wawasan
JURNAL ILMIAH AGAMA DAN SOSIAL BUDAYA

Packaging Fatwa in the Post Truth Era: MUI Fatwa Contest Facing New Religious Authority

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Abstract: Indonesia has a federation organization that brings together several Islamic organizations. This organization is known as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). One of his duties is to issue Islamic legal fatwas to serve as guidelines for the Muslim community. However, on a practical level, quite a few fatwas give rise to polemics. In several cases of intolerance and mobilization of political interests, MUI fatwas are often used as a means of legitimation. This article wants to discuss the contestation of the MUI fatwa with the dynamics of Islamic thought in Indonesia in the context of the digital era. Data was obtained from online news documents regarding MUI fatwas in several cases with social problems. This research found that the MUI fatwa polemic arose due to the need to consider Indonesia's social setting and political conditions. Hence, Islamic law products were prone to being misused and misunderstood. This study also argues that the MUI authorities must package the fatwa by prioritizing cultural diversity, social impacts, and political tensions at that time. Thus, the MUI fatwa must be formulated apart from being based on scientific grounds and supported by good online media infrastructure. So they will be better able to contest with the new religious authority in the post-truth era. Good fatwa packaging via social media is also oriented towards finding substantial values in responding to community problems based on the principle of uniting the community (*tauhid al-ummah*) and protecting the community (*himayat al-ummah*).

Keywords: packaging fatwa: post-truth era; new religious authority; contestation.

Abstrak: Indonesia memiliki organisasi federasi yang menghimpun beberapa organisasi Islam. Organisasi tersebut dikenal dengan Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). Salah satu tugasnya adalah mengeluarkan fatwa hukum Islam untuk dijadikan pedoman masyarakat muslim. Namun dalam tataran praktis, tak sedikit fatwa ini justru menimbulkan polemik. Dalam beberapa kasus intoleransi dan mobilisasi kepentingan politik, sering menjadikan fatwa MUI sebagai sarana legitimasi. Artikel ini hendak mendiskusikan kontestasi fatwa MUI dengan dinamika pemikiran Islam di Indonesia dalam konteks era digital. Data diperoleh dari penulusuan dokumen berita online tentang fatwa MUI dalam beberapa kasus yang memiliki problem sosial. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa polemik fatwa MUI muncul akibat tidak mempertimbangan setting sosial dan kondisi politik di Indonesia, sehingga produk hukum Islam tersebut rawan disalahgunakan dan disalahpahami. Kajian ini juga berargumen bahwa otoritas MUI perlu mengemas fatwa dengan mengedepankan keberagaman budaya, dampak sosial dan tensi politik yang ada pada saat itu. Fatwa MUI dengan demikian, perlu dirumuskan selain berdasarkan landasan ilmiah, juga harus didukung infrastruktur media online yang baik. Sehingga akan mampu lebih siap berkontestasi dengan otoritas keagamaan baru di era *post-truth*. Pengemasan fatwa yang baik melalui media sosial juga diorientasikan guna menemukan nilai-nilai substansial dalam menjawab problematika keumatan yang didasarkan pada prinsip menyatukan umat (*tauhid al-ummah*) dan menjaga umat (*himayat al-ummah*).

Kata Kunci: kemasan fatwa; era pasca kebenaran; otoritas keagamaan baru; kontestasi.

1. Introduction

The prolonged conflict in the Middle East has left many wondering why groups in the name of religion represent violent actors. As a result, Islam was identified as the source of terrorism because its teachings were riddled with inhumane behavior. The massacre and murder, accompanied by screams of *takbir*, became a scene full of irony. Is this the teaching of the Prophet? Is this a reflection of scripture? Is this a divine order?

This terrible phenomenon is the result of the failure of a group of humans to convey religious teachings in the social, cultural (and political) realms. Islam as a victim is used as a cover for criminal acts. In the name of God, everything is legal, including murder. This phenomenon increasingly emphasizes that the relationship between religion and nationality is challenging to reconcile harmoniously. Because, under the pretext of upholding God's law, your own brothers were slaughtered without mercy. The cases in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Libya reflect the irony of how badly Islam is shown.

This action, which is more of an attempt at religious hijacking, has long been opposed by Saifuddin Zuhri. He stated that Islam cannot be brought about by hatred and destroying the foundations of peace because it will only leave lasting grudges. The phenomenon of terrorism in the name of Islam is counter-productive to the mainstream missionary strategy of Indonesian Muslims. Shortly after that, this will result in efforts to reduce the peaceful meaning of Islam (*salm*) and eliminate the character of Islam as the savior of humanity (*sallama*) (Saifuddin Zuhri, 1981).

