

Urban Sufism

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Abstract

This article explores the shifting landscape of Muslim piety among Indonesia's urban middle class through an analysis of three major waves: Urban Sufism, the Hijaber community, and the Hijrah movement. Drawing on theories of *popular religion*, *ritual bricolage*, and *pious consumption*, the study argues that contemporary piety is not a rupture from tradition but a reconfiguration shaped by digital media, moral capitalism, and symbolic authority. Employing a qualitative methodology that combines literature review, digital ethnography, and visual-narrative analysis, the article demonstrates how spiritual values are sustained through new forms of expression—ranging from motivational Islamic seminars and modest fashion to Instagram-based *dakwah* and halal branding. These developments reveal a dynamic process of religious subjectivation, where Islamic devotion becomes both a personal ethic and a social performance, closely tied to class aspirations, visual aesthetics, and market logic. The article contributes to current debates on digital religion by highlighting how Indonesian Muslims construct religiosity not only through textual interpretation, but also through visual symbols, affective communities, and commercial practices. In doing so, it challenges binary narratives of secularization versus religiosity and offers a nuanced framework for understanding continuity and change in contemporary Islamic expressions.

Keywords

Urban Sufism, digital piety, symbolic authority, halal economy, Muslim middle class

Introduction

The transformation of religious expression within Indonesia's urban Muslim society over the past two decades reflects a crucial dynamic at the intersection of spirituality, modernity, and the market. One of the most striking manifestations of this dynamic is the emergence of the *Hijrah* phenomenon—a movement generally understood as a personal shift toward a more devout lifestyle. Yet in practice, *Hijrah* involves a variety of performative elements, media engagement, and consumer behaviors. This phenomenon illustrates how piety is no longer expressed solely through worship and individual practices, but increasingly through aesthetics, lifestyle choices, and participation in digital communities.¹

The development of the *Hijrah* movement cannot be understood in isolation from the long-standing history of Islamic spirituality in Indonesia, particularly the transformation of Sufism within urban settings. From Aa Gym's massive *dzikir* gatherings to communities like the *Hijaber*

¹ Annisa R. Beta, "Hijabers: How young urban Muslim women redefine themselves in Indonesia," *International Communication Gazette* 76, no. 4-5 (2014): 377-389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048514524103>; Martin Slama, "Practising Islam through social media in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416796>

sisterhood and events such as *HijrahFest*, there is a clear continuity in how the urban Muslim middle class frames piety as part of a digitized and commodified public life.² This transformation reflects a new form of popular religion—one no longer controlled entirely by formal religious institutions, but increasingly shaped by public figures, digital networks, and the halal lifestyle market.³

The literature on popular Islam, pious consumption, and post-Islamism suggests that contemporary religious expression can no longer be separated from the logics of media and moral capitalism.⁴ However, much of this scholarship remains focused on symbolic visibility or political resistance. In contrast, the Indonesian context offers a unique space where religious piety grows alongside symbolic capital, collective affect, and consumption—without necessarily shedding its spiritual dimensions. Within this context, the concepts of *material piety*⁵ and *ritual bricolage*⁶ become particularly useful in analyzing how urban Muslims reassemble religious practices within a modern configuration that is fluid, pragmatic, and yet normatively grounded.

This article argues that the three waves of urban Muslim piety in Indonesia—Urban Sufism, the *Hijaber* community, and the *Hijrah* movement—constitute a form of middle-class ritual bricolage that merges Sufi values, the halal market logic, and digital aesthetics. This transformation reflects how piety is reconfigured symbolically, normatively, and performatively within the framework of religious capitalism. Employing a qualitative approach based on literature review, social media analysis, and visual documentation, this article seeks to contribute to a renewed reading of continuity and change in the expression of contemporary Muslim religiosity in Indonesia.

Popular Religion and Pious Subjectivities

The *Hijrah* phenomenon among Indonesia's urban Muslim middle class is not merely an individual transformation toward greater religiosity; it is also a complex socio-cultural expression that blends *da'wah* aesthetics, moral consumption, and the repositioning of religious authority amidst the logics of capitalism and digital mediation. To critically engage with this phenomenon, the

² Julia D. Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (2001): 701-729. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700107>; Rachel Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Greg Fealy, "Consuming Islam: Commodified religion and aspirational piety in contemporary Indonesia," in Greg Fealy and Sally White (Eds.), *Expressing Islam: Religious life and politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), 15-39.

