

Islamic Knowledge Authority in Disruptive Era

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Abstract

The era of disruption gave birth to various social changes that impacted various lines of life. An era marked by the rise of new media, namely alternative media which in its development has become a new field of debate, one of which is discourse on Islamic or religious knowledge. Where society faces a reduction in understanding of religion without control and the existence of the media makes religious authority shift from personal to impersonal. This means that the existence of authority holders, namely people who are considered qualified in religious affairs such as Kyai, Ustad, or religious leaders are not always a reference like traditional Muslims because everyone can choose a source of religious knowledge according to their needs very easily. This study aims to explain how Islamic scientific authority is in the era of disruption and who are the actors of Islamic scientific authority in the era of disruption. This study uses a qualitative approach that emphasizes literature study, in other words, researchers do not go directly to the field. The results of this study state that Islamic scientific authority in the era of disruption requires Islamic scholarly holders to take part in conveying their knowledge both in real media and in new media which is called social media to the fullest so that the authority of Islamic scholarship is maintained.

Keywords: Authority, Islamic scholarship, Era of Disruption

1. Introduction

A science according to its epistemology begins with shared experience which grows into knowledge and then develops into science on the basis of scientific characteristics. This means that knowledge is the result of human creation with rational reasoning power regarding concrete and abstract matters. In general, the classification of these sciences into three major groups, namely exact sciences, social sciences and humanities. The naming of these groups also experiences differences between a country, nation and people so that in the literature it is known that there are natural sciences, social sciences and cultural sciences or humanities. Sometimes the grouping of knowledge is further strengthened by adding behavioral sciences and spiritual sciences.¹

At first glance it seems that religion as a science is only treated as a discipline which is one of the elements of cultural anthropology. Its position is equated with myth, magic and magic. Because it does not stand alone, religion is then cross-referenced with various other branches of knowledge that are also

¹Kattsoft, Louis O, Introduction to Philosophy. trans. Soejono Soemargono. (Yogyakarta: Tiara Discourse Yogya, 1992), p. 17

linked to religion, namely geography, history, law, sociology, ethics and philosophical systems. From each of these sciences it is developed by adding the word religion after it so that for example sociology becomes the sociology of religion. With this system it can be said that Islamic scholarship is not treated as a monolithic branch. Meanwhile, according to Harun Nasution, the Islamic sciences that developed in Islamic history had their own branches. The Islamic sciences were classified by him into two groups, namely basic groups and branch groups. The Islamic sciences in the basic group include interpretation, hadith, creed/kalam science, Islamic philosophy, tasawuf, tarekat, comparative religion as well as modern developments/updates in the sciences of interpretation, hadith, kalam and philosophy.²

Islamic scholarship certainly cannot be separated from the name of scientific authority, because if this knowledge does not have clear authority, it can be said that science cannot be accounted for. In general, Muslims in Indonesia are more obedient and follow recommendations from traditional religious authorities. Where Islamic scientific authority is held by kyai, ustadz and other Muslim scholars. However, in the current era, there has been a significant shift after the massive wave of social media use which has had an impact on the process of finding newer sources of knowledge and in accordance with the preferences of Muslims, especially in the context of Islamic scholarship. Various fundamental scientific constructions have experienced disruption. This disruption was caused by very rapid changes due to advances in information technology.³

The emergence of the internet has opened a space for discussion, the process of seeking knowledge, recovery of identity crises, spiritual experiences and the distribution of religious values, not only relying on certain authorities. According to Eickelman and Anderson, the development of mass education and the internet through its products, namely new media (media), creates conditions of equality in terms of discourse in the public sphere, one of which is religious discourse. The consequence is that access to seek Islamic knowledge is a right for all people.⁴ In short, the authority on Islamic scholarship in Indonesia is no longer built on the basis of traditional religious authority, but rather the ability of these figures to combine Islamic values with secular values.

