

The Role of Women’s Leadership in the Traditional Muslim Religious Movement (New Paradigm in PBNU Leadership 2022-2027)

Ahmad Arifi, Rizal Fathurrohman,

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga

ahmad.arifi@uin-suka.ac.id; 22304011005@student.uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

Seeing the structure of PBNU for the 2022-2027 Period, Gus Yahya (Top Leader of PBNU) gave an important role for women to join the structure of PBNU’s daily management, after approximately 96 years PBNU did not involve women in its staff structure. This certainly affects the direction of PBNU organizational policies in the future. This study intends to analyze the shift in NU’s religious paradigm related to the role of women in collective leadership at PBNU and its implications in responding to changing times as well as welcoming a new civilization within NU which is entering the second century. This research includes library research with a socio-phenomenological approach. This study resulted in the finding that the paradigm shift in NU leadership was based on changes in religious understanding and empirical experiences of NU clerics (Kiai and Nyai) in various aspects of life, religious, social, political, and cultural. In addition, many NU programs related to women such as reproductive health,

sexual violence, migrant women workers, reproductive health, and women's radicalism are considerations for the importance of women's involvement in the development and implementation of these programs. Strategic roles in PBNU given to women such as Nyai Dr. (H.C) Sinta Nuriyah Abdurrahman at Musytasyar, Nyai Nafisah Ali Maksum at A'wan, Alissa Wahid and Khafifah Indar Parawansa at Tanfidziyah.

Keywords: *The Role of Women, Traditional Religion, Gender, PBNU*

A. Introduction

During the turbulent times before the reformation, Indonesian women were at the forefront of the action and became part of the leaders advocating for democratic change (Afrianty, 2020). Two decades after carrying out democratic reforms, Indonesia continues to face socio-religious problems (Bolysbayeva, 2021). For example, the emergence of a patriarchal culture that places women in the domestic vortex such as taking care of the household, educating children, and maintaining morale is a serious problem in women's socio-religious movements (Fatmawati, 2019).

Clevenger in his study also revealed that women are not passive recipients of religious teachings or practices, contrary to previous understandings of patriarchy as a culture. Religion may be an important space for women to explore ideas about gender, family, and sexuality because they understand the doctrines and practices of religion in their particular social and cultural environment (Clevenger, 2020). In the US, there are female employees bringing legislation to court when there is discrimination against women in the employment element of United Claims, which states that women are paid less to do work on an equal footing with their male counterparts (English, 2021).

Anti-feminist groups in Southeast Asia are politically-strategic because they often associate immoral human rights with Asian ideals. In Southeast Asia, the reality of men's and women's lives, especially their sexual and reproductive health rights, is still heavily influenced by culture and religion which are more pro-men. This reality is influenced by Islamic culture in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam concerning the actions of Muslim/feminist women in Southeast Asia to politicize spirituality (Maryani, 2021). Halford added that in the realm of personal, congregation, workplace, and the larger community, the construction of gender identity is heavily influenced by religious institutions, practices, and beliefs. This is especially true in traditional religious communities where women may experience gender inequality institutionalized through androcentric and patriarchal religious ideologies (Halford, 2021).

M. Amin Abdullah claims that the *taqlidy*-dogmatic structure of Islamic thought that emerged prevented him from accommodating the dynamics of science without engaging in epistemological criticism. The characteristic of this group is to uphold Islamic scientific heritage in its present form without considering normative or historical factors. Critical thinking which is influenced by critical-philosophical thinking towards all human thought, including religious thought, is the second characteristic. This critical group argues that Islamic intellectual property is a historical creation that is always open to modification. This second school of thought enables the progress of science in any discipline and utilizes it to create religious traditions that can be adapted to contemporary issues and trends (A. Abdullah, 2012).

According to Gus Dur, Islam does not differentiate between men and women in public office. The gap between men and women is purely biological, not institutional, as many from traditional Islamic literature have led to believe. Whether Muhammad was an Arab with all his cultural contexts or Muhammad was a messenger who conveyed divine messages,

even if some verses or hadiths discriminate against women, this role must be studied carefully (Arrahmah, 2022).

This is in line with the women's emancipation movement, Raden Ajeng Kartini dictated that women as figures not only function as a means of growth but also as the basis on which the process is built. In this case, RA Kartini emphasized that the women's and gender emancipation movement has equal rights for women from all walks of life to change stereotypes about women who are considered weak but have the same capacity to occupy top positions in their professional lives (Kurniawan, 2022).

