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# From the Pulpit to the Screen: The Dynamics of Fatwa Mediatization on Philanthropy in Indonesia

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the dynamics of the mediatization of religious fatwas concerning alms (philanthropy) in Indonesia, identifying patterns and changes in the delivery and acceptance of fatwas since the post-Soeharto reform era. The main focus of this article is how media not only serve as channels of information but also act as agents shaping religious narratives. The process of mediatization shows a significant shift in how fatwas are received and practiced by the people. This shift reflects changes in public perceptions of the obligation to give alms and the responses of the ulama. Using a qualitative approach and discourse analysis techniques, this study distinguishes three emerging discursive positions: full acceptance of fatwas through media, adaptation of fatwas to modern media contexts, and rejection of the mediatization of fatwas. The article concludes that the mediatization of fatwas concerning alms highlights the inability of traditional views to persist without adaptation in the context of modern media in present-day Indonesia.

Keywords: Fatwa on alms, mediatization, religious discourse, public perception

## Abstrak

Artikel ini menganalisis dinamika mediatisasi fatwa keagamaan terkait zakat (filantropi) di Indonesia, dengan mengidentifikasi pola dan perubahan dalam penyampaian serta penerimaan fatwa sejak era reformasi pasca-Soeharto. Fokus utama artikel ini adalah bagaimana media tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai saluran informasi, tetapi juga bertindak sebagai agen yang membentuk narasi keagamaan. Proses mediatisasi menunjukkan pergeseran signifikan dalam cara fatwa diterima dan dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat. Pergeseran ini mencerminkan perubahan persepsi publik terhadap kewajiban berzakat dan respons dari para ulama. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan teknik analisis wacana, studi ini membedakan tiga posisi diskursif yang muncul: penerimaan penuh terhadap fatwa melalui media, adaptasi fatwa terhadap konteks media modern, dan penolakan terhadap mediatisasi fatwa. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa mediatisasi fatwa tentang zakat menyoroti ketidakmampuan pandangan tradisional untuk bertahan tanpa adanya adaptasi dalam konteks media modern di Indonesia masa kini.

Katakunci: Fatwa sedekah, mediatisasi, wacana keagamaan, persepsi publik

## Introduction

The phenomenon highlighted in this study is the dynamics of the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia (Fakhruroji, 2015). Mediatization refers to a process in which mass media not only serves as a channel of information but also actively shapes and directs religious narratives (Hjarvard, 2013; Lundby et al., 2018). In this context, mass media plays a key role in conveying religious fatwas to congregants (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003). This has become increasingly relevant in the digital era, where access to information via mass media (including social media) is broad and rapid (Yoo et al., 2016, pp. 123–133). This process is changing how fatwas are received by the public. This reflects a shift in perceptions and religious practices in society (Ab Rahim et al., 2025). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how mediatization influences the dissemination and reception of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia (I. Rosidi, 2021).

Research on fatwas and philanthropy has been conducted by numerous scholars, but most studies remain focused on the traditional aspects of fatwa dissemination and reception (Ullah et al., 2018, p. 895). Several studies have explored the impact of media on religion, yet few have specifically addressed the mediatization of religious fatwas in the post-Soeharto reformation era

(Scannell, 2016, pp. 3–7; Yazid et al., 2023, pp. 1–18). Existing studies generally emphasize the role of media in disseminating religious information without deeply examining the dynamics and changes in fatwa dissemination (El Ishaq, 2021, pp. 41–56). This article aims to fill that gap by identifying the patterns and shifts in philanthropic fatwa dissemination and reception through mass media (Saripudin et al., 2020). Consequently, this study offers fresh contributions to our understanding of how mediatization affects religious fatwas in Indonesia (Fakhruroji, 2015).

The primary objective of this article is to analyze the dynamics of the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia (Driessens et al., 2017). This analysis will identify and describe how mass media influences religious narratives and shapes public perceptions of the fatwas (H. Campbell, 2010). Additionally, this study aims to understand how these mediatization processes signify a shift in how fatwas are received and practiced by believers (Ullah et al., 2018). Consequently, this article provides insights into ongoing changes in religious practices in the digital era, specifically in the realm of philanthropy (Frunza, 2019, p. 156). Emphasis is placed on the interaction among religious scholars (ulama), media, and congregants in the processes of fatwa dissemination and reception (Rusli & Nurdin, 2022).

