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Exploring Ulama's Political Messages in Digital Media Sermons: Youth Perspectives and Practical Meanings

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Komunikasi politik,
media sosial, ulama,
pejabat pemerintah,
aktivis politik

Membicarakan persoalan kemasyarakatan dan kenegaraan merupakan hal penting dalam konteks negara demokrasi. Setiap warga negara berhak terlibat melakukan komunikasi politik menyalurkan aspirasinya tentang pembangunan. Termasuk membicarakan persoalan ekonomi, pendidikan, keagamaan, kebudayaan dan perencanaan pembangunan. Ulama sebagai pemimpin umat Islam, pun sangat perlu terlibat menyampaikan pesan-pesan politik tentang proses pembangunan, terutama kepada pejabat negara, partai politik, masyarakat luas dan aktivis komunikasi politik lainnya. Ulama memberikan nasihat agar pembangunan nasional dilaksanakan dengan penuh rasa tanggung jawab. Penelitian ini akan mengkaji sejauh mana pandangan khalayak terhadap pesan-pesan politik ulama dalam ceramah agama Islam yang dimuat dalam media sosial. Juga untuk mengetahui makna pesan-pesan politik ulama dalam ceramahnya tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam dan analisis isi. Lima orang informan telah dimintai pandangan mereka terhadap pesan-pesan politik yang disampaikan ulama melalui media sosial. Peneliti juga telah menonton, mendengar, mencatat dan menganalisis isi pesan-pesan politik ulama dalam berbagai platform media sosial. Penelitian ini mendapati bahwa khalayak mengharapkan agar ulama lebih aktif memberikan pesan-pesan politik kepada pejabat negara dan aktivis politik lainnya. Ini penting untuk mengingatkan mereka, agar menghindari penyalahgunaan kekuasaan, melakukan perbuatan korupsi, serta mengutamakan kepentingan pribadi dan golongannya. Penelitian juga mendapati materi dakwah ulama dalam media sosial sangat penting, sebagai menjadi bahan evaluasi bagi pejabat negara dan aktivis politik dalam melaksanakan pembangunan. Amanah rakyat perlu dijalankan

dengan sebaik-baiknya, agar tercipta masyarakat sejahtera, adil dan makmur

Abstract

Keywords:

Government officials; political activists; political communication; social media; ulama

Discussing social and state issues is important in the context of a democratic country. Every citizen has the right to involve in political communication to channel their aspirations about their country. This includes discussing economic, educational, religious, cultural and development planning issues. As muslim community leaders, it is critical that ulama involve in conveying political messages about the development process to state officials, political actors and parties, and the wider community. Ulama need to provide advice so that national development is carried out with a full sense of responsibility. This research will explore people views on political messages of ulama in religious lectures published on social media. It also seek to understand what people think about the meaning of the ulama's political messages in his lectures. This research uses qualitative methods through in-depth interviews and content analysis. Five informants were asked for their views on the political messages conveyed by clerics via social media. Researchers have also watched, listened, recorded and analyzed the content of ulama's political messages on various social media platforms. This research found that the public expects ulama to be more active in providing political messages to state officials and other political activists. This is important to remind them to avoid abuse of power, committing acts of corruption, and prioritizing their personal and group interests. Research also finds that clerics' preaching material on social media is very important, as evaluation material for state officials and political activists in implementing development.

INTRODUCTION

Community involvement in discussing state issues is increasingly open and demonstrates a better and more encouraging trend, considering that this is an important component of a democratic state (Rossini, 2022). In fact, it is even more widespread when viewed from the aspect of the themes discussed. People are becoming increasingly accustomed to discussing political

themes to obtain accurate political information (Garrett & Bond, 2021). It is not just about pragmatic political themes or politics to fight for power, but more about political themes in the real sense, covering national development matters and efforts to create wider, fairer, and more sustainable social welfare.