The male and female populations together make up about half of the population, but the world is too male-dominated from their point of view thus far. Women have gradually taken on a more prominent role, and what they have done has made a significant contribution. The duty and obligation to preserve, maintain and improve this planet is a collective effort. Gus Yahya stated that the people of the archipelago were not ruled by men; conversely, women are stronger in many ways, such as the Minang Tribe which exemplifies the supremacy of women in the household. Apart from Aceh, he added, women, dominate Javanese society. He gave an example: in Javanese society, men only plant rice when it is already harvested; the next phase is dominated by women, and those who measure, cook, sell, and store are women (Syakir, 2022).

In the context of religious movements in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as one of the major mass organizations has a significant influence on people's beliefs and thoughts, especially among traditional Muslims. The fatwas issued by NU through PBNU become the basis for decision-making and social life. However, patriarchal culture has been ingrained in NU since its founding. This is exemplified by the existence of men who are far more prominent and dominant than women. Thus, women in NU are less visible (Ilman & Aji, 2020).

NU understands that men and women naturally perform tasks differently. For example, in the case of pregnant women, giving birth and caring for children, these roles cannot be separated from one another. This point of view discusses the meaning and interpretation of the letter As - Shura verse 49 (Firdaus, 2022). Women, however, have a social role in addition to their physiological functions, as well as their status as citizens. NU considers that women have the same rights in the public sphere as men. Even Musyawirin admits that women have several benefits.

The NU and Muhammadiyah perspectives on women in leadership are examples of progressive Islam. Islam which is not old-fashioned but cosmopolitan is in line with the trend of democracy which allows anyone, regardless of gender, race, or religion, to become a leader. As a result, it is important to reflect on our politically macho face. Masculinity in this context refers not only to the outward manifestation of masculinity but also to ways of looking and acting that are gender-biased (M. S. Abdullah, 2022).

NU's attention to women's issues has existed since the birth of NU but has not brought active NU women directly into the public sphere like Indonesian women at that time. Approaching its one-century age, Nahdlatul Ulama made a breakthrough after 96 years, namely by involving eleven women in the PBNU management structure for the 2022-2027 Period (Niam, 2022). They belong to the structural (implementing) type, starting in Mustasyar, A'wan, and Tanfidziyah. With this adjustment, PBNU's future policies will be broader and more responsive in looking at women's interests.

Even though patriarchal views are still strong and often influence NU policies, people in authority, such as religious leaders (kiai), can change these conventional gender roles (Boyer, 2022). As reported by NU Online, KH Yahya Cholil Staquf, who is fondly called Gus Yahya (Top Leader of the Nahdlatul Ulama

Executive Board), including women in the ranks of the PBNU Tanfidziyah during the PBNU management period for the 2022-2027 Period (Triono, 2022).

Gus Yahya highlighted that the inclusion of women in management was not motivated by concerns about gender equality, but the selection was based on capability and capacity, by organizational demands, in preparing management from the start to special PBNU institutions and bodies (Triono, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the shift in NU's religious paradigm related to the role of women in collective leadership at PBNU and its implications in responding to the times as well as welcoming a new civilization within NU which is entering the second century.

This study is related to research conducted by Isnaini and Farida (Isnaini, 2021). What distinguishes this research lies in the range of focus and object of research. If this research analyzes gender equality leadership as the basis for the development of PTNU quality management, then this research focuses more on the role of women's leadership in traditional Muslim religious movements. Other research was also conducted by Saputra and Hidayat (Saputra & Hidayat, 2022). The difference with this research appears in the focus and object of study, if this research focuses more on quality management based on gender equality in leadership in SMA NU for those who can have an impact, then this research focuses more on the role of women's leadership in the structural roles of NU. There is also dissertation research conducted by Muhammad Amin (Amin, 2021). The thing that distinguishes this research lies in the object of study, if this research emphasizes women's leadership from the perspective of Acehnese *mufassir*, then this research focuses on women's leadership in traditional Muslim religious movements.

The research methodology used is a qualitative design. This study conducted document analysis using one of many qualitative research designs (Bowen, 2009). The library research

design is used as a process for finding, selecting, and collecting written data from sources about a problem in a particular field which is used as fair study material through systematic, directed, and accountable work procedures (Kasiram, 2010). In other words, this study uses library sources as research objects. For primary sources, the author consults and takes analysis and synthesis of several books, articles, documents, and the latest news related to NU and women and then packages using a socio-phenomenological approach (Khoiruddin, 2014).

