

WOMEN'S IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL ISLAM AGE: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias

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Abstract

This paper discusses the phenomenon of religious lectures on social media that are gender-biased. The gender-biased religious lectures delivered in social media by some famous figures perpetuate the discrimination against women in Indonesia. This research answers how and why the religious lectures with gender-biased theme appear massively on social media. By using a qualitative method and feminist approach, the study focuses on the religious preachers on the new social media. This study shows that the large amounts of lectures with the gender-biased theme in social media are inseparable from the role of the promotional accounts. It shares videos of gender-themed propaganda massively and attractively to attract many visitors and followers of these accounts. This study reveals that the massive religious lectures with gender bias on social media are not only dealing with the textual understanding of religious texts but also a matter of the religious commodification. The actors of business could determine the massively particular religious discourse on social media.

Keywords: Digital Islam, Religious Authority, Gender.

A. Introduction

The digital age has been influencing the social, political, and religious life. For example, in Egypt, digital media is used as a strategic tool for the political movements by *Ikhwanul Muslimin* (the Muslim Brotherhood community) (Tartoussieh, 2011, p. 207). The digital age has allowed Muslims to create a new form of imagined community, as Mandaville said, a re-imagined *umma* (Mandaville, 1999). The shifting of religious activities into the digital space brings up the term “digital Islam.” Digital Islam age means the era of an encounter between Islam and electronic information technologies and communications (Mandaville, 1999, p. 23). Digital Islam has become a vehicle for the revival of women’s expression in the Arab world (Mernissi, 2004). But, digital Islam pertaining to women’s identity could be different elsewhere. In America, for example, the research related to Muslim women and online Islamophobia cases on social media shows that Muslim women get a more negative impact instead of Muslim men. As a minority in the minority (35 percent of all male Muslims in the US), the perception of online media puts more pressure on Muslim women than Muslim men to show the best Muslim identity in the US (Eckert, 2018).

Meanwhile, social media in Indonesia has become a new vehicle for religious preachers to convey religious lectures. The religious messages are conveyed in a professional way via social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Therefore, observing the digital phenomenon of Islam on such platforms is necessary to see the new dynamic of Muslim society in Indonesia. Compared to the other digital spaces, online social media are more widely used by

internet users today. The wider community could easily access the religious lectures conveyed by religious preachers from various educational, social, and political backgrounds. With such easy access, people can enjoy religious lectures anywhere and anytime they want. Unfortunately, the lectures are sometimes delivered by those who do not have adequate authority in delivering religious messages.

Some previous studies have analyzed the relation between women and media in the context of women's identity. For instance, Byerly & Ross (2008) revealed that there was a dialectical process of women activists in the media industry. Feminist activists in the media increase the women's public participation and the influence of feminist movements in their social lives. Popa & Gavrilu's research (2015) identifies the women's images on online media by employing the content analysis. Texts in online media produce meanings that reproduce the dominant gender ideology in digital media news. On the other hand, social media has provided opportunities for women to play an active role in business, politics, and self-expression (Lubis, 2014).

On the contrary, from those studies, this research departs from the basic argument that social media in digital Islam affirms women as objects of gender bias. Many forms of normative and textual understanding of religious texts appear in the religious lectures. Whether we realize or not, the textuality of some Islamic religious texts tends to be gender biased. This focus of study then becomes essential because the lectures delivered by popular preachers on social media could quickly be accessed by the broad audience. They could access the propaganda in virtual space without being limited by time

and place. The recorded videos could be shared massively on various social media platforms and watched repeatedly. Indeed, the model of preaching in this space is different from the conventional preaching limited to certain areas.

For this reason, this study would address two research questions: 1) how are the forms of gender bias in the lectures conveyed by the famous religious preachers, and 2) why do so many gender-biased contents of religious lectures appear on social media. Using the feminist approach, this study focuses on popular religious preachers on social media. The social media here refers to the virtual platform that could be easily accessed by commoners such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Social media plays an essential role in constructing the view of the wider community. Likewise, it has a significant impact on creating gender-biased opinions towards women.

B. Basic Concepts

Initially, it is essential to emphasize some basic concepts in this discussion. These concepts are part of the theoretical framework employed in analyzing the forms of gender bias in the religious lectures of popular preachers on social media.

1. Gender

Conceptually, gender could mean “a mental and cultural interpretation of sex differences from both men and women.” Gender’s idea is to show the division of activities considered appropriate for men and women. Gender as a concept is to identify differences between men and women in terms of socio-cultural influences.

This definition shows that a gender is a form of social constructions, not natural things, or mutable characters (Hidayatullah, 2010, p. 9). Gender is a cultural perception and an expectation that should be of men or women (Connolly, 2011, p. 65). In contrast to gender, the term “sex” generally refers to the differences between men and women in terms of biological autonomy. In the Indonesian dictionary, therefore, sex is defined by a thing that concerns more on a person’s biological aspects, including chemical composition and hormones in the body, physical anatomy, reproduction, and other biological characteristics (Hidayatullah, 2010, pp. 9–10).