In the Indonesian context, Islam is a religion that plays a significant role in building the national spirit. Nationalism in Indonesia is even born from the articulation of the faith of Muslim communities. This reality is affirmed by the traces of Indonesia's Islamization, which since its arrival has not displayed hegemony and domination, on the contrary, namely through acculturation and assimilation into local culture (Al-Zastrouw, 2017). The values of Islamic teachings, which are the essence of Pancasila, have become an essential force as a common platform in maintaining the diversity and unity of the Indonesian nation (Maliki, 2000).

In its history in Indonesia, Islam as a religious teaching has always been present in carrying out social transformations and national revolutions in fighting against imperialism. History has succeeded in recording that Islamic boarding schools, with their various unique characteristics, were even able to inspire the spirit of nationalism through the thoughts of their ulama. Prince Diponegoro, Raden Fatah, Imam Bonjol, KH Hasyim Asy'ari, Kiai Abbas, Kiai Zainal Mustofa, Kiai Saifuddin Zuhri are a few names of Islamic boarding school cadres who actively participated in fighting for the country's independence based on a religious spirit within a national framework.

The Banten peasant rebellion in 1888 under the leadership of Tarekat figures against colonialism, the Jihad fatwa of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari which was able to pump up the spirit of war in Surabaya in November 1945, the Java war led by Pengeran Diponegoro which overwhelmed the imperialists are historical traces that cannot be erased Just like that, historically Islam has had a significant contribution in laying the foundations of nationality (Kartodirjo, 1984).

From the historical facts above, fatwas or calls from ulama are a determining factor in driving the pace of change in Islamic society. The position of ulama in Indonesian social culture, with its diversity, is still the basis for spiritual aspects and ethical morals in responding to life's problems.

However, the rapid pace of digital technology has challenged the positive image of Islamic performance often displayed by the intellectualism of religious figures. The emergence of a new religious authority in certain positions shifts the supremacy of Islamic intellectuals that Islamic organizations, including NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI, have played. In several aspects, this Islamic mass organization is lagging in terms of fulfilling religious needs on social media.

Whether we admit it or not, the national political commotion that was sparked by Ahok's "politicization of statements" regarding surah al-Maidah: 51, which then gave rise to the Islamic populism movement 411 and 212, as well as the discourse of the people power movement in the presidential election dispute, was sparked by a group of people in the name of the Movement MUI

National Fatwa Guard (GNPF). Religious fatwas became a tool for mobilizing conflict and became very powerful because they were driven by social media (Jatmiko, 2019).

Rumadi had understood the dynamics of religious authority long ago. In his article, he explains that religious patterns may adhere to certain religious authorities, either as individuals who claim their popularity on social media or as certain religious groups. However, someone can be religious without authority. If the first view is based on the argument that religion is a total understanding of divinity, so it requires religious guidance, then the second opinion is based on the argument that religion is a private right to theology. Thus, for Rumadi, religious authority is not static but dynamic. The level of religious authority and the interrelationships between levels of authority are part of this dynamic (Rumadi, 2012).

For example, new religious authorities are emerging, as in a study conducted by Jinan, which is concerned that traditional religious fatwas or views are being "torn" by the status quo by critical and alternative voices in online media. This phenomenon, in turn, impacts the authority of offline religious leaders, which needs to be improved. Someone with a prestigious position in an offline community will need help bringing that authority into the online environment. Ironically, social media platforms, both Facebook and YouTube, do not have a place for formal theological discourse, which is boring like conventional lectures, which tend not to be as influential in presenting the "religious image" as desired by social media.

Religious expression in the virtual world gives birth to what Campbell calls "networked religion," characterized by the emergence of networked communities: for example, young people who have migrated, varying socio-cultural identities, shifting authority, and religious practices that adhere to "all certainty." Religious articulations in cyberspace, thus, provide not only insight into the general attributes of online religious practice but also help explain current trends in religious practice and even social interactions in networked societies (Campbell, 2012). Studies of religious communities in Internet media signal that there has been a loosening of traditional religious affiliations and the formation of new religious networks based on shared views, cultural tendencies, and understandings that have a more incredible place in online media. In this position, online media impacts the construction of religious identity.

Small pieces of text, flyers, short videos, and networks of online resources have become the core of social interaction in new media. As a consequence, internet media has shifted patterns of scientific socialization and interaction, giving rise to the democratization of knowledge online, which has the potential to undermine the supremacy of traditional religious authorities (Jinan, 2015).

The shift in religious authority in Indonesia also remained in Muzakka's (2018) study. He traced that in Indonesia, there is a new trend of people paying more attention to, following, and even in certain positions believing in fatwas issued personally by someone compared to fatwas issued institutionally. By examining Nadhirsyah Hosen and Firanda's social media and websites, Muzakka concluded that the strength of traditional authorities does not guarantee that their fatwas will be followed. However, what is called a popular figure in cyberspace (a popular leader) has the potential to gain the sympathy of many people to follow what he says.