Based on the explanation above, the research formula is compiled, namely the formulation of the problem, research questions, and research objectives. The formulation of the research problem is about Islamic scientific authority in the era of disruption. The question is how is the authority of Islamic scholarship in the era of disruption. The purpose of this study is to discuss Islamic scientific authority in the era of disruption. With this research, it is hoped that it can add to the

² Harun Nasution, *Classification of Science and Islamic Research Traditions: A Perspective in Harun Nasution et al, New Traditions of Islamic Religious Research: An Interdisciplinary Review of Science*, (Bandung: t.np, 1998), p. 73

³K. Rohma, *The Existence of Knowledge in the 4.0 Era*. *Journal of Socio Dialectics* 5 vol. 2 of 2020. p. 56-57

⁴Eickelman, DF, & Anderson, J. W, *Redefining Muslim Publics, New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2002 Pg. 67

knowledge of the general public about Islamic scientific authority in the era of disruption.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach using several methods and presented narratively with the aim of finding answers to a phenomenon or question through the application of scientific procedures systematically using a qualitative approach.⁵ The author uses the type of library research or library research in writing this article, namely writing that is done through collecting data and information and the materials needed come from the library, either in the form of journals, books or other sources. The author deals directly with data and information not directly from the field or eyewitnesses, library data is ready to use, although in general it is a secondary source or material from second hand and not original data from first hand.⁶ For this reason, the data collection technique used in this paper is literary data collection, namely by collecting library materials, books and journals related to the object of discussion, which in this case is the authority of Islamic scholarship in the era of disruption and then concluded. This paper will systematically try to describe how Islamic scientific authority is in the current era of disruption.

3. Literature review

Islamic Scientific Authority

Islam is a religion that adheres to the existence of Allah as God, believes in Muhammad as the messenger of Allah and the Koran as the holy book that is believed. In the belief of Muslims the existence of holy books or sources of written norms has its own position. Normative sources that are usually used as references are the Koran and hadith. In fact, besides these two, there are also other sources such as the fatwas of friends, pre-Islamic Shari'a (syar'u man qablanā), masalah mursalah and ijtihad of the Ulama. However, in this context, it is important to look at the Koran and hadith, beyond the others because both have been documented in writing and are generally believed by Muslims to be holy books or texts (scripture). For this reason, the holy book and hadith are the main source of knowledge for Muslims.

According to Harun Nasution that Islamic teachings originating from the Qur'an were revealed from heaven to the Prophet in stages in accordance with the development of the Muslim community during the time the Prophet was still alive, namely in two periods covering the Mecca period and the Medina period. The verses revealed during the Mecca period were verses that contained teachings about faith, worship and verses that contained basic principles regarding the

⁵ M. Yusuf, *Quantitative Qualitative Research Methods and Research Joint* (Jakarta: Fajar Interpratama Mandiri , 2017), p. 92

⁶Lexy Moleong, *Qualitative Research Methods* , (Bandung: Rosdakarya Youth . 2016), p. 75

relationship between humans and each other. The next period was a period of perfecting a number of teachings that were revealed in the first period.⁷

In Islam it is believed that Allah, the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an are the highest authorities. The three are seen as the real authorities. This viewpoint is agreed upon by Muslims, but such an agreement needs further explanation to avoid misunderstanding. A good explanation of this can be traced from the history of how Muslims live this doctrine. Muslims have witnessed historical facts during the leadership of Caliph Uthman bin Affan (23-35 H/644-656 AD) who was accused of failing to run a government system with a *shūrā* system and was accused of having ruled by following his desires, not by God's law. Disobedience to Uthman bin Affan led to his assassination and rebellion known as *slander al-kubrā*.

Authority in Islam, must first be seen as a sociological phenomenon. That is, the issue of religious authority is a social construction, not a theological construction. Or at least, the issue of authority in Islam is a form of interplay between the construction of religious beliefs and social reality. This is important because normatively-theologically, Islam does not recognize the institution of monks (monks) as in Judaism (*lā rahbaniyata fi 'lIslām*), nor the papacy as in Catholicism which controls religious life, including the interpretation of religious teachings. Because Islam does not recognize monastic institutions, religion in Islam is basically a very personal matter. Every adherent of Islam is given the right and space to live and interpret the teachings of his religion. No one or a group that can control or assume that their religious interpretation is the most correct. There is no "official interpretation" that can control and "kill" other interpretations.⁸