The thesis tested in this article is that the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas indicates a shift in how fatwas are received and practiced by believers. Mediatization has caused fatwas to no longer be passively accepted, but rather be influenced by narratives constructed by the mass media (Abusharif, 2019). This thesis also proposes that traditional understandings of fatwas cannot remain intact without adaptation in the context of modern media (Sisler, 2011). In other words, to stay relevant, religious fatwas must be adapted to the more modern formats and presentation styles of the media (Lundby, 2019). This study tests the thesis by means of discourse analysis of various forms of philanthropic fatwa dissemination in mass media and corresponding public responses (Bin Yusuf & Boletbekova, 2022; Gerbner, 1985; Van Dijk, 1983).

Previous studies have pointed out several tendencies in research on religious fatwas and mediatization (Bekmurzaev, 2018; Hidayat, 2018; Lundby et al., 2018; Qudsy et al., 2021). This study identifies three main patterns in the existing literature. First, there is a pattern of the full acceptance of fatwas through media, in which mass media acts as the primary conduit for delivering fatwas to the public (M. H. Rosidi, 2021, pp. 17–36). Second, there is a pattern of adapting fatwas to modern media contexts, in which fatwas are adjusted to

suit media formats and presentation styles to reach wider audiences (Mariani, 2013). Third, there is a pattern of rejecting the mediatization of fatwas, where certain groups refuse changes in how fatwas are communicated via mass media (Hamdani, 2023, p. 53). These three patterns reflect the diversity of ways in which fatwas are received and practiced by believers in the digital era (Yahya & Junaidi, 2021). The first pattern found in prior studies is the full acceptance of fatwas through media. In this pattern, mass media serves as the primary channel for conveying fatwas to the public.

Fatwas communicated via mass media tend to be widely accepted by believers, particularly among those with easy access to media (Setianto, 2015). Research shows that mass media wields considerable power in shaping public perceptions and understandings of religious fatwas (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2014). Such full acceptance implies that mass media is regarded as a legitimate and trustworthy information source when it comes to disseminating fatwas (Luo et al., 2022). Consequently, mass media's role in communicating fatwas is of utmost importance in forming the religious narratives within society (Hasyim, 2020a).

### **Evolving Adaptations of Fatwas to Contemporary Media Platforms**

The second identified pattern is the adaptation of fatwas to modern media contexts. In this pattern, religious fatwas are modified to fit media formats and presentation styles that can attract broader and more diverse audiences (Fürsich, 2010). Modern media—television, radio, and social media—differs from traditional media in significant ways (Mathiyazhagan et al., 2015; M. H. Rosidi, 2021). Therefore, fatwas must be presented in an appealing and easily comprehensible format for modern-day audiences (Batsell, 2015). Such adjustments may include the use of simpler language, engaging visuals, and greater interactivity (Ware, 2019). Previous studies suggest that these adaptations are crucial for ensuring that fatwa messages are well received by audiences familiar with modern media (Miladi, 2017, p. 129; Rahman et al., 2016, p. 31).

The third pattern is the rejection of fatwa mediatization. Certain groups within society resist changes in how fatwas are conveyed through mass media (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2014, p. 127; Suaedy, 2023, pp. 1–24). They argue that mediatization can undermine the authority and authenticity of fatwas. These groups often uphold traditional modes of fatwa communication, such as mosque sermons or direct religious gatherings (Burhani, 2014, p. 285). Their

rejection often stems from the belief that mass media cannot replace the authority of religious scholars (ulama) in delivering fatwas (Afandi et al., 2021). Prior research indicates that such rejection reflects tensions between modernity and tradition in religious practice (Suaedy, 2023).