Misbah (2019) confirmed through his research the massive number of Salafi groups campaigning for their teachings via social media. Using the Instagram platform, this group raised the hashtags #musikharam and #musiclaw, which, in Misbah's study, weakened traditional religious authority. This is because digital media is currently a relatively popular alternative source compared to conventional studies (Hatta, 2019).

However, the dynamics of online and offline religion received quite important notes from Solahudin and Fakhruroji, who emphasized that the phenomenon of transmitting Islamic teachings on the internet should not be understood only as a form of religious populism that challenges religious authority but also as an opportunity to expand religious authority in a digital context. The online-offline reciprocal relationship is intended to describe the relationship between the context of Islamic learning practices on the Internet and traditional practices in offline contexts. Thus, online Islamic learning practices will never be separated from traditional religious frameworks, and offline contexts will

remain the primary source of online religious practices. With this assumption, the online-offline distinction should no longer be a problem because the internet has become part of the daily lives of Muslims. The absorption of information about Islamic teachings on the internet has demonstrated this reciprocal relationship productively. Traditional-offline religious authorities negotiate with internet-online contexts to build contextual relationships in contemporary Islamic society (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019).

Previous studies have not touched on fatwa institutions in Indonesia as a symbol of traditional religious authority. In this paper, we will discuss the current MUI fatwa contestation, especially in the post-truth era, which is faced with the emergence of the phenomenon of new religious authority, where a scientific basis does not determine the popularity of religious figures but rather emotional similarities and political agendas—for example, the case of wrong *tasrif* (Arabic morphology) carried out by Ust. Tengku Zulkarnaen and Haikal Hasan interpreted the term "*kafir*," which sparked public emotions. Then, the very tendentious and provocative preaching, as shown by Alfian Tanjung and Yahya Waloni regarding "the end times".

Some of the ustadz mentioned above have many followers on social media, influencing mass psychology, which is quite dangerous for social harmony. This kind of phenomenon is a challenge in itself for the existence of the MUI as an authoritative Islamic religious institution in Indonesia. This is because this organization, from the start, declared itself as an institution whose aim was to protect the people (*himayatul ummah*) and unite the people (*tauhid al-ummah*). The rapid development of information technology and the birth of a post-truth era where many new religious authorities are emerging means that the MUI must involve itself in the increasingly free contestation of religious thought. How can the MUI compete in guarding moderate Islamic thought in Indonesia in the digital space? So, how should a fatwa be packaged visually and persuasively on the internet? This fundamental question will be answered in this article in more detail.

2. Online Media and the Birth of a New Religious Authority

Surprising figures have been recorded by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) regarding internet consumption in Indonesia. One of the survey institutions concerned with the use of digital information reported that in 2023, at least 215 million Indonesians were connected to the internet. This means that 78, 19% of the Indonesian population is familiar with digital platforms. Of this percentage, 79% are active users who use the internet daily to meet their information and communication needs (Nabila, 2019).

APJII reports that the average daily internet usage is used to consume online video streaming, with user figures reaching 45.3%, followed by games at 17.1%, and listening to music at 13.3%. This figure is surprising because it does not rule out the possibility that video content consumed either from YouTube or directly uploaded to social media (Facebook et al.) contains Islamic information that, in certain positions, a person cannot evaluate academic standards against—delivered by someone via live streaming broadcast in the name of religion (Nabila, 2019).

This extraordinary figure will continue to increase because the flow of globalization has succeeded in dragging Indonesian society into an ocean of information that is increasingly unstoppable. One of the logical consequences of this phenomenon is a shift in religious authority and symbols.

Traditionally, traditional religious authority refers to those who study at Islamic boarding schools, leading Islamic universities, or strictly follow taklim assemblies; with such a background, they can convey religious messages and are recognized by their congregation. They are ulama', kiai, murshids, and religious teachers.

The concept of authority referred to in this article, borrowing the theory introduced by Max Weber as quoted by Zulkifli, states that *religious authority* is defined as "a certain quality of an individual personality by which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities." Zulkifli (2013), in his writing, even emphasized that the concept of authority cannot be conflicted with the concept of power. Both have their realm. He said the difference was:

> *Power* may be defined as the capacity to act freely in responding to resistances from individuals or groups while authority is the right to act, lead or decide. While power is not institutionalized and always related to resistance and confrontation, authority is institutionalized and represents a set of norms, procedures, and traditions to be implemented in a social unit.

The explanation above concludes that there is a fundamental difference between "power" and "authority." If power is better understood as the capacity to respond to a social phenomenon, then authority is limited to acting, leading, and deciding. Therefore, authority, in this case, becomes very fluid and is not rigidly owned only by one particular community. Anyone can have authority without having to be in power first; groups and groups can appear in public to present ideas (Zulkifli, 2013).