Discussions about politics are very interesting and important in the context of democracy, conducted with honesty,

integrity, and responsibility (Darko et al., 2022). Such discussions can be classified as a form of genuine political participation. Political participation means the involvement of the community in various political processes. Indeed, the community has the right to participate in all stages of policymaking in the context of national development (Waldschmidt & Sépulchre, 2019). This involvement begins from the decision-making process, implementation, evaluation, to the opportunity to participate in the execution of decisions. The activities carried out by the community include conveying political messages to those in power, whether regarding economic, political, or emergency situations (Lerouge Arnaboldi, 2023).

These messages are directed to government officials, parliamentarians, and other formal political activists. The purpose of these political messages is to influence the policy-making decisions taken by the government. Leaders must provide opportunities for citizens to express their views so that they align with their expectations (Silva & Proksch, 2022). This political communication process can be individual or collective, organized, measurable, and conducted peacefully. Political messages are an important element in political communication, providing information related to state, social, and national issues. Discussions carried out in the context of political communication involve political activists from various backgrounds who try to influence

people through dialogue (Zebib, 2022). The most important theme in political messages is formulating and enacting policies that benefit society.

In conveying political messages, the tendency so far has been for political activists to be the ones who talk the most about state policy. Those who dominate political discussions are public officials and members of political parties. Discussions in the context of political communication must provide meaningful contributions to society, making them more valid and extensive (Rossini, 2023). This is conveyed more in terms of how to gain and maintain power. In a democratic country, everyone has the right to discuss political issues as an inherent right of citizenship. This includes religious figures, who may also convey political messages. Given that political activities themselves are aimed at seizing and obtaining power (Budiana & Achmad, 2022). With the power they possess, an individual or group of people will have significant access to participate in formulating and determining public policy. Political power is considered as real power to regulate society's life in its various aspects because without political power, the influence of an individual or group becomes less effective in society's life.

In other words, through political power, an individual or a group can regulate societal, national, and state life. The regulation that should be carried out is to genuinely provide welfare, justice, and prosperity to all citizens (Gupta et

al., 2021). In reality, political power does not always reflect its intended goals. There are disparities and violations committed by political activists. The political goals, which ideally should embody high and pure values, often exist merely in discourse. They are a delightful and beautiful topic in academic seminars. Also, when political activists launch campaigns ahead of general elections. Limited to rhetoric by government officials in power.

Political objectives cannot be fully implemented well. When they assume the reins of power, political activists forget their campaign promises (Susila et al., 2020). They carry out activities that appear to be aimed at the interests of the people, but it turns out that behind it all, there are personal and group interests. In a country experiencing such national political conditions, national development will face various challenges encountered by society. Eventually, the welfare and justice desired by the people will be difficult to achieve as a whole. National development will falter and be poorly managed (Fagan, 2023). Various shortcomings and inequalities will increasingly spread to various sectors of life.

Therefore, all parties need to be involved in governing the country according to their respective contexts and positions. Starting from political officials, opinion leaders, social activists, journalists, academics, and researchers, they must appear together

to take care of the nation. This involvement is important as political justification in making decisions for the public interest (Muirhead & Rosenblum, 2020). Likewise with religious figures from various ideological backgrounds and beliefs. All of them must unite with other components of the nation in involving themselves in paying attention to national problems. In the context of this research, we will discuss the necessity of involvement of Islamic scholars and religious figures in discussing state politics. Islam is believed to be capable of providing guidance in various aspects of life, including state and political order (Doli Witro, 2020). It needs to be clarified that what is meant by state politics here is the delivery of political messages aimed at nation-building and governance. Not in the context of clerics or religious figures, for the purpose of gaining political power. Here it is not about how to get ulama to hold positions in state institutions or become officials in government affairs, as is done by political activists in general.