B. Discussion

1. NU's Religious Paradigm Shift

On January 31, 1926, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (1871-1947) and KH. Chasbullah (1883-1971) founded NU to protect the rights of orthodox Muslims. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) like all Islamic organizations, must adapt to colonial, political, and social constraints (Arifianto, 2021). One of the most difficult problems is overcoming a patriarchal society and the limited role of women who are constrained by their household responsibilities. Patriarchal culture has a stigma that men are at the top of the hierarchy and women are second-class citizens. That is why, at that time Fatayat NU's desire to become an autonomous women's organization was hampered by this culture (Adisti, 2021).

As one of the spiritual concepts of pesantren and NU, the yellow book has also been criticized for spreading racist and patriarchal religious views. Islamic boarding schools in general do not accept the claim that the yellow book is out of date because history shows that the yellow book can answer all the problems of society through the formulation of answers given by the authors of the book. However, those who advocate change criticize the conservative way of reading the yellow book which puts forward the text as it is (*qauli*), without considering its ethical basis, namely the purpose of the text which should be to create benefit (Arifi, 2010).

This benefit continues to experience transformation and dynamics throughout the history of human civilization so that the texts in the yellow book must be interpreted critically, dynamically, and contextually and can become solutions to social problems. This religious belief often works sociologically as a way of life, world view, and even a paradigm, which always provides a normative orientation or frame of reference on how humans act and understand reality (Franklin, 2020).

The struggle for women's equality has expanded beyond several pesantren and now extends to the highest kiai forums, including the National Conference, Konbes, and NU Congress. To encourage discussions on gender justice within the NU community in the organization's official venues and ensure effective and widespread transmission of justice ideals, Fatayat, IPPNU, academics, and activists fighting for gender justice work together. Finally, judgments in favor of gender equity are taken, particularly when it comes to women's leadership. In conclusion from other gender issues, women's leadership is a very sensitive subject (Pietrobelli, 2020).

Women's leadership shows that women can be leaders not only for their people but also for men. Of course, conservatives have long opposed women's leadership based on long-institutionalized religious scriptures. Because NU's official resolutions have far-reaching consequences for socio-cultural development in Indonesia, the prolonged struggle that is carried out continuously and never given up by all gender activists creates extraordinary results that should be appreciated by all components of the nation.

Men and women have the same responsibility to build a society, nation, and world that is beneficial for the growth of human existence in all fields. However, there are differences of theological opinion in the context of leadership. Religious writings interpreted by professionals in various fields underline that women are not allowed to become leaders because they are

morally and physically incapable. Morally, women in positions of authority will encourage them to interact more with the opposite sex, which is feared could lead to slander. While men are stronger and more capable than women. Due to the strict and textual view of Islamic teachings, the majority of Muslims prohibit women from holding positions of leadership for moral and capability reasons.

However, historical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of women as leaders refute this theological rationale. One of them is Queen Bilqis, the queen of Saba, whose leadership is known for her glorious success, state security, and thriving and safe economy. In the contemporary world, successful women leaders include Indira Gandhi, Margaret Tacher, Srimavo Bandahanaeke, Benazir Butho, and Sheikh Hasina Zia. And statistics show that many male leaders fail. So, the success or failure of a person is determined by his integrity and capabilities, not by his gender (Muhammad, 2012a).

In the context of the NU consensus, Bahtsul Masa'ail held three meetings to determine whether or not women could become leaders, in 1961, 1997, and 1999. The 1961 decision was not the same as the 1997 and 1999 decisions. In the decision of the Nahdlatul Ulama council meeting in 1961 decided on how the law of women became village heads. The explanation was that women were not allowed to run for village head, because that was the same as running for judge, except in emergencies. The decision implicitly implies that women cannot appear as leaders (Niam, 2022).

Significant developments in Nahdlatul Ulama then occurred in 1997 at the NU National Conference in NTB with a female leader, the IPPNU General Chair at that time, Machrusah Taufiq, who was assisted by Najihah Muhtarom. They educate conservative NU clerics through historical, social, and nationalist analysis. Machrusah Taufiq discusses the history of women leaders in Indonesia who have achieved

success. Sociologically, there are currently many women leaders who have succeeded in leading institutions in their respective regions. Furthermore, women are expected to be able to build the nation with their potential together with men, so public sector constraints only weaken women's potential and make NU experience setbacks and contradictions in the context of Indonesia's great development goals. Scholars accept this explanation, they also acknowledge nationalist, historical, and sociological underpinnings (Asmani, 2015).