In the context of religious understanding, individuals who have intellectual capacity and meet academic standards can hold the status of a religious authority, which, on the other hand, also requires legitimacy from other parties (Ghafur, 2014). This understanding provides an understanding that religious authority does not require intellectuality but also recognition from other people, ultimately giving rise to popularity.

The "Lingkaran Survei Indonesia" (LSI), led by Denny JA, for example, conducted research from 10 to 19 October 2018 with 1,200 respondents. The survey results yielded surprising facts regarding the significant influence of ulama on advice in electoral politics. The voices of famous religious figures on social media are even more listened to by the public than traditional religious authorities.

Among the ulama in Indonesia, there are at least 5 ulama with a high level of electability, where their voices are heard much more. Abdul Somad occupies the first place. His appeal was widely listened to by the public at 30.2 percent, known by 59.2 percent of respondents, and liked by 82.5 percent. Second place is Arifin Ilham. His appeal was listened to by 25.9 percent of respondents and was liked by them with a figure of 84.4 percent. Ranked third is Yusuf Mansur. It was listened to by 24.9 percent of respondents, with a popularity level of 57.2 percent and a liking level of 84.9 percent of respondents.

Meanwhile, in fourth place is Aa Gym, with a popularity level of 69.3 percent and 24.9 percent listening to its voice. Rizieq Shihab occupies the last rank. Its popularity level was 53.4 percent, with a likeability level of 52.9 percent, and its appeal was listened to by 17 percent of respondents. This data shows a shift in religious authority and a gradual process of change along with the growth of media technology itself (Arigi, 2018).

The presence of the internet and the development of digital platforms in Indonesia, in turn, have implications for a shift in religious authority, which was previously firmly held by television media through its preaching broadcasts. Initially, religious authority in Indonesia was represented by two major Islamic organizations: Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. These two Islamic organizations usually use their collective ijtihad capabilities to formulate problems and decide on public issues. Apart from that, in this context, the MUI also often issues fatwas as a manifestation of its presence in providing solutions to the public.

With more than half of Indonesia's population accessing the internet, the LSI survey found a point of intersection when placing Abdul Shomad in the first place, whose voice and appeals were heard by the public.

Instead of having a boarding school and appearing on television, Abdul Shomad's career was built from his video recordings uploaded on YouTube and Instagram, which then underwent a process of circulation and reproduction on other social media, including the WhatsApp application. New media, which has become a viral instrument for a religious advocate - with a good appearance and oration performance - brings about fundamental changes in the field of thought, fatwas, and religious practice, as well as relationships based on religious norms (Jinan, 2013). If traditional religious authorities gain influence from charisma and scientific credibility, then new religious authorities born in the digital space give birth to "religious figures" based on artificial performance and even political direction without caring about their scientific base. This kind of phenomenon certainly holds its challenges and opportunities.

This phenomenon does not only occur in Indonesia but also internationally, especially in the Middle East. This is confirmed by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson in their book *The New Media in The Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (2003), who argue that new forms of global communication in the Muslim world play a significant role in fragmentation. And contestation, political and religious authority (Eickelman & Anderson, n.d.).

This condition is also supported by Nabil Echchaibi's argument in his article *From Audio Tapes to Video Blogs: The Delocalization of Authority in Islam* (2010), which considers that the presence of new media has become fertile ground for discursive space, not only for religious meanings but also for new Islamic experiences. transnationally mediated.

Of course, this change process has two impacts. On the one hand, this shift in authority provides space for the democratization of Indonesian society to choose reading references and tausiah from several religious authorities in Indonesia.

On the other hand, this also redefines the face of Indonesian Muslims. Initially, the image of Indonesian Islam was dominated by moderate, dialogical, and tolerant Islamic expressions, with expressions shown by Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, for example. However, nowadays, the face of Indonesian Muslims are experiencing a gradual shift towards the political ideology movement of Islamism, which is often expressed in hateful, racial, and intolerant speech that has the potential to inflame the social life of Indonesian society.

This phenomenon strengthens the shift in Islamization in the public sphere. So far, the spread of Islam has been played by figures from Indonesian Islamic mass organizations towards figures famous in cyberspace. Meanwhile, political predators exploiting electoral politics to gain votes took advantage of this new religious authority. Here, religious issues and things related to SARA are the cheapest and most effective programs to increase the electability of one candidate and reduce the other in the regional elections.

The regional elections in Jakarta are a clear example of this. Instead of discussing public rights and programs that support the community, this marriage of interests makes the face of solidarity, nationality, and Indonesianness increasingly discolored in the guise of prejudice and hatred.

3. MUI Fatwa: Considering Methodology and Controversy

Indonesia is a democratic country with a large mandate in managing existing diversity. Differences in democracy are something that requires continuous and serious attention. This is because the composition of the population has a high level of diversity, both in terms of culture, class, social, religion, and aspirations, requiring this nation to be present in dynamizing differences in a more constructive, not destructive, way.