³ Hubert Knoblauch, *Populäre Religion: Auf dem Weg in eine spirituelle Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2009).

⁴ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005); Charles Hirschkind, *The ethical soundscape: Cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Asef Bayat, *Making Islam democratic: Social movements and the post-Islamist turn* (California: Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁵ Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia*.

⁶ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000).

article employs a conceptual framework that integrates three approaches: popular religion, ritual bricolage, and pious consumption.

First, the *Hijrah* movement and the *Hijaber* community represent contemporary forms of popular religion—religious expressions that are non-institutional, digitized, and rooted in affect and identity narratives. As Knoblauch has argued, popular religion extends into public space through performativity, not merely through traditional ritual.⁷ In Indonesia, *da'wah* is now primarily consumed via Instagram, YouTube, and *da'wah* festivals such as *HijrahFest*, which feature celebrities as spiritual actors and mediate piety as a lifestyle.⁸ Their success in building communities indicates that religious authority has become relational and symbolic, rather than solely institutional.

Second, the transformation from Urban Sufism to *Hijrah* reflects the practice of ritual bricolage,⁹ in which traditional elements—such as *dzikir*, the Prophet's *hijrah*, *ulama's* advice, and a simple lifestyle—are reassembled into forms that align with social media dynamics, middle-class values, and visual culture. This suggests that piety does not disappear, but rather undergoes negotiation in form and meaning in order to remain relevant amid the pressures of urban modernity. The phenomenon also demonstrates that spirituality does not always move toward secularization; instead, it can become increasingly public and visual, as seen in studies of young Muslim women and the global halal industry.¹⁰

Third, this phenomenon is deeply intertwined with the practice of *pious consumption*—piety that is mediated and interpreted through consumer choices, ranging from halal cosmetics and *syar'i* fashion to exclusive religious study groups held in hotels. Rinaldo have shown that middle-class Muslim women in Indonesia often use value-based consumption as a means of expressing identity, asserting social status, and signaling religious commitment.¹¹ In this context, *Hijrah* cannot be separated from market logics and spiritual capitalism, which together produce a new form of religion-based “moral economy.”

Although the literature on popular Islam has made significant contributions to understanding transformations of piety in the digital age, much of it continues to emphasize dimensions of visibility, personal symbolization, and affective performativity. This approach often centers public figures and visual expression as prerequisites for agency, overlooking religious expressions that are anti-figurative, anonymous, and norm-driven. This article proposes a theoretical expansion by introducing the concepts of *silent agency* and *anonymous collectivity* as alternative analytic lenses. By emphasizing visual anonymity, textual authority, and *syar'i* aesthetics as forms of representation, the article challenges the assumption that religious engagement in digital spaces must be articulated through personalization and visibility. Hence, the article's contribution lies

⁷ Knoblauch, *Populäre Religion*.

⁸ Slama, “Practising Islam through social media in Indonesia.”

⁹ Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*.

¹⁰ Banu Gokarikel and Ellen McLarney, “Muslim Women, Consumer Capitalism, and the Islamic Culture Industry,” *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6, no. 3 (2010): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.2979/mew.2010.6.3.1>

¹¹ Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety*.

not only in offering a periodization of urban Muslim piety, but also in repositioning the epistemological understanding of female religious agency in the mediative age.

To examine the dynamics of piety representation across the three waves of urban Muslim religiosity, this article employs an interpretive qualitative approach, combining literature review, digital ethnography, and visual-narrative analysis. Primary data were collected from Instagram accounts that reflect a range of urban Islamic values—such as @muslimah.salafy, @fiqihwanita, @hijrahfest, and @pemudahijrah—as well as narratives from digital documentaries and television programs like *Celebrity Hijrah* (TransTV, 2015) and *Hijrah Culture* (Narasi TV, 2020). Secondary sources include contemporary academic literature on popular Islam, the Muslim middle class, and moral economy. The unit of analysis focuses on visual symbols, caption structures, the use of *syar'ī* quotations, and the aesthetic styles of these accounts that indicate patterns of digital piety. This approach draws on the frameworks of visual ethnography¹² and media discourse analysis,¹³ allowing a critical reading of how religious norms, symbolic authority, and religious subjectivity are symbolically constructed through digital media.

