

Appendix 1

Annotated Readings

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SHORT BIO

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Introduction

The annotated readings present seminal works on female religious authority in Indonesia, each with a brief summary and reflection on its scholarly contribution.

Hefner, C. M. (2016). Models of achievement: Muslim girls and religious authority in a modernist Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 40(4), 564-582.

The study by Hefner (2016) focuses on the religious authority of female students at Madrasah Mu'allimat, a prestigious Islamic boarding school for girls in Yogyakarta, affiliated with Muhammadiyah, the second-largest

Muslim organization in Indonesia. The school receives recognition for its training cadre program that equips the students to take leadership roles and to carry out the mission of Muhammadiyah by promoting Islamic values through religious outreach.

Despite the school's long-standing prominence in Islamic science, a visible change has occurred among its students. Many are now choosing more prestigious careers that promise greater social mobility over careers in Islamic science. As a result, this has led to an identity crisis for Muhammadiyah and the school. Using ethnographic research methods, Hefner explores how the school's administrators and teachers perceive this shift and its implications for women's religious authority.

By highlighting the evolving aspirations of female students at Mu'allimat, Hefner's work challenges traditional views on women's religious authority as confined to Islamic sciences. Hefner argues for a broader understanding of authority that includes career and societal roles that allows for a dynamic model of contemporary Islamic femininity. The study highlights that the female students continue to embody religious values and piety, even as their career aspirations diversify.

One of the key aspects of the study is its focus on the moral and religious standards upheld by Mu'allimat students who serve as role models for societal leadership. Students are encouraged to maintain a public image of piety through their behavior and adherence to strict dress codes. Although some might view the school's dress codes and uniform requirements as limiting self-expression, for the Mu'allimat students, these rules are of great ethical importance as they symbolize discipline and unity within the student community and, thus, foster humility and cultural pride, reinforcing Islamic identity and Muhammadiyah values.

The Mu'allimat is a source of pride for Muhammadiyah in that it is a source of female religious authority. As elaborated by Hefner, the institution itself is almost entirely run by well-educated women who are Mu'allimat alumni, highlighting the leadership capabilities of these women in educational settings. Furthermore, this illustrates the significance of the institution in shaping religious education and female empowerment within the community. The institution facilitates Muslim women's independence by empowering

them through education and strong leadership opportunities within the institution.

Kloos, D. (2016). The salience of gender: Female Islamic authority in Aceh, Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 40(4), 527-544

Kloos's study (2016) examines the vital role of female ulama in reshaping gender relations within the context of Aceh's Islamic traditions. Through an analysis of the experiences of two female ulama, the study exemplifies how religious authority can be wielded by women to challenge patriarchal structures, particularly in a region where the implementation of Islamic law has often been seen as a barrier to women's rights. Their authority has helped advance women's rights in Acehnese society, particularly through their advocacy for gender equality within the context of Islamic law.

The ability of female ulama to advocate for women's rights within the framework of Islamic law is significant. By combining their extensive Islamic knowledge with a progressive and open-minded approach to Islamic teachings, they are able to challenge misogynistic interpretations of Islamic law and promote gender parity. This nuanced approach allows them to address gender issues within a traditional Islamic context without rejecting the religious framework that may resonate more with conservative communities.

As educators and activists, the work of these female ulama highlights the intersection of religion, education, and social justice. They focus on reforming educational practices and establish pedagogies that address social justice concerns not only for gender equality but also broader societal and cultural assumptions that restrict women's role in Acehnese society. They incorporate Islamic texts like the Quran, Hadith, and Kitab Kuning (traditional Islamic texts) in their discussions of critical issues including sexuality, domestic violence, and community discord.

In summary, Kloos's research underscores the various power sources of female ulama in advancing women's rights within Islamic communities. These women's ability to reinterpret traditional Islamic knowledge and challenge patriarchal norms demonstrates the evolving role of women in

religious leadership and activism, contributing significantly to the ongoing transformation of gender dynamics in Aceh.

Ismah, N. (2016). Destabilising male domination: Building community-based authority among Indonesian female ulama. *Asian Studies Review*, 40(4), 491-509.

The study by Ismah (2016) explores how female ulama from Java conceptualize community-based authority through their direct engagement with everyday life. She examines the experiences of three women ulama who participated in Rahima's female ulama cadre program and highlights how the authority of these female ulama manifests itself in the community and alters the perceptions of the male ulama regarding their roles.

In her analysis, Ismah identifies three key aspects contributing to the community-based authority of female ulama that offer a nuanced understanding of how these women operate in spaces traditionally dominated by men.