Although previous research has offered valuable insights into the mediatization of fatwas, it also presents several limitations (Bekmurzaev, 2018; Hamdani, 2023; Zuhri et al., 2023). One key shortcoming is the lack of focus on the interactive dynamics between media and fatwa reception among believers. Many studies emphasize the media's role in conveying fatwas without analyzing how believers subsequently receive and practice these fatwas. In addition, few have explored how these changes mirror shifts in the public's perception of philanthropic obligations. Existing studies often fail to identify the long-term impact of mediatization on religious practices (Hjarvard, 2016, pp. 8–17). Consequently, more in-depth research is required to fully grasp these dynamics.

This study seeks to complement and address these gaps in previous research by conducting an in-depth analysis of how mass media shapes religious narratives and influences believers' perceptions and practices related to philanthropic fatwas (Farah et al., 2017; Herbert, 2011; Meyer & Moors, 2005; Meyrowitz, 2008). The primary focus is on the interaction among ulama, media, and the public in the processes of fatwa dissemination and reception (Jamaa, 2018). This study also examines how adapting fatwas to modern media contexts may enhance believers' acceptance and understanding of fatwas (Mariani, 2013, p. 142). Furthermore, it explores the long-term effects of mediatization on religious practices (Fakhruroji, 2015; Hjarvard, 2016), particularly in the sphere of philanthropy (Mwale, 2022). By doing so, this research offers a more comprehensive perspective on the dynamics of philanthropic fatwa mediatization in Indonesia.

The case selected for this study is the philanthropic fatwa in Indonesia. This choice is based on the significance of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia's religious and social context, especially in light of changes since the post-Soeharto reformation era (Blunt et al., 2012; Latief, 2014). The philanthropic fatwa was chosen due to its high relevance to the everyday lives of Indonesian Muslims (Benthall, 1999, p. 27) and because philanthropy is a key aspect of Islamic teaching that is frequently governed by ulama fatwas (Daniela, 2020). Moreover, the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas exemplifies evolving perceptions and religious practices in the digital era, making it an apt subject

for this investigation (H. A. Campbell & Cheong, 2024). Accordingly, this study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how mediatization influences the acceptance and religious practice concerning philanthropy in Indonesia (Lundby, 2023).

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study strategy and discourse analysis (Brown & Yule, 1983; Hollstein, 2011). A qualitative methodology was selected because it permits the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the mediatization phenomenon surrounding philanthropic fatwas (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 252). A case study strategy enables an in-depth examination of a specific case—in this instance, philanthropic fatwas—within a particular context, namely post-reformation Indonesia (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Karim et al., 2014). Discourse analysis is employed to examine how philanthropic fatwas are communicated and received through mass media. The data utilized in this research comprises both primary and secondary sources (Johnston, 2014). Primary data were gathered from the fatwas of ulama (Adi Hidayat, 2019; Bahauddin Nur Salim, 2022), administrators of religious institutions (LAZISNU DIY, 2023; METRO TV, 2023), and community members, as well as through participatory observation. Secondary data consisted of relevant documents, media publications, and academic literature (LAZISMU, 2024; LAZIZNU, 2024; MUI, 2020).

Research participants included ulama, religious institution administrators, and community members engaged in the discourse on philanthropic fatwas. Ulama were selected because they issue fatwas and possess religious authority. Religious institution administrators were chosen because they frequently serve as intermediaries in delivering fatwas to believers. Community members were selected as key informants to offer perspectives on how fatwas are received and practiced in daily life. The participants were selected purposively, based on specific criteria pertinent to the study (Hasyim, 2020a). Informants were chosen due to their direct involvement in the discourse on philanthropic fatwas and their ability to provide deep insights into the research topic.

The research proceeded through several stages: data collection via participatory observation and document analysis (Rutakumwa et al., 2020). Participatory observation was conducted by attending religious activities where philanthropic fatwas were disseminated, to better understand the context and methods of fatwa delivery. Document analysis entailed examining relevant documents, such as fatwa texts, media articles, and related

publications (MUI, 2020). Data collection methods involved recording details about participant interactions and perceptions of fatwa mediatization, as well as visual and audio documentation when necessary. All collected data were organized and securely stored for further analysis (Ranney et al., 2015).