Urban Sufism and the Middle-Class Turn to Piety

The emergence of Urban Sufism in Indonesia since the early 2000s marked a new form of piety flourishing in urban spaces, particularly among the Muslim middle class experiencing social mobility, educational expansion, and cultural transformation. This phenomenon did not originate from traditional *ṭarīqa* orders, but evolved from study groups (*pengajian*), thematic *halaqah*, and popular religious figures who responded to the spiritual needs of modern, connected, and globally exposed urban communities.¹⁴

Unlike classical Sufism, which is esoteric and based on spiritual lineages (*bay'a*, *murshid*, *dhikr khafī*), Urban Sufism is characterized by openness, inclusivity, and an emphasis on practical piety that can be translated into the public social sphere.¹⁵ In the Indonesian context, this concept was popularized by figures such as Aa Gym, Ustadz Jeffry al-Buchori, and the Paramadina community founded by Nurcholish Madjid. They promoted a form of spiritual guidance that was accessible, communicative, and media-friendly, tailored to the lifestyle of urban society.

¹² Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, Second Edition (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2015).

¹³ David Machin and Andrew Mayr, "How to do Critical Discourse Analysis." *European Journal of Communication* 29, no. 1 (2014): 131-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323113511002e>

¹⁴ Julia D. Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival"; Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 2 (2007): 389-420. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911807000661>

¹⁵ Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983); Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000).

This transformation intersects closely with the process of *santrization of the middle class*,¹⁶ which refers to the integration of Islamic values into the professional, educated, and economically established lifestyle. The emergence of religious study groups in exclusive venues—from five-star hotels to shopping malls—signifies that spirituality has become part of the status symbols and moral language of the middle class. Fealy refers to this as *aspirational piety*, wherein religious devotion becomes a means for the Muslim middle class to assert moral authority and social credibility.¹⁷

In this regard, Urban Sufism functions as a meeting point between spiritual needs and symbolic capital. Many public figures and Muslim professionals utilize *pengajian* forums, mass *Dhikr Akbar* events, and Islamic motivational seminars to align religious values with the demands of modern productivity.¹⁸ *Dhikr* and Islamic study are no longer practiced in secluded circles, but are packaged into mass gatherings, broadcast on television, and capitalized through Islamic lifestyle products—ranging from motivational books and spiritual seminars to exclusive *umrah* travel packages.

Recent data from the Demographic Institute of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, indicate that 68% of urban middle-class Muslims in Indonesia participate in religious activities that are integrated with social or economic engagements.¹⁹ This suggests that spirituality in urban contexts is not isolative but interactive and socially productive.

Moreover, the rise of *Islamic soft power* through friendly communication styles and visual media aesthetics has reinforced Urban Sufism as a lifestyle rather than merely a *ṭarīqa* movement. Lim's study shows that many urban Muslims now turn to digital sermons and YouTube *ustadz* as their primary sources of religious reference—more so than traditional religious organizations.²⁰ This trend illustrates how religious authority is being restructured through digitalization and personal branding, while also reinforcing a logic of religious individualism packaged within a collective framework.

Urban Sufism has also paved the way for more fluid and adaptive forms of piety that engage with popular culture—such as Islamic fashion, religious tourism, and professional Muslim communities—which serve as a bridge to the second wave: the rise of the *Hijaber* community. Here, the shift from spiritual interiority to religious symbols and aesthetics becomes increasingly visible, simultaneously opening the space for market dynamics to shape contemporary Muslim expressions of piety.

¹⁶ Robert W. Hefner, "Islamization and democratization in Indonesia," in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, eds. Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvath (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press: 1997), 75-127.

¹⁷ Fealy, *Consuming Islam*.

¹⁸ Saiful Mujani and William R. Liddle, "Indonesia's Approaching Elections: Politics, Islam, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 109-123. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0037>

¹⁹ Lembaga Demografi FEB UI, "Laporan Riset Kelas Menengah Muslim dan Praktik Keagamaan Urban." Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia.

²⁰ Marlina Lim, "Archipelago Online: The Internet and Political Activism in Indonesia" (Ph.D Thesis, University of Twente, the Netherland, 2005).