The 1997 NU National Conference decision expanded the role of women in society. Women are members of society as well as citizens who have state and political rights. In this case, women are required to carry out their social duties in a more open, firm, and secure manner. In political tasks, according to Islamic teachings, women have the right to do so as long as they have faith and can carry out these social and political roles.

Not only that, the struggle of reformers within NU who are persistent in pushing for gender justice in the Bahtsul Masail NU forum cannot be separated from NU's legal products which are inclusive and gender sensitive. They dealt with the *kiai*, who for the most part remained exclusive in interpreting *fiqh* books. Personal, social, anthropological, historical, and nationalist views are put forward, without emphasizing textual arguments that are often used by *fiqh* academics, so that scholars understand their arguments. This happened at the 30th Muktamar in 1999 in Lirboyo.

The decision to allow women to participate in politics was strengthened in 1999 in the Bahtsul Masa'il at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School in Kediri, East Java. This decision states that leadership in today's culture is not a personal matter, but an institutionalized concept. The challenge ahead is to find a way to create a leadership structure that prioritizes feminine qualities based on the principles of solidarity, compassion, peace, and balance.

Nevertheless, conservative clerics still try to maintain their textual reasoning arguments according to the paradigm of thinking that places the text in an unquestionable position, without an in-depth study of the dimensions of benefit and the purpose of law enforcement. Even though the number of reformist clerics is small and conservative clerics are more dominant, a personal approach that is taken in a sympathetic and non-frontal manner allows conservative clerics to accept reformist offers that value moderation (Asmani, 2015).

The above dynamics show that there is still controversy surrounding the role of women in leadership. Though the conclusion of the last debate allows women to take part in leadership at the state and local levels. This happened when a female presidential candidate lost the 2004 presidential election, the NU kiai even declared that Nahdlyyin members were forbidden to vote for a female presidential candidate in general elections. At that time there was a couple of Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi. It was known at that time, KH. Hasyim Muzadi was the top leader of PBNU who was later deactivated for being a vice presidential candidate. In the discussion held by the East Java NU Kiai at the Raudhatul Ulung Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, the participants were advised not to vote for a female presidential candidate. This shows that there are still many NU kiai who uphold the notion that women are prohibited from occupying social and political positions.

Apart from the dynamics of the consensus of NU scholars in addressing women's leadership and its arguments, KH. Yahya Cholil Staqf, chairman of PBNU for the 2022-2027 period, actually included several women in PBNU structural positions. She did this with arguments that were somewhat different from the issue of women's leadership that had been echoed so far, such as gender equality and others. Gus Yahya, his nickname, stated that the reason for including women in the ranks of the Tanfidziyah PBNU management was because of their scientific

capacity and capability as well as qualified experience in carrying out organizational work.

She felt compelled to include mothers as the most powerful players at the most basic levels of society's structure. Because these women are their children's first madrassa. Gus Yahya also added that it was time to reap the benefits of the women's education process which had been very productively built by NU. Islamic boarding schools traditionally open class doors and accommodate female students. They sent women to a higher academic level, and as a result, we now have a cadre of women who are outstanding, who even men appreciate (Karimatul, 2022).

The role of women in public life is rapidly expanding, as is access to education for all and increased knowledge of their rights. Women can learn anything based on their interests and abilities. Hence, it offers professional prospects in the sector in which they are involved. Several women have held public office, including the president, governor, district head, and mayor. Several women have been appointed as rectors at state Islamic religious colleges. NU's women's housing policies are part of this larger trend. Previously, NU took a different approach to the position of women in the organization (Niam, 2022).

The shift in the religious paradigm of NU, in this case around women's leadership, is based on changes in religious understanding and empirical experience from NU clerics. In addition, in line with NU's second-century struggle to contribute to a better civilization, it is inevitable to involve women to carry out several fundamental transformations, the transformation of people's insights, the transformation of mindsets, and the transformation of mentality (Faizun, 2023).

2. The Role of Women in Leadership at PBNU

The highest organizational structure within NU, as well as at the center, is the PBNU (National Executive Board of Nahdlatul

Ulama), which consists of two executive bodies, Tanfidziyah and Syuriah, both of which have not had a single female member in the past. However, in 2022, the Chairman of PBNU made a significant choice to involve women in the ranks of the PBNU board as Tanfidziyah and Syuriah (Triono, 2022).

