



---

## Religion, Media and Piety Construction: A Study of the Web Series Entitled Ustad Milenial

**Annidaul Aula**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta

e-mail: [annidaaula@gmail.com](mailto:annidaaula@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This article aims to expand the discussion of the identity of piety in the web series with the Islamic genre, Ustad Milenial, which airs on WeTV and Iflix. Identity is a crucial problem in social life. In the web series, the pious identity of a muslim is different from the identity of piety shown in previous Islamic popular cinema, both in terms of story plots, characters, and symbols used in building a pious identity. The focus of the discussion in this article is how the identity of piety is built in this web series, and why is the identity of piety in this web series described in such a way? Based on a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, and discourse analysis, I argue that there is an alternative to the identity of piety depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series. The results of this study indicate that the identity of piety in the Ustad Milenial web series is constructed through the appearance of youth muslims who are more trendy, the noble ideals of a muslim in maintaining Islam, a strict religious education background for an authority, devotion and affection for parents, religious knowledge of youth muslim, the use of digital technology as a medium of da'wah, love stories that are identical with young people, and the inter-religious tolerance.

### **Keywords:**

Identity of Piety, Web series, Ustad Milenial.

### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memperluas diskusi identitas kesalehan dalam web series bergenre islami, Ustad Milenial, yang tayang di aplikasi streaming WeTV dan Iflix. Isu tentang identitas menjadi problem krusial dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Dalam web series ini, identitas kesalehan seorang muslim ditampilkan berbeda dengan identitas kesalehan yang ditampilkan dalam sinema islami populer terdahulu, baik dari segi plot cerita, tokoh yang dipilih, dan simbol-simbol yang digunakan dalam membangun identitas kesalehan. Fokus bahasan dalam artikel ini adalah bagaimana identitas kesalehan yang dibangun dalam

*web series tersebut, dan mengapa identitas kesalehan dalam web series ini digambarkan sedemikian rupa? Berdasarkan pendekatan kualitatif dengan paradigma konstruktivistik, dan metode analisis wacana, saya berargumen bahwa ada sebuah alternatif dari identitas kesalehan yang digambarkan dalam web series Ustad Milenial. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa identitas kesalehan dalam web series ini antara lain dikonstruksikan melalui penampilan kaum muda muslim yang lebih trendi, cita-cita mulia yang dimiliki seorang muslim dalam memelihara Islam, latar belakang pendidikan agama yang ketat bagi calon seorang pemegang otoritas keagamaan, bakti dan kasih sayang kepada kedua orang tua, keilmuan agama kaum muda muslim yang mumpuni, pemanfaatan teknologi digital sebagai media dakwah, kisah asmara yang identik dengan kaum muda, dan sikap toleransi beragama.*

**Kata Kunci:**

Identitas Kesalehan, Web series, Ustad Milenial.

## **Introduction**

In this study, Ustad Milenial is an original WeTV and Ifix web series in the Islamic genre that depicts the piety identity of young Muslims in the contemporary era. The web series does not only tell about the journey of a young Muslim in achieving his dream of becoming an *ustaz* as described in the outline of the plot, but it also creates constructions about the piety identity of young Muslims that should be used as an example in the contemporary era. The identity of contemporary piety depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series is different from the one depicted in popular and legendary Islamic films, such as the piety shown in the movies *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, or *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*.

The identity of piety in earlier Islamic popular movies (Heryanto 2015; Hoesterey and Clark 2012; Clark 2008) focuses more on the identities of Muslim men and women and their role divisions in the family or in society. Unlike today's Islamic genre cinema, the piety identity displayed on the Ustad Milenial web series highlights the identity of young Muslims who no longer mind the division of roles between men and women both in the family and the social environment. Besides, if the identity of piety in

earlier Islamic cinemas was depicted in abaya dress, veil, and restrictions on relationships of men and women that were not *mahram*. In Ustad Milenial web series the identity of piety is depicted in a more casual dress, as well as less restrained relationships between men and women. The discussion in this article is not only limited to the division of roles and symbols identified with the piety identity of a Muslim as in the earlier Islamic cinema. This article will further examine the identity of piety constructed in the Ustad Milenial web series in a more comprehensive way.

Previous studies on Ustad Milenial web series focused on categorizing Muslim ethics (Azizah and Rahman 2022); the values of Islamic religious education owned by Muslims (Oktaviani, Bakar, and Fahmi 2021); and a study of *da'wah* messages (Nasrum, Kasman, and Alamsyah 2021) delivered in the web series. Generally, these previous studies focused on the implied messages that the web series wanted to convey to its audience. This research does not only stop at the messages to be conveyed but also how these messages indirectly become a social construct that can form an identity for the audience, especially Muslims.

There are two main topics as the focus of this article. First, how is the piety identity built in this Ustad Milenial web series? Second, why is the identity of piety in the Ustad Milenial web series portrayed in such a way? Discussions in previous studies have argued that phenomenal Islamic films such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* portray a strict identity of piety. Unlike the piety identity constructed in this Ustad Milenial web series, I argue that there is an alternative to the piety identity depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series.

This article uses a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm. Construction is a process carried out to form a discourse (Hamad 2007). The constructivist paradigm in this study is used to understand how a discourse related to the piety identity of a Muslim is built through an interesting medium, namely a web series. This research is

presented using a descriptive design, which is a design used to describe the things questioned in this study to produce a new understanding related to the identity of piety built in the Ustad Milenial web series. The subject in this study is the Ustad Milenial web series. While the object, that becomes the focus of the study, is the identity of piety. The primary data in this study are the elements of the web series, including the storyline presented, the characters displayed, and the symbols used in the Ustad Milenial web series. Meanwhile, the supporting data in this study is a document study or literature study of articles and also previous research related to the subject matter of the research. The data obtained in this study were then analyzed using the discourse analysis method.

The results of this study will be presented in several sub-discussions. First, the discussion of the identity of piety and Islamic movies in Indonesia in the post-New Order era. Second, a brief presentation related to the Ustad Milenial web series and the parties behind it. Third, the discussion is related to the piety identity of young Muslims constructed in the Ustad Milenial web series along with the reasons or motives that underlie the development of piety identities in the web series. Fourth, discussion around the topic. Fifth, conclusion.

### **The Piety Identity and Islamic Cinema in Indonesia during Post New Order Era**

The issue related to identity has almost become a symbol of the problems of contemporary society (Charness and Chen 2020). Identity is the process of constructing meaning over cultural attributes until it gives rise to plurality of identities as a source of contradiction in self-representation and social action (Castells 2010). Basically, the concept of identity deals with the answer to the question “who am I?”, or in simple terms it can be understood as the individual’s way of understanding themselves, and also how the individual is understood by others. The answer to the question

will contain the labels and symbols of the individual's identification of himself. Individuals will strive to show their identity through the behaviors or attributes they highlight in order to be easily identified and socially accepted (Sadewa 2019; Jenkins 2008; Helal and Ozuem 2017).