Thus, Urban Sufism not only paved the way for more visually oriented and identity-based *hijrah* practices, but also marked a transformation in the meaning of piety—from one that is Sufi-based and esoteric to one that is expressive, public, and intertwined with the moral economy and social performativity. This wave laid the cultural and symbolic groundwork for the emergence of digital religiosity and *hijrah* branding in the subsequent era.

Performing Faith through Fashion and Consumption

The second stage in the development of urban Muslim piety in Indonesia is marked by the emergence of the *Hijaber* community—a wave of young Muslim women who express their religious identity through *syar'i* fashion, Islamic lifestyle, and digital performativity. Unlike Urban Sufism, which is rooted in Sufi spirituality and *halaqah*-based communities, the *Hijaber* phenomenon is grounded in visual aesthetics, collective affect, and public symbolization of religious commitment. This shift reflects a movement away from esoteric piety toward a form of religiosity that is performable, consumable, and closely linked to branding, identity, and digital social capital.²¹

Emerging in the early 2010s, the *Hijaber* movement combined Islamic dress codes with global fashion trends, primarily through social media platforms like Instagram. *Hijrah* celebrities and fashion bloggers such as Dian Pelangi became central figures in representing the urban *Muslimah* lifestyle—modern, *syar'i*, and expressive. They did not merely offer Islamic visuality; they also produced identity discourses about Muslim women as active, professional, and economically empowered individuals. This demonstrates how religiosity has become part of the identity marketplace, where appearance serves not only as an expression of faith, but also as a medium for displaying class, choice, and moral taste.²²

The expansion of communities such as *Hijabers Community* (HC) and *Hijabers Mom Community* (HMC) shows that Muslim women's fashion is no longer merely a matter of *fiqh* interpretation, but has become a collective expression of cultural piety embedded in media consumption, public participation, and halal economic logic. In one of her statements, Dian Pelangi once wrote: "*Hijab* is not just an obligation, but also an identity. We can be *syar'i* and stylish without losing who we are".²³ This statement reflects how religious norms are being reconciled with aesthetics and self-expression.

Furthermore, the growth of the halal market in the fashion and cosmetics sectors has become a major driving force behind this wave. Brands such as Wardah, which declared itself a halal cosmetic brand as early as 1995, have become emblematic of the successful fusion between

²¹ Beta, "Hijabers."

²² Mona Abaza, "Shifting Landscapes of Fashion in Contemporary Egypt," in *Islamic fashion and anti-fashion: New perspectives from Europe and North America*, eds. Emma Tarlo and Annelies Moors (Londo-New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), 75-92; Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety*.

²³ Dian Pelangi, *Instagram*, 2017. <https://www.instagram.com/dianpelangi/?hl=en>

religious ethics and modern branding logic. Wardah does not merely market its products as halal; it specifically targets urban young *Muslimah* through beauty campaigns infused with spiritual values and *syar'i* representations. This success is reflected in its domestic market dominance, capturing 35% of Indonesia's cosmetics market by 2022, positioning Wardah as a pioneer of faith-driven branding in Southeast Asia.²⁴ This value-based consumption illustrates the phenomenon of *pious consumption*,²⁵ where products are chosen not only for their function but also for the spiritual meanings associated with them.

However, the visually expressed piety associated with this phenomenon is not without controversy. Some critics view the *Hijaber* trend as a commodification of religion, wherein piety is reduced to appearances shaped by social media algorithms, branding strategies, and moral capitalism.²⁶ Nonetheless, such critiques often fail to recognize that Muslim women in this context are not passive recipients. On the contrary, they actively use digital spaces to negotiate religious meanings, reconstruct identities, and access the public sphere in ways previously restricted under classical patriarchal frameworks. Within this perspective, *hijrah* expression through fashion is a form of culturally contextual agency—not merely a fleeting trend.²⁷

Interestingly, the *Hijaber* trend has also given rise to lifestyle-affiliated communities such as the Tunnece Lover Community—a fashion-oriented group that not only sells products but also fosters social and moral solidarity among urban Muslim women. Here, we can see that *performing piety* through consumption does not signal passivity, but rather represents an agency that is collective, digital, and economic. As shown in the research of Pramiyanti & Baulch,²⁸ the visual narratives constructed by *Hijaber* communities demonstrate efforts to bridge the tension between *syar'i* norms, middle-class expression, and digital aesthetic demands.

