareness of women's humanity and also the social system that surrounds them (@Ngaji_kgi, 2021). Therefore, Ngaji_kgi often provides methodological training to understand religious texts. The participants are general in nature, and each participant must follow until all the materials and sessions are followed. The study materials include "The Lens of Women's Essential Justice (Lensa Keadilan Hakiki Perempuan)", "Gender Relations in Arabic and Interpretation (Relasi Gender dalam Bahasa Arab dan Tafsir)", and "Islam and the Humanization of Women (Islam dan Pemanusiaan Penuh Perempuan)". Ngaji_Kgi's strategy is more formal in nature by organizing a number of courses, advocacy, book reviews, and a series of thematic studies.

Not only responding to the general view of the inequality of gender relations that have been rooted in human life, but also responding to every new problem. One example is the response to the Draft Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU PKS/Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual). Academic and confusing debates regarding the RUU PKS are presented in a simple and easy-to-understand way for readers. In this position, digital hermeneutics becomes very important to read about it. In digital hermeneutics, readers are invited to understand the debate about the RUU PKS through a digital platform using simple language, illustrations, so that it invites readers to the substance without being bothered by detailed and difficult analysis.

The function of digital hermeneutics is actually trying to bridge the reader with the text or narrative in an easier way, without having to eliminate the basic meaning of the text or narrative. In the context of the problem above, mubadalah.id tries to convey the main ideas on the urgency of the PKS Bill in the midst of a fairly serious academic debate. This is conveyed by conveying important points with visualizations that make it easier for readers to understand.

D. CONCLUSION

Social media is a new contested space. There has been a shift in the discourse space, which was originally a material public space, shifted to an immaterial and abstract media space. Nevertheless, the development of discourse in the media is influential and even able to change the order of human life, including in the context of religion and discourse on the relationship between men and women. As a new contested space, gender discourse in the media is

dominated by conservative groups. This has encouraged the birth of digital activities of progressive contextual groups to provide a balanced discourse in the media. Among the accounts that carry out massive movements to counter gender bias are mubadalah.id and ngaji_kgi. In the perspective of digital hermeneutics, the two accounts have succeeded in changing discursive discourses about gender relations that are difficult to be understood by readers. Of course, there are various strategies used to convey messages, including posters, caricatures, and short audio messages, holding thematic studies, courses, and advocacy through the media.

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