In Indonesia, the restraint on identity occurred for 32 years and experienced freedom after the 1998 reform era, and during this era, the public space was filled with various identities (Duraesa and Ahyar 2021). Religious identity that used to be passive in the public sphere during the New Order era gained momentum for freedom in this reform era (Sunesti, Hasan, and Azca 2018). Urban-based and educated Muslims are increasingly free to explore new activities in the fields of culture, art, intellectuals, and law to shape their identities and express their piety (Heryanto 2011). Social piety as a symbol can be understood as a form of mass popular culture ritual which means that the faith and piety of Muslims can be formed through the consumption of religious commodities (Putri and Sunesti 2021).

Briefly, piety can be understood as being conscious of God. In the fifth edition of the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), piousness is defined as obedience and sincerity in carrying out worship. Piety is more towards one's self or spiritual side. However, today piety is not only a private matter of the individual. Piety has become a public matter and its activities can be carried out together in the public sphere (Hasan 2012). Piety, academic achievement, and activism were generally used as influential ways to fight the authoritarian regime in Indonesia in 1998 (Barendregt 2011). Within the framework of culture, religion, or politics, piety becomes an Islamic identity built on the basis of dual deconstruction, both by actors and institutions of society. The construction of postcolonial contemporary Islamic identity takes place in reaction to modernization and globalization (Castells 2010). Ideas, sounds, images, and meanings about Islam abound in contemporary forms of popular culture, including film, music, television, radio, comics, and magazines (Weintraub 2011).

The identity of piety, prosperity and daily ethics is content that many Islamic films portrayed in the period after the New Order ended. In the Indonesian language, the reference to these Islamic movies is often used for films of the Islamic genre, usually also called Islamic cinema, religious films, or Arabic films. This Islamic film is included in a media that is able to uphold the values of public piety. The popularity of Islamic films does not lie in their ability to explain what Islam is like, but rather in what Islam can do (Hoesterey and Clark 2012).

The latest developments in Indonesian cinema cannot be separated from the euphoria of the fall of President Soeharto's authoritarian regime which opened the political climate and allowed less restriction on mass media to have an impact on the liberation of cultural and artistic expression (Clark 2008). Islamic films are one of the Islamic products that are currently becoming increasingly popular in various Muslim communities, especially for those who want to explore new forms of religiosity through piety. This Islamic film genre is able to highlight forms of piety related to the concerns, desires, and doubts of Muslims in Indonesia as the authoritarianism of the New Order era ends.

In general, these earlier Islamic films highlight the identities of piety by showing the piety of the characters, from the restrictions on association between men and women who were not mahram, as well as in terms of their appearance which was more highlighted. The ideal Muslim man is portrayed in a pious personality figure in casual attire that does not take away his element of piety. Meanwhile, the ideal Muslim woman is characterized as a woman who has a pious personality and is displayed in a dress and veil which is an illustration of her piety identity. This identity then becomes important because it relates to the culture of Muslim consumerism, so it can be used to find out how far the film can influence the audience (Sasono 2010). In addition, the ideal Muslim figure is commonly constructed in a polygamous storyline that is used as an identity of piety of Muslims.

Polygamy is one of the main issues raised in earlier Islamic films. In Indonesia, debates about morality, marriage, and family are inseparable from discussions of religion, especially Islam. Polygamy is often associated with conservative forms of Islam, although not everyone who practices polygamy is a devout or conservative Muslim. Many people also believe, and even practiced by Muslims themselves, that polygamy is unfair to women (Brenner 2011). Polygamy is often described as one of the attempts made by a Muslim in achieving a certain level of piety. Piety is politically suspected because it is considered subversive, but the most important thing to note is the male social hierarchy over piety (Heryanto 2008). Such issues were raised by phenomenal Islamic films, including *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*. This film both raises the issue of polygamy as a story plot. The story is in contrast to the Muslim piety identity depicted in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. Here, the main female character is portrayed as a Muslim who in various debates is considered too secular.

Another issue that has become the characteristic of Islamic films after the New Order era is the plot of the story that ends with the one of the characters converting to Islam. The religious conversion of the character is emphasized by the absence of Muslim characters in the movies who convert from Islam to other religions. With this background, many studies are then interested in examining workers in the film industry who are trying to convert to Islam or also trying to improve their Islamic values (Heryanto 2015). This can be understood as the purpose of the Islamic film which also seeks to construct Islam as a true religion, until none of the characters in the Islamic film lose their piety identity.

To understand the identity of piety in Islamic films after the New Order, the discussion cannot be separated from the emergence of a new generation in the Indonesian film industry who succeeded in producing the phenomenal film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. It is very interesting when this film is able to attract as many contemporary Muslim audiences as possible

in Indonesia. At least, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* is the first Islamic film after the New Order era that managed to gain more than three million viewers in just a few days of its broadcast. A literature review of previous scientific works shows that not all Islamic genre cinemas receive positive appreciation. Criticisms of Islamic cinema are widely received, such as the many criticisms of the film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. Although it managed to break records and achieve success in terms of screenings with ticket sales achievements of up to millions, this film is inseparable from criticism from various parties. The criticism received by the film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* can be understood by looking at the Islamic soap operas produced earlier. In addition to fulfilling the element of entertainment, previous Islamic films also fulfilled religious elements. Meanwhile, in *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, the depiction of the identity of young Muslims and the selected casts to play the characters in this film caused a heated debate and discussion.

The production of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* aimed to offer a middle ground between the piety identity of traditional Muslims and militant Muslims portrayed through cinema since the post New Order era. The themes raised in Islamic films after the New Order era have things to do with individual lifestyles, such as the journey of finding a life companion, self-identification, and personal achievements (Heryanto 2015; Sasono 2010). Unfortunately, the post New Order Islamic films limit themselves to issues around ideological rivalries. It was the ideological rivalry that later made the films considered to have achieved success because they were widely discussed and even debated. The many debates over the ideology rule out things that should have become more important to discuss. The success of these films is not able to address the issue more broadly and critically adapted to the current conditions and situation of Indonesia (Heryanto 2015).

People behind the film industry in Indonesia are trying to provide an alternative towards the depiction of identity that fits the modern era



that is more secular. They seek to make Islamic films not only revolve around issues of polygamy, gender violence, and poverty which in fact are very contrary to the teachings of the Islamic religion (Hoesterey and Clark 2012). Not only does it stop at film media, now in social media young people are free to express their piety and reconstruct their identity (Kavakci and Kraeplin 2016).

Along with this phenomenon of technological development and information media, such individuals have found new places that show how their identity can be formed or even how they can bring influence in the formation of identity. Modernity is able to bring an influence on the individual, so that an individual is able to have a sense of wanting to transform him by trying to break away from any tradition or even social structure that is considered to imprison them during this time (Nasrullah 2011). The construction of the identity of piety has also been developed using the medium of web series.