How many women are members of the PBNU management, including Hj. Alissa Wahid (Top Leader of PBNU), who is also the Top Global of the Gusdurian Network. Hj. Khofifah Indar Parawansa (Top Leader of PBNU), who is also the Governor of East Java and Chairperson of Muslimat and Ai Rahmayanti (Deputy Secretary General of PBNU), who is also the top global of PP Rumah Perempuan and Anak (RPA) are all members of PBNU's Tanfidziyah board. Nyai Hj. Sinta Nuriyah Abdurrahman Wahid, who was once Chairperson of the Puan Amal Hayati Foundation, Nyai Hj. Nafisah Sahal Mahfudh, who was a member of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) and Nyai Hj. Mahfudhoh Aly Ubaid, who was once a member of the PPP honorary assembly, joined Mustaysar NU.

While, Nyai Hj. Nafisah Ali Maksum, who is also the caretaker of the Krapyak Islamic Boarding School, the Ali Maksum Foundation, Hindun-Annisah Complex, and Beyt Tahfidz An-Nafisah, Nyai Hj. Badriyah Fayumi, who was also the founder of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI), Nyai Hj. Faizah Ali Sibromalisi, who is also listed as a member of the MUI Fatwa Commission, Nyai Hj. Ida Fatimah Zainal, who has also been a member of the Bantul Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), and Nyai Hj. Masriyah Amva, who was also the executive chairman of the 2017 Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI), all of whom are members of the A'wan NU (expert council).

The female leadership element chosen by the General Chairperson of PBNU is meant to answer the demands of the times and the challenges of future changes which are constantly evolving significantly. The presence of women in the Tanfidziyah

NU structure is very important because many NU initiatives related to women will fail if women are not involved in their management. Stunting, early childhood education, reproductive health, and the family economy are just a few of the issues that will greatly benefit from women's involvement in program development and implementation (Ahmad, 2022).

PBNU also involves women in its managerial ranks to provide space and opportunities for women to play an even bigger role in building a new civilization that is not gender biased and to support a century of NU (Abdul, 2022). This initiative to provide more space for women at NU's top management level could serve as inspiration for the establishment of management at the regional and branch management levels of NU, as well as the structure of the NU below it. Many women have scientific or organizational abilities. Islamic boarding schools are managed by numerous *bu nyai*. They have good knowledge of religion. Many NU women have been active in various groups since they were still in college. They rose through the ranks to become legislators, officials, bureaucrats, and others. His ability is very qualified to help NU; just as we allow them to develop.

They are given separate areas in independent groups that mainly deal with women's issues, such as the Nahdlatul Ulama Girls Student Association (IPPNU), Fatayat NU, and Muslimat NU. Muslimat NU was founded in 1946, Fatayat NU was founded in 1950, and IPPNU was born in 1955. PPNU was intended for middle-level NU students, while the Women's Indonesian Islamic Student Movement Corps (PMII) was a forum for students. Fatayat NU is intended for women of childbearing age, while Muslimat NU is intended for mothers who are already married. Because there is an age cut to membership, membership restrictions are not strictly enforced. These groups have made significant strides in empowering women for NU (Ahmad, 2022).

This strategy of compartmentalizing the institution was standard practice at the time, and additional autonomous groups

within the extended NU family were established four or five years after the male-run organization was founded. The Ansor Youth Movement was founded in 1934, followed by Fatayat NU in 1951. The Nahdhatul Ulama Men's Association (IPNU) was founded in 1950, followed by the Nahdhatul Ulama Women's Association (IPPNU) in 1955. According to Mrs. Umroh Mahfudhoh, founder of IPPNU, segregation between men and women in the organizational structure at NU greatly benefit women by allowing women in their areas to express their views and increase their involvement in the organization (Bush, 1999).

The separation of NU women from men in different organizations indicates the phenomenon of the 'different domains' in which each of them works. There is a significant difference because there is an opinion that NU has institutionalized and increased the role of women who are categorized as 'traditionalists' when viewed from the type of activities, which are centered on education, health, and other 'social' activities. This activity is believed to be by "women's nature" because it is related to upbringing, education, and child care (Sundari, 2017).

The representation of women in the Indonesian parliament has grown over the past two decades, growing from 9.6 percent in 1999 to 20.9 percent in 2019. This is in line with progress in other democracies (Chishti, 2020). This increased representation of women has resulted in the emergence of mainstream rhetoric relating to the selection of various women with the support of oligarchic structures, as well as the use of dynastic politics, in which successful female candidates take advantage of family connections with local political figures. A similar dynamic also occurs in other Asian countries where female candidates can secure seats in parliament thanks to the support of family networks and/or political dynasties (Mahsun, 2021).