If the plurality of Indonesian society is not managed well, Indonesia has the potential to become a failed country due to endless conflict. Pancasila, as the social capital of this nation, needs to become an umbrella for religion in national and state life. Because of the principles contained in Pancasila, there are universal values that unite, strengthen, and develop the religious and national spirit (Azra, 2006).

This includes differences of opinion regarding religious fatwas. As is known, it is almost certain that Islamic mass organizations have organizational wings tasked with issuing collective fatwas. This reality has implications for differences in agreed Islamic law because they may differ in decision-making procedures (*istinbath hukm*). In this context, Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI are academically intense religious institutions or organizations that issue fatwas, often giving rise to different or contradictory legal products.

This study aims to highlight the products of Islamic thought from the MUI, commonly referred to as fatwas and their contestation with other Islamic thought in the digital space. As is known, the contestation of ideas in the online world prioritizes the credibility of truth and visualization and persuasion in conveying information, including, in this case, fatwas.

Why is this so important? The validity of a legal fatwa (Islamic law) does not solely lie in the accuracy of the aspect of conformity with the text's postulates (*manqūl*) but to what extent the fatwa can provide fair moral guidance for society (even non-Muslims). to give birth to a harmonious social order.

Therefore, the fatwa from the *manqūl* side may be correct but not necessarily suitable for application in real life, considering the heterogeneous socio-cultural setting of Indonesian society (Rumadi, 2012).

Why do you need to pay attention to the above? A fatwa has two functions: First, as an answer to questions that arise from the public. Second, as an answer to contemporary problems. If the first function aims to provide legal certainty to avoid public confusion, then the second function serves to provide religion relevant to modernity's challenges.

The MUI Fatwa Commission, as a unit tasked with carrying out collective ijtihad, generally bases its academic output on the text of the Qur'an and hadith, relying on the consensus of previous scholars (*ijma'*), as well as the causative syllogism commonly known as qiyas as a source of law. Operationally, the MUI fatwa guidelines contain four introductory provisions.

First, it does not contradict the values of public benefit (*maslahah ammah*) and does not conflict with normative Islamic texts, whether the Koran or hadith.

Second, suppose the fatwa issued by the MUI does not find a solution from the first formulation. In that case, it must be based on the consensus of previous ulama (read: ijma), qiyas mu'tabar, as well as other Islamic legal instruments, for example, *saddz-adz-dzari'ah, maslahah mursalah,* and *istihsan*. For this reason, rational reasoning becomes very important in a position like this.

Third, tracking the opinions of madhhab imams regarding similar or identical issues, both regarding the inclusion of legal arguments or the arguments of parties with differing opinions. You can also adopt the madzhab imam's methodology as an analytical tool to solve problems.

Fourth, because MUI fatwas are often used as instruments for socio-religious solutions, obtaining academic confirmation from expert judgment regarding the problem being studied is necessary. Contemporary problems, such as IVF, female circumcision, organ transplantation, and other problems that do not have a clear basis in Islamic law, require consideration of benefits to be strengthened by the opinions of these experts.

The hierarchical provisions above are then strengthened by a methodological framework in the legal determination process at the MUI Fatwa Commission, which consists of five stages (Sholeh, 2016):

1. Exploring the views (*qoul*) of madzhab imams regarding the similarities in the problems being studied, along with the postulates that serve as the basis for their arguments.
2. Second, as an ijtihad institution, issues with a clear legal basis (*qath'iyat*) are determined as they confirm that the MUI applies the *qath'i, qauli*, and *manhaji* text approach.
3. As for problems debated by madzhab scholars, the solution is traced using two methods, namely by finding common ground (*al-jam'u wa at-taufiq*) and choosing an opinion that has a solid argumentative basis (*tarjih*); this method is commonly known as fiqh comparison (*fiqh al-muqaranah*).
4. Socio-religious problems that do not find a legal basis in any madhhab are determined through *jama'i* (collective) ijtihad using the ushul fiqh methodology.
5. Fatwa must be based on public benefit (*maslahah ammah*) and the objectives of Islamic law (*maqashid syar'iyyah*).

As the etymological meaning suggests, an MUI fatwa can be given to anyone, whether individual, social, or governmental, requested or not. Basically, fatwas contain "question and answer" logic and have an element of theological accountability to contextualize Islamic teachings. So the most fundamental characteristic of a fatwa is that it is a life support, both in religion and society, culture and state. An example is the issue of carrying out Friday prayers, tarawih, *Eid al-Fitr*, and going home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In carrying out its function as a fatwa giver, the MUI has issued many legal products relating to various issues, not only those relating to ubudiyah rituals but also social, cultural, and even health and national issues. However, Iswahyudi, in his study, stated that the fatwa issued by the MUI was counter-productive to the principles they had upheld:

> …MUI has not optimally carried out its function as an inclusive organization regarding the religious fatwas it produces. The MUI fatwa seems to have an exclusive tendency. "Through its

fatwa, the MUI positions itself as the judge of a person's or group's beliefs... The MUI misleads an ideology, prohibits the development of a religious opinion, and encourages the government to dissolve beliefs, opinions, and sects... (Iswahyudi, 2017).