Faster internet connections, easier access to online video streaming access, and the increasing consumer interest in online video, are the background for the emergence of new entertainment media that are easier in terms of production and distribution. People in the entertainment industry began to produce content with series programs. This new online-based program is divided into several episodes until it can be said to be a shortened version of the program in television. William (2012) says there are several reasons that make people in the entertainment industry prefer to make web series as opposed to movies.

Some of the reasons that make this web series different from short films or television shows are due to its wide distribution. This online-based series can easily reach audiences from all over the world. In addition, web series can also directly engage the audience. The audience can provide support or feedback related to the project through the comment section. This feedback from the audience is important for filmmakers to be able

to know the extent to which their web series can be accepted by the public. Web series also have serialized stories that allow scriptwriters to expand their stories compared to films or short films. Actors also have the opportunity to explore the characters along with the development of episode segments. Not only that, but web series also have greater monetization opportunities. This monetization can be obtained through ad revenue sharing, sponsored brand content, and investments by large studios in online-only content that have incentivized filmmakers to create web video content.

This web series is also used as a new medium in constructing the identity of piety. These identities are constructed through the elements present in Islamic genre series. Islamic web series are currently being produced and aired through popular video streaming applications. Among the popular web series include the Web Series Negeri 5 Menara which aired on the MAXstream application, Satu Amin Dua Iman which aired on WeTV application, and also the Ustad Milenial web series which will be the focus of discussion in this paper.

Islamic web series began to be widely produced with the consideration of an increasingly broad market segment along with the emergence of many production houses and the development of various supporting video streaming applications. Some of the points that are the characteristics of the web series produced massively by various production houses include the high quality of the cinematography. In terms of cinematography quality, many Islamic web series today are able to compete with the cinematography of leading films. Islamic web series also collaborate with many young artists who have high popularity in the Indonesian entertainment scene to be able to attract more audiences. In terms of content, the plot raised tends to be simple by highlighting the phenomenon of young Muslims today. The issues raised are also inseparable from various issues that are familiar to the lives of young

people in the contemporary era, for example issues related to romantic conflicts, goals, careers, and friendships. Apart from that, Islamic web series also tend to display their own standards of piety identity.

The mushrooming of the Islamic genre in this web series is a consequence of the continued development of the media. Web series can be said to be a simpler form than movies or soap operas. Web series are more enjoyable because they will not be done in one sitting like a movie. But web series also do not have episodes that are too long and tend to be boring like soap operas. This makes web series a medium that has a certain appeal so that it can be used as a new form of expansion of entertainment media as well as media for the construction of Islamic identity.

### **Ustad Milenial Web Series**

Ustad Milenial is a religious web series produced by Im-a-gin-e production house which aired on WeTV and Iflix. These two applications are the best web series entertainment applications in Indonesia. WeTV ranked number one on the Play Store as the most popular Asian & Local Dramas web series application, while Iflix ranked fifth. This series aired from April 12 to June 17, 2021 with a total of 20 episodes and each episode lasting 42-53 minutes. By collaborating with well-known young artists in the country, such as Prilly Latuconsina, Arbani Yazis, Umay Shahab, Yoriko Angeline, Endi Arfan, Hanggi, and legendary artists such as Cut Mini and Dony Alamsyah. This web series also involves a well-known Indonesian director who had directed the phenomenal Islamic film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, Hanung Bramantyo. In this Ustad Milenial web series, Hanung is present as a supporting actor who appears in episode 2.

The Ustad Milenial web series can be briefly described as the journey of a young Muslim named Ahmad in achieving his dream of becoming an *ustaz* in his generation, the millennial generation. The choice of the word 'millennial' which is used as the title in the web series refers to a generation

that can generally be said to be young who are born between 1980 and 2000 or around 23 -33 years old. Millennials are often referred to as digital natives because they were born in the era after the internet. Unlike digital immigrants, the people who were born in the digital world after experiencing a life without the internet, millennials are also synonymous with characters who are creative, optimistic, open-minded, have high social awareness, are impatient, multitasking, and have a balanced work life. Today, millennials dominate a larger number when compared to previous generation, namely Generation X and the baby boomer generation (DeVaney 2015; Rohman 2019). Thus, it can be understood the reason for choosing the millennial generation as the main segment in the Ustad Milenial web series. In addition, it can also be understood that the selection and portrayal of character characters in the Ustad Millennial web series aims to strengthen the concept of millennials comprehensively.

Based on the synopsis, this Ustad Milenial web series tells the journey of Ahmad (Arbani Yazis) after graduating from his education at the Gontor Islamic Boarding School. Ahmad received a scholarship to continue his education to Cairo. This scholarship is very important for Ahmad because it can bring him closer to his goals. Ahmad's plan was able to proceed smoothly until the day his father died and gave a message to Ahmad to continue his family business to Ahmad. But after getting approval from his mother, Ibu Maemunah (Cut Mini), Ahmad then flew to Cairo to continue his educational scholarship. When he was on his way to the airport, Ahmad learned that his family's business had large amounts of debt and was in danger of bankruptcy. In the end, Ahmad delayed taking his scholarship and chose to return to assist his mother in paying off his family's business debts. During his struggle to pay off debts and continue to run a family business with his best friend, Ibrahim (Endy Arfian), Ahmad gave an overview of the story of a young millennial Muslim in living his life, such as his struggle in achieving his dream of becoming

a millennial *ustaz* who continues to inspire, the form of his devotion to both parents, and also from the story of the triangular romance between himself, Khadijah (Prilly Latuconsina) and Susan (Yoriko Angeline) which is relatable to the problem faced by the young generation. This web series does not only present an entertainment that is not only visually qualified, but also in terms of plot and also moral message which is filled with religious messages and Islamic sharia learning.

Reflecting on the phenomenon of the identity crisis of young Muslims of the contemporary era, this series not only depicts the journey of a Muslim to achieve his ideals as an *ustaz*, but also describes the identity of the ideal young Muslim through his figures. The figures of young Muslims interpreted in this series are different from the images of young Muslims who have been visualized in several previous films, for example, such as the figures of young Muslims featured in the film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. The identity of young Muslims featured in this series provides a new alternative for young Muslims to form their Islamic identity, not only displayed from the way they dress, but also in terms of attitudes, lifestyles, and also religious knowledge visualized through the character of the cast.

Web series as a form of media in this digital era have been successfully seen as an opportunity for religious activists to make it a variation of the media that can be used as a formation of the piety identity of young Muslims. The *Ustad Milenial* web series is able to act as a medium that presents the construction of the identity of young Muslims through implicit messages and the selection and portrayal of characters, storylines presented, and symbols used in this web series. This is inseparable from the roles of people who work behind the scenes of web series production, ranging from directors, producers, and also artists who are chosen to be cast in the *Ustad Milenial* web series. A number of big names involved in this film include Hestu Saputra who became the director, Hanung Bramantyo who became the creative supervisor, and Luna Maya who took the creative producer part.