Thus, the second wave in the transformation of urban Muslim religiosity in Indonesia represents a significant shift: from inwardly oriented spirituality to a form of piety that is visually performed, socially curated, and embedded within the networks of the halal economy. In this context, faith is not only internalized but also displayed, consumed, and positioned as the moral language of the contemporary Muslim middle class. This wave also opens up space for the emergence of more collective and transformative *hijrah* narratives in the subsequent phase—where piety becomes not only a matter of identity, but also of social positioning, digital representation, and symbolic authority. In this sense, the *hijrah* movement marks not only urban Muslims' digital

²⁴ Inaya Rakhmani, *Mainstreaming Islam in Indonesia: Television, Identity, and the Middle Class* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016);

²⁵ Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety*.

²⁶ Eva F. Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 24-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416758>

²⁷ Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*.

²⁸ Emma Baulch and Alila Pramiyanti, "Hijabers on Instagram: Using Visual Social Media to Construct the Ideal Muslim Woman," *Social Media+Society* 4, no. 4 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118800308>

religiosity, but also serves as a contested arena of representation, affect, and symbolic authority in a digitized and marketized contemporary Islam.

The Rise of the Hijrah Movement: Piety, Publicity, and Moral Economy

The emergence of the “Hijrah” community and identity as the third wave in the transformation of urban Muslim religiosity in Indonesia represents a collective articulation of digital piety driven by affective logics and symbolic capital, rather than formal religious institutions. Unlike the *Hijaber* phase, which focused on individual visual expression and aesthetically driven *syar’i* lifestyles, the *Hijrah* movement presents itself as an *affective community*—a network formed through visual *da’wah*, collective emotion, and digitally curated symbols of piety. The participation of public figures and Muslim celebrities serves as a primary resource for establishing *symbolic authority*, which does not stem from structural positions of religious scholarship, but from moral credibility and relatable narratives of personal transformation.²⁹

This movement began gaining momentum in the mid-2010s, when public figures such as Teuku Wisnu, Arie Untung, and Dude Herlino emphasized stories of personal spiritual change. Its apex was marked by the 2018 *HijrahFest* in Jakarta—a visual *da’wah* festival that combined spirituality, halal lifestyle, Islamic entrepreneurship, and middle-class aesthetics into a single symbolic space. Within the framework of *religious branding*,³⁰ *HijrahFest* became a professionally packaged and visually driven *da’wah* ecosystem, demonstrating how Islamic values are capitalized and disseminated through the logics of market and affect.

The narratives constructed through social media reinforce the cohesion of the *Hijrah* community as a digital entity. The @hijrahfest account, for example, posted: “Hijrah is not just a trend, but a way home.” This phrase reflects *affective framing*—a strategy of framing *da’wah* as an emotional and existential experience rather than as purely doctrinal instruction.³¹ Such representations are not grounded in theological argument or clerical figures, but in affective resonance and spiritual meanings that feel intimately connected to the identity quests of the urban Muslim generation.

Women play a central role in the *Hijrah* movement—not as passive followers, but as producers of symbolic and visual narratives. Events such as *Women’s Festive*, initiated by Fenita Arie, highlight *gendered symbolic authority*—a repositioning of women as agents of visual *da’wah* who combine self-expression, *syar’i* values, and performative aesthetics into a communicative and normative representational package. In an interview with Narasi TV, Fenita stated, “Fashion is

²⁹ John Portmann, *Celebrity Morals and the Loss of Religious Authority* (London: Routledge, 2019).

³⁰ Gökarıksel and McLarney, “Muslim Women, Consumer Capitalism, and the Islamic Culture Industry.”

³¹ José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

my path of *da'wah*." This statement is not only personal but also affirms the role of women in shaping a form of visual piety that is socially and spiritually legitimate.³²

Community accounts such as @pemudahijrah and @sahabatsurga.id reinforce this form of representation through a *da'wah* aesthetic that does not rely on prominent figures but instead draws from *textual authority*—that is, authority built through inspirational quotes, calligraphy, and recurring minimalist visual designs. In this context, *da'wah* is not delivered through bodies or voices, but through texts and symbols that shape how audiences emotionally and normatively experience and understand Islam.³³

Structurally, the *Hijrah* movement also adopts the principle of *wasatiyyah*,³⁴ a moderate approach to *da'wah* that avoids both extremism and liberalism. Communities like @sahabatsurga.id utilize the *hijrah* narrative to reach urban youth seeking spiritual peace, identity stability, and a sense of belonging within an increasingly fragmented landscape of values.