Data analysis encompassed multiple phases. The first phase involved data coding, in which the gathered data were organized into relevant categories (Elliott, 2018). The second phase was identifying key themes, wherein emergent themes from the data were identified and evaluated (Rivas, 2018). The third phase was discourse analysis, which examined how communication patterns and perceptions surrounding the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas took shape (Hjelm, 2021). The analytic techniques employed were thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis. Thematic analysis was used to detect and interpret key themes, whereas critical discourse analysis was used to explore the manifestations of power and ideology within the dissemination and reception of fatwas through mass media (Hasyim, 2020b). The analytical findings were then interpreted to address the research questions and test the proposed thesis.

## **The Dynamics of Fatwa Mediatization**

This section elaborates on the principal findings regarding the dynamics of the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia. These findings encompass patterns of acceptance, adaptation, and rejection of fatwa mediatization. The study identifies how mass media serves as the main channel for fatwa dissemination, how fatwas are adapted to modern media contexts, and how some groups reject such changes. Each pattern is analyzed in detail to provide a holistic depiction of how mediatization influences the acceptance and religious practice related to philanthropy in Indonesia (Kołodziejska et al., 2023a).

The first data set indicates that mass media has become the primary conduit for disseminating philanthropic fatwas, reflecting the full acceptance of fatwa mediatization by a portion of the Muslim community. Outlets such as television, radio, and online media are extensively employed to communicate fatwas, thereby reaching diverse and expansive audiences. For instance, televised programs featuring ulama delivering philanthropic fatwas often garner considerable attention and are well-received. This study finds that such acceptance is partly driven by believers' trust in mass media as a legitimate and credible source of religious information (Fawzi et al., 2021, pp. 154–174).

The scope of philanthropic fatwa mediatization spans various types of mass media used to circulate the fatwas to different segments of Indonesia's population. Television, radio, newspapers, and especially online media play integral roles in this process. Television and radio broadcast fatwas through religious programs, while online media—news websites and social media platforms—facilitates a faster and more interactive transmission of these fatwas. The breadth of this outreach encompasses both urban and rural areas, enabling broad coverage of believers across the entire country (Zamhari & Han, 2021).

The intensity of mediatization is evident from the frequency with which philanthropic fatwas are communicated via mass media and from the extensive public response they elicit. Fatwas are frequently broadcast on television and radio, and continuously published via online media. Public reactions also signal high levels of engagement, with numerous comments, discussions, and inquiries submitted by viewers and users—either directly during live TV or radio broadcasts or through social media. This study reveals that the high frequency of fatwa coverage and the robust public response underscore the central importance of philanthropic fatwas within Indonesia's religious life (Wajdi, 2021).

The second data set shows the adaptation of fatwas to a modern media context, whereby fatwas are presented in formats more appealing and relevant to contemporary audiences (Siddik, 2021). Modern media necessitates tailored approaches to presenting religious content so as to captivate broader and more diverse viewers. Philanthropic fatwas are frequently delivered through engaging television programs, incorporating graphics, illustrative videos, and more accessible language. Furthermore, online media allows greater interactivity, enabling audiences to participate in discussions and pose queries directly to ulama. These adaptations facilitate enhanced acceptance of fatwas among modern audiences (Ronaldi et al., 2023).

The formation of linkages between mediatization factors and fatwa reception involves adapting language and formats to draw in audiences, as well as collaborations between ulama and media outlets in developing and broadcasting fatwas. Ulama work alongside television producers or online content writers to shape fatwas in ways that are more engaging and easier to comprehend. Additionally, social media allows ulama to interact directly with their audiences, answering questions and clarifying fatwas in real time. This process illustrates that mediatization entails a close partnership between

ulama and media to ensure that fatwa messages resonate with the public (Abusharif, 2023). The logical correlation between mediatization and fatwa reception is evident in the heightened acceptance of fatwas disseminated via modern media formats compared to traditional fatwas. This study finds that fatwas conveyed through modern mass media are more readily embraced by audiences than those disseminated through traditional means such as mosque sermons. The data suggest that audiences feel more engaged and acquire a better understanding when fatwas are communicated through the media channels they regularly use. This underscores the finding that adapting fatwas to modern media formats improves public acceptance and comprehension of those fatwas (Hamdani, 2023).