Hestu Saputra is familiar to the Indonesian film scene. Hestu has directed various well-known films, such as the film *Hujan Bulan Juni*, and also the film *Cinta Tapi Beda* which was co-directed with Hanung Bramantyo. Some of these films ushered him in the best director in the Piala Citra. What many people have no clue about is that Hestu Saputra is actually a person who has a convert background. Hanung Bramantyo is a very popular figure in the Indonesian film scene. Like Hestu, Hanung has directed films of various genres throughout his career as a director. Hanung also has a strong religious background because he had received an education at a pesantren. Luna Maya's involvement in the *Ustad Milenial* web series is an interesting part. Luna Maya is one of the most popular artists in the country, despite the phenomenal scandal that had shocked Indonesia in 2010. The people behind the scenes of creating the *Ustad Milenial* web series which has this religious genre are things that should be considered in an effort to accept the various piety identities constructed in the *Ustad Milenial* web series.

When viewed through the production side, this web series is produced by a production house that has a young age. *Im-a-gin-e* as the production house of the *Ustad Milenial* web series is one of the production houses that were just established in 2016. *Im-a-gin-e* branding itself as an innovative, productive, and creative production house in creating and producing creative works such as TV Sitcoms, TV Series, commercials, and feature films. *Im-a-gin-e* not only ranks itself as a production house, but also as an event organizer and also artist management. Some of his production works include TV series *Catatan Si Boy*, *Tetangga Masa Gitu* and *OK JEK*. While the religious genre of production besides *Ustad Milenial* is the *Sajadah Panjang* web series which airs on the MAXstream application with several main actors who are the same as the *Ustad Milenial* web series, namely *Arbani Yazis*, *Cut Mini*, and *Donny Alamsyah*.

## Piety Identity in Ustad Milenial Web Series

This section explains how the depiction of the piety identity of young Muslims in the web series Ustad Milenial and the motives underlying the depiction. Not only conveyed through visuals, the piety identity here is also conveyed through implied messages, such as through plots, dialogues, or scenes that can provide discourse constructs for viewers of the Ustad Milenial web series. Through the plot and several players chosen to play the characters in this web series, the main target audience in this web series is young people. One thing to note is that this target is not limited to young Muslims only, but also young people in general.

First, one of the identities of piety that is portrayed through appearance. The most basic identity of piety is to give an idea of the appearance or clothing worn by the characters as an illustration of the piety identity of young Muslims. This identity depicted through visuals or clothing worn becomes an important part of being displayed in constructing the piety identity of a Muslim. Indirectly, clothing can be used as a symbol or identity for Muslim groups in expressing their identity (Halim 2020). To display their piety identity, they use distinctive clothing as a way to show at once to distinguish the identity of self-righteousness from the piety identity of another sect or group of Muslims.

In the web series Ustad Milenial, it is described that the clothes used as the piety identity of millennial young Muslims here look more casual and relaxed. The characters are described as millennial young people with an age range between 20-25 years. They wore clothes based on the current trend. The young Muslim male character in this web series wears jeans. Meanwhile, the tops used are more often with jacket-lined T-shirts, either jean jackets or jumpers. Meanwhile, Ahmad's character is often shown in a *koko* shirt and occasionally with a *songkok*, but his subordinate clothes are still shown in jeans. They also wear footwear issued by leading brands such as those that are popularly used by young people today. The female

character is depicted wearing a shirt or blouse with a veil whose ends are tied back. The female character is also depicted wearing pants as a subordinate. This kind of appearance contrasts with the clothes worn by female characters in earlier Islamic films that were synonymous with abaya and veils or niqabs to show their piety identity. The appearance depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series is one of the alternatives for young Muslims to show their piety identity, in addition to the clothes that have been described as piety identities in previous Islamic films.

### Picture 1. The Appearance of Young Muslims



Source: WeTV/UstadMilenial

Second, in addition to using appearances, the identity of piety in the Ustad Milenial web series is depicted through the figure of Ahmad, the main character in this film, who has dreamed of becoming an *ustaz* since he was a child. In one of the scenes, a dialogue is shown between Ahmad as a child and his father. At that time, little Ahmad was still wearing an elementary school uniform. When Ahmad's father asked about his ideals, Ahmad confidently replied that he aspired to become an *ustaz*. This web series wants to show that the ideal of becoming an *ustaz* is not only shared by children who have a strong religious background such as *keiai*, *habib*,



or other religious figures, but the ideal of becoming an *ustaz* can also be owned by anyone. In this case, Ahmad is also described as a child who knows exactly what he wants. To become an *ustaz*, he had to take religious education seriously. Ahmad chose to pursue his religious education in pesantren also of his own wish, not of coercion or parental desire.

The dream of becoming an *ustaz* also breaks the existing construction in society that what children want when they become adults is not only to become a doctor or a policeman. Reflecting on the constructions formed in society during this time, which doctors or police are often constructed as two professions worthy of being aspired to by children from an early age. Indirectly, children are constructed to have ideals that can support a more established career. However, in this web series it was later reconstructed that being an *ustaz* can also be a noble ideal, especially for a Muslim. *Ustaz* can be understood as a teacher who teaches the values of the teachings of the Islamic religion. Through the words of Ahmad's father in this web series, *ustaz* is constructed as a teacher for all mankind. *Ustaz* is not limited to just teaching Muslims, but an *ustaz* also has a responsibility to all mankind. Through the encouragement of his parents, Ahmad then grew up with a variety of strong religious education in order to achieve his goals. Even this depiction of a young Ahmad who has mastered religious knowledge can indirectly construct the ideal piety identity of young Muslims.