The process of gender differentiation between the sex of men and women has experienced a long history. Gender differences are formed, socialized, strengthened, and constructed socially and culturally from both religion and state. Ultimately, the society has claimed that gender differences are natural and given by God. It is biological and cannot be changed. Gender differences, finally, are understood as the nature of men and women. The effects of understanding gender as natural are slowly affecting the “sex” or biological characteristics of men and women. Because of the social construction of gender, it motivates men to be reliable, aggressive, and domineering. Conversely, women have to be gentle, obedient, and so on, which also influences their physical and biological development (Fakih, 2001, pp. 7–10).

2. New Religious Authority

According to the recent research, religious authority is divided into traditional religious authority and new religious authority (Kailani, Ikhwan, & Suhadi, 2019, p. xxii). In this context, the definitions of the “religious scholar” and “religious entrepreneur” are essential to be mentioned. These two last terms arise in the dissemination of research results initiated by PusPIDeP Yogyakarta, School of Graduate Studies of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Such terms emerge from the different definitions proposed by Islamic scholars in Indonesia. The religious scholar means “people who have a formal religious education background, specifically studying Islamic texts through educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and Islamic universities.” Generally, the religious scholars are associated with traditional religious authority, as mentioned above. On the other hand, religious entrepreneurs, new religious authority, are those who can package religious messages through several ways such as writing, training, and short videos delivered through new media to reach a wider audience. Usually, though not all, they obtain the religious knowledge through easily accessible sources such as translation books, religious preaching, or the internet (Tim Peneliti, 2019, p. 3).

This study focuses more on clerics or preachers who belong to the religious entrepreneurs or those who possess the ability to deliver the religious messages in a new media. It could be the preachers that have *Pesantren*

(Islamic boarding school) background or graduated from an Islamic university but can convey the religious messages in the new media such as short video, writing, and pictures.

In this study, therefore, the religious preachers are not those who have traditional Islamic knowledge authority, but those who gain popularity on the online social media. The popularity of preachers influences the community of social media users. At this point, the preachers later become figures of the new religious authority for commoners. Some of the Indonesian religious preachers are active and popular on social media. Among them, the most famous names on social media in 2018 are (1) Abdul Somad, (2) Khalid Basalamah, (3) Adi Hidayat, (4) Subhan Bawazier, (5) Syafiq Reza Basalamah, (6) Hanan Attaki, and (7) Felix Siau (Admin, 2018b). Those preachers have bases of popularity on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The religious lectures delivered by the preachers have become popular on social media. The lectures conveyed either on their own accounts or the professional accounts are massively shared by social media users in the virtual world. The lectures of those famous preachers could be seen in every post, receiving a huge response on social media. The preachers' use of online media, at the same time, increases the accessibility of their lectures for ordinary people. Thus, with the help of online social media, the preachers' popularity has grown rapidly. The preachers who are relatively newcomers in conveying

the religious lectures could be more popular than the religious scholars who have been active for a long time in giving the religious lectures traditionally.

3. Feminist Approach

The feminist approach becomes an essential analytical tool to examine the forms of gender bias in religious lectures on social media. The term feminism comes from the Latin word "Femina," which means "having a character of femininity." Feminism is initially preceded by a perception of the inequity of women's position in society when compared to men. From this, various efforts have been made to equalize women and men in all fields following the potential possessed as a human being. This effort was later known as the feminist movement (S. Anshori and others, 1997, p. 19).

A feminist approach is an approach that emphasizes aspects of injustice in all aspects of life. In this study, this approach focuses on gender aspects, namely the position of women in the socio-cultural area. Feminism's supporters view that gender differences have brought out injustice, whether for women or men. They argue that the nature of gender is a trait that can be exchanged and influenced by social constructs. Therefore, this nature of gender should be fought by both men and women, so they do not become victims in the social construction of gender differences. In line with the above, Sue Morgan asserts that the feminist approach in religious studies will use the concept of gender as the primary analysis (Connolly, 2011, p. 63).

In Islam, the traditional Muslims tend to interpret religious texts such as the Qur'an and hadiths unilaterally based on the patriarchal worldview. This develops into discrimination in gender differentiation (Abu Zayd, 2013, p. 162). Whereas, the Qur'an as the main Islamic source fights for equality and struggles against the patriarchal ideology. Q. 9:71 clearly describes that believers as a community of both males and females are in mutual guardianship. Indeed, the Qur'an recognized the existence of patriarchy at the time of revelation, but it did not mean advocating these practices. On the contrary, the inequality based on patriarchy was addressed to restriction and omission (Barlas, 2002, p. 6). Quranic verses were sent down gradually due to the challenge, reform, and change of the patriarchal tradition in Arabic. At the same time, the Qur'an proposes social justice in all aspects including the gender aspect. It is one of the moral fundamentals in the Qur'an (F. Rahman, 1979, p. 33). The Qur'an as discourse responded and represented the rooted traditions. Hence, the socio-historical context and linguistic environment at the time of Qur'anic revelation are reflected in the content, style, objective, and linguistic system of the Qur'an (Esack, 2001, p. 201). Although the textual structures of Qur'anic text in parts seem likely misogynistic, its significances that the Muslims should follow the social justice.