So far, many parties who have struggled with women's issues, including Islamic women's organizations, prefer the first method for various reasons. Broadly speaking, the role of

women in leadership is consistently fighting for women's rights and expanding their participation in public life (Ekawati, 2016). Such as in the health sector (BKIA, assisting the government in implementing family planning programs and improving nutrition), education (kindergarten, skills training to fulfill the role of mothers and wives), charity work (sponsoring orphans and parents), and increasing income to increase family income.

From a moral point of view, if women become leaders, they will be encouraged to interact more deeply with the opposite sex, which can lead to defamation. Meanwhile, men are stronger and more capable than women. The Muslim majority that prevents women from emerging as leaders due to moral and ability issues is the result of the religious scriptures being interpreted in a strict textual way. However, historical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of women as leaders refute this theological rationale. One of them is Queen Bilqis, the king of Saba, whose government is known for great success, the security of the country is guaranteed solid, and the economy is prosperous and safe (Muhammad, 2012b).

Hasibulah Sastrawi, an expert on Islamic politics, believes that the involvement of politicians and the increasing prominence of women in the current PBNU management is reminiscent of Gus Dur's management style. Hasibullah, who also serves as Director of the Peaceful Indonesia Alliance, said that Gus Dur, the fourth president of the Republic of Indonesia as well as the grandson of the founder of NU, was responsible for developing the ideals that Gus Yahya is currently trying to practice (Devina, 2022).

NU's push for women to become public leaders indirectly helps women to improve their overall quality. Women must have the ability and ethics to become leaders. Women's leadership without skills and ethics will only set a bad precedent for women's leadership discourse. This is intended so that with good intellectual, social, emotional, and professional abilities,

women can make the maximum possible contribution to the development of the nation's civilization in the future.

With these contributions, women will gradually gain the public's trust and will naturally be allowed to rise to leadership positions. For Indonesian women to show their presence and actualize themselves during a competitive globalization era in the present and future eras, culturally it is necessary to increase the competence and moral integrity of women (Asmani, 2015).

NU, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia which was formed in 1926, has two NU women's organizations that have management from the Central to the Village/Kelurahan level throughout Indonesia. The organization is Muslimat NU, a women's organization formed on March 29, 1946, in Purwokerto, Central Java, under the umbrella of NU. Members over the age of forty and Fatayat NU, which was formed on 24 April 1950. Fatayat NU serves the younger generation of NU women, with members aged between twenty and forty years (Mahsun, 2021).

These two women's organizations have had a significant impact on the lives of many Muslim women. Routinely, the two groups hold religious activities such as *Majlis Ta'lim*. Members of local chapters are also often active in NU-related service activities, such as managing kindergartens, schools, and health facilities, as well as small-scale education, income generation, microcredit, and other development initiatives. These activities not only help deepen members' theological knowledge; they also provide a platform for members to create solidarity and social networks that benefit the larger NU community (*ummah*). Muslimat and Fatayat are particularly strong in places where much *pesantren* support NU, such as East and Central Java (Mahsun, 2021).

In Mahsun's previous conception, the character of Muslimat and Fatayat as mass organizations with networks that extended down to the village level made them the main

source of social capital. They work by increasing the capacity of individual members and then uniting them in collective action to deal with the difficulties faced by NU women (Safi'i & Ismanto, 2021). In the context of electoral politics, the presence of Muslimat and Fatayat women's organizations has greatly helped female politicians with NU backgrounds to enter politics with a relatively large population of female voters, making it easier for these women to compete in the legislature and regional head elections.

C. Conclusion

The change in the paradigm of NU's leadership was based on changes in the religious understanding and empirical experience of NU intellectuals (Kiai and Nyai). Women's human resources are increasingly advanced with many NU women Professors and Doctors (Muslimat and Fatayat), NU women Bureaucrat Leaders, and Leaders who can develop the religious and intellectual side of NU. Moreover, the many NU programs related to women such as stunting, early childhood education, reproductive health, and the family economy are also a consideration for the involvement of women in the development and implementation of these programs. Then, the social and religious movements played by women in NU spread to various aspects of life, both social, political, cultural, and religious. For example, the activities of IPPNU, Fatayat NU, Muslimat NU, and NU institutions that traditionally deal with women and children, and talk about issues of sexual violence, migrant labor, reproductive health, and women's radicalism.

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