### Picture 2. Ustaz as an ideal alternative for children

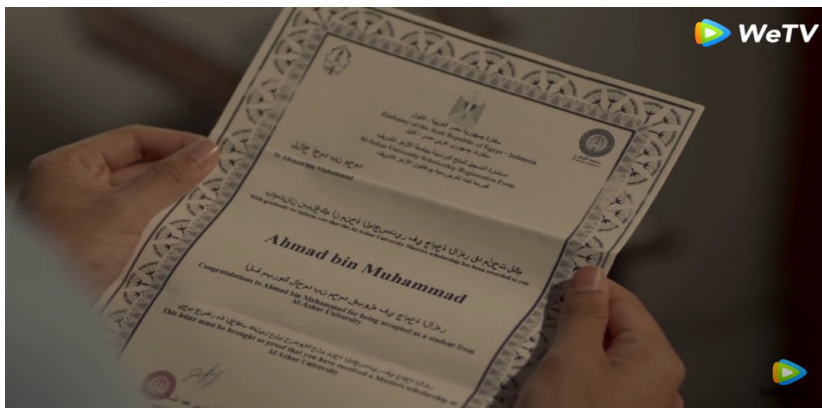


Source: WeTV/UstadMilennial

Third, the identity of piety is also demonstrated through the religious educational background of a religious authority. This film features the figure of Ahmad, who will later become a religious authority, having a strict religious education foundation. Ahmad is described as a graduate of the Gontor Islamic boarding school, one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions located in Ponorogo Regency, East Java. This Islamic boarding school is known as a modern religious education institution that has a high level of discipline in instilling religious education and foreign languages. This boarding school is also popular for its wide network. Although this film has a location in Yogyakarta, the pesantren described as the educational setting for Ahmad in obtaining religious education is located in East Java, specifically in Gontor. This is because Gontor historically produced many important figures such as K. H. Hasyim Muzadi, Nurcholish Madjid, and Emha Ainun Nadjib.

In addition, the depiction of Ahmad's background in his journey to achieve his dream of becoming an *ustaz* is shown by the strong religious education. Ahmad had to go through a long religious education starting from childhood in a family environment, continuing his education at the modern Islamic boarding school Gontor, to continuing his religious education to Cairo. Indirectly, this Ustad Milenial web series wants to show that a religious authority should have a strong background in religious education or Islamic boarding schools. This provides another point of view with the phenomenon of the massive appearance of the new *ustaz* in this technological era. In contrast to this phenomenon, the Ustad Milenial web series appeared by providing a counter discourse.

### Picture 3. A religious educational background for the future religious authority



Source: WeTV/UstadMilenial

Fourth, the piety identity of young Muslims depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series is the devotion of the characters to their parents. Ahmad is described as taking time off from his studies in Gontor because he wanted to take care of his ailing father. It was also described that Ahmad had to postpone his opportunity to continue his religious education in Cairo because he wanted to help his mother to pay off debts in his family business. Not only did he want to help his family pay off debts, Ahmad also chose to fulfill his father's request to continue his family business. Not only Ahmad, several other characters depicted in this web series also have strong devotion to their parents, such as Aisyah, Khadijah, Ibrahim, and also Timbo. Aisyah, who is Ahmad's younger brother, is described as having a very good personality, has a close relationship and helps her mother a lot in selling *mangut* catfish cooked by her mother. Likewise, Khadijah, Ibrahim, and Timbo are described as very devoted to their parents. They are not only kind, but are also willing to help their parents in running a family business which is managed together with Ahmad's family business.

Devotion to parents becomes the piety identity of young Muslims depicted in the Ustad Milenial web series. In Islam, the devotion is indeed a priority for every young Muslim. Even if both parents are not Muslims, a Muslim must remain devoted to both, regardless of the parents' faith. The importance of devotion to parents has been widely discussed in the text of the Qur'an and hadith. Even in this web series, Ahmad is described as prioritizing his parents by postponing his scholarship to Cairo which can lead him to achieve his dream of becoming an *ustaz*. Through the depiction of the character who is devoted to both parents, the Ustad Milenial web series aims to create a construct of discourse on the identity of young Muslims who are devoted to both parents. Indirectly, the Ustad Milenial web series gives an implied message that in this day and age, ethics must still become a priority and must not be swept away by the new cultures.

#### Picture 4. Ethics and devotion to parents



Source: WeTV/UstadMilenial

Fifth, the identity of piety in this film is also depicted through the existence of qualified religious knowledge possessed by the characters. In this web series, Ahmad is described as a young Muslim who has qualified religious knowledge. In line with his ideal of trying to become an *ustaz*, Ahmad equipped himself with strict religious scholarship. With

this qualified religious knowledge, Ahmad tried to convey his religious knowledge to those around him and dared to take a stand on various phenomena that were happening in society. This is depicted in several scenes featured in this web series. For example, when Ahmad tried to pay off the debts owned by his family business. When Ibrahim suggested asking the bank for help, Ahmad refused because Ahmad did not agree with the interest system implemented by the bank. In addition, in one scene, Ahmad's courage in conveying his religious knowledge when faced with a problem is depicted. When Ahmad had to deal with a businessman who wanted to practice polygamy with a child who had not yet entered the legal age of marriage. Seeing this phenomenon, Ahmad boldly expressed his disapproval based on his religious knowledge. On several other occasions, Ahmad is described as having a high tolerance for other characters in the web series that are of different religions.

Besides Ahmad, other characters in this web series are also described as having very capable religious knowledge. For example, Khadijah who would rather perform prayers alone as opposed to performing prayers with others who are not mahrams, which in her faith is not allowed. The good understanding of religion is portrayed by all the characters in this web series. The religious understanding depicted by the characters in this web series is one of the many piety identities highlighted in this web series.

The identity of young Muslims is not only highlighted through their appearance or attitude towards others, but also complemented by the religious knowledge they have. The Ustad Milenial web series tries to construct that qualified religious knowledge is one of the piety identities that young Muslims should have. Related to the topics of *riba* and polygamy, the Ustad Milenial web series wants to convey the teachings of the Islamic religion related to trade and early marriage through the plot and dialogues among the characters.

### Picture 5. Religious knowledge owned by the young Muslims



Source: WeTV/UstadMilennial

Besides that, Ahmad as the main actor here is also described as proficient in utilizing social media. In one of the scenes, it is shown that Ahmad is opening Youtube to find out information related to Al-Azhar, the campus he wants to visit to continue his religious education. On another occasion, it was also described that Aisyah often helped Ahmad to convey his da'wah through videos which were then uploaded to social media platforms. Not only that, Aisyah was also shown to be recapturing a promotional video of her mother's *mangut* catfish to be uploaded to social media.

The Ustad Milennial web series tries to present facts that are relevant to the social conditions occurring in the recent technological era. These days, everyone cannot be separated from technology. Technology has become another part of life, in addition to primary needs (Hidayaturrahman and Putra 2019). Every character or millennial generation featured in this web series is described as having an attachment with technology. They have been very familiar with using technology, especially smartphones. Technology is used to do business, spread religious messages, or simply to share stories of daily life as a form of existence. This Ustad Milennial web series tries to illustrate that young Muslims in the millennial era are a



very technologically literate generation. They use technology for a positive impact. It also breaks the stigma that has been attached that Muslims are conservatives, tough, or do not keep up with the times. The Ustad Milenial web series also shows that technology can be used as a medium to shape the piety identity of young Muslims through its sophistication. Through technology, young Muslims also have other very interesting media alternatives that can be used to share their religious knowledge with a wider scope, not limited to the surrounding group or community.