The Qur'anic worldview tries not only removing the effect of the patriarchal tradition but also portraying women with a vivid improvement from the previous condition in pre-Islamic Arabia (Schimmel, 1998, p.

92). According to Wadud, the Qur'an indeed advocates reforms gradually in more often. If the Qur'an abolishes these habits simultaneously, it would only cause new problems. Therefore, it continues slowly following the change of the occurring contexts (Wadud, 1999, p. 101). Inevitably, one of the successful keys of the Prophet's preaching in making changes in Arab society is that the teachings that he carries contain a liberation from various aspects of oppression and inequality. It is, of course, comforting marginalized communities who have not been humanized, including women (Najwah, 2006, p. 77). Therefore, the contextual understanding of the social-historical milieu of Qur'anic revelation is necessary to get the dynamic significance of the text. When gender justice becomes the ideal moral in the Qur'an, Islam, however, struggle against any biased interpretation based on the patriarchal construction.

In conducting the studies on gender issues in Islam, therefore, it is necessary to employ a feminist approach to restore the spirit of gender justice, which the Prophet had fought. As stated, the feminism approach roots from the injustice in the realities including gender-biased practices in the societal domain. Especially, the feminist approach in Islam reviews verses quoted by males to establish inequality and deconstructing the male and female dissimilarities (Abu Zayd, 2006, p. 91). This approach supports the goal of the Qur'anic view in reinforcing gender equality and eliminating discrimination in any form against women. Q. 4:1 implies that the Islamic worldview emphasizes absolute human

equality because the term '*nafs*' in this verses signifies the feminine word. The significance of Q.S. 7:189 also asserts that the relationship of both men and women should always be concerned with equal principles. Besides, based on Q. 16: 97, Q. 4: 124, Q. 40: 40, and Q. 3: 195, both men and women are equal at receiving a reward for doing the right deeds. These verses indicate that the holistic Quranic view sustains gender equality and refutes the gender-biased ideology (Abu Zayd, 2013, p. 161). Unfortunately, most of the exegetes' horizon reflected in the classical commentaries was constructed by the patriarchal effects. Moreover, understanding the Qur'an in the neo-patriarchal Arab societies is monopolized with textual interpretations (Yoyo, 2018, p. 260). The lectures of religious preachers nowadays, however, are based on those works. Whereas, the Qur'an was sent down gradually according to the social-cultural problem at the time to transform the unjust pra-Islamic traditions. Therefore, the feminist approach in this context is intended to demolish the inequality and, at the same time, to criticize the motif of gender-biased in the religious lectures.

Based on the object of this research, the feminist approach would examine religious lectures of those popular preachers. According to Mansour Fakih, this approach will explore gender injustice in five categories. The first is a marginalization. Gender differences cause marginalized women. Women's marginalization occurs not only in the workplace but also in the household, community, or culture, and even

the country. It increasingly limits the women's economic activities because of restrictions that women should only work in the private area. In fact, in some tribes in Indonesia, women do not inherit property from their husbands (Fakih, 2001, p. 13).

The second is a stereotype, namely labeling or marking. Women become victims of injustice because of labeling in the society. As women are assumed to be preening, any sexual harassment is associated with this stereotype. Women have to serve men so that their education is not prioritized (Fakih, 2001, p. 16). The third is the subordination of women. Subordination is an attitude putting women in positions that are not important. This assumption departs from the view that women are irrational or emotional so that they cannot become leaders (Fakih, 2001, p. 15).

The fourth is gender violence. This violence sometimes occurs due to the power inequality that exists in society. Gender violence could be in the form of women's rape, or in marriage, acts of beating women, pornography, and etcetera (Fakih, 2001, p. 17). The fifth is the workload for women. It comes from the thinking that women do not deserve to be family leaders, and then it brings up an understanding that their main task is domestic. All household chores, therefore, such as cooking, washing, mopping, and caring for children are the responsibility of women (Fakih, 2001, p. 21).

C. Social Media and Popular Preacher

Nowadays, virtual social media becomes a new medium in conveying religious messages. For commoners, this media is an appropriate tool to access religious lectures more easily anywhere and anytime. With the development of various platforms of virtual social media, the preachers, their fans, and the ordinary people use the media to disseminate the religious lectures more broadly, whether in writing, video, and pictures. These could easily be shared on various social media platforms.