First, female ulama demonstrate religious authority through their knowledge of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Kitab Kuning, issuing fatwas and providing religious guidance in the community. Beyond their religious expertise, their involvement in gender activism at both national and international levels strengthens their ability to address women's concerns within an Islamic framework.

Second, female ulama hold social and cultural authority by being influential leaders within their communities serving as teachers, preachers, and mediators. They also raise awareness on issues such as women's and children's rights, thus, enhancing their social and cultural influence.

Third, female ulama have leadership authority that is reinforced by their roles in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasah (Islamic schools). They influence educational and religious practices and contribute to decision making and curriculum development in both their own institutions and other organizations.

These female ulama build upon their community-based authority to create a collective authority, forming forums at local and regional levels to support each other. This collective methodology provides a platform for national advocacy, allowing female ulama to address broader issues and issue fatwas on national matters, exemplified by initiatives like the congress of female ulama.

Despite ongoing challenges, these female ulama are recognized as charismatic agents of change who continue to adapt their religious knowledge to suit contemporary needs, contributing to a peaceful community and advocating for gender justice within the Islamic framework. Their extensive experience in religious knowledge and leadership capacity has earned the support of male ulama, as well as their families and communities, which strengthens their roles and fosters a growing acceptance of female leaders within religious discourses.

Birchok, D. A. (2016). Women, genealogical inheritance and Sufi authority: the female saints of Seunagan, Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 40(4), 583-599.

Birchok's (2016) study analyzes the authority of two female saints, Maknih and Wan Doneh, who lived and were buried in Seunagan, Aceh, Indonesia. Both women are descendants of Habib Abdurrahim, a prominent male saint in the region. While leadership in the Habib Abdurrahim family has traditionally been a patrilineal succession, Birchok's study challenges traditional views of gender and leadership within the Islamic Sufi community.

The experience of these female Sufi leaders underscores the importance of spiritual charisma and influence in the transfer of authority within their community. They inherited a unique preternatural power from their father, Habib Muda, who was a son of Habib Abdurrahim. During their lifetimes, these women played pivotal roles in guiding and leading the rituals in the Syattariyah Sufi path practiced in Seunagan, which included both male and female members.

Through the intercession of these women, their influence continued even after their passing. Their graves became significant sites for locals seeking spiritual help and divine intervention. The ritual visitations of their graves demonstrates the deep reverence people have for these female saints, highlighting their special position among the prominent saints of their lineage.

The study also raises important questions about whether the lineage of these female saints could pass down spiritual power through their sons or if their matrilineal descendants might eventually take on leadership roles in Seunagan Syattariah. While the dominant expectation in the Habib Abdurrahim family and other Sufi communities may favor patrilineal succession, Birchok introduces the possibility that matrilineal lines can also play a role in the future leadership of the Seunagan Syattariah. This challenges rigid interpretations of Islamic genealogies and suggests that gender roles within spiritual leadership can be more flexible than traditionally assumed. By acknowledging the potential for leadership through female descendants, Birchok's research allows for further exploration on how Islamic practices can evolve to reflect local traditions and contemporary realities.

Although the future leadership of Seunagan Syattariah was still unclear during the study, Birchok's research suggests that leadership in the Seunagan Sufi lineage may not always strictly adhere to a male-only line. This challenges the notion that Islamic genealogies are exclusively patrilineal and implies that local traditions and practices may incorporate matrilineal connections as well.

In conclusion, Birchok's study offers a significant contribution to the understanding of gender and authority in Sufism, particularly in the context of Aceh. It highlights the complex relationship between spiritual power, gender, and lineage, suggesting that leadership in Sufi communities may be more fluid than traditionally believed. The possibility of a matrilineal inheritance of authority reflects broader trends where gender norms are being re-examined and challenged, paving the way for more inclusive spiritual leadership.

Farida, U., & Kasdi, A. (2018). The 2017 KUPI Congress and Indonesian Female ‘Ulama’. IAIN Kudus.

Farida and Kasdi's (2018) study provides a detailed exploration of the advocacy efforts of female ulama in Indonesia following the 2017 KUPI Congress in Cirebon. The study highlights the central roles of female ulama in promoting social transformation through progressive interpretations of Islam, particularly in addressing issues of gender justice, humanity, and environmental sustainability.