Whether it is acknowledged or not, the MUI fatwa has caused much controversy among Muslims due to differences in arguments, methodology, scientific basis, politics, and other factors. In 2016, for example, the MUI issued two fatwas which succeeded in generating public polemic, namely regarding the response to Basuki Tjahaja Purnama's speech regarding his views on Al-Maidah verse 51, as well as a fatwa regarding the law regarding wearing non-Muslim religious attributes.

Concerning the religious blasphemy fatwa, for example, the MUI issued its legal product amid heated conditions in the DKI Jakarta Governor election. This is made worse by packaging strategies and techniques for conveying inappropriate Islamic teachings in terms of time and the social context of Indonesia's religion. The fatwa, which was issued through a statement of attitudes and opinions signed on October 11, 2016, meant that this "legal product" was used by political actors to win the election. On the other hand, the MUI's attitude of claiming someone is a blasphemer and blasphemer, in certain aspects, is used as a legacy for several Islamic groups to carry out acts of intolerance and persecution in the name of religion.

Furthermore, there is the question of the attribute of non-Muslim religious celebrations as a form of haram acts. Fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) No. 56 of 2016 concerning the law on using non-Muslim religious attributes, for example, ultimately sparked controversy. The polemic arose because there was rejection and sweeping away of Muslim employees who wore Santa Claus clothing to attract customers. Since when has clothing become a religious representation and a symbol of disobedience to a particular religion? In a social context, the MUI fatwa has become an instrument to fuel sweeping actions by specific Islamic organizations to "guard the fatwa." A legal product delivered to a regional locus that recognizes religious differences has a negative effect on the existence of religious teachings themselves. Religion, in turn, legitimizes persecution and acts of intolerance as a symbol of obedience.

The two fatwas above not only had social impacts but also political effects whose fragmentation remains today. The position of fatwas, which should be a place for academic debate, has become a medium for legitimizing actions that violate the nation's legal, social, and cultural norms. This is very problematic; in its original position, the fatwa was used as a tool of religious observance, but it has implications that could be more counterproductive to religious values.

The legal products issued by the MUI are increasingly being held hostage by the actions of individuals who use fatwas for political purposes. By claiming on social media, the public's offense resulting from the "inaccuracy" of issuing the fatwa also triggered a breakdown in the social cohesion of the Indonesian Muslim community. In fact, in certain aspects, people who cannot learn about Islam take part in holding the fatwa hostage to inflame public offense. It does not stop there; "religious celebrities" also contribute their voices by taking advantage of their popularity on social media.

Thus, the fundamental nature of the MUI fatwa must be the following things: 1) the desire to gain social legitimacy from society while having a positive relationship with Islamic organizations; 2) the desire to maintain good relations with the government; 3) the desire to encourage Muslim public participation in national development; and 4) the desire to maintain harmonious relations with non-Muslim religious groups (Hamzah, 2018)

4. Fatwa Packaging in the Post-Truth Era

Internet channels have become a new medium in Indonesia, giving rise to a new religious authority. This phenomenon emerged (and is emerging) due to the increasing freedom of society to express, voice, and interpret its ideas about Islam.

In the post-truth era, truth has metamorphosed into a commodity and has become absurd because the struggle for various interests colors it. Multiple truths are constructed according to the version of interests of each group. At such an epicenter, the progress of Islamic law is at risk of being trapped in a sectarian labyrinth. Therefore, can the MUI fatwa institution bring inclusive awareness about the

relationship between socio-cultural political phenomena and Islamic law to have a harmonious dialectic, not counter-productive?

In his thesis, Anderson concluded that through new media, more and more people are taking part in the public sphere and seem to have the authority to talk about Islam. With this popular media instrument, ordinary people get involved and discuss things the ulama consumes. This is where social fragmentation emerges, inevitable from digital media's excessively free interpretation process (Eickelman & Anderson, n.d.)

Therefore, amid the increasingly intense mediatization of religious expression, the discourse regarding Indonesianness and Islam in new media must be strengthened again. This strengthening can start from established religious authorities by making new media their primary medium of preaching so that they become the reference of choice for the Indonesian people amidst these new religious authorities.

The opportunity to involve online media in religious transmission can shift the relational pattern between religious figures and society to become more mechanical between producers and consumers as in the context of marketing. Interaction via Internet media has defined the identity of religious leaders and their followers in different ways. Religious figures act not only as symbols of Islamic supremacy in understanding religious teachings but also as distributors of content, as well as adherents who have become consumers or technology users (Fakhruroji, 2018).