Some preachers rapidly become popular in online social media. Each of them has an official account to upload their religious lectures, whether personally or professionally managed. Reportedly in the *jagad.id* website page, some of the most famous names of Islamic preachers on social media in 2018 are (1) Abdul Somad, (2) Khalid Basalamah, (3) Adi Hidayat, (4) Subhan Bawazier, (5) Syafiq Reza Basalamah, (6) Hanan Attaki, (7) and Felix Siau (Admin, 2018b).

The mentioned preachers above have high popularity, not because they often give religious lectures in various cities but due to the role of social media, such as YouTube and Facebook. One of the most widely used media to spread religious lectures is YouTube. YouTube platform makes it easier to store recorded lectures with a longer duration. Usually, the online link of recorded lectures on YouTube is shared in other social media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, and Twitter.

For example, one of the most famous preachers on YouTube is Abdul Somad with the channel "Media Al-Qur'an Sunnah," which often uploads Abdul Somad's lectures. There

is also another channel that is quite intense in uploading Abdul Somad's short lecture, "Meong Channel," which has more than 800 thousand subscribers (followers) and more than 177 million views (watched). Besides Abdul Somad, there is also the channel "Khalid Basalamah Official" with 707, 435 subscribers, with more than 47 million views. Both of these preachers also have popularity on social media such as Facebook (Zaenudin, 2017). More than 1.4 million people have followed Abdul Somad on the fan page name "Ustadz Abdul Somad عبد الصمد" on Facebook. The Khalid Basalamah account with the official fan page name "Ustadz Khalid Z. A. Basalamah" has been followed by 74 thousand people. On Instagram social media, Abdul Somad's official account, "ustadzabdulsomad" has 6.9 million followers. The Khalid Basalamah account "khalidbasalamahofficial" has 474 thousand followers.

Another preacher considered popular on social media is Adi Hidayat. One intense YouTube channel uploading his lectures is "Da'wah Audio," with more than 40 million views. The Instagram account, "Ustadzadihidayat," has more than 1.2 million followers. Another one who is quite popular on social media is Felix Siauw. In addition to preaching by writing books or posting on social media, Felix is also active in making short religious lectures on his personal YouTube channel. Until now, followers of Felix Siauw's channel have reached 201 thousand subscribers, and all of his videos have been watched more than 7 million times. The Felix Instagram account, "felixsiauw," has been followed by as many as 3 million people. Besides Felix, the preacher who is quite popular among the millennial generation or young men and women is Hanan Attaki. Hanan

Attaki has a private channel with 191 thousand subscribers and has been watched more than 5 million times. Hanan Attaki's religious lecture videos on YouTube are uploaded by the channel "Islamic Lamp.Net" with subscribers reaching 862 thousand and have been watched more than 85 million times. For the Instagram, "hanan_attaki" account has reached 5.5 million followers. There is also Syafiq Reza Basalamah, which is quite popular on YouTube. Syafiq has an official channel called "Syafiq Riza Basalamah Official," with 238 thousand subscribers and more than 11 million views. For Instagram, the "syafiqrizabasalamah_official" account already has 641 thousand followers. Syafiq Riza Basalamah also has an NSP lecture or light teaching collaborating with Telkomsel providers.

From the various accounts above, it is evident that some popular preachers have professionally managed accounts. In addition to official accounts, there are many other accounts or channels on social media that distribute their lecture videos. These channels or accounts seem to compete for collecting many subscribers and followers. These various non-official accounts add to the popularity of the preachers. At the same time, the account benefited from the popularity of the preachers to sell several products. It shows the high popularity of the preachers is inseparable from the economic motives behind these accounts.

D. Forms of Gender Bias in Popular Religious Lecture

As explained from the get-go, gender biases in the religious lectures of the famous preachers would be analyzed by using the five categories of gender injustice mentioned by

Mansour Fakih. The lectures are mostly obtained from YouTube channels, which store many recorded videos of the famous preachers' lectures. The following is an analysis of the gender-biased contents in five categories of gender injustice forms.

1. Marginalization

Khalid, in his lecture on YouTube with the title "Tugas Utama Seorang Istri" (The Main Duty of a Wife), explained that the main duty of a wife is to take care of her husband and children. This statement departed from the question of one of the audiences who said that he had stopped working because of taking care of her husband and children, and then asked if it is a kind of *kufri ni'mah* (refusing an enjoyment from God) or not. Khalid answered that it is the best decision because taking care of the family is an obligation while working is only ancillary. It has nothing to do with *kufri-ni'mah* attitude. Precisely, the decision to stop working for Khalid is a kind of gratitude with the income earned by the husband (Admin, 2018a). Khalid added that the wife's main duty is to serve her husband in providing both biological needs and food. Serving a husband is a guarantee of heaven; otherwise, working outside is not a guarantee of heaven.