**Picture 6. The young Muslims as *digital native***



Source: WeTV/UstadMilenial

Seventh, it should be noted that the Ustad Milenial web series is a medium that has an entertainment function. Like most other entertainment media, the Ustad Milennial web series also includes commercial elements that can attract audiences. Since the web series tells the story of young people, it provides elements that are relatable to young people, and one of which is the element of romance. Romance is an element that cannot be separated from the lives of young people. Youth is a phase in which humans are very fond of adventures, challenges, and have an interest in new things. During this time, they experience many things to become more mature. By presenting an element of romance in it, the Ustad Milenial web

series strives to make the plot of the story as realistic as possible as it is happening in the lives of young people today.

In this Ustad Milennial web series, it is depicted that Ahmad as the main character experiences a love triangle between Khadijah and Susan. Khadijah is a female character he has known for a long time and has been his playmate since they were kids. Khadijah kept her admiration for Ahmad. Khadijah is the woman chosen by Ahmad's father so that she could marry and accompany Ahmad's life. On the other hand, after returning from Gontor, Ahmad met a woman named Susan. Susan is one of Aisyah's friends, Ahmad's sister, who often plays at her house. In this web series, Susan is described as someone who has different religious beliefs from Ahmad. After knowing Susan for a long time, Ahmad started to have a crush on her.

Thus, the religious messages conveyed in the romance story of this web series aim to provide a description of a young Muslim's identity. The less restriction between young Muslims depicted in this web series is an attempt to provide an alternative for piety identity of young Muslims. The piety identity in this series is different from previous Islamic films which have stronger restrictions related to the man and woman relationship.

### Picture 7. Romance plot



Source: WeTV/UstadMilennial



Eighth, the Ustad Milenial web series also highlights the religious tolerance that young Muslims have by raising plots related to non-Muslims. In this Ustad Milenial web series, Susan is portrayed as a devout Christian. In one scene, Ahmad and Susan are shown having dinner together. Susan was seen solemnly praying before she then ate her meal. Even though she is a non-Muslim, Susan is described as having a kind personality, helpful, and respecting anyone. Susan is also described as someone who has high social concern by teaching local residents to start a home business or a small business. In addition, Susan is described as a figure who likes to help and please anyone. She then became interested in Islam when she saw Muslims doing worship during congregations in mosques. In this web series, Susan is described as having a romantic interest in Ahmad.

The plot of the web series story, which involves linking the romantic story of the main character with another her main character who is a non-Muslim, has become a very classic plot in Indonesian Islamic cinema. Similar to the general plot of the story, the non-Muslim character is depicted as receiving hidayah until she later abandoned her faith and chose to convert to Islam. However, this Ustad Milenial web series chose to create a new construct that is different related to the romance of different religions, so it creates a plot that can provide a new perspective. When two characters are involved in a romantic relationship of different religions, this web series implies that no one should to sacrifice their beliefs to be with his loved ones. The Ustad Milenial web series tries not to discredit any of the beliefs so that there is no tension between two different beliefs. Basically, this construction can create a positive perspective for Islam, and that Islam is not a coercive religion.

### Picture 8. Religious Tolerance



Source: WeTV/UstadMilennial

## Muslim Millenials, Popular Culture, and Entertainment Industry

The discourse around the identity of piety in the Islamic web series highlights an interesting relationship among populist groups, popular culture technology, and the entertainment industry. This phenomenon also provides concrete examples of how the technology of popular culture can frame and construct piety as an identity for the benefit of certain groups. Post-reform political polarization that leads to populism tends to use Islam as the largest religion in Indonesia to present a political contestation between piety and power struggle in the public space (Duraesa and Ahyar 2021). Using web series, as in the Ustad Milennial, we can see that the construction of piety identities it displays cannot be separated from the influence of people who are behind the scenes and certain interest groups. The people involved behind the scenes are important to highlight, given that one of the things that caused the phenomenal Islamic film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* to get a lot of criticism is because the main cast and the person who works behind the scenes are considered less qualified because they

do not have a strong background of piety identity. As a web series that has a religious genre and is full of religious messages, are the contributing parties, both from the actors, and the people involved in the production of the web series the ones who must have a strong background of piety identity in their daily lives? Also, will it give a significant assessment to the audience? With the background of piety identity for those entertainment industry workers, can Islamic cinema production avoid claims of religious commercialization?

The Ustad Milenial web series also highlights some of the common narratives used to present the close relationship between popular culture technology and the piety of young Muslims. Young people, especially millennials and beyond, are a generation that has an intense interest for technology. Popular culture technology, which is mostly targeted at young people (Weintraub 2011), becomes an expressive platform that can shape the identity of young people through religious texts, readings, religious music, and other forms of Muslim entertainment that can be easily downloaded in order to shape the person to be pious (Nisa 2018; Slama and Barendregt 2018). As a generation that is no longer easily carried away by certain ideological perspectives, the piety identity displayed in the Ustad Milenial web series is one of the alternative identities that can be used as a figure for millennial Muslims who are experiencing identity panic.

Thus, this discourse of piety identity that is largely displayed through religious symbols and attributes can give a certain meaning for the audience to choose its identity according to the sources and references it has. It also shows that the construction of piety identity through popular culture technology is easier because it is free from the limitations of traditional understanding in interpreting religion. However, the commercial nature of the media and its relationship with the entertainment world today has made the deliberative nature of the media in doubt. Thus, this technology of popular culture is ambivalent, in which the constructed identity of

piety can be both an alternative and a doubt to the deliberative nature of the media.

This study further demonstrates that the existence of a new form of the construction of the identity of piety mediated by the technology of popular culture not only revolves around how the forces of the media can shape an identity construct by utilizing piety as the main subject, but also how the relationship between religious groups and the entertainment industry is affected by the currents of new cultural technologies as the main platform in shaping the identity of piety. The construction of a piety identity through web series can strengthen or weaken the identity of a particular religious group. Meanwhile, popular culture technology that continues to develop has high potential to be used by the profit-oriented entertainment industry to make religious symbols a profitable commodity. In this study of the Ustad Milenial web series, popular culture technology is not only a platform for construction, but also shows how technology can be authoritative in creating piety through religious messages. On the other hand, the identity of piety highlighted through fashion shows the commodification of cultural symbols and attributes in the country's entertainment industry. Thus, the construction of the identity of piety in this web series is inseparable from the two interests in which it is contexted; the competition of religious authority and the practice of commodification of religion.

It is important to note that the use of popular culture technologies gave rise to new forms of practice in shaping the identity of piety. For religious believers, their level of piety can be strengthened or altered by popular culture technology (Hirschkind 2006; Slama and Barendregt 2018). Religious groups compete to show their identity through the platform, especially Muslim figures growing out of the urban middle-class base that are increasingly emerging in modern public spaces (Sunarwoto 2021; Hasan 2018; Princess and Sunesti 2021). Popular culture technology

seems to play its authoritative nature to create a new form of religious authority that is unstoppable from the heated debate (Slama 2018; Schulz 2012; Fewkes 2019). If in the past this religious authority was held by religious actors with their religious their educational background, today religious authority can be held by popular culture technology.