From the perspective of moral economy, *Hijrah* communities have successfully created financially productive *da'wah* ecosystems. They actively organize Islamic business seminars, collaborate with Muslim marketplaces, and promote halal products as part of a religious lifestyle. According to a DinarStandard report in 2023, the contribution of religious communities to Indonesia's sharia economy has increased by 12.6% over the past three years—with *Hijrah* communities serving as one of its key driving forces.³⁵

Thus, *hijrah* is not merely an individual spiritual journey; it is also a sociopolitical repositioning that negotiates the boundaries between religious authority, religious consumption, and collective expression in contemporary Islam. This movement represents a new configuration of digital religious community— affective, symbolic, and economic—blending transcendental values with market logics, *da'wah* with visuality, spiritual identity with social capital. This is the significance of the third wave: not merely an expansion of the *Hijaber* trend, but the articulation of a *new religious subjectivity* shaped by digital space, visual language, and Indonesia's urban Muslim middle class.

Continuity and Change: Ritual Bricolage and the Islamic Middle Class

The phenomenon of religiosity among Indonesia's urban middle-class Muslims over the past two decades cannot be reduced to mere trends or spiritual fashion. What we have witnessed through

³² Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis, *Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

³³ Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance*.

³⁴ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

³⁵ DinarStandard, "State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2023/24" (DinarStandard & Salaam Gateway, 2023). <https://salaamgateway.com/reports>

the three waves of transformation—Urban Sufism, the *Hijaber* community, and the *Hijrah* movement—is a manifestation of what Hervieu-Léger calls *ritual bricolage*: the reassembling of elements from religious tradition into forms that better align with contemporary sociocultural conditions.³⁶ Within these transformations lies a continuity of values, religious spirit, and aspirations, alongside significant shifts in format, media, and modes of representation. This section aims to connect the narratives of the three previous waves to a theoretical framework that explains how piety and Islamic identity are flexibly constructed by the urban middle class through symbolic practice, moral consumption, and representational aesthetics.

¹⁴ In the context of Urban Sufism, we observe the continuation of Sufi values such as *dzikir*, inner introspection, and *tazkiyatun nafs*, though these are repackaged into professional religious gatherings, spiritual retreats, and motivational seminars held in luxury hotels. This phenomenon demonstrates that the content of spiritual values is maintained, while the media context is transposed into public and middle-class social spaces.³⁷ This transformation does not stem from decadence but from the need to make spirituality compatible with the logic of modernity.

In the second wave, the *Hijaber* community did not abandon *syar'i* principles but reframed them within visual language and consumer culture—turning Islamic fashion into a medium for expressing piety and a symbol of empowerment.³⁸ The visibility of the *Hijabers* is not a rejection of norms; rather, it is a reaffirmation of religious values through more publicly communicative forms. This practice asserts that modest fashion is not a reduction of piety but an aesthetic articulation of spiritual values.

Meanwhile, the *Hijrah* wave has expanded expressions of piety into collective movements and digital communities. Various *Hijrah* groups—from *HijrahFest* to *Pemuda Hijrah*—serve as arenas where piety is not only a personal performance but a shared project to build a religious society amid capitalism, media saturation, and the diversity of urban Muslim identities. Elements such as *niyyah* (intention), *tazkiyah* (self-purification), and the spirit of *da'wah* are not lost—they are simply reoriented in form, with the participation of celebrities, entrepreneurs, and halal brands signaling the integration of symbolic and economic logics into contemporary religiosity.³⁹

This process is closely intertwined with class dynamics. The Muslim middle class possesses the *cultural capital* necessary to navigate the complexities of modernity: they leverage higher education, social mobility, and digital literacy to access, shape, and disseminate religious values.⁴⁰ They also wield the power to redefine religious authority—not as the exclusive domain of mass organizations or senior *ulama*, but as a shared space alongside inspirational figures, Instagram

³⁶ Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*.