Khalid virtually agreed that working in public areas for women is permissible the certain conditions. However, for Khalid, working for women who have had enough with a husband's income is a sheer lust. What is conveyed on this theme is a form of marginalization of women; it gives the limit for women in working in the private area. Working in public is still conditional

because it is assumed that the main duty of women is only domestic.

Another lecture delivered by Adi Hidayat on the video uploaded by the channel "Semoga Berkah" with the title "Istri Dilarang Cari Nafkah" (Wife is Forbidden to Earn a Living) shows a marginalization of wives. Women are forbidden from working and earning a living. Earning a living is only the task of a man as a leader. When this task is exchanged, it would be problems in the household. Using the legitimacy of Q. 4: 34, Adi explained that men are given special abilities to earn a living. When the husband earns a living, then all the fortune sent down is enough for all members of his family.

Conversely, if a wife or woman is looking for fortune, then as much as whatever is obtained, God only gives for her personal alone, not for all her family. Besides, when a woman takes on her husband's task to earn a living while her husband can earn it, then as much as whatever is obtained, it would be problems in the household. Adi added that the wealth obtained by the wife does not bring serenity but anxiety. He also mentioned that a wife or woman could only do some tasks in the household (Berkah, 2018a). Whereas, the significance of Q. 4:34 actually suggests that those who lead and to be led, whether men as leader or women have the responsibility to help each other (Syamsuddin, 2017, p. 56).

The lectures of both preachers above show that the contents of religious lectures spread on social media are still very laden with themes containing marginalization of women. Women experience the interpretations in

such a way that they have limitations in their lives. The lectures about wife's duties in the private area and the prohibition against working in the public domain due to gender differences constructed by the preachers have had a severe impact on the welfare of women.

2. Stereotype

Abdul Somad, quoting a phrase of Q. 2: 187, "*hunna libāsun lakum*," stated that women are a cloth of men covering the disgrace of men. Thereunto, by citing the hadith talking about women being created from a crooked rib, Somad built the opinion that the ribs protect the heart. The duty of women, therefore, is to protect men (Ilmu, 2018). Here women are stereotyped as a protective cloth and as crooked ribs. On the same theme, Syafiq alluded that women were created from ribs that are weak and must be protected (Mengaji, 2018a). What he did not notice is that Q.S. 4:1 implies that the Islamic worldview supports the absolute human equality. It is because the term '*nafs*' in this verse signifies the feminine word. Both male and female, as Q. 9:71 clearly asserts, are in the intimate mutual guardianship.

In another case, Adi Hidayat's lecture on YouTube with the title "Saya mau poligami tapi istri minta cerai" (I want to practice polygamy, but the wife asks for divorce) uploaded by the channel "Semoga Berkah" has been watched as many as 516 thousand times. In this video, he explained that a woman is reluctant to be a wife of polygamy because she does not understand and should be educated. To give legitimacy from the religious

argument, Hidayat stated an example of the story of Sarah, who allowed Prophet Ibrahim to marry Hajar. Likewise, he added that to give a right understanding to wives so that they can accept polygamy, husbands have to use a practical approach (Berkah, 2018b). Hidayat in this section seemed to give labeling to wives who refuse the practice of polygamy as women who do not have enough knowledge of the Islamic laws or are weak in understanding the Islamic teachings.

Felix Siau in a video uploaded on YouTube with the title "Playboy" said that *"Instead, we see sometimes it is rare for women who have a sense of "istiḥyā" (sense of shame) or a sense of reluctance when they made mistakes and were noticed by people"* (Siau, 2018a). The statement of women having no shame is a form of negative labeling towards them. Whereas, both men and women have the same potential to have no sensitivity and courtesy in the public space. However, in his statements, Felix focused more on women who did not have feelings of shyness in public place.

In another video uploaded on YouTube with the title "Selamatkan Wanita Muslimah" (Save Muslim Women), Felix clearly said, *"The world is now always dominated in quantity by women; hence the nature of women also dominates the world. For example, if the nature of men is logical, women are usually emotional. That is why the today's world, the world changes from logical to emotional"* (Siau, 2016). The point of Felix's statement in this video is that women who dominate must be careful because it would be easily damaged to destroy Islam. Felix's saying reinforces

the negative labels attached to women. They are seen less logical, more emotional, and easily damaged. Therefore, they have more responsibility to look after themselves.

Syafiq Basalamah, on his video, gave a religious lecture by mentioning some of the essential natures of women. He said that women have a sense of jealousy. This character is considered by Syafiq to be the immutable nature of women. He legitimized this by the story of Aisha (the Prophet's wife), who was jealous because of another Prophet's wife. Syafiq also mentioned that women have irritability and a lack of thinking. The lack of women's logic for Syafiq is a part of women's nature because their main task is taking care of children. Caring for children relies more on feeling than reason (Mengaji, 2018a).