On the one hand, this phenomenon has opened a new chapter in disseminating religious messages. However, on the other hand, mediatization can cause a shift in the role of religious figures as parties who have authority as sources of religious information (Fakhruroji, 2015)

The packaging of fatwa products via online media, through attractive and powerful visualization, contributes to building the image of Indonesian Islam in the future, which Azyumardi Azra terms a smiling face, flowering Islam. This effort is also to counter movements that campaign for Islam with a rigid, intolerant image and often even reduce the essential values of religious teachings.

The face of Islamic moderation, which the Indonesian Muslim community has firmly held, has become distinctive because it can coexist with a democratic system that has so far failed to be practiced by Middle Eastern Muslims (Hilmy, 2013). So, it is not surprising that Indonesia is commonly portrayed as an ideal Islamic prototype typology because it has succeeded in showing its tolerant, dialogical, democratic, and inclusive nature and works in harmony with local traditions. Although it cannot be denied that there are still conflicts with religious nuances in several places, these can quickly be suppressed and proceed in a sporadic, unstructured, and massive manner, as shown in Middle Eastern countries.

So, it is not surprising that the unique Islamic character of Indonesia is often used as a reference because it is considered prosperous in combining Islamic values, traditions, and local culture, as well as democracy with a human face as a cornerstone of civilization in establishing relationships with other creatures.

Indonesia's social capital as a country with most Muslims adhering to the Shafi'iyah school of thought is fortunate. The religious logic of this school of thought is derived from the social intelligence that was put into practice by its founder, Imam Syafi'i. As a central figure in the tradition of Islamic legal thought, he formulated a moderate legal concept as a political step to reconcile the methodological contestation between Ahl al-Ra'yi on the one hand and Ahl al-Hadith on the other. The intellectual inscription carried out by Imam al-Syafi'i is a form of crystallization of his social piety, which was built because of his contact with the contextual reality of his time.

Paradigmatic legal reasoning initiated by Imam Syafi'i is a form of nomenclature of resistance to the political exploitation of religious texts (*istighlal al-nash al-diniy*) initiated by Ibn Abd Rabbah and the ideology of the sultanate (*al-idiyulujiyyah al-sulthaniyyah*) developed by Ibn Al-Muqaffa'. Thus, the MUI Fatwa Commission is a paradigmatic breakthrough that can respond to contemporary problems requiring fast, precise, and accurate answers that can be accounted for normatively and socially simultaneously. There is no madzhab fanaticism and absolutism of thought. Inclusivity and objectivity are put forward to advance people in various aspects of life (Makmur, 2019)..

This indicates that when oral religious texts are transformed into literal texts (open and read), they always give rise to various interpretations and meanings (Hasan, 2018). In this position, religious discourse displayed haphazardly on social media soon becomes public consumption containing freedom of interpretation. In this position, it is essential.

Furthermore, commenting on the religious movements of the Muslim community, which has led to the development of virtual digital information, an internet activist, Eli Pariser, expressed his anxiety. He saw even dangerous irregularities in the algorithmic systems contained in social media. He said there had been a kind of "big bubble" which had resulted in intellectual isolation. This phenomenon gives birth to an alienated perspective because he feels trapped in a bubble that can only see his point of view without looking at other people's opinions. This reality has the potential to give birth to a mono-perspective virtual society; it only deifies its perspective and defines reality based on one point of view (Zakaria, Busro, & Furqon, 2018).

This concern has the potential to get worse because one of the characteristics of radical movements is a firm monopoly on truth (truth claim), which results from an unwillingness to accept one's own mistakes, as well as an allergy to accepting the truth from other parties (*laa yuqbalu khoto' minan nafsi, wa laa yuqbalu ats -sowwab minal ghair*).

For example, suppose someone who uses social media (users) receives information about the dangers of specific thoughts. In that case, he will be trapped in denying the existence of other ideas which may contain the truth. This phenomenon ultimately gave birth to narrow fanaticism and absolutism in thinking. This is very dangerous if the fanaticism and monopoly of truth are attributed to religious views. This will give birth to anti-criticism individuals. Eli Pariser commented on this phenomenon by introducing a concept called a "filter bubble." Namely, a world built based on a common mono perspective. Social media has become a place where we cannot learn anything. Worse, these filter bubbles tend to create false consensus effects.

Due to obtaining uniform information, a person tends to claim that others agree with him and conclude that his opinion is the majority conclusion. In fact, in other places, what happens could be different. Even Mostafa El-Bermawy from Wired warned that the filter bubble phenomenon could potentially damage democracy. The internet's position as an alternative medium for absorbing religious knowledge can make someone blind to what happens in real life. He equates virtual reality, which is full of insults, with dynamic social reality. The destructive impact of the filter bubble phenomenon is increasingly massive due to several bad habits of netizens and the media—for example, the media's habit of selling bombastic titles. So, the habit arises of only reading the title without clicking on the content. Data shows that 59 percent of news links shared on social media are not clicked at all. This habit of consuming information implies fostering "belief" in hoaxes, which is currently a hot issue in Indonesia.