The KUPI is a groundbreaking movement that has revitalized Islamic thought in Indonesia, empowering female ulama to foster societal development and promote progressive interpretations of Islam that prioritize gender justice. Post-congress, the ulama's da'wah has focused on the interconnectedness of gender justice and Islam's role in promoting peace. This is evident in their advocacy efforts mobilized through the three fatwas that were issued during the congress addressing sexual violence, child marriage, and environmental destruction.

One of the strategies employed by the female ulama in this research is the transformation of their pesantren into shelters for vulnerable and marginalized groups. These shelters provide safe spaces for the impoverished, orphaned, and survivors of sexual abuse, showcasing the multifaceted support offered by these institutions. Moreover, some pesantrens have been reimagined as hubs for ecological and cultural diversity, emphasizing the importance of species egalitarianism and environmental preservation. This reflects a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness between humanity and nature.

Despite the risks involved, these female ulama remain steadfast in their belief that their actions align with Islamic values. These ulama actively engage in interfaith dialogue to promote moderate Islam and emphasize non-violence. Their commitment to principles of justice and compassion underscores the broader meaning of Islamic teachings. By emphasizing universality, Islam highlights the interconnectedness of humans and nature within the cycles of life, reinforcing the importance of virtues such as care, responsibility, and stewardship.

This research is valuable for understanding how Islamic feminism operates in grassroots and institutional contexts. It effectively showcases the multifaceted contributions of female ulama, demonstrating their ability to integrate faith-based activism with contemporary social challenges. By emphasizing their leadership in progressive religious interpretation and social advocacy, the study challenges patriarchal narratives within Islamic tradition.

Nisa, E. F. (2019). Muslim women in contemporary Indonesia: Online conflicting narratives behind the women ulama congress. *Asian Studies Review*, 43(3), 434-454.

The study highlights the First Congress of Women Ulama (KUPI) as a groundbreaking event that amplified the voices of women ulama and focused on advancing civil Islam in Indonesia. Praised for its agendas promoting gender equality, gender justice, and broader interpretations of Islamic teachings, KUPI has made significant strides. However, the study critiques its limited success in reaching a wider audience, particularly in comparison to the extensive influence of conservative Muslim women's groups.

As social media and internet platforms play a pivotal role in modern da'wa (proselytization) and shaping public discourse on Islam, conservative Muslim women's groups have effectively leveraged such medias to propagate their views, often overshadowing KUPI's online campaigns. For instance, Hijrah movements and morality campaigns led by conservative activists, which emphasize women's roles as housewives and mothers and call for a "return to true Islam," have gained substantial attention and engagement on social media. Messages advocating a return to "kodrat wanita" (women's biological roles) resonate strongly with audiences, often eclipsing KUPI's progressive narratives on gender equality.

While KUPI has made efforts to utilize digital tools, the author argues that it has not matched the success of its conservative counterparts in the online space. This discrepancy highlights the urgent need for more strategic and

widespread online campaigns to amplify KUPI's progressive messages and broaden its reach.

van Doorn-Harder, N. (2023). Women's Religious and Social Activism in Southeast Asia. The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Women, 444.

The article by Doorn-Harder (2023) provides a critical analysis of Muslim women's activism in Southeast Asia, focusing on Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The study emphasizes the intersection of Islamic feminism and universal human rights, exploring how misogynistic interpretations of Islamic texts and the rise of radical Muslim movements, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, have marginalized women. In response, Muslim women activists have employed *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to reinterpret Islamic teachings, advocating for gender justice and aligning Islamic principles with universal human rights frameworks.

The study highlights the importance of collaborative strategies employed by these activists, who work alongside Muslim intellectuals, religious leaders, policymakers, and government to advocate for gender-sensitive national laws. They tackle critical issues such as marital rape, polygamy, and child marriage, using Islam as a principle to strengthen their arguments for policy reforms. This collaborative approach underscores the activists' commitment to fostering partnerships and advancing women's rights within Islamic frameworks.

In addition, the author highlights the transnational dimensions within Islamic feminism by showing case how the activists foster solidarity across national and cultural boundaries. They have significantly contributed to the global Muslim feminist movement through initiatives such as the international online platform Musawah and the formation of Indonesia's first Congress of Female Ulama (KUPI) in 2017, both of which serve as milestones demonstrating the transformative impact of this activism.

Doorn-Harder's work is invaluable for understanding the nuanced ways in which Southeast Asian Muslim women navigate religious and social structures to promote gender equality. It offers a compelling example of how Islamic feminism operates locally and globally, contributing to the broader

discourse on gender justice in Muslim-majority societies. This study is a key resource for researchers examining the intersection of religion, gender, and human rights.