3. Subordination

Abdul Somad's religious lectures, although revealing the textual analysis and using *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), are inseparable from gender bias. It could be seen in one of his lectures, alluding to the issue of polygamy. Polygamy is presupposed as an emergency door to prevent adultery for men (Ilmu, 2018). Somad's explanation positioned women as an object for the male's desire in the name of religion.

Similarly, for Khalid Basalamah, he asserted that the first law of polygamy was a divine command and should not be disputed. The reason for practicing polygamy is not determined by the wife's permission because the behest of polygamy is the God's law. Basalamah added that the criteria for husbands who want to practice

polygamy are to have extra energy, material, and time. However, he explained that men always feel enough, and if they do not think enough, they will tend to do polygamy. Therefore, for Khalid, the first wife's duty is to provide an optimal service for her husband. At this point, it could be seen that a woman's fault as a wife causes a man to do polygamy. Looking at what was conveyed by Khalid, it has been shown that there is an injustice view on the existence of a wife as a woman. Women ultimately have to carry on two burdens at once, accepting polygamy and being blamed.

In his further explanation, Basalamah said that there was a woman who had two friends and agreed to be married by the same man. This case, he emphasized, was rarely found and not for everyone could do it because all three of such women were at a high level of faith (Mengaji, 2017). Basalamah's explanation shows a wife who is willing to be polygamy has a higher faith because she willingly accepts to be polygamy as God's command. On the contrary, a woman or wife rejecting polygamy is considered as rejecting the God's law. Whereas Q. 4:3, Abu Zayd explains, is substantively not to recommend the polygamy marriage, but Islam gradually limited four wives with the requirement of justice. Then, the spirit of the verse is monogamy as the final aim of the legislation. Therefore, the unmentioned message is to prohibit the polygamy marriage (Abu Zayd, 2004, pp. 287-293; Ichwan, 1999, p. 91).

Another Basalamah's lecture on YouTube titled "Cara berhias untuk suami: Cantik ala suami" (How to

dress up for husband: Beautiful for husband) uploaded by the channel “Kebumen Kaji” with more than 714 thousand views shows an example of subordination. A wife has to dress for her husband, and her model choice must be by the husband’s will. He then added the story of a husband who divorced his wife because the wife did not want to grow her hair long (Mengaji, 2018b). Likewise, his explanation was blaming the wife who did not want to dress up as her husband wants. In his explanation, Basalamah said that lengthening hair was not something to be problematized because there was no reason for the wife to reject it. For Basalamah, the wife’s dressing is the husband’s basic need that must be done according to her husband’s will. The wife, therefore, does not have the freedom to dress up according to her own choice. Women have to look based on the men’s perspective, which then perpetuates the women’s subordination to men’s desire.

Likewise, Subhan Bawazier is one of the preachers who give lectures on YouTube. His video titled “Inilah Syurgamu Wahai Wanita” (This is Your Heaven, Lady) tends to gender bias. This video on the channel “al-Hujjah Channel Islam” showed an example of a woman’s conversation, *“I know, if I am not led (by man), I will not go to heaven”* (Dakwah Islam, 2017). The discussion’s context where men are women’s leaders indicates that for women to get into heaven depends on men as their leaders. This religious lecture tried to lead the opinion that women are very dependent on men, even in the matter of being able or not to get into heaven. Whereas, Q. 40:40 clearly states that whoever performs the right

thing, man or woman, will receive reward and get into heaven. Both are responsible for their respective deed. The message of Q. 4: 11 is undeniable that fear of God is the norm for differentiation among human beings.

Hanan Attaki's lecture on YouTube with the title "Perhiasan Paling Indah" (The Most Beautiful Jewelry) featured a statement, "*A man's happiness is to get a solihah wife, a woman who has good attitudes*" (Islam, 2019). In this context, Attaki's statement positions women as a symbol of subordination under men. In another video titled "Pemimpin Wanita adalah Laki-Laki" (Women's Leaders are Men) the channel "loveakhirat.id" uploaded Attaki's lecture positioning women as subordination. Attaki, in this video, asserted that a husband as a leader has to be assertive to his wife, such as the wife's activities outside must be controlled, and her mobile phone must be checked over in detail. A wife, Attaki added, should not be *qawwam* (leader) of husband, including not being a religious enforcer in the household. It is not part of *sunnatullah* (God's provision) if the wife is upholding religious teachings. Upholding religious rules is the husband's task. Attaki quoted a hadith about the disadvantage of a society led by women. A family led by a woman would not be ideal and never get grace and blessing (loveakhirat.id, 2018). Attaki's explanation related to the position of women in the household and the issue of leadership strengthened the subordination of women under men.