Hoaxes become increasingly uncontrollable when reinforced by emotional conditions that seem to "agree" with the information even without examining it. These are the shots from which the post-truth era emerged. That is, truth is not measured by factual, logical, and empirical parameters but is accumulated through its relevance to a person's emotions and interests.

In other cases, hate propaganda is manifested as an explosion of mass offense at an insult. Protesters demand direct government intervention, or engage in vigilante actions to assuage hurt religious feelings. In an age where few challenges are more pressing and universal than learning to live with diversity, opportunists use hate propaganda to create delusions about "pure" communities that need protection from the taint imposed by others. Some of this is hate speech, which encourages violence against disliked groups. Protesters show the dark side of people's power - a public that believes in the primacy of its opinions, is intolerant of differences, and uses democratic space to strangle the freedom of other parties (George, 2017).

As a fatwa institution, MUI takes a strategic-alternative positioning amid the increasingly unstoppable proliferation of information that is currently occurring. The effort that MUI needs to make is to package the fatwa in a more egalitarian and popular way. In other words, as a legal guide, the religious views expressed must take into account, among other things:

1. MUI fatwas must adhere to the principle that fatwas are non-binding professional opinions. However, it remains in the corridor of building the welfare of the Muslim community, as well as the collective benefit (*maslahah ammah*). With this understanding, the MUI will successfully distort itself from religious exclusivity while simultaneously minimizing the piracy of fatwas by individuals with interests by capitalizing on offense through MUI fatwas. In this way, the MUI as an institution, which intelligent scholars and ulama inhabit, will become a role model for the people (*qudwah hasanah*), guide and servant of the people (*ri'ayat wa khadim al-ummah*) and as a movement for social improvement and renewal (*Islah wa al tajdid*) (Mudzhar, 1993).
2. MUI authorities must socialize the fatwa product through popular media networks (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). Its function is to target a wider congregation so that they understand the *maqasyid syari'ah* and *maqsud al-a'dzam* why this fatwa needs to be issued. The text of the fatwa and the social context must also be explained in popular languages. Because the nature of Islam is preaching, the fatwa formulation must be preached using a tool that reaches all elements of society, especially reaching those who learn Islam instantly.
3. MUI institutionally needs to form a team as an "agent" to promote its fatwas on social media. Of course, with the minimum requirements of mastering the problem being studied, understanding the fatwa issued, and having skills in good rhetoric.

The offer above is relevant considering that media culture tends to change, structure, and even determine the direction of daily life, including religious practices. Media culture helps shape a shared worldview and its values, including Islamic values and teachings in this context.

This argument is strengthened by the fact that religion supported by internet infrastructure functions very well in building interaction networks, where the structure of social relations and belief patterns becomes very soft, global, and interconnected. This complements the discourse on "networked society", which argues that there is a shift in the structure and understanding of how the social, political, and economic world, culture, and religion function in the collective reasoning of society. Through this online media, everything must be essential, acknowledge and understand that we are currently in a new era in religion, with the emergence of connected communities where social relations are increasingly decentralized but interconnected and often supported by social infrastructure. -mechanical (Campbell, 2012).

5. Conclusion

The shift in religious authority from traditional to famous, marked by society's tendency to obtain security information through online media, has implications for the role of the MUI as a fatwa institution, which must also contest to color the social-Islamic dynamics in Indonesia. As a fatwa institution, MUI needs to be present in cyberspace as a balancing force for the emergence of new religious authorities, which often present Islamic performances that are counter-productive to Muslim religious traditions and the socio-cultural character of Indonesian society. MUI must display its fatwa products as more popular, following trends, and packaged in attractive but substantial language. This means that MUI fatwas must consider Islam's scientific basis and experts' opinions on specific issues. However, it also accommodates internet-based infrastructure to transmit appropriate Islamic ideas and attitudes to the Indonesian Muslim community.

MUI fatwas formulated based on adequate scientific knowledge and supported by good online media infrastructure will be better prepared to contest with the new religious authorities. As well as reflecting the treasures of Islamic thought in the social media landscape. However, of course, MUI's success in winning the contest must follow the trends or "rules of the game" that apply in digital media, which prioritize image and packaging. There is a strong fragmentation between scriptural and substantial Islam on social media. In this context, the MUI becomes an intermediary because the fatwas issued, apart from indirectly representing the attitudes and views of various Islamic organization federations, are also based on a study of authoritative religious texts to find substantial values in responding to public problems based on principles. uniting the people (tauhid al-ummah) and protecting the people (*himayat al-ummah*).

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