The religious education background of religious actors is also one of the focuses of piety identity as well as criticism of contemporary religious authority holders described in the Ustad Milenial web series, that one of the piety identities of a religious authority is to have a strong religious education background and islamic boarding schools. It is not enough for an authority to undergo a secular religious education as is the educational background of most new authorities. While the Ustad Milenial web series criticizes the new authority, the web series itself has become a new form of religious authority. In other words, technology acts as the new religious authority in constructing the identity of piety. Thus, the thing to note here is that the religious actors who are behind the scenes and their ideology as the basis in the construction of the piety identity depicted in the web series.

The religious educational background of the authority has become a phenomenon that has often received criticism in recent times. The number of new religious authority that has emerged in this technological era cannot be determined whether o religious education is stricly qualified. Even some of the authorities who have a lot of followers on social media today cannot be sure to have a clear Islamic knowledge. Many religious authorities understand new media and they have good appearance, but they are lacking in religious education or Islamic boarding schools (Hew 2018; Kailani and Sunarwoto 2019; Nisa 2018), so the new media allows new religious authorities to actively exist in the media (Kiptiyah 2017). Felix Siau, for example, is someone whose emergence shows that popular culture technology allows Muslims from different backgrounds to act as

an authority and spread their ideas by adjusting their da'wah strategies in new media. The new religious authority constructs piety according to the ideology of the new media which follows the logic of the market and its competitive nature, and thus resulted in implications for religious discourse and representation (Echchaibi 2011; Zulhazmi and Hastuti 2018).

The logic of the market in constructing this identity of piety is widely reflected in the symbols and attributes highlighted in Islamic cinema, namely fashion. This Muslim fashion or is widely highlighted in Islamic cinema because it is relatable with religious symbols and the identity of piety. For example, the hijab as a popular culture in Indonesia is not only a Muslim identity, but also part of the various faces of new Islamic groups and the source of many interests (Taufik and Taufik 2019). In the Ustad Milenial web series, millennial young Muslims are shown in casual, trendy, but still Islamic clothes like the fashion trends of most young Muslims in Indonesia.

The rise of the radicalism issue in Indonesia recently, has an impact on the choice of appearance of the piety image of young Muslims. Middle Eastern Muslim clothing that is similar to Indonesian *gamis*, veils, or pants above the ankles (or *cingkrang* in Indonesian) began to be avoided. However, regardless of how Islamic fashion trends are used as an identity of piety in Islamic cinema, it is a form of perpetuating the practice of commodifying religious symbols in the fashion industry. This commodification is supported by globalization, capitalism and the decline of religious institutions that allow the spiritual consumer to choose his own spiritual practices (York 2001).

The study also viewed the commodification of religion in Islamic cinema not only through fashion, but also in the entertainment industry itself. In a study of the Ustad Milenial web series, the presentation of the love triangle conflict is one of the strategies of this web series in attracting audiences. Whether admittedly or not, the complicated story

of a love triangle between the main characters who hold different beliefs, can be used as a magnet from the commercial side of Islamic cinema. In other words, the involvement of the element of romance in the Ustad Milenial web series is basically the main element that makes this web series competitive in the entertainment industry. If this web series only focuses on the values of Islamic religious teachings, then this web series will feel monotonous and eventually abandoned.

This study requires further study related to how the identity of piety constructed in Islamic cinema is interpreted in the spiritual experience of Muslims. The identity constructed in a medium is not necessarily expressed equally by each audience. This subjective spiritual experience of the audience needs to be studied further to find out how an identity construct carried out through the medium works. In addition, further studies are also needed related to the positions and attitudes taken by official religious institutions in the midst of the spread of religious messages delivered by religious groups through popular culture technology. Finally, this study demonstrates relevance to the relationship between popular culture technology and religion, so it needs further exploration to find new forms in mediated religious practice, between the profane and the sacred.

## **Conclusion**

The Ustad Milenial web series seeks to provide an alternative piety identity for young Muslims that is different from the piety identity that has been portrayed in previous Islamic films. The piety identity of young Muslims in the Ustad Milenial web series is constructed through the appearance of young Muslims who are modern and trendy, the noble ideals owned by a Muslim in maintaining Islam, a strict religious education background for a prospective religious authority, his devotion and affection for both parents, and the religious knowledge of qualified young Muslims. In addition, the identity of piety is also described by the

use of digital technology as a medium for da'wah, romance stories that are relatable with young people, and the stories conveying religious tolerance. The actors behind this millennial Muslim web series seem to understand the tendencies of young Indonesian Muslims so that the selection of themes and issues raised is in line with the recent preference of youth in Indonesia.

## References

- Azizah, Muthia, and Rini Rahman. 2022. "Nilai-Nilai Akhlakul Karimah dalam Film Ustadz Milenial." *Fondatia Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* 6 (2): 192–205. <https://doi.org/10.36088/fondatia.v6i2.1793>.
- Barendregt, Bart. 2011. "Pop Politics and Piety: Nasyid Boy Band Music in Muslim Southeast Asia" In *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, edited by A N Weintraub, 235–56. London: Routledge.
- Brenner, Suzanne. 2011. "Holy Matrimony? The Print Politics of Poligamy in Indonesia" In *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, edited by A N Weintraub, 212–34. London: Routledge.
- Castells, Manuel. 2010. *The Power of Identity*. Second Edi. UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Charness, Gary, and Yan Chen. 2020. "Social Identity, Group Behavior, and Teams" *Annual Reviews* 12: 691–713. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-091619-032800>.
- Clark, Marshall. 2008. "Indonesian Cinema: Exploring Cultures of Masculinity, Censorship and Violence" In *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*, edited by Ariel Heryanto, 37–53. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203895627>.
- DeVaney, Sharon A. 2015. "Understanding the Millennial Generation" *Journal of Financial Service Professionals* 69 (6): 11–15.
- Duraesa, M Abzar, and Muzayyin Ahyar. 2021. "Islamic Popul[ar]ism: Religious Popularism and Activism in the Yukngaji Community." *QIJIS* 9 (2): 503–34. <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v9i2.7795>.