Also of the context of subordination, Khalid Basalamah's lecture mentioned that a husband's right

to his wife is to demand the wife's obedience. The obedience may not be rejected by the wife due to religious orders (Channel, 2018). Syafiq Riza Basalamah's lecture uploaded by the channel "UDA News" titled "Kewajiban Istri terhadap Suami" (Wife's Obligation to her Husband) confirmed that wife's obedience to her husband is a source of household harmony. If not, there is only misery between husband and wife. When a wife is not obedient and loyal, her husband will run away and looks for other women who want to obey him. To strengthen this opinion, Riza recited Q. 4: 34 explaining the position of male as female's leader who must be obeyed (News, 2018). The wife's obedience to her husband is a necessity. In addition, Syafiq positioned women as a subordination of men, and women have to be obedient without any reciprocal obedience relationship between both. A wife is placed as the second level of the creature in the relationship of both husband and wife. She only has obligations but does not get her rights.

He used the opposition binner logic in understanding this verse. In fact, the significance of Q.S. 4: 34 should not regard the male or female, but the ability to be a leader regardless of kind of gender. The verse uses the word '*rijāl*', not '*zakar*' to indicate the leadership is laid to the professionalism. Because the word *rijāl* indicates social construction, whereas *zakar* indicates biology. The leadership of the male in the family is not absolute, but the female can be a leader for the shared goodness (Syamsuddin, 2017, p. 155).

4. Violence

In addition to physical violence, gender violence could even occur psychologically. One exciting video is Felix's video uploaded on his private channel with the theme of "Minta Poligami" (Requesting Polygamy). Felix appeared in front of the camera accompanied by his wife and conducted a dialogue explaining about polygamy. Initially, Felix's wife said her agreement with polygamy doubtfully. However, then, Felix said that polygamy is a part of Islamic jurisprudences. Thus, rejecting polygamy means rejecting Islamic law and God's law. At the end of the video, his wife said that she was not ready to accept polygamy but did not reject polygamy due to the Islamic teachings (Siauw, 2018b). The video conveying this religious message shows a form of psychic violence towards the woman who consciously refuses the practice of polygamy. But she was continually convinced by the man with religious arguments and rigid interpretations for the man's interest.

Alongside physical and psychological violence, religious lectures often contain the material of sexual violence in marital relations. In another YouTube video uploaded by Erry Saputra's channel entitled "Hak Suami Kewajiban Istri" (Husband's Rights, Wife's Obligations), Basalamah said that a husband has an urgent biological need. Therefore, when he wants to have sex, his wife must serve him. The biological needs of women could be postponed while men could not. Khalid said that, consequently, it is natural for men every day to have sex, and women have to understand to comply with it. He

also inserted a story of the Prophet who called his wife. Wife's Prophet had to serve at any time because it is an obligation (Saputra, 2018). Khalid's lecture positioned women as if they are slaves of sex for men, and he did not pay attention to the women who have the same rights. To legitimate his argument, Khalid cited some verses and hadith about the wife's obligations in serving her husband. With his textual understanding of religious texts, Khalid tried to develop this opinion.

5. Double Burden

The channel "Kebumen Mengaji" uploaded one of Syafiq's lectures with the title "4 Sifat Istri yang Harus Dipahami Suami" (4 Wife's Characteristics to be Understood by Husband). He stated that women are domestic workers with a myriad of responsibilities that could not be replaced by men. It could be observed from the Syafiq's following statements:

"I imagine if my wife dies, eventually I have to take care of my four children. I have to cook for them. I have to bathe them. I have to give them food. My children have to be taken to school one by one. Could we do all? It will not work. Our wife works at home for 24 hours, and there is no rest. In a state of late pregnancy, she has a baby. Who looks after babies? Only our wife. Who makes milk for our children? Only our wife. Even she has to serve us (as a husband)" (Mengaji, 2018a)

The above illustration is the expression of a husband who appreciates his wife who works day and night in taking care of the household. However, if we look at it closely, this phrase helps institutionalize that the wife

has many domestic responsibilities that are irreplaceable by the husband. Finally, the wife often experiences a double burden. The dual roles that women only play in the domestic space are no longer of gender differences that could also be done by men.

E. Gender Bias and Religious Commodification

The globalization of Islam and technology has supported the emergence of the new religious authority (new micro intellectual) whose religious knowledge is garnered from independent learning and technological media. It becomes a new challenge for the old tradition where the study of religion has to be under the guidance of religious leaders who have the traditional religious authority. In some Islamic countries, the emergence of the new authority can replace traditional religious authority. The new authority can serve as a place to get religious knowledge and study religion. In the process, the intellectuals of the new religious authority have to be open to modernity and the interpretation of religious principles to suit the modernity. Hence, claims to implement religious principles are only as interpretations for legitimations and justifications to continue utilizing new technological media (Turner, 2007, p. 128).

The question we ask here is why the preachers in social media influence the wider community, and why propaganda containing gender bias appears massively on social media. The content of religious lectures would become more widespread and accessible to many people. On the one hand, the laypeople are increasingly getting close to social media. The massive repetition gives rise to a belief towards the

preachers who are then deemed appropriate to be followed. Those preachers then become the religious authority and their religious messages conveyed would be more readily accepted by society.