The third data set demonstrates the rejection of mediatized fatwas, illustrating the complexity of the interplay between mediatization factors and public acceptance. Some segments of society, especially more conservative groups, refuse to accept changes in how fatwas are communicated via mass media. They assert that mediatization can diminish the authority and authenticity of fatwas (Mundzir et al., 2023). This rejection reflects the fact that not all societal groups respond positively to mediatized fatwas, and a complex dynamic emerges between traditional and modern preferences regarding fatwa reception. This complexity reveals that mediatization of fatwas is not universally welcomed, and underscores the need to understand the cultural and social contexts underpinning their acceptance (Hasyim, 2020b).

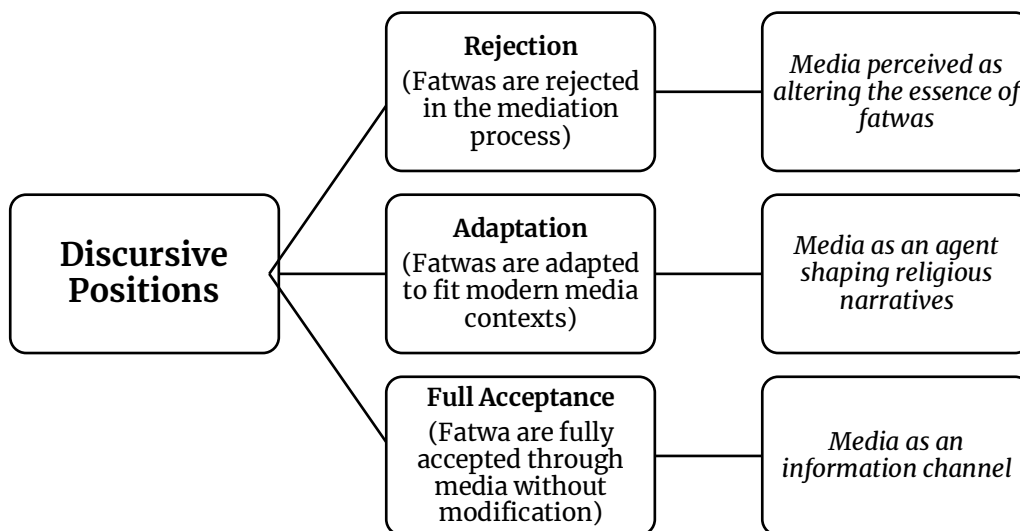
### **Key Factors Shaping Fatwa Mediatization**

Fatwa mediatization may be influenced by intermediary variables, including educational level, media access, and openness to technological change. This study shows that audiences with higher levels of education are more inclined to accept fatwas delivered via modern media (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Media access also has an important role, as those who have better access to mass media are more frequently exposed to and receptive of mediatized fatwas. Furthermore, openness to technological innovation affects acceptance; younger generations accustomed to digital technology are more amenable to the mediatization of fatwas compared to older generations (Zaid et al., 2022).

The dynamics of fatwa mediatization in Indonesia reflect various discursive positions in the acceptance and dissemination of fatwas through media channels. These positions encompass rejection, adaptation, and full acceptance, illustrating the extent to which media influences the essence,

form, and societal reception of fatwas. On one hand, mediatization is perceived as capable of altering the essence of fatwas, while on the other hand, the media is viewed as an effective information conduit for reaching a broader audience. The following figure (Figure 1: Dynamics of Fatwa Mediatization in Indonesia) provides a visual representation of the three primary positions within this dynamic, highlighting the complexity of the interaction between religious traditions, scholarly authority, and the influence of modern media within the Indonesian societal context.

Figure 1 Dynamics of Fatwa Mediatization in Indonesia



The link between mediatization and fatwa reception is facilitated by the social and cultural structure in Indonesia. The social structure wherein ulama and religious institutions hold significant authority heavily influences fatwa acceptance. Ulama with high levels of authority who are widely recognized by their communities generally find their fatwas more easily accepted, even when these fatwas are disseminated through mass media (Hasyim, 2020b). Moreover, the cultural context that venerates religious authority and tradition also shapes the reception of these fatwas (Zaid et al., 2022). This research indicates that one must consider the socio-cultural context underpinning the interplay among ulama, media, and communities in order to fully comprehend the reception of mediatized fatwas.