So, to avoid chaos in religion, Islam recognizes the concept of *ijmā'*, a concept created by *uṣūl al-fiqh* experts to resolve various issues for which there is no definite legal basis. However, *ijmā'* is not a single concept³ that is definitely binding on Muslims. As a product of *ijtihād fiqhiyyah*, *ijmā'* products are still only binding for those who want to follow (*mulzim bi nafsihī*), cannot be forced on all Muslims. The issue of authority, especially religious authority, has become an arena for contestation by various religious groups. By holding on to authority, it is not uncommon for authoritarian actions to be exhibited by judging other groups that are considered to have deviated from the religious rails that are considered established. Not only is it a matter of judging "cultists", authorities are also often used to control followers of other religions. Controlling here is meant to control the behavior of adherents of other religions that are feared to threaten the religion that holds authority. By holding authority, God seems to reside within that person. His words and actions are considered to represent the words and actions of God. As a result, going against the words and actions of those in authority is considered the same as going against the words and actions of God. At this extreme point,

⁷Harun Nasution, *Classification of Science and Islamic Research Traditions: New Traditions of Islamic Religious Research: An Overview Discipline of Science*, (Bandung : Nuance, 1998). p. 78

⁸Harun Carter, *Authority and Democracy*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1979), p. 54

religious authority will threaten diversity in religious life, both the diversity of religious understanding and the diversity of religious expressions.⁹

Max Weber divides authority into three forms, namely traditional, legal and charismatic authority. Traditional authority refers to the authority possessed by a leader in a traditional society, who has authority in interpreting and enforcing the applicable rules. In Weber's view, along with modernization, this traditional authority will be replaced by legal authority that arise and develop as in bureaucratic authority as it occurs in rational Western society. While traditional authority is related to belief in the sacredness of traditional values and adherence to leader because of his relationship with previous leaders, obedience towards legal authority is built on the principles of modern rationality. Temporary Therefore, charismatic authority refers to the recognition that the leader has charisma, or often called *karomah*.¹⁰

In this regard, to understand the theoretical aspects of the issue of religious authority, it is better to state the opinion of Khaled Abou el-Fadl, a Kuwaiti-born scientist who is now a teacher of Islamic law at the Law Faculty of UCLA, United States. Khaled Abou el-Fadl distinguished two types the nature of authority, namely coercive authority and persuasive authority. Coercive authority is the ability to direct the behavior of others by persuading, taking advantage, threatening, or punishing. This type of authority is forcing others to submit to their thoughts and will. This coercive authority is usually related to political power with all its apparatus having the power to coerce and punish. While persuasive authority is the ability to direct the beliefs and behavior of others on the basis of trust. Therefore, persuasive authority involves normative power that comes from within the person. This type of authority is usually associated with one's knowledge, charisma and the like. These two types of authority are related to the distinction of the next two terms taken by Abou el-Fadl from Richard Friedman in an article entitled "On the Concept of Authority in Political Philosophy,"⁵ namely: "holding authority" (being in authority) and "holding authority". (being an authority). Taking authority means holding an official or structural position that gives authority to issue orders and directives. The authority is obeyed because he has coercive power. In this case there is no recognition of personal submission, because a person may have a different opinion with the authority, but he has no other choice but to follow the will of the authority.¹¹

Thus, the attachment of a person in authority is more due to the existence of a force that compels him to submit. Whereas obedience to "authorities" involves a different spirit. Here people consciously renounce their personal opinions in submission to those in authority who are seen as having better knowledge, wisdom or understanding. Thus, people's submission to authority

⁹Asymawi, Muhammad Said al-, *al-Islām al-Siyāsi*, Cairo: Sina Linnasyr, 1978. Carter, April, *Authority and Democracy*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1979), Pg. 86

¹⁰Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (Illinois: The Free press. 1947), p. 76

¹¹Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *In the Name of God, from Authoritarian Jurisprudence to Authoritative Jurisprudence*, (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), p . 37.

holders is voluntary submission and obedience. Submission is based on individual awareness to follow someone's opinion.

