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Negotiating Authority in the Formation of Young Muslims's Piety in Contemporary Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores the important role of traditional and modern religious authorities in the formation of the young Muslim's piety in Indonesia. Leading figures of religious organizations represent traditional religious authorities that have been key actors in guiding the morals and knitting social cohesion of Indonesian society for a long time. They play a role in teaching Islamic doctrines and rituals, as well as nurturing local Islamic traditions that significantly influence the behaviour and religious identity of young Muslims. However, the emergence of young Islamic preachers who use social media for da'wah in the digital era positions them as new religious authorities, which simultaneously leads to the fragmentation of traditional religious authority. The massive penetration of the internet and the dissemination of various patterns of fundamentalist Islamic movements on social media have given birth to the interaction between the two forms of authority with conflicts and complementary attitudes. This article also aims to explain the nature of the tensions and complementarities between the two religious authorities in the contemporary era. This study uses Talal Asad's approach to Islamic discursive tradition thinking, which emphasizes that the production of religious knowledge is strongly influenced by traditional systems, material conditions, historical processes, and political authority. This article finds that modern religious authorities build their authority among young Muslims through Islamic preaching popular on social media, while traditional authority is built through political structures, body discipline, and ceremonies of local Islamic traditions. The article also finds that the conflict and complementarity of the two religious authorities can be managed into a richer dialogue that improves the spiritual awareness of young Muslims and promotes an approach to Islamic da'wah by combining the values of local Islamic traditions and modern realities.

Keywords: Islamic Learning; Muslims's Piety; Religious Authority; Social Media