- Echchaibi, Nabil. 2011. "From Audio Tapes to Video Blogs: The Delocalisation of Authority in Islam University of Colorado at Boulder." *Nation and Nationalism* 17 (1): 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00468.x>.
- Fewkes, Jacqueline H. 2019. "'Siri Is Alligator Halal?' Mobile Apps, Food Practices, and Religious Authority Among American Muslims." In *Anthropological Perspective on the Religious Uses of Mobile Apps*, edited by Jacqueline H Fewkes, 107–30. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26376-8>.
- Halim, Abd. 2018. *Wajah Al-Quran di Era Digital*. Edited by Lutfi Rahmatullah. Yogyakarta: Sulur.
- Halim, Abd. Dkk. 2020. *Ingin Saleh Boleh, Merasa Saleh Jangan*. Edited by Agus Wedi. Yogyakarta: Sulur.
- Hamad, Ibnu. 2007. "Lebih Dekat Dengan Analisis Wacana" *Mediator* 8 (2): 325–44.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi. 2012. "Piety, Politics, and Post-Islamisme: Dhikr Akbar in Indonesia" *Al-Jami'ah* 50 (2): 369–90. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2012.502.369-390>.
- . 2018. "Menuju Islamisme Populer." In *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Milenial: Transmisi, Apropriasi, Dan Kontestasi*, edited by Noorhaidi Hasan, 1–27. Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press.
- Helal, Guida, and Wilson Ozuem. 2017. "Social Identity Matters: Social Media and Brand Perceptions in the Fashion Apparel and Accessories Industries" *IGI Global*, 326–61. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-9282-2.ch041>.
- Heryanto, Ariel. 2008. "Pop Culture and Competing Identities." In *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*, edited by Ariel Heryanto, 1–36. London: Routledge.
- . 2011. "Upgraded Piety and Pleasure: The New Middle Class and Islam in Indonesian Popular Culture." In *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, edited by Andrew N Weintraub, 60–82. New York: Routledge.
- . 2015. *Identitas dan Kenikmatan: Politik Budaya Layar Indonesia*. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.
- Hew, Wai Weng. 2018. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw." *Indonesia*

- and the Malay World*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416757>.
- Hidayaturrahman, Mohammad, and D.I Ansusa Putra. 2019. "The Role of Technology and Social Media in Spreading the Qur'an and Hadiths by Mubalig." *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v4i1.1858>.
- Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. "Cassette Ethics: Public Piety and Popular Media in Egypt." In *Religion, Media, and The Public Sphere*, edited by Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors, 29–51. USA: Indiana University Press.
- Hoesterey, James B, and Marshall Clark. 2012. "Film Islami: Gender, Piety and Pop Culture in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia" *Asian Studies Review* 36 (2): 207–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2012/685925>.
- Jenkins, Richard. 2008. *Social Identity*. Third Edit. New York: Routledge.
- Kailani, Najib, and Sunarwoto. 2019. "Televangelisme Islam dalam Lanskap Otoritas Keagamaan Baru." In *Ulama Dan Negara Bangsa: Membaca Masa Depan Islam Politik di Indonesia*, edited by Noorhaidi Hasan, 179–206. Yogyakarta: Pusat Pengkajian Islam, Demokrasi, dan Perdamaian.
- Kavakci, Elif, and Camille Kraeplin. 2016. "Religious Beings in Fashionable Bodies: The Online Identity Construction of Hijabi Social Media Personalities" *Media, Culture & Society* 39 (6): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443716679031>.
- Kiptiyah, Siti Mariatul. 2017. "The Celebrity's Kyai and New Media." *Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya* 19 (3): 339–52. <https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v19i3.495>.
- Nasrullah, Ruli. 2011. "Konstruksi Identitas Muslim di Media Baru" *Komunika* 5 (2): 221–34. <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v5i2.172>.
- Nasrum, Ilham, Suf Kasman, and Muh Alamsyah. 2021. "Pesan Dakwah dalam Serial Film 'Ustad Milenial' (Pendekatan Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)." *Washiyah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 2 (4).
- Nisa, Eva F. 2018. "Creative and Lucrative Da'wa : The Visual Culture of Instagram among Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia." *Asiascape*:

- Digital Asia* 5: 68–99. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.
- Oktaviani, H Abu Bakar, and Ilham Fahmi. 2021. “Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Sinetron Ustad Milenial.” *Jurnal Ilmiah Waban Pendidikan* 7 (5): 189–98. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5511743>.
- Putri, Addin Kurnia, and Yuyun Sunesti. 2021. “Sharia Branding in Housing Context : A Study of Halal Lifestyle Representation.” *Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo* 5 (1): 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jsw.2021.5.1.7268>.
- Rohman, Nur. 2019. “Gen Z Dan Normativitas Studi Agama di Media Sosial.” In *Dari Halliday Hingga Hanan Attaki: Generasi Milenial Membincang Generasi Z*, edited by Abd. Halim., Dkk. Yogyakarta: Sulur.
- Sadewa, Ghalif Putra. 2019. “Membongkar Identitas dalam Film ‘Wandu’” *Jurnal Rekam* 15 (1): 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.24821/rekam.v15i1.1927>.
- Sasono, Eric. 2010. “Islamic-Themed Films in Contemporary Indonesia: Commodified-Religion or Islamization?” *Asian Cinema* 21 (2): 48–68. [https://doi.org/10.1386/ac.21.2.48\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/ac.21.2.48_1).
- Schulz, Dorothea. 2012. “Reconsidering Muslim Authority: Female ‘Preachers’ and the Ambiguities of Radaio-Mediated Sermonizing in Mali.” In *Radio Fields: Anthropology and Wireless Sound in the 21st Century*, edited by Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher. New York: New York University Press.
- Slama, Martin. 2018. “Social Media and Islamic Practice : Indonesian Ways of Being Digitally Pious.” In *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence*, edited by Edwin Jurriens and Ross Tapsell, 146–62. Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institue. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814786003-015>.
- Slama, Martin, and Bart Barendregt. 2018. “Online Publics in Muslim Southeast Asia: In Between Religious Politics and Popular Pious Practices.” *Asiascape:Digital Asia* 5: 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340090>.
- Sunarwoto. 2021. “Online Salafi Rivalries in Indonesia: Between Sectarianism and ‘Good’ Citizenship.” *Religion, State & Society* 49

- (2): 157–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2021.1924014>.
- Sunesti, Yuyun, Noorhaidi Hasan, and Muhammad Najib Azca. 2018. “Negotiating Identity in Democratic Society: The Internet and The New Public Sphere of Salafi-Niqabi Women.” Vol. 241. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icosaps-18.2018.39>.
- Taufik, H M, and Amalia Taufik. 2019. “Hijrah and Pop Culture: Hijab and Other Muslim Fashions among Students in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara.” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 8 (2): 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v8i2.5305>.
- Weintraub, Andrew N. 2011. “Introduction: The Study of Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia.” In *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, edited by Andrew N Weintraub, 1–17. New York: Routledge.
- William, Dan. 2012. *Web TV Series: How to Make and Market Them*. United Kingdom: Oldcastle Books.
- York, Michael. 2001. “New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality.” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 16 (3): 361–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537900120077177>.
- Zulhazmi, Abraham Zakky, and Dewi Ayu Sri Hastuti. 2018. “Da’wa, Muslim Millenials and Social Media.” *Lentera* 2.