Disruption Era

The era of disruption gave birth to various social changes that impacted various lines of life. The Disruption Era requires everyone to be able to compete and follow a rhythm that continues to run dynamically. Between one dimension and another, both social, economic, and cultural, are increasingly intertwined. Indeed, initially the era of disruption was synonymous with various contestations of technological developments which had economic implications. But gradually, this has penetrated the community's point of view in social life, including religious attitudes. Disruption is not only related to various changes in economic activity that require economic actors to think from a 'tomorrow' perspective, but is also closely related to various challenges in the social life of society. If illustrated, the situation of the era of disruption is the emergence of various phenomena that moving so fast and constantly experiencing changes that are difficult to catch up with. Therefore, as emphasized by Renald Kasali, disruption is actually not only a phenomenon today but a phenomenon tomorrow that is carried over to today.¹²

This era of disruption is a phenomenon when society shifts activities that were originally carried out in the real world, to the virtual world. This phenomenon develops in changing patterns of the business world. The emergence of online transportation is one of its most popular impacts in Indonesia. The changes driven by innovation in science and technology also occur in education. Developed countries, which have been the center of science and technology development, are facing rapid changes that are inevitably affected by destructive changes.

The fundamental changes that occurred in this era of disruption are characterized by a condition as follows:

- a. Physical business cost savings because the business is carried out in cyberspace and becomes simpler
- b. Making product quality from certain businesses better with rapid development
- c. The era of disruption creates new markets so that businesses that have been closed so far can reopen d. Products or services in the era of disruption are more accessible and easier to choose from, such as online shops where we only open stores through cyberspace, then order and access them from the internet.
- d. The era of disruption has made everything now smart. Smarter, more time-saving and more accurate.¹³

In simpler terms, the implications arising from the era of disruption include problems in understanding religion, shifts in religious authority, and changes in people's behavior patterns. First, in terms of religious understanding,

¹²Alamsyah. The Authority of the Prophet's Sunnah as a Source of Islamic Law in the Modern World. (SOCIO-RELIGIOUS 9, 2010), p. 56

¹³Ahmad Muthohar, Ideology of Islamic Boarding School Education, Rizki Putra Library, (Semarang, 2007), p. 20-21

millennial society is no longer like traditional society, which has limited access to information. The era of technological disruption has made anyone regardless of gender and age maturity able to become a consumer as well as a producer of religious information.

This should be watched out for because it can cause uncontrolled understanding of religion. bias understanding bias occurs everywhere-without the process of verification and dialogue as happened in the situation of traditional Muslims. It is not uncommon for this implication to give birth to Muslim groups that seem exclusive and not permissive towards the diversity of religious understandings. They are 'allergy' with a pattern of understanding religion outside of what they believe. Second, when society faces a reduction in religious understanding without control, at the same time the existence of the media makes religious authority shift from personal to impersonal.¹⁴

This means that the existence of authority holders, namely people who are considered qualified in religious matters (such as Kyai, Ustad, or religious leaders) are not always referred to as traditional Muslims because everyone can choose a source of religious knowledge according to their needs very easily. The shift from personal to impersonal also eliminates social interaction which can actually create a separate atmosphere in the process of learning religion. Third, the era of disruption has changed many patterns of people's behavior, especially through new media intermediaries. New media has provided new insights for the public to act according to what is obtained from the media.

Social media is the most dominant factor that has the most influence on the pattern of people's lives. The standard of decency is no longer the same from one person to another. Society makes appropriate formulas in behaving in accordance with what is ingested from the media. However, the existence of new media cannot be ignored in Muslim life today. Its existence seems to have become a basic need that occupies a primary position in everyday life. Unfortunately, the new media, with their practical and multitasking characteristics, has greatly influenced how religion treats and treats religious sources. This new media indirectly becomes the agent of transformation of various religious models who live in the midst of society. On the one hand, with the existence of new media, religious communities are facilitated in terms of access to sources of religious values, but on the other hand caution is needed because the sources taken are not always valid and authoritative.