³⁷ Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival"; Hefner, "Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia."

³⁸ Beta, "Hijabers."

³⁹ Chairawaty and Kiki Zakiah, "Branding Identity as Da'wah Strategy: Islamic Business Ethics," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal of Humiletic Studies* 14, no. 2 (December 30, 2020): 259-274. <https://doi.org/10.15575/ida.jhs.v14i2.10595>

⁴⁰ Rinaldo, *Mobilizing piety: Islam and feminism in Indonesia*; Slama, "Practising Islam through social media in Indonesia."

ustazahs, and value-based communities. It is here the emergence of what is so-called *decentralized symbolic authority*—a condition in which religious truths are negotiated within interactive spaces that blend values, aesthetics, and consumption.⁴¹

The process of *continuity and change* in piety is far from neutral; it is saturated with agency, affect, and social calculation. Contemporary piety among the Muslim middle class not only reflects the persistence of Islamic values but also demonstrates the capacity to productively adapt their form without abandoning normative substance. In this regard, piety becomes a means of navigating modern life, reinforcing moral identity, and articulating religious values within a social system driven by symbolic capital.⁴²

Data from the University of Indonesia's Demographic Institute in 2023 show that 78% of Indonesia's urban Muslim middle class associate piety with self-management, disciplined consumption, and a halal lifestyle.⁴³ This indicates that transformation is not confined to symbolic realms alone, but is actively reshaping the *habitus* of a Muslim society increasingly conscious of Islamic living across all aspects of life—from clothing and food to entertainment and finance.⁴⁴

In conclusion, contemporary narratives of religiosity in Indonesia cannot be understood through a binary lens of old versus new. Rather, they form a mosaic of transposed values, where piety remains a central concern, yet is conveyed through media and styles attuned to the spirit of the times. This transformation demonstrates that Islam, as a tradition, is not static but capable of adaptation, response, and the creation of new spaces for expression, reflection, and more flexible and diverse forms of authority—particularly among the urban Muslim middle class positioned at the heart of Indonesia's socio-cultural transformation.

Conclusion

This article asserts that the *hijrah* phenomenon within Indonesia's urban Muslim society is not a sudden or isolated occurrence, but rather a continuation of a long-standing transformation of religiosity—one that has been re-mediated through digital platforms, market logic, and middle-class dynamics. By tracing three key waves—Urban Sufism, the *Hijaber* community, and the *Hijrah* movement—this study demonstrates that piety is not a static entity, but a continually negotiated expression of values shaped by the contexts of modernity and moral capitalism.

The primary contribution of this article lies in highlighting how the process of *ritual bricolage* actively operates within Indonesia's urban Muslim milieu. Through this lens, it becomes clear that

⁴¹ Marleen de Witte, Martijn de Koning and Thijl Sunier, "Aesthetics of Religious Authority: Introduction," *Culture and Religion* 16, no. 2 (August 12, 2015): 117-124.

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁴³ Lembaga Demografi FEB UI, "Laporan Riset Kelas Menengah Muslim dan Praktik Keagamaan Urban."

⁴⁴ DinarStandard, "State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2023/24."

Sufi values, *syar'i* norms, and the spirit of *da'wah* have not disappeared; instead, they have been reassembled into formats that are more communicative, aesthetic, and adaptive to new social structures. In this sense, *continuity and change* are not dichotomous but coexistential dynamics that reflect both spiritual depth and openness to contemporary modes of representation.

The theoretical implications of these findings enrich our understanding of *popular religion*, *pious consumption*, and *symbolic authority* in contemporary Islam. This article shows that religious authority is no longer centralized within formal institutions, but is distributed across celebrity figures, digital communities, and halal ecosystems that combine affect, performance, and symbolic capital. It also indicates an epistemological shift in how truth, piety, and Islamic identity are constructed in a digitized public sphere.

Future research might focus on intra-community dynamics, gender relations, and the political implications of increasingly globalized digital piety. Moreover, it is crucial to explore how working-class Muslims or non-urban communities respond to and produce alternative forms of religiosity beyond the dominant middle-class framework. In an ever-evolving Islamic landscape, such studies are essential for balancing the discourse between spirituality, mediation, and structures of power in contemporary Muslim societies.

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