In the issue of commodity, Lukens-Bull said that capitalism could be not only the ideologization of commodities but also the commodification of ideologies (Lukens-Bull, 2008, p. 220). Based on this division, the phenomenon of religious lectures on social media could be part of the commodification of ideology or religion. The fusion of religion into digital spaces of technology makes religion not only a mere system of beliefs and rituals. Religion is then displayed visually so that it can be seen and heard easily. Religion eventually is treated as an economic item like other commodity goods that could bring benefits (M. Rahman, 2018, p. 104). The extensive use of social media and increasingly high competition demands the creativity in packaging religious messages. It sometimes reduces the essence of religious teachings and ignores the impact of that packaging. The main goal is profit and it ignores other values. In this context, the gender issue, which was initially produced by the preachers who did not understand the essence of the textuality of religious text, is then used by business people in social media accounts. It certainly exacerbates the public's general perception of women's identity in religion and perpetuates gender injustice.

The creative efforts could be seen from the way to get the viewer or followers' accounts. The lecture video with a long duration is cut and packaged adjusting to exciting themes. The content is displayed by giving the title to the uploaded video on social media accounts. For example, in the

Instagram account, “khalidbasalamahofficial” some of the titles are “Wanita Bagai Tulang Rusuk” (Women are Like a Rib), “Wanita dan Agamanya” (Women and Her Religion), “Wanita, Sembelih Hewan?” (Women, Slaughtering Animal?). The women in the video’s title are described negatively to attract more viewers. Conversely, men are positively portrayed, such as the video title “Lelaki yang Setara 1000 Orang” (Men Who Are Equal to 1000 People). This account also often uploads flyers about joint pilgrimage solicitation sponsored by the particular travel agent as a form of religious commodification.

In other accounts, women are also portrayed as objects and associated with some negative images. For instance, the account “assessments.ustadz.abdulsomad” reposts Ustadz Somad’s lectures with the title “Perempuan Ibarat Bunga” (Women are Like Flowers) and “Dosa Jariyah Wanita” (Jariyah Sin of Woman). The religious commodification of this account could be seen from some sale posts advertising Islamic clothing, Islamic business, and a make-up product for women. In this context, we could say the commodification enters in such a particular ideology of gender bias. The use of social media indicates that Indonesian Muslims negotiate a toll as a symbol of modernization and Islamic material to commodify a particular ideology. Social media accounts and video channels ultimately turn to be a new digital public market.

Those accounts re-post the preacher’s religious lectures who have popularity on social media. Preachers have a lot of enthusiasts and fans because of the number of accounts that record, post, or repost the video of their religious lectures. They become a new authority figure in religious affairs. They instantly emerge as figures who have a religious authority

that shifts traditional figures. From this point, we could see that there is a link between the new religious authority and the commodification of religion. With the profit motive, both channel and account owners try to package the lecture's content to find more followers or viewers. In doing that, one useful step is to display the lectures by adding the gender-biased titles to affirm the contents. It is inseparable from the thinking of society in general, which is still under the patriarchal shadow. Thereby, the video would soon be easily spread and accessed by many ordinary people.

F. Conclusion

This study shows the high intensity of gender injustice in religious lectures on social media. The lectures containing gender bias are usually delivered on themes about the relationship between husband and wife. The easy access to popular religious lectures on social media has a significant impact on constructing gender biases in the public view and perpetuating the forms of marginalization, stereotype, subordination, violence, and double burden toward women.

It indicates that the preachers' lectures are inseparable from using the legitimacy of both Qur'anic text and Hadith but delivered in a matter of gender bias. Likewise, gender bias arises due to the inability to understand religious texts by considering the historical context and moral ideal of the texts, which are used as the legitimacy of the lectures. Some religious preachers have quite high education, but do not employ both social approaches and theories in understanding religious texts or in answering the issues of gender relation asked by the audiences.

The significance of observation is that the popularity of religious preachers on social media is inseparable from the role of social media accounts that use these preacher's religious lectures to increase the benefits of those created accounts or channels. Both accounts and channels are used to sell various products. Videos distributed through social media, at the same time, become new platforms for advertising. It shows the preachers' popularity could not be separated from the economic motives by certain parties. However, we could say that this is kind of a direct and indirect way of religious commodification. The first one is because of the selling products of commodification, which are embodied directly with religious material such as Islamic words in the T-shirt. The later is that the use of the catchy title on religious lectures intends to attract the viewers. They, thereby, sell products by using the popularity of Islamic lectures to gain buyers. Hence, the rapid and massive spread of gender-biased content on social media is inseparable from religious commodification. In other words, particular religious narratives developing on social media are inevitably controlled by actors of capitalism.

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