4. Discussion

Traditional religious authorities are those who have high knowledge of the Islamic religion, such as the ability to read classical Arabic books, master the sciences of jurisprudence, hadith, tasawuf, nahwu, sharaf, and others. In addition, traditional religious authority can also be formed because it has followers or students. In the pesantren tradition, followers are known as santri. Then, referring to the traditional religious authority of a kyai, Dhofier mentions another aspect

¹⁴Primayana, KH, & Dewi, PY A , . Education Management in Religious Moderation in the Digital Disruption Era , (Maha Widya Bhuwana, 2(1), 2021), p. 1-6.

that forms traditional religious authority, namely his heredity from the kyai's family.¹⁵

the emergence of new religious authorities does not directly weaken the role of traditional scientific authorities. Traditional scientific authorities also adapt to new religious discourses to strengthen their authority as holders of Islamic discourse. Traditional religious authorities were able to survive and even become major players in the wave of communication technology and information, social media. In turn, the scope of its authority is not limited to the traditional scope, but spreads to all existing segments of Islamic discourse. In addition, the meeting between traditional status and new media can form a celebrity culture for a preacher with a traditional religious education background. As said by Zaman and Turner, the new authority is filled by people who do not have sufficient Islamic religious skills, come from general education (not pesantren), and do not have access to traditional sources of Islamic knowledge (turath).¹⁶

The existence of science can be interpreted as the existence of science at a time. The existence of science in the Disruption era is an assessment of the existence of science in the Disruption era which is developing rapidly and developing towards various reforms which cannot be separated from the role of science. Various recent technological discoveries in the 4.0 era show that the existence of science tends to increase. In this era, humans are competing with each other to achieve the highest possible level of education, both formal and non-formal. This is done to continue to update self-ability and knowledge. Because, the ability of a human being can make himself increase based on science.¹⁷

Disruptive Era as a consequence of advances in information technology has a disruptive character. In other words, character destroys various things that have been established, including disrupting the building of past knowledge to be replaced with new knowledge. According to Syakhrani Abdul Wahab (2019), entering this era of disruption, Islamic education is required to be more sensitive to symptoms of social change in society. Islamic education must be willing to disrupt itself if it wants to strengthen its existence. Sticking with the old ways and systems and closing oneself off from developments in the world, will further make Islamic education worse off and obsolete (obsolete).

Meanwhile The era of the industrial revolution 4.0 has changed the way of thinking about education. The changes made are not only in the way of teaching, but far more important are changes in the perspective of educational concepts. This view directs academics to conduct a review of the building of Islamic sciences. According to George J. Mouly, the development of science is divided into three stages, namely animism, empirical science and theoretical science. George J. Mouly explained that at the stage of animism, science was often

¹⁵Zaman, Muhammad Qasim, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 1-16;

¹⁶Han, Muhamad Ibtissam, *Youth, Street Preaching and Fragmentation of Religious Authority: A Study of the Da'wah Movement of Hijrah Youth and Hidayah Youth*. Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Postgraduate, (2018), p. 59

¹⁷K. Rohma, *The Existence of Knowledge in the 4.0 Era*. *Journal of Socio Dialectics* 5 (2) 2020, p. 97

associated with elements of myth. Goerge stated that the final level of science is theoretical science, in which the relationships and symptoms found in empirical science are explained on the basis of a causal framework as a step to control activities so that the expected results can be achieved.¹⁸

This theoretical knowledge must be reviewed in terms of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontology is understood as the foundation of science which is the basis for the establishment of a science. Epistemology is understood as the methodological framework of a science. Axiology is understood as the use of a science at the operational level. The era of disruption 4.0 forces us to re-examine ontology, epistemology and axiology. A science may not have a strong ontology, not methodological to develop itself, and not axiological to be actualized operationally in society. That's why, a lot of old knowledge was shattered by the presence of new knowledge in the midst of the 4.0 disruption era. The true Islamic religious sciences are not only worldly oriented, but also for the salvation of the hereafter. Ontologically Islamic sciences have a strong foundation because they are based on divine texts originating from the Qur'an and hadith as well as the thoughts of the scholars. Islamic sciences can be said to be loaded with a spiritual dimension because they are not only oriented to the world but to the hereafter. Methodologically and operationally, the Islamic sciences undeniably borrow from the development of theoretical science. This methodological and operational side should be re-examined. By borrowing Wagah's language, Islamic sciences must be prepared to disrupt themselves. Because, if not so then it will be disrupted by itself. Things that need to be disrupted are mainly the methodological and operational aspects. In this case, it is necessary to design a methodology of Islamic knowledge that is able to develop itself, so that it is axiologically meaningful for the context of life in the present.¹⁹