Islamic scholars should have a strong desire to help organize people's lives in a better direction. Because with the religious authority they have, they are confident to get involved in politics (Alkaf & Hakam, 2022). In this context, when speaking in front of an audience, they must be involved in conveying state political messages, with the aim of benefiting society as a whole in the truest sense. So Islamic preachers must understand and comprehend state issues

and explore current political issues. They cannot be anti-political or avoid discussing political issues. Meanwhile, there are also Islamic scholars who refrain from or fear discussing political matters related to the state, which is considered an unfavorable attitude. These scholars believe that political affairs are not the concern of religious leaders, akin to the secular view that separates religion from politics (Latief et al., 2022). They consider political issues to be the responsibility of political activists and government officials. As a stance or opinion, this must be respected. They should not be forced to discuss political issues. These scholars who hold such views are also very important in religious life. They must be seen positively, as they can also convey other religious messages in different contexts.

However, it must also be well understood that the task of Islamic preachers is to enlighten the public on religious, state, and societal matters. Thus, discussions on religious issues cover all dimensions of life, including political issues (Koentjoro, 2023). Islam is a perfect religion, complete with guidance to regulate all aspects of human life, including political life. With political power, it will help regulate people's lives in various aspects. Islam obliges Muslims to engage in da'wah, constantly encouraging its followers to do good in any form. Additionally, the concept of da'wah involves giving advice or warnings to the public to avoid committing crimes, wrongdoing, and

disgraceful acts. Indeed, the task of da'wah is an obligation for all Muslims, according to their abilities and knowledge (Wastiyah, 2020). Traditionally, the responsibility of da'wah has been carried out by Islamic scholars and preachers.

In fulfilling their duty of spreading Islam, scholars can employ various forms or strategies of da'wah. These include oral da'wah and written da'wah. Nowadays, an additional method of da'wah has emerged: through social media (Mastori & Islamy, 2021). Islamic preachers can write da'wah materials and publish them on social media. They can also record da'wah materials and upload them to social media.

Currently, digital media and social media can be seen as means of enhancing democracy by facilitating and promoting political participation, deliberation, and the free flow of information (Tajuddin & Bahari, 2023). The use of social media in da'wah certainly makes it easier for scholars. It also benefits the public by providing easy access to da'wah materials anytime and anywhere. In fact, people today are very familiar with using the internet in their daily lives, leading to the concepts of digital citizenship and cybersecurity (Black et al., 2022). The da'wah material typically delivered by preachers to the public generally includes fundamental Islamic teachings such as aqidah (creed), sharia (Islamic law), morals, interpretation of hadith, and Islamic history (Daulay & Amini, 2022).

However, some scholars have begun incorporating elements of state politics as topics in their sermons, particularly those shared on social media. Through digital da'wah, these scholars convey political messages. Among their sermon themes are urging leaders to carry out their duties well, avoid actions detrimental to the people, and guide citizens to support trustworthy leaders.

In the context of this research, the focus is on the reception of political messages disseminated by Islamic scholars through social media platforms. The study aims to analyze the content of these messages delivered via digital media sermons and assess their reception among the audience. Given the varying perspectives regarding the appropriateness of scholars engaging in political discourse, the research also seeks to gauge the audience's reactions to the presented content. The overarching objective is to evaluate whether these messages align with the traditional role of scholars in fostering religious enlightenment and knowledge within the community (Rahmah, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of political communication has increasingly gained attention from many quarters, especially after the opening of democratic space in Indonesia since the start of the reform era two decades ago (Djumadin, 2022). Everyone is free to communicate and express their aspirations and desires in national life. Besides this, communication for the public serves as

a means to actualize their potential and contribute thoughts towards national development (Susanto, 2021).

In essence, communication permeates all dimensions of human social life, such as social communication, political communication, intercultural communication, health communication, and so on (Astajaya, 2020). When communication delves into the discussion of political messages, it is referred to as political communication (Kariryaa et al., 2022). Typically, political communication is always associated with political discussions, both verbal and non-verbal. The political messages discussed cover topics that can influence both the public and the government within a political system.

Simply put, political communication can be described as the transmission of politically charged messages from a source to a recipient to create a shared understanding (Kustiawan et al., 2022). The process of political communication always involves political messages and political actors or those related to power, governance, and policies concerning the state. The political messages conveyed, whether written or unwritten, verbal or non-verbal, carried out covertly or openly, consciously or unconsciously, all contain political content. In relation to national affairs, political communication can be seen as the effort to convey opinions and attitudes from citizens or organizations and interested

parties to influence political decision-making (Lewandowsky et al., 2020). This means that anyone can convey political messages, not just political activists. Academics and community leaders, including religious leaders, should also be involved in conveying political messages related to the state (Ehsan, 2021).

The involvement of religious leaders in political matters often sparks lengthy debates among various groups. Some agree with it, while others do not. Those who support the involvement of religious leaders in political discussions argue that all religious affairs encompass all dimensions of worldly life, including state and societal matters (Gherghina & Mişcoiu, 2022). They believe that worldly and spiritual matters should not be separated and that both should be of concern to religious leaders, as they are essential for believers (Dalmeri et al., 2022).

On the other hand, those who oppose this view consider politics to be solely a worldly matter. They argue that religious values should not be brought into political affairs. They believe that politics should be left to politicians, while religious leaders should focus solely on providing religious education to the public. There is also a perspective that religious leaders are a pure group, whereas politics often involves dishonesty. Therefore, it is inappropriate for religious leaders to enter the political arena, which tends to involve unscrupulous behavior and the

use of any means to achieve personal goals (Mráz, 2021).

Actually, such views need to be discussed more deeply. Considering that in the modern context, politics is the best way to manage the life of society within the government. Politics is related to how to manage the resources vital to society, such as water, natural resources, and biological resources, ultimately aiming to lead people towards safety and prosperity (Hidayat & Suwanto, 2020). This is certainly in line with Islamic teachings. Since these issues are part of Islamic teachings, Islamic leaders, or ulama, need to be involved in them. The implementation of political preaching by ulama is not limited to direct sermons before the public (Ramdan & Usman, 2021). Nowadays, preaching that conveys political messages has extended to social media. Several ulama have taken to delivering political messages through various social media platforms, both in written form and as recordings disseminated via the internet.

Using social media as a tool for preaching political messages functions to recreate political ideas, enabling individuals to form political attitudes and determine specific political behaviors (Walgrave et al., 2023). Social media is widely used as a campaign tool (Petrova et al., 2021). Besides aiming to garner political support, conveying political messages can increase public interest and political literacy more effectively than conventional campaign methods.

Social media is now extensively utilized as a means of communication and information gathering (Ennsner-Jedenastik et al., 2022). It has redefined how people interact with one another, allowing them to build relationships without geographical and demographic barriers. Social media today is the most efficient and influential medium in various life aspects such as social, commercial, business, and political (Cobis & Rusadi, 2023). The delivery of messages must be effective, meaning the messages should clearly convey information to the public. The messages should also be convincing, effectively persuading others to accept the ideas presented. Similarly, the political messages delivered by ulama through social media must be effective to positively influence the public.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes qualitative methods through in-depth interviews and content analysis. The form of this research is descriptive because the aim of to describeparticipant views on political messages of Islamic sholars and leaders on social media and the meaning contained in the ulama's political messages. In the initial phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted between June and July 2023 to obtain primary data from informants. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in answering questions and enable the exploration of the informants' viewpoints (Daae & Boks, 2015). Therefore, the researcher chose to use

semi-structured interviews to ensure that sufficient information was collected about the audience's reception of the ulama's political messages in Islamic religious lectures on social media.

To maintain the confidentiality of the informants, numbers were used in naming participants, namely informants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The purposive sampling technique was used, considering specific criteria in selecting informants consisting of young generations who were students from two provinces, namely South Sulawesi Province and West Sulawesi Province. The researchers inquired about the informants' perspectives on receiving political messages through social media. Informants were provided ample opportunity to elucidate and express their opinions on the questions posed by the researcher. The interviews were meticulously recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed.

Next, an analysis of the content of Islamic religious lectures on social media was conducted. Content analysis is an objective explanation of communication messages that have been published, broadcasted, or depicted (Sabitha Marican, 2009). Certain parts of the message can be heard, obtained, and seen by referring to the textual content, meaning, images, symbols, ideas, themes, or any communication message conveyed (Ibrahim & Yusof, 2020). In this section, the study examines five digital preaching broadcasts containing Islamic religious lectures. These lectures also

provide advice and insights related to political governance, humanitarian politics, and national development.

The selection of these five channels is based on interviews with informants. The principal researcher (HFS) watched several digital preaching broadcasts by several scholars whose names were mentioned most frequently in interviews, where their preaching was uploaded via social media. The researcher analyzed five digital preaching broadcasts to elucidate the meanings embedded in the political messages they conveyed. These broadcasts featured sermons by Ustaz Habib Ja'far, Ustaz Adi Hidayat, Ustaz Abdus Somad Batubara, Sheikh Ali Jabeer, and Ustaz Dasad Latif. The researcher attentively listened to, observed, and documented the speakers' words pertaining to political themes of statehood and nationalism. Subsequently, the researchers synthesized the information based on these political themes and interpreted the conveyed messages.

RESULTS

The study results are divided into two main groups: the first focuses on the reception of ulama's political messages in digital media, while the second delves into the interpretation of the messages conveyed in the sermons mentioned by the informants during the interviews.

Audience Acceptance of Ulama's Political Messages

The important role of ulama as leaders of the Muslim community (Doerry, 2022) is to provide enlightenment of thought and broaden the insight of Muslims in various aspects of social, national, and state life. In their lectures on social media, clerics do not only focus on religious issues. Ulama must also be free to discuss political issues (Walid Jumblatt Abdullah, 2021), not only concerning halal and haram laws or matters related to heaven and hell. While these discussions are undoubtedly important, discussions about politics are also crucial in enlightening Muslims.

Public respect for ulama is very high. Ulama become patrons in daily life (Mahfud, 2020). Their words are heard and heeded. Many of their followers follow their advice and orders. People listen to clerics giving lectures in various places, both in-person and via social media. Nowadays, many ulama are familiar with giving lectures via social media (Briandana, 2020), including lectures related to political messages.

This research aims to gain an understanding of the meaning and audience acceptance of ulama's political messages on social media. To obtain data for this research, the researcher involved five participants from the younger generation to obtain the necessary data related to their acceptance of political messages conveyed by clerics via social media.

These five participants correspond to the following characteristics:

Table 1: Informant characteristics

Informant Code	Age	Gender	Study Program	Origin	Favorite Ulama	Media Type
Informant 1	24	Man	Islamic Communication and Broadcasting	Makassar	Ustaz Habib Ja'far	Tiktok
Informant 2	21	Woman	Hajj and Umrah Management	Mamuju	Ustaz Adi Hidayat	Youtube Facebook
Informant 3	20	Woman	Islamic Guidance and Counseling	Palopo	Ustaz Abdul	Youtube Facebook WhatsApp

Somad							
Informant 4	20	Woman	Islamic Communication and Broadcasting	Polewali	Syekh Ali Jabeer	Tiktok Facebook Youtube	
Informant 5	20	Man	Sharia Economics	Luwu Timur	Ustaz Dasad Latif	Tiktok	

Based on Table 1, the study included three female and two male participants, all aged between 20 and 24 years. These individuals come from various academic disciplines and are currently enrolled in universities. They reside in two provinces, namely South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi. The participants access Islamic religious lectures delivered by clerics through social media platforms that are highly popular among the younger generation, such as TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The clerics most frequently mentioned and followed for their sermons are Ustaz Habib Ja'far, Ustaz Adi Hidayat, Ustaz Abdus Somad Batubara, Sheikh Ali Jabeer, and Ustaz Dasad Latif.

The study revealed that the involvement of ulama in discussing state political issues in their Islamic religious lectures delivered via social media is positively received by the participants. The responses from the five participants highlighted several arguments supporting the importance of ulama engaging in the delivery of political messages. These findings underscore the participants' belief in the

significant role that ulama can play in political discourse.



Figure 1: *The Importance of Scholars Conveying Political Messages*

The political messages of ulama in Islamic religious lectures are crucial to implement as part of the manifestation of Islamic teachings exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, it is incorrect to claim that ulama are prohibited from discussing political issues. Politics plays a significant role in regulating the life of a state, ensuring the safety and peace of its people, and fostering good relations between Muslims and people of other religions.

"Getting involved in politics should follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who engaged in politics to uphold Allah's religion and its path of preaching. For instance, the Medina Charter created by the Prophet Muhammad is a form of politics and a method of preaching to improve relations between infidels, Jews, and Muslims, ensuring safe and peaceful coexistence" (Informant 1).

In a democratic country, when a leader is elected to govern, the people must adhere to the policies they enact. However, it is crucial to ensure that these policies are in the best interest of the people. Sometimes, policies enacted by leaders are perceived to benefit the people, but behind these policies, there may be specific intentions to maintain power or gain financial benefits for personal or group interests. This is where the presence of ulama becomes essential to provide guidance, ensuring that leaders are aware of their responsibilities and do not formulate policies solely for personal or group interests.

"Ulama must be sensitive to political issues, especially concerning current leadership. Muslims need to be politically aware, as state policies are the result of political decisions. If the current leaders are irresponsible and unprofessional in their governance, it will have a negative impact on society. In this context, ulama's involvement in

politics is about reminding leaders to prioritize the welfare of the people" (Informant 2).

One of the significant problems that is currently very detrimental to the people is the widespread behavior among government officials, political activists, and other members of the legislature, who are more focused on seeking worldly pleasures. They prioritize accumulating wealth and maintaining power, often through unethical means. However, they forget that as believers, they will be held accountable for all their actions before God Almighty.

Such behavior by officials needs to be addressed and reminded to return to the right path. They may have forgotten their responsibilities or become carried away with temporary pleasures, or influenced by the currents of globalization and their surrounding environment. In this context, ulama need to deliver political messages during Islamic religious lectures. Ulama must remind and advise government officials and political activists to focus on the responsibilities entrusted to them.

"The involvement of ulama in the political field must be carefully considered. In today's political landscape, many individuals use any means to gain power and engage in corruption. This behavior is detrimental to the country and its people. Ulama, through their religious lectures, need to include political messages to remind

officials and political activists about the dangers of corruption and its impact on the people. Moreover, as believers, corruption is a grave sin, which will be accounted for in the afterlife" (Informant 3).

To achieve the goals of national development in various sectors of life, the participation of all relevant parties is crucial. Government officials, political activists, and citizens all have important roles according to their respective positions. Government officials, entrusted with the authority to regulate and formulate policies for national development, must demonstrate high levels of professionalism, commitment, and integrity to ensure that national development can achieve its true objectives.

However, in its implementation, various problems arise that have the potential to harm the country, leading to gaps and errors. Implementers and policymakers in this development process need guidance and reminders. One of the parties capable of providing such reminders is the ulama, through political messages in Islamic religious lectures via social media. The role of ulama is solely to provide guidance and reminders; this does not imply direct involvement in the technical implementation of development projects. The advice of these scholars should not be viewed as negative intervention but rather as a positive and constructive contribution.

"In my opinion, it is permissible for clerics to engage in politics as long as it is done within a reasonable context, because Islam teaches us