This research demonstrates that the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas in Indonesia signals a shift in how fatwas are received and practiced. These findings diverge from earlier studies that largely emphasized traditional fatwa reception without taking into account the role of mass media in fatwa dissemination. This study reveals that mass media functions not merely as an informational outlet but also as an active agent in shaping religious narratives (Kołodziejka et al., 2023b). Mediatization has redefined how believers adopt and interpret fatwas, underscoring the expansive role of modern media in religious practice—an element previously underestimated. These results extend our understanding of how religious fatwas evolve within an ever-changing technological and media environment (Khan & Aytes, 2020).

These findings mark the beginning of the end in terms of highlighting how adapting fatwas to modern media contexts is pivotal for preserving the relevance of fatwas in the digital era. The mediatization of philanthropic fatwas is not merely a response to technological advancement but also a reflection of the requirement to connect with a broader and more varied audience. Such adaptation demonstrates that a failure to incorporate modern media could result in a fatwa's diminished relevance and influence. Hence, this research opens avenues for further exploration into how other religious practices might adapt to media and technological developments (H. A. Campbell & Evolvi, 2020).

The significance of these findings lies in recognizing that mediatization of fatwas transforms not only dissemination methods but also believers' comprehension and religious practices. Mediatization facilitates easier access and comprehension of fatwas among a broader audience; however, it also introduces new challenges concerning fatwa authority and authenticity (Zaid et al., 2022). Mediatization underscores the necessity of adapting religious messages so that they are accepted and properly understood. The study indicates that modern media can amplify the impact of fatwas, provided they are conveyed in ways that resonate with and address audiences' needs (M. H. Rosidi, 2021). The results of this study represent a fundamental divergence from prior research that mostly concentrated on traditional fatwa reception and did not thoroughly examine the influence of mass media. Previous inquiries often disregarded the ways in which media could shape religious narratives and religious practices (De Fina, 2021). Conversely, this research emphasizes the significant role media assumes in molding religious understanding and practice within society.

The findings confirm that fatwas disseminated through modern media can be more effective in reaching and influencing the public than those disseminated through traditional channels. Additionally, this research reveals that a complex interplay between tradition and modernity influences fatwa acceptance—an aspect inadequately explored in earlier works (Sedgwick, 2020).

The implications are that ulama and religious institutions must be more adaptive to technological and media shifts in fatwa dissemination if they are to remain relevant and accepted in society. Ulama and religious institutions need to devise effective communication strategies employing modern media outlets to distribute religious messages (Mustofa et al., 2023). This entails utilizing social media, online platforms, and other compelling media formats to engage a larger audience. Additionally, ulama training in modern media use is imperative, ensuring that the delivered messages remain authentic and credible. Such steps are crucial if religious fatwas are to persist as meaningful and authoritative guidance for believers in the digital era.

## Conclusion

The key finding of this study is that the mediatization of philanthropic fatwas exposes the limits of traditional perspectives to endure without adaptation in today's media ecosystem: the process reshapes the production, dissemination, and reception of fatwas, while digital platforms emerge as pivotal actors that reframe religious narratives and renegotiate ulama authority; without adjustments in format, rhetoric, and communication strategy, conventional fatwas risk losing relevance for believers who are increasingly networked online. The study makes three principal contributions.

Conceptually, it advances a dynamic framework that maps the co-production of authority among religious scholars, media, and Muslim publics. Empirically, it uncovers concrete adaptive patterns—recontextualizing normative texts, deploying visual narratives, and employing strategic hashtags—that have been largely overlooked in Indonesian mediatization scholarship. Methodologically, it introduces a replicable blend of qualitative case study and discourse analysis suitable for investigating other fatwa categories and religious contexts. Nonetheless, the scope is limited to philanthropic fatwas issued by major Indonesian religious organizations, constraining generalizability to different fatwa types or national settings. Future research should pursue cross-national comparisons and harness

social-media analytics to capture real-time public reception. Overall, the study demonstrates that mediatization not only broadens access to fatwas but also reconfigures their form, authority, and modes of internalization, thereby furnishing a theoretical and methodological foundation for further inquiries into how religion is negotiated amid Indonesia's digital media currents.

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