Precisely the era of disruption 4.0 is an opportunity for Islamic sciences. At a time when other sciences are dead in the sense that they are not developing, then now is the momentum to develop Islamic science. Several opportunities include humans in the global world currently developing spirituality. This is caused by the emptiness of the soul where humans in the midst of an increasingly busy world need a spiritual side. Islamic science, especially in the study of Sufism, has a strong foundation on this matter. Currently sharia economy is also developing as an alternative to conventional economics. In various parts of the world there is an Islamic economic system in the form of Islamic banking. Halal systems are also being developed in various business and business sectors, such as halal food, halal cosmetics, halal tourism, halal travel, and even up to sharia hotels, sharia swimming pools, and others. Basically, Islamic sciences have a great opportunity to develop in this era of disruption 4.0. Of course various Islamic knowledge cannot be separated from the Prophet Muhammad who laid down the basic principles which were later developed by Muslim scholars and intellectuals during the Abbasid period to produce the golden age of Islam as a

¹⁸Jalaluddin , *Philosophy of Science* , 1st Edition , (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers , 2013) , p. 59

¹⁹A. Syakhrani, *Strengthening the Existence of Islamic Education in the 4.0 Era. Journal of Cross-Country Islamic Studies* , (Vol.1 No.2 December 2019) , Pg. 57-69.

pillar of Muslim civilization. Now is the time to carry out the development of Islamic scholarship.

According to Syed Farid Alatas offers 10 points of attitude that can be carried out and held by Islamic Progressive groups, including; 1) balance between knowledge and practice (ilm'amal); 2) inspired by Edward Said's criticism of Orientalism; 3) there is room for criticism, both internal and external; 4) being inclusive as well as exclusive on the other hand, where one must accept diversity and plurality but must be exclusively able to maintain one's traditions; 5) there is continuity between maintaining tradition and embracing modernity simultaneously; 6) there is a link between extoric and esoteric aspects, by linking Islamic laws explained by Ulama as well as connectivity with the wider community by paying attention to ethics, morality, and religious experience; 7) trusting rationality and non rationality by combining religious knowledge that is acceptable to reason as well as aspects of religious experience, as practiced by the Sufis; 8) freedom as well as restriction, with due regard state rules that regulate stubborn groups while also providing space for freedom of thought and academics; 9) criticizing the oppressive global structure of capitalism by placing oneself not part of that structure; 10) balancing between the life of the world and the hereafter.²⁰

5. Conclusion

Science is an important part of human life. The reason that is given, leads humans to continue to update the various knowledge they have. In the era of disruption, with its icon, namely the rapid development of technology, it does not make science disappear into the masses, despite the fact that there are phenomena of mutual disruption among science. Islamic knowledge has a strong stability because it is based on spirituality which is oriented to the world and the hereafter. The reality in the 4.0 era is visible that between one science and another science is in a situation of mutual disruption. The era of disruption 4.0 is an opportunity to assert the authority of Islamic sciences on the one hand, and at the same time becomes a momentum to review the methodological aspects and their actualization based on relevant developments on the other hand. the emergence of new religious authorities does not directly weaken the role of traditional religious authorities. Traditional religious authorities also adapt to new religious discourses to strengthen their authority as holders of Islamic discourse. instead the traditional religious authority was able to survive and even become a major player in the wave of communication technology and information, social media. In turn, the scope of its authority is not limited to the traditional scope, but spreads to all existing segments of Islamic discourse. In addition, the meeting between traditional status and new media can form a celebrity culture for a preacher with a traditional religious education background. Therefore, there is a need for in-depth socialization and interaction related to the relationship between traditional Islamic scientific authorities and authorities in the era of disruption in order to create

²⁰ W. Akmaliah, Articulating the Alternative Voices of Southeast Asian Muslims. Islamic Studies. <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.2020>, p. 76

synergy in the da'wah process and the distribution of Islamic values that are intact and comprehensive .

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