Volume 09 (2015)

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Internet and *Kyais* in Indonesia

Negotiation of Authority in a Mediatized Environment

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Abstract

The *Kyais* (plural from of 'a *kyai*', an Indonesian term generally used to indicate experts in Islamic scholarship and people who establish and lead an Islamic boarding school known as 'Pesantren' where the *santris*—students of the Pesantren—spend their 24 hours in it with particular systems designed by the Kyais themselves) known as the representatives of (Islamic) religious authority in Indonesian history. Society's great trust in *Kyais*, as it will be discussed in this paper, combined with their ability to solve not only religious problems but also social, psychological, cultural, and even political, together create a stable, solid, and absolute religious authority for them in Indonesian Muslim society. Furthermore, the fact that Indonesia is the fourth of the Asian countries with the highest Internet user number in the world (internetworldstats.com, June 30, 2014) and, at the same time, it is the country with the world's largest Muslim population, together creates an interesting phenomenon of the *Kyais'* engagement with Internet and its implication on the construction of religious authority in the context of Indonesian Islam. Using mediatization as the theoretical foundation, this paper aims at understanding four particular research questions raised from the phenomenon; the roots of the *kyai-ness*, how the *Kyais* gain their authority, how it is different with the coming of Internet, and how the future of their relationship is.

Keywords

Religious authority, Internet, Kyais, Indonesia, and mediatization

1   Introduction

According to the first sentence of the executive summary of the Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association's report on the profile of the Indonesian Internet Users for 2014 period, in 2014 most of the Indonesian society is no more able to get away from the Internet-based communication activities."[1] This survey which covered 2000 Internet users from 42 cities in urban

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1   Asosiasi Penyedia Jasa Internet Indonesia, "Profil Pengguna Internet Indonesia 2014," (March, 2015).

and rural Indonesia, more or less, supporting the notion of the ubiquitous presence of Internet-based media communication and its inseparable role for current Indonesian's way of life. The data on the "Top 20 Internet Countries 2013 with Highest Numbers of Users" released by *Internet World Stats*[2] which put Indonesia in the eleventh among the other countries in the world with approximately 55 million of users, confirms this new reality.

What is more, the fact that Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population makes the issue of negotiating authority between the Kyais (who are believed as the one who holds the most authoritative position in religious matters) and the ubiquitous presence of the Internet in Indonesia, becomes an important issue to discuss. To begin with, this paper will provide theoretical considerations of the term 'religious authority,' followed with an empirical exploration of how this religious authority is being culturally, personally, and doctrinally given' to the Kyai. Based on my interview with the five Kyais, this paper then shows Kyai's point of view on the reality of the Internet which then will be discussed in the last section based on mediatization theory.

2   Religious Authority: Theoretical Exploration

The term 'religious authority' is a complicated term requires a comprehensive theoretical exploration. It consists of two words each implies and leads to a further complicated concept: 'religious' and 'authority.' The term 'authority' alone has plagued a number of scholars from various disciplines in social sciences to engage with. The same happened with the term 'religious,' and, for more, the combination of the two: 'religious authority.'

Considering the broad concept of 'religious authority,' Kramer and Schmidtke, from the perspective of Islamic studies, prefer to use plural ('religious authorities')[3] as they show there are various important studies (have been and could be) done in this topic. To give a comprehensive understanding of the concept, and to find out what kind of religious authority that the *Kyais* had in their selves, this research would like to discuss the topic from different perspectives: Islamic studies, Sufism, sociological, and political.

To have a comprehensive understanding of what the term "religious authority" means, first of all, we need to understand the term "authority" separately. Coming from sociological perspective, Max Weber, identifies three ideal types of authority: charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal authority. *Charismatic* authority means belief in the supernatural or intrinsic gifts of the individual. People

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2   http://www.internetworldstats.com/.
3   Gudrun Kramer and Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 3.

respond to this kind of authority because they believe that the individual has a 'special calling.'[4] *Traditional* authority understood as belief in time and custom. People respond to this kind of authority because they value of the past and they believe that time proven methods are the best.[5] *Rational-legal* authority is belief in procedure. People respond to this kind of authority because they believe that the requirements or laws have been enacted in the proper manner. People see leaders as having the right to act when they obtain positions in the procedurally correct way.[6] With regard to our discussion on the case of *Kyais'* religious authority, I see Webers' concept of charismatic authority, among the other two, is the most helpful to be used as theoretical basis to understand the case. Therefore, the following discussion will focus only on that particular kind of authority.

Weber refers the term "charisma" to either of two types: natural and artificial. The former considered as a gift that inheres in an object or person simply by virtue of natural endowment and cannot be acquired by any means. While the latter means a gift produced artificially in an object or person through some extraordinary means.[7] At this point, it is interesting to see how Weber explains the different characteristics of the prophet and the priest with regard to the charisma they both have. He mentioned that we shall understand "prophet" to mean a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment. At this point, there will be no significant distinction between a "renewer of religion" who preaches an older revelation, actual or supposititious, and "founder of religion" who claims to bring completely new deliverances. Here, the personal call is the decisive element distinguishing the prophet from the priest. The latter lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal relation and charisma. Fortunately, almost no prophets have emerged from the priestly class.[8]

To make clear of what actually Weber means by charismatic authority, he outlines five principal characteristics of charismatic authority as below:

1. People's recognition of those who claim for authority is the most important part in measuring the validity of charisma. Psychologically this 'recognition' is a matter of complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality, arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope.

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4   Examples of this type of authority include Susan B. Anthony, Adolf Hitler, Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Golda Meir, and Jesus—notice that it is people's belief in the charisma that matters; thus, we can have Hitler and Jesus on the same list.

5   Good examples of this type of authority are the parents and grandparents, the Pope, and monarchies.

6   A good example of this type is the professor—it does not matter who the professor is, as long as he or she fulfills the requirements of the job. Further explanation on this, please see: Kenneth Allan, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World* (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2013), 199-200.

7   Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 2.

8   Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion,* 46.

2. Suffering a loss of charisma will lead him to think his god or his magical or heroic powers have abandoned him.

3. The corporate group which is subject to charismatic authority is based on an emotional form of communal relationship

4. Pure charisma will not so much care about economic consideration.

5. In traditionally stereotyped periods, charisma is the greatest revolutionary force.[9]

By its very nature, Weber reminds us that the existence of charismatic authority is specifically unstable. The holder may forego his charisma; he may feel 'forsaken by his God,' as Jesus did on the cross; he may prove to his followers that 'virtue is gone out of him.' However, only because pure charisma does not know any 'legitimacy' other than that flowing from personal strength, that is, one which is constantly being proved.[10]

There are at least two important key terms I would like to underline from Weber's explanation on the issue of charisma in general and charismatic authority in particular, which are: trust and recognition. These two attitudes toward authority, be it general authority or charismatic, for me are acting as the core determinant of authority to be authoritative. In other words, however great the authority and the charisma that individual has in him or herself,[11] he/ she will not considered as charismatic and authoritative as long as other people do not believe in and recognize that charisma and that authority.

At this point, it is interesting to take political argument of what is authority as it is presented by Hannah Arendt when she explained about the 'authority in general.' According to her:

> "since authority always demands obedience, it is commonly mistaken for some form of power of violence. Yet authority precludes the use of external means of coercion; where force is used, authority itself has failed. Authority, on the other hand, is incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. Where arguments are used, authority is left in abeyance. If authority is to be defined at all, then, it must be in contradistinction to both coercion by force and persuasion through arguments. The authoritarian relation between the one who commands and the one who obeys rests neither on common reason nor on the power of the one who commands; what they have in common is the hierarchy itself, whose rightness and legitimacy both recognize and where both have their predetermined stable place.)"[12]

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9   Talcott Parsons, *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1947), 359-363.
10 H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).
11 Since authority is not only belong to one particular gender.
12 Hannah Arendt, "what is authority," in *Between Past and Future* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 93.

By this, Arendt tried to explain that authority in general is not only incompatible with either coercion by force or persuasion through arguments, but also it is hierarchical in its very nature. These two important natures of an authority then what makes it the most stable element of human's life.[13]

This notion of coercive and persuasive approach of authority, interestingly, also becomes one of El Fadl's concerns when he explored the meaning of religious authority from the perspective of Islamic law. Even though, he did not explicitly argue the compatibility of those two in his definition of 'religious authority.

In his efforts to explore the possible meanings of authority, El Fadl first of all, clarified the term by distinguishing between coercive authority and persuasive authority. Coercive authority, according to him, is the ability to direct the conduct of another person through the use of inducements, benefits, threats, or punishments so that a reasonable person would conclude that for all practical purposes they have no choice but to comply. Persuasive authority, on the other hand, is the ability to direct the belief or conduct of a person because of trust. Here, El Fadl reminds us that persuasive authority does not necessarily involve the complete surrender of judgment or an unconditional surrender of autonomy. In fact, a complete surrender of judgment or autonomy often turns into a coercive form of authority.[14] Instead, persuasive authority involves the exercise of influence and normative power upon someone. Persuasive authority influences people in believe, act or refrain from acting in a certain fashion by persuading them that this is what ought to be. It influences people to believe that acting according to certain directive is consistent with their sense of self-responsibility.[15]

In order to make the distinction clear, El Fadl used Friedman's terminology: "being in authority" and "being an authority." According to Friedman, being "in authority" means occupying some official or structural position that empowers a person to issue commands or directives. There is no "surrender of private judgment" in this case because a person may disagree with the person in authority and yet feel that there is no choice but to comply. Obeying "an authority," on the other hand, involves a different dynamic. Here, a person surrenders private judgment in deference to perceived special knowledge, wisdom or insight of an authority. Deferring to someone *in* authority involves deferring to someone's official position or capacity, but deferring to someone who is *an* authority involves deferring to someone's perceived expertise. The distinction is the difference between deferring to a police officer and deferring to one's plumber.[16]

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13 Hannah Arendt, "what is authority"…, 94.
14 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (England: Oneworld
     Publication, 2001)*, 21.
15 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 22.
16 Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 18-19.

In his effort to understand the notion of authority from Islamic studies perspectives, El Fadl, he begins from the fundamental nature of authority in Islamic teachings which says that Islam rejects elitism and emphasizes that truth is equally accessible to all Muslims regardless of race, class, or gender.[17] As it is justified by the Quranic verse saying that there is no superiority of one sex over another or one nation over another, the only criterion for superiority is righteousness.[18] In Islamic tradition, I do agree with El Fadl when he says that Sunni Islam does lack a formal institutional and hierarchical structure of authority. There is no authoritative center other than God and the Prophet, but God and the Prophet are represented by texts. In effect, it is the text that stands as the authoritative center in Islam.[19] This then gives birth to some problematic issues related to the authority of the text and the authority of the interpreter of the text.[20]

As it is believed by Muslims, that during the prophet's lifetime, there was no question of that he was recognized as the authoritative voice representing the Divine Will. The prophet was considered the direct recipient of God's revelation, and therefore, he actively became the point of authority for the early Muslim community, as he does not speak from personal desire. It is a divine inspiration.[21] However, there are some contemporary scholars who problematize the authenticity and authority of Prophet's sayings.[22] With the death of the Prophet, the early Muslim community experienced its first serious crisis of legitimacy and authority. Early Muslim debated and fought over who become the repository of legitimate authority after the Prophet.

By the fourth-tenth century, according to El Fadl, the authoritativeness of the Prophet had become firmly and undeniably deposited in the idea or concept of Islamic law and in the representatives of Islamic law, the jurists of Islam. The jurists had become the repositories of a literary, text-based legitimacy. Their legitimacy based itself on the ability to read, understand, and interpret the Divine Will as expressed in texts that purported to embody the Divine Will.[23]

17　Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (England: Oneworld Publication, 2001).
18　Quran (49:13).
19　Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 11.
20　There are alot of scholarly works discussed this issue, among them are: Aisha Y. Musa, *Hadith as Scripture: Discussions on the Authority of Prophetic Traditions in Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), Daniel A. Madigan, *The Qur'an's Self Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (UK: Princeton University Press, 2001), David R. Vishanoff, *The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics: How Sunni Legal Theorists Imagined a Revealed Law* (Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 2011).
21　Quran (53: 3-4) Edip Yuksel, Layth Saleh al-Shaiban, Martha Schulte-Nafeh, *Quran: A Reformist Translation* (USA: Brainbow Press, 2011).
22　Further discussion on this issue please refer to: Muḥammad Taqī, *The Authority of Sunnah* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1998), Daniel W.Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1996), Must}afa> al-Siba>'i>, *al-Sunnah wa Maka>natuha> fi> Tashri>' al-Isla>m* (Qa>hirah: Da>r al-Sala>m, 2006).
23　Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 12.

Regarding the concept of authoritativeness, El Fadl agrees with Friedman that absolute authoritativeness will often involve an unqualified surrender of judgment. at this point, he emphasizes that being an authority or being authoritative necessarily involves that element of trust (as it is also emphasized by Weber's charismatic authority), and any behavior consistent with justifying this trust, including the offering of persuasive arguments, will preserve or booster such an authority.[24]

To sum up his understanding of the concept of "authoritative," El Fadl goes in line with John Finnis' description of the authoritative which points out the important of an exclusionary reason, the reason that we will consider the most compelling and the reason that leads us to exclude all other countervailing reasons and it is of the result of an encounter with the authoritative.[25] This Joseph Raz's terminology of exclusionary reason (i.e. a reason for judging or acting in the absence of understood reasons), according to Finnis, is 'the focal meaning of authority, whether that authority be speculative (the authority of learning or genius) or practical (the authority of good taste, or practical experience), and whether the authority be ascribed to a persons, or to their characteristics, or to their opinions or pronouncements, or to some opinion or prescription which has authority for reasons other than that its author(s) had authority.'[26]

Interestingly, we found this 'exclusionary reason' is very much embedded in Sufism's doctrine of "*Shaykh-Murid* (Master-disciple) relationship" as it is implicitly understood from Ibn Arabi's saying "it is through God that one knows masters, and through masters that one knows God." As the master in Sufism has a significant role for a *murid* to guide him to the God's path,[27] and only the masters who can 'show the divine character traits in his/her soul and how to bring them into the open,'[28] a *murid* see him as the most authoritative person in his spiritual journey. Even then the master will cause him any discomfort, the disciple should still be patience for it. Here is the story about the patience of a disciple:

> The saint Shibli once tested the sincerity and patience of his students. When Shibli entered a profound mystical state. he was locked up as a madman. many of his students went to visit him, and when they arrived, Shibli asked, "who are you?"
>
> "we are some of those who love and follow you."

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24   Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 21.
25   Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name...,* 22-23.
26   John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (New York: Oxford, 2011), 234.
27   Frager explained that the "path" of Sufism does not mean a road that anyone can follow. It refers to a path in the desert from one oasis to the next. It is a trackless path; the sands shift constantly. You need a guide to get to that next oasis because, unless you have traveled that way often, you could never find your way by yourself. A Sufi teacher is a guide who has traveled the spiritual path, who knows the way and its pitfalls and dangers. See: Robert Frager and James Fadiman (ed.), *Essential Sufism* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997), 127.
28   William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (England: Oneworld Publication, 2000), 25.

Shibli began throwing stones at his visitors. stung by the stones, they began to run away, crying, "it is true – Shibli really has gone crazy!"

Then Shibli called out to them, "Didn't I hear you say that you loved me? You could not even bear a stone or two before running away. what became of that sincere love you claimed you had for me? Did your love fly away with a couuple of stones? if you really loved me, you would have patiently endured the little bit of discomfort I caused you."[29]

Chishti and Suhrawardi treatises and other writings, as cited by Riazul Islam, have a remarkable agreement on the fact that *iradat* (discipleship) requires a complete loss of will on the part of the *murid*. His will is thus completely submerged in the *pir's* (master's) will. There is repeated emphasis on the most complete obedience to the *pir*'s will. According to Riazul Islam, this implies that 'the *murid* was to completely abdicate his judgment and surrender his will, and was to obey blindly each and every command of his master.'[30]

To conclude the discussion on 'religious authority', I would like to say that Weber's charismatic authority which emphasizes the factors of believing and recognition does not naturally belong to one specific gender and are actually in line with El Fadl's notion on coercive and persuasive authority in a way that both coercive and persuasive authority are the results of the process of believing and recognizing of the people before the authority. However, Arendt's notion of the incompatibility of the coercive and persuasive approach in accessing authority is very much important to complement our understanding of how the authority works. Here, John Finnis' notion on exclusionary reason is very much helpful for understanding how the process of believing and recognizing take place in an individual in which it creates total obedience to the authoritative. Sufism's doctrine on master-disciple relationship, furthermore, would be an important explanation of what kind of obedience and how that obedience grown in oneself.

The exploration of those previous theories on authority is very much helpful for this research to understand a big picture of the *Kyais'* religious authority in a way that those show that authority consists of at least three important elements: personal (charisma), cultural (long-term hierarchy), and doctrinal (master-disciple relation in Sufism). Further discussion of which element (of many others), that constitutes *Kyais'* religious authority and how do they maintain it, will be discussed in the following sections.

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29 Robert Frager and James Fadiman (ed.), *Essential Sufism…,* 25.
30 Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 387.

3   Kyais' Religious Authority: What and How?

After we discussed the concept of religious authority which generally means the power to direct people through satisfying and reasonable religious argument, in this subsection, I will discuss about the *Kyai* as the representative of religious authority in Indonesia. To begin with, I would like to provide Joseph Raz's explanation on the types commonly used for explaining the nature of authority in general. There are at least three types of it:

1. The basic standard explanation consists of identifying the conditions that are in fact either necessary or sufficient for holding effective (*de facto*) authority. In addition to this, Raz reminds us not to abandon other important considerations: under what conditions people can obtain or hold authority, under what circumstances a community is likely to accept the authority of some persons, and what these conditions are for, what it is to have authority or to be in authority.

2. The second type is by describing the necessary or sufficient conditions for holding of legitimate (*de jure*) authority. Accordingly, the concept of authority is to be explained by explaining how claims to authority can be justify. Moreover, they do not presuppose the claims to authority can in fact ever be justified, but merely point out how they are to be justified.

3. Some people believe that authority must be defined by reference to rules: that a person has authority means that there is a system of rules, which confers authority on him. Here, Raz urges us to clarify which rules confer authority and which do not. [31]

Learning from the above three types, this subsection will elucidate the notion of religious authority of the *Kyai* within three important considerations: *first*, the conditions of the *Kyai* for holding the authority (including the circumstances a community is likely to accept their authority and how do the *Kyai* use those conditions for, *second,* how claims to *Kyai*'s authority can be justified, and *third*, system of rules, which confers authority on the *Kyai*.

3.1   Conditions of the *Kyai* as the religious authority holder: how and why

In Javanese rules of language, the term "*Kyai*" originally used to indicate three different positions:

1. As an honorific title for some particular items that are considered as sacred; for example, "*Kyai* Garuda Kencana" used for a Gold Carriage in the Yogyakarta palace;

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31 Joseph Raz, *The Authority of Law: Essays on Law and Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5-10.

2. As an honor for the parents in general

3. As an honorific title granted by the society to an expert in Islam, who has or be a leader of the *pesantren* and teach the classical books to their *santri* (students)

With their expertise in Islamic knowledge, the *Kyai* often seen as individuals who can understand the greatness of God and the secrets of the universe, thus they seems to have an unaffordable position, especially by the lay people.[32] They are, at the same time, charismatic religious authorities who are believed to have unique abilities to communicate with God, as channels through which God's mercy and blessing enter society. Not only the *Kyai* themselves who are considered as so but also, the position of *nyai* (*Kyai*'s wife) in a *pesantren* also shares the same consideration. She is a revered figure, and serves as something of a foster mother to young *santri*. In *pesantren* where there are female *santri*, she plays a leading role in their religious training. Moreover, the children and subsequent descendants of *Kyai* are believed to inherit his sacred characteristics.[33]

In a *pesantren*, the *Kyai* becomes a single leader who holds almost absolute authority which makes him the most respected one in that environment.[34] He is the sole power center that controls the environment and at the same time, is the role model for the *santri*. He is like a king whom all of his commands become valid constitutional laws in his kingdom. He has the right to impose penalties on students who violate the terms of his commands according to normative rules applied in *pesantren*.

Society's great trust in *Kyai* and his ability to solve social, psychological, cultural, political, religious problems, are of many factors put the *Kyai*'s position in line with the elites and be part of social and political structures in society.[35] Even more, I see it is not an exaggeration here to say that the *Kyai* has the same cultural position with the position of the feudal nobility who commonly known as *Kanjeng*, whom considered as having the things that are not owned by anyone else in the society.[36] This clearly seen from the presence of Javanese kingdoms aristocratic characteristic which can also be found in the traditions of being respectful in the *pesantren*. In such manner, it will be hard to separate feudalism from *pesantren*'s tradition as it is hard to pull out feudalism from a kingdom's setting.[37]

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32 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982), 56.
33 Bianca J. Smith and Mark Woodward, "Introduction: de-colonizing Islam and Muslim feminism," in Bianca J. Smith and Mark Woodward (eds.), *Gender and Power in Indonesian Islam: Leaders, Feminists, Sufis and Pesantren Selves* (Routledge, 2013), 11.
34 Pradjarta Dirdjosandjoto, *Memelihara Umat: Kiai Pesantren-Kiai Langgar Di Jawa* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), 156.
35 Mujamil Qomar, *Pesantren...,* 29.
36 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Bunga Rampai Pesantren* (CV. Darma Bhakti, 1974), 20.
37 Mujamil Qomar, *Pesantren Dari Transformasi Metodologi Menuju Demokratisasi Institusi* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2002), 29.

Regarding the question of circumstances a community is likely to accept their authority and how do the *Kyai* use those condition, it is interesting to see the case of *Pandhalungan* culture and the existence of *Kyai* in that area.

Pandhalungan cultural region refers to a region in the northern coastal areas in the eastern province of East Java with Madurese-background majority. The so-called Pandahlungan society is, culturally, a hybrid society which means a new civilized society comes of two mixed dominant cultures Java and Madura. In general, *Pandhalungan* people are living in urban areas. The administrative geography of *Pandhalungan* culture consists of Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Situbondo, Bondowoso, Jember, and Lumajang.

Social ethics of *Pandhalungan* people rooted in the values of two dominant cultures, Java and Madura, among them are: politeness (poeple should be "*andap asor,*" humble towards others. Although they often seen as rude people, but actually they highly respect the norms of politeness), respect (being respectful to elders and people who has high social class is very important for Pandahulungan people, more over to their teachers and *Kyai*), and high work ethic (*Pandhalungan* people has high work ethic standards together with Ethic and job mobility is very high *Pandhalungan* society, underpinned by sincerity, diligence and their perseverance in life, not only among men but also women.

Through its further development, *Pandhalungan* culture is heavily influenced by Islamic nuances. This because in this region, *ulama* and *Kyai* do not only play their role as religious leader but also as a public figure who has strong connection with various political forces which then makes people obedient to their religion and at the same time, make them more obedient to their religious teachers and *Kyai* than their local authorities. The involvement of the Kyais in a local practical politics,[38] gives significant impact not only on the changing pattern of political environment in that particular area, but also on the socio-religious atmosphere of the society.

In conclusion, beside their intellectual, social, religious, and political capitals (gained through Kyais' involvement in practical politics), the local wisdom of a particular society (like in the case of Pandhalungan society) very much contribute to the society's attitude in accepting Kyais' authority. In what follows, we will discuss further on how to measure the kyainess of the Kyais.

3.2   Justifying *Kyai*'s religious authority

In Indonesian history, particularly during Dutch colonial era, any cultural, political and social activities in the name of Islam were being restricted. This then has made Islam found difficulties to play its (political) role, in urban areas in Java. As the consequence, the centers for studying Islam

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38 Further exploration in this topic, please refer: Endang Turmudi, *Kiai dan Kekuasaan* (Yogyakarta, LKiS, 2004).

were moved to rural areas where the *Kyai* build and develop the *pesantren*. Interestingly, most *Kyai* in Java assumes that a *pesantren* might be considered as a small kingdom for the *Kyai* where he owns a position of the holder of an absolute power and authority in that *pesantren*. None of the students who can resist the power of the *Kyai* (in his *pesantren*) except the other *Kyai*s who have a greater influence.[39]

There are, according to Solahudin, two inherent attributes of a *Kyai*: Islamic scholarship and *pesantren* leadership. Other related attributes supposedly possessed by a *Kyai* including *ahli ibadah* (totally devout), and *muballigh* (Islamic preacher). They may also act as a kind of consultant on religious matters.[40] Today, many prominent scholars in society also got the title of "*Kyai*" although they are not leaders of *pesantren*. Due to a strong connection with *pesantren*'s tradition, the title of "*Kyai*" usually used to refer to the scholars from Muslim traditionalists.[41] *Kyai* is not a title that formal education offers for, but it is society who vouluntarily offer.[42]

In addition, according to *pesantren*'s tradition, someone's expertise can be measured by the number of the books being studied and the *ulama* he learned from. The popularity of the *Kyai* and the number of qualified books taught in a *pesantren* become the distinguishing factor between one *pesantren* to the other. [43]

3.3   Systems behind the *Kyai*'s religious authority

Regarding the relationship between *Kyai*'s religious authority with the local Javanese system of belief, it is interesting to found that according to the concept of the Javanese state organism, the king is regarded as a symbol of a microcosm, or a country. In Javanese' thoughts, a cosmic divided into two: micro-cosmic and macro-cosmic. The micro means the human world or the real world and the macro means the supernatural. The king in this sense was regarded as a link between the two forms of the cosmic. During the Hindu kingdom, the king was even considered as a manifestation of divinity in the microcosm of life. Then Islam came and changed the whole picture of this local belief. The state authorities then, were no more able to monopolize the symbol of the power of the macrocosm in the Javanese cosmological view. Since Islam is the official religion of the Javanese , the authorities now have to compete with the Muslim religious authorities (the *Kyai*s) in more

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39   Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren…,* 56.
40   Dindin Solahudin, *The Workshop for Morality: The Islamic Creativity of Pesantren Daar at- Tauhid in Bandung, Java* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), 41.
41   Zamakhsyari Dhofier…, 55.
42   Simuh, *Islam dan Pergumulan Budaya Jawa,* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003), 66.
43   Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren…,* 22.

complex form of power hierarchy; For *Kyai*s who all his life led a religious life activities, are also gaining political influence.[44]

In global context, particularly in 19th century, *pesantren* became an inseparable part of what so called Islamic scholarliness community, but still with its genuine Indonesian culture elements. The *santri* and *Kyai* were reading the same classical religious books as their Muslims brothers in this world have. This gives significant impact on the development of *pesantren*, the inernational network of the *ulama* makes *pesantren* becomes a well-established educational center and Islam orthodoxy, more over, it provides a solid foundation for a process of making *ulama* as an influential social elite. The international dimension of *pesantren*, particularly Mecca, makes *ulama* and *pesantren* gain more authority not only in religious matters but also in socio political problems.

There are at least two factors behind the process of institutionalizing the *ulama* in 19th century, beside the international experience that we have talked about before. These two factors are sufism and tarekat. These last two factors provide a fertile land for the development of socio refligious activities which place *ulama* in a more authoritative place, not only in religious area but also in social and political arena. A sufism's doctrine to be total obidience to a teacher (*murshid*) significantly contribute to place *ulama* not only in a strategic place but also makes them a single actor who determines almost every single parts of *pesantren*s' life. In a *pesantren*, *ulama* appear as the sole authority who monopolize religious interpretations, moreover, as 'the embodiment of religious understanding' itself. Not only criticism which is absent from the *santri*, but also a reluctance to accept other teachings than those given in pesanteren where they studied. *Kyai* regarded as a channel of God's grace to his disciples in this world and the hereafter.[45]

In addition, the social reality of the rural areas people, more or less, make *Kyai*'s religious authority acknowledged not only in *pesantren* but also among society where he lives. People in that area have a very high level of trust to the *Kyai*. They depend for their living on him which sometimes it goes beyond religious boundaries. Through his *pesantren*, a *Kyai* acts as a formulator of social reality based on Islamic terms. This condition furthermore supported by the practical oriented of the Islamic teaching style in which the materials being tought related to daily life.[46]

Another system builds *Kyai*'s religious authority is the way the *Kyai* maintain their identity which, according to Dhofier, there are at least three things done by the *ulama* to create their unique community's identity: (1) establishing a tradition which regulates that immediate family is the most eligible to be a successor.(2) developing a network of endogamous marriage alliances among *Kyai*'s

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44 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren…,* 58.
45 Jajat Burhanuddin, "Ulama dan Politik Pembentukan Umat: Sekilah Pengalaman Sejarah Indonesia," in Jajat Burhanuddin dan Ahmad Baedowi (eds.), *Transformasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Pengalaman Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Penerbit PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in collaboration with PPIM-UIN Jakarta and Basic Education Project DEPAG, 2003), 20-21.
46 Jajat Burhanuddin, "Ulama dan Politik Pembentukan Umat", 22.

family; and (3) develop a tradition of transmission of knowledge and intellectual transmission chain among *Kyai*s and their families. In this way, the *Kyais* define themselves not only as different community from the Muslim community in general, but also place themselves as spiritual guides and finally as the social elite.[47]

To conclude this section, I would like to recall what we have concluded in previous section that the term religious authority consists of three elements: personal, cultural, and doctrinal. A better look at the case of *Kyais'* religious authority as we have discussed in this section, in general, confirms at least two of those three elements; personal and cultural. Conditions of *Kyais* as experts in Islamic scholarship, as charismatic religious authority, and as politician, obviously are examples of the personal elements of the religious authority. This personal element, in my opinion, is the core element of *Kyais'* what constitutes their religious authority. This said, even though a *Kyai* live in a society where culturally people do not recognize or even go against his religious authority and no doctrinal supports from religious dogma, people will still see him as religiously authoritative from his good inner personal charisma which came out of his spiritual capacity. The obvious example of this is as it was happened to Muhammad before he was appointed by God to be a *Rasul* (Prophet). Furthermore, the existing of the other two elements (cultural and doctrinal) inside the *Kyais* will for sure complement their religious authority. This because culture and doctrine are two elements embedded in human being that gives them good considerations before executing any work.

In the following section, we will discuss further the influence of Internet on those elements of religious authority of the *Kyais*. Before that, we would like to provide you a general picture of the dynamic of the existence of the Internet in *Kyais'* life.

4   Internet among Kyais

In this section I will discuss Kyais's opinions on the issues related with the coming of Internet based on my interview with Kyais from Pandhalungan areas where the authority of Kyais is very much embedded in and acknowledged among the society.

Interview is conducted on June and July 2015 with five Kyais based on the qualifications below: coming from the districts of Pandhalungan areas, are the leaders of the *Pesantren,* well educated, actively engage in social activities, have a formal position in Islamic organization, and familiar with Internet (in its different degrees). They are: KH.[48] Adnan Syarif, Lc. MA (leader of *Pesantren* Syarifuddin), Kyai, Dr. Abdul Wadud (leader of *Pesantren* Manarul Qur'an), KH.

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47 Jajat Burhanuddin, "Ulama dan Politik Pembentukan Umat," 23-24.
48 "K" stands for *Kyai* and "H" for *haji* or the one who already went to Mecca for hajj.

Mohammad Darwis, M.Pdi[49] (chief of the association of The Huffaz of the Quran in Nahdatul Ulama[50] district Lumajang), KH. Muhyiddin Abdussomad (leader of Pesantren Nurul Islam district Jember), and KH. Ahmad Azaim Ibrahimy (leader of Pesantren Salafiyah Syafiiyah Sukorejo district Situbondo). In addition to the previous mentioned qualifications, the accessibility and availability factors are other important considerations in choosing the five *Kyais* among other hundred *Kyais* in the area. For the purpose of the interview, I made a form of interview consent consists of short explanation about the ongoing research, their agreement (or disagreement) to record the interview and to publish their names only for academic purposes. The aforementioned true identity of my interviewees here is ethically under their agreement.

Based on my interview, there are at least four interesting points to discuss in the case of Internet and Kyais:

1. Kyais' views on what Internet is.

2. Kyais' usage of the Internet.

3. Kyais' views on the impact of the coming of the Internet on their authority.

4. Kyais' views on the future of their relationship with Internet.

4.1   Kyais' views on what the Internet is.

Based on my interview with the Kyais, it is interesting to find that beside a common view of Internet as only a tool for communication and for disseminating religious messages, as it is shown by KH. Muhyiddin Abdussomad's statement saying that "*Internet is just like any media that considered as any thing makes the process of communication easier,*" and by Kyai Dr. Abdul Wadud's view that "*Internet is a tool for da'wa* (Ar. Islamic missionary)*, it can be seen as double-edged sword, the right click might causes you go to heaven and the left click might causes you go to hell,*" I also found that Kyais' view of the Internet as a miracle sent by God to human being, as it is told by KH. Mohammad Darwis when he says that "*Internet is God's current miracle. It is God's blessing for human being.*" A long with him, KH. Adnan Syarif adds that *Internet is one of God's signs in the universe, based on what mentioned in the Quran: "soon will We show them our signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth." (Quran chapter 41 verse 53)*. Like any other technology, Internet according to the five Kyais provides the positive and negative impacts all together, for KH. Ahmad Azaim Ibrahimy, is requires user's maturity as he said that "*Internet is like a knife which will be harmful for little*

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49   An academic title for Magister in Islamic education.
50   One of the largest mass-based Muslim organization in Indonesia except Muhammadiyah.

children and, at the same time, is really helpful for adult, depends so much on user's intellectual and emotional maturity not physical."

4.2   The usage of Internet among Kyais.

From the interview, it reveals that because of their tight activities, the Kyais found very limited time to access the Internet. And most of them use the Internet only for getting more information related to some particular issues and only one of them admitted using it for finding different opinions of one particular religious issue. Despite of this fact, it is interesting to find here how the Kyais relate their faith with the decision of not using the Internet which shows their anxieties to the bad influence of the Internet on their lives. Let us first see KH. Mohammad Darwis's statement

> "I use the Internet only when I need it. I, intentionally, do not spoil myself with this technology. My hand phone is not connected to Internet because I see my faith is not strong enough (to deal with the Internet). Even without the Internet, I sometimes lose my willing to read and memorize the Quran. I am not a high-tech type of Kyai and I do enjoy being such a person and see it as a positive thing."

Unlike him, Kyai Dr. Abdul Wadud enthusiastically admitted that

> "I am consuming all kind of Internet features like Facebook, Blackberry Messanger, twitter, WhatsApp. I am also writing for the web. I have my Android smart phone connected 24 hours with Internet. Even though I do not regularly use the Internet, but I feel I am always connected to information."

4.3   Kyais' views on the impacts of the coming of the Internet on their authority

The Kyais clearly see various impact of the coming of the Internet, be in positive way and negative way. KH. Muhyiddin Abdussomad sees that *"Internet makes santri's minds more open. It also helps the accommodation of information."* Also Kyai Abdul Wadud's consideration that

> "Internet with its WhatsApp Group App maintains the relationship between Kyais and santri. Before, people could not get in touch with the Kyais except by personally visiting them, now people can reach the Kyais through Internet."

In the context of *Pesantren*, KH. Mohammad Darwis sees that Internet gives significant impact on

> "the transfer of knowledge and the transfer of values (akhlaq. Ar. attitude) among the santri, like the way they act, talk, deal with social problems, even more, on some particular normative issues like

being engage in sexual relationships. The Internet also gives significant impact on the authority of some knowledge come from "Kitab Kuning" (widely acknowledged Islamic traditional references). It also might cause the change in Kyais' intellectual competence standard."

From a wider perspective, KH. Ahmad Azaim sees that

"with the coming of Internet, society becomes more open. This then create significant impacts on how society criticize Kyais' policy, on how they are able to reveal disgraceful facts of the Kyais. Internet also gives ability to society to deliver they opinions and get involved in what so called gazwu al-fikr (ar. war of ideas)."

In this regard, KH. Muhyiddin Abdussomad adds that Internet

"also gives impact on the authority of the Kyais, particularly in the issues of politics. This because people made the Kyais as their reference not only for religious matters but also for any social matters, for most, political matters."

Despite the Kyais' consideration of the impacts of the Internet on different aspects of social life, but interestingly, all of the Kyais agree that Internet will not change the santri's submissive and respectful attitude toward the Kyais. There are two important reasons behind this, KH. Adnan Syarif sees that *"the santris do not know much about Internet. This then will not cause any big issues on the authority of the Kyais,"* KH. Muhyiddin adds *"that there is still strong relationship among the santri and their Kyais."*

4.4   Kyais' views on the future of Internet and Kyais.

It is interesting to find that all the five kyais agree about the bright future of the relation of the Internet and Kyais. As KH. Mohammad Darwis says that

"The Internet will be a more important commodity than any other people's basic commodities. The existence of the Kyais and Internet should not seen as a contradictory but as two potential elements of society each synergize one another."

KH. Muhyiddin Abdussomad, optimistically, sees that *"Internet will not eradicate Muslims' identity, it precisely will strengthen their identity."* The future of Internet and Kyais, according to KH. Ahmad Azaim Ibrahimy, is

"like a horse and the cavalier. Each needs one another. Will a cavalier stay alive without a horse? Yes. But it will be very much different for a cavalier living without a horse. Will a horse stay alive without a cavalier? Yes, for sure. But the horse will always be a wild one without a cavalier."

5   Negotiating Kyais' Religious Authority: Mediatization perspectives

To a researcher who intended to use this concept of mediatization will find the term itself as the first difficult to deal with. The term is problematic in ways that it is a relatively new and not universally used by scholars to indicate the same phenomenon. Comparison to the other existing concepts in media and communication studies which have quite-similar points of view and concerns, more often, creates ambiguity of the very idea of mediatization. For now, I will only point out some important characteristics of this theory and how to use it as theoretical background to understand my research on the reality of Internet and the *Kyais*.

As it is concluded by Martino, the presence and interference of media communication in important human activities will be the core of a definition of "mediatization." By this, the concept strongly emphasizes on the phenomenon of the ubiquitous presence of media communication and its significant place in our contemporary life. The media are no more considered as 'only-tools' to disseminate messages, but they are inseparable part of the way people communicate with others in their everyday life.[51] The mediatization theory in this regard very much helpful to guide us to see the issue of Internet and Kyai not merely from the phenomenon of the coming of the Internet to Indonesia and how more and more Indonesians use it in their communicative action, but more from the reality of how people include the Internet in the broader frame of their interpersonal relationship, working life, in all its social and cultural aspects, can be lived in a world filled by messages, meanings and signs exchanged by people using technological gadgets.

By this, mediatization theory does not see media merely from its technological significance, but more from its social role for the society, particularly, how technology infiltrates the sphere of culture, economy, and personal relationship. It questions new models of community engagement. Accordingly, it sees media and communication as a cultural process that might not be comprehensively understood except by understanding what happens in society where it takes place. In short, the media cannot be understood outside the broader frame of society.[52] At the same time,

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51 Luis Mauro Sa Martino, *The Mediatization of Religion: When Faith Rocks* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 13.
52 Luis Mauro Sa Martino, *The Mediatization of Religion…,* 14.

'there is a cultural necessity for mediation because of the way that different partners to communication are embedded in different (local) contexts.'[53]

What is more, Krotz and Hepp remind us that as a process, mediatization is not only a process of upcoming new media and the coming into existence of an increasingly complex individual media environment. It is a meta process that consists of a changing everyday life, of changing identity constructions and social relations, of a changing economy, democracy and leisure, of a changing culture and society as a whole.[54]

Mediatization theory, in conclusion, is very much helpful for this research on Internet and *Kyais* in some important ways. For most, it provides the empirical basis of how to see the reality of the Internet and Kyai and how each influences one another from a broader context of how the Internet infiltrates and becomes an inseparable social element in the dynamism of Indonesian society's religious life. In particular it will help this research to see the new ways of Muslim community's engagement with Internet in Indonesia (and in the world) from a long process of how Islam was became media and being mediated through history, in which it creates a new definition of religious authority and practices..

With all of those important notes from mediatization in mind, this section will try to answer how the (religious) authority of the Kyai is negotiated and changed by the Internet, or how it changed as a "mediatized reality"[55]

To begin with, I would like to reemphasized that the term religious authority consists at least of three important elements: personal (as it is best explained by the concept of charisma), cultural (or long-term hierarchy), and doctrinal (as it is understood from the concept master-disciple relation in Sufism. These three elements, furthermore, can be clearly found in our previous discussion on Kyai's religious authority (including the conditions of the *Kyai* for holding the authority and how do the *Kyai* use those conditions for; how the claims to *Kyai*'s authority can be justified; and *third*, system of rules, which confers authority on the *Kyai*).

The personal element of religious authority clearly found in the fact that Kyai's charisma considered as one of the most important supporting factor behind his solid religious authority. The cultural element of religious authority obviously found in the fact that the social reality of the people living in particular rural areas becomes a big consideration for people's submissive attitude toward the Kyai. As we found in Pandhalungan society. The doctrinal element of religious authority

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53 Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* trans. Keith Tribe (UK: Polity Press, 2013), 33.
54 Friedrich Krotz and Andreas Hepp, "A Concretization of Mediatization: How Mediatization Works and Why 'Mediatized Worlds' are a Helpful Concept for Empirical Mediatization Research," *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication,* Vol. 3. No. 2 (2011).
55 Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz, "Mediatized Worlds-Understanding Everyday Mediatization," in Hepp and Krotz (eds.), *Mediatized Worlds: Culture and Society in a Media Age* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 8.

evidently found in how the Islamic teachings (particularly in Sufism) draw clear lines of how should a student interact with his teacher and obey everything his teacher told him to. Having said this, our question on how the (religious) authority of the Kyai is negotiated and changed by the Internet, can be made more specific to how each of the elements of religious authority is shaped and changed by the Internet?

5.1　Charisma vs Internet

As I mentioned in our discussion on charismatic authority, that there are two important entities build some one's charismatic authority; society's trust and recognition. At this point, it is important to question did the Internet change people's trust and recognition toward the Kyai?

To answer this, let me begin by recalling what the Kyai said about this issue. From the interview's transcripts, we can clearly see that even though there were some considerations regarding the changing pattern of the transfer of knowledge and the transfer of values in Pesantren tradition caused by the coming of the Internet, this does not make the Internet able to reshape or change the solid charismatic authority of the Kyai. What is more, even though the Kyais saw that the coming of Internet can make the *santris'* minds more open intellectually, but that does not change their personal and social attitude toward the Kyais.

The mediatization theory's general assumption stating 'that people's lives are shaped as they relate to their media environments and include a variety of media in their daily practices,'[56] at this point, does not include the change in people's moral attitude towards the charismatic. By this, we can say that the trust and recognition of a mediatized society toward the charismatic will not shaped by media. This confirms the fact that the authority of charisma is still above the authority of media. Weber's previous explanation of the charismatic authority of the prophet as the purely individual bearer of charisma in addition to his personal relation can be the best explanation for this in the sense that the Kyais, who are theologically justified as the heirs of the prophets and they at the same time have strong personal relationship with the society, share the privileges of that prophetical kind of charismatic authority which makes their authority above any other authorities including the authority of the media.

56　Knut Lundby, "Introduction: 'Mediatization' as Key," in Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 2.

5.2   Doctrine vs Internet

Another important element of religious authority is doctrine. If we refer back to what have been said about Sufism doctrine of the high authority of the master over the students and the strong obligation for being respectful and submissive to the master, also the doctrine brought by a widely-used reference about *akhlaq* (Islamic morality or good manners) in Pesantrens in Indonesia saying that 'it is considered as the most important manner of the students to believe that the teacher has a higher degree of virtue than their parents as the teacher is the one who take care of and train their spiritual lives,'[57]along with the prophetical sayings and Quranic verses supporting the high position of the ulama, those all together lead us to conclude that doctrines is one of the most important elements constitute a solid Kyai's religious authority. In the context of our discussion on mediatization of Kyais' religious authority, it is interesting then to question will the coming of Internet shape the significance of the doctrinal elements of Kyais' religious authority?

To answer this question, it is important here to recall the Kyais' views on the impact of the Internet on their authority and the future of their relationship with Internet. The interview with the five Kyais reveals that they consciously see the impact of the coming of the Internet, be in positive and negative way: the Internet helps the accommodation of information; it provides a direct access to reach the Kyai; and at the same time, it is blamed as the reason behind the worse attitude of the *santris* in their social lives and in their interaction with the long acknowledged traditional Islamic resources, it also seen as the cause of the changing in how people see Kyai's intellectual competence standard; it enables society to reveal the negative facts of the Kyai's life, it makes society dare to criticize Kyai and his policy, etc.

However, despite of all of those impacts of the coming of Internet on Kyais' authority, the strong theological doctrines of the high position of the Ulama/ the Kyai/ the master and the obligation to mind their manners in front of the Kyais still very much embedded and integrated in their deep personality. This obviously shown by the Kyais' agreement that the *santris* do still uphold the Islamic teachings in their interaction with the Kyai. People still see the obedience to Kyai as the most important thing in different fields of their lives, not only in their religious life but also in their political life. In Indonesia, people see Kyai's political choice as something they have to follow. This is why we often found in Indonesia the candidates for legislative, even the candidates for presidency, come to see the Kyais to ask for their blessing. We also found many candidates put the Kyai's picture along with them in some political billboards to show that they got blessing from the Kyais. This is one of the strategy we found commonly used in Indonesia to gain people's votes.

From the mediatization's perspective, this phenomenon shows that however mediatized a society, it will not change the doctrinal elements of someone's religious authority. The doctrine, especially

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57 Hafiz Hasan al-Mas'udi, *Taysir al-Khallaq fī 'ilm al-Akhlaq,* 11.

religious one, is one of the important entities in Indonesian people. In other words, piety and obedience toward religious doctrines for Indonesian people still becomes a determinant factor for their social and political preferences. People's media environment, at this point, cannot interfere in the aspect of belief of the people which come out of the manifestation of religious doctrine.

5.3   Culture vs Internet

Another element constitute religious authority is cultural element. What I mean by culture here is the existing social hierarchy in particular culture. In our discussion on the condition of the Kyai's religious authority, we found that how the title Kyai is itself a form of hierarchical system created by the Kyai and have been maintained through various initiatives like for instance developing a network of endogamous marriage alliances among Kyais' family. This non egalitarian system, according to Nurcholish Madjid, can be found historically as the influence of Persia or Iran in particular "the Aryan people" and its Aryanism to Islam in Indonesia.[58] In this way, as I argued before, Kyais define themselves as an exclusive community in the bigger structure of society. In the context of our discussion on Internet and Kyais, it is interesting to question if the coming of Internet change or reshape this long standing hierarchical system of Kyainess?

Our interview with the Kyais reveals that the openness brought by the Internet to the society provides positive tendency to this question. Kyais' consideration of the Internet's ability to provide a wide access to information, along with its user friendly and non-hierarchical feature gives significant impact on breaking down the hierarchical system of kyainess.

This can be clearly seen from the fact that beside the Internet gives easy access to reach the Kyai through various apps, it also facilitate society to criticize Kyai's authority. Even mover, it enables them to unveil the dark side of the Kyai's reality. Hjarvard's understanding of mediatization as 'the process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or become dependent on, the media and their logic'[59] at this point, finds its relevance. In the sense that the logic of Internet as an independent reality, non-hierarchal, open for anybody, authority free, brings everyone who use it to realize that all of them are in the same media environment where there is no place for hierarchy to exists inside it. This said, the mediatized Kyais will find themselves living in the system that provides to anyone inside it the same ability and opportunity to act like anyone else. If so, there is no more hierarchy in such environment.

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58 Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 2013), 84.
59 Stig Hjarvard, "Soft Individualism: Media and the Changing Social Character," in Knut Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization…*, 160.

6   Conclusion

Among many important research areas that mediatization theory might be used as theoretical base, a research regarding the reality of mediatization of religion, of the influence of the media on religious institutions, beliefs, and practices, will be one of the most important area. The overall outcome of the mediatization of religion, however, as explained by Hjarvard, is not a new kind of religion as such, but rather a new social condition in which the power to define and practice religion has changed.[60] This current research on Internet and *Kyais* is essentially heading to the same direction. This said, my aim in researching the reality of the negotiation between Internet and *Kyai* from the perspective of mediatization of religion is to prove that *Kyais'* engagement with media (read: Internet) will not change the very nature of *Kyais* as charismatic religious leader who has their own portion of authority and it will not create a new kind of *Kyais'* reality, but rather a new social condition in which the power to define and negotiate the *Kyais'* reality has changed. Kyais' articulation on what the Internet is, what does the Internet mean for them, the anxieties they shared, the confidence attitude they showed with regard to Internet's impact on the santris' and pesantren's life, obviously are clear token of this reality. At the same time, the fact that Internet will not (yet) change the very idea of Kyai's reality as the one who holds religious, cultural, and doctrinal capitals in a form of an absolute religious authority confirms a stronger "logics of kyainess" over the media logic. What is more, we can argue that the Internet indeed provides an alternative space for society to (re)negotiate what is known as 'religious authority,' however it will not change its very nature. Having said this, however mediatized a society is, religious authority will still finds its undeniable existence. In my opinion, this because religious authority, theoretically is an embedded part of society's life.

Acknowledgements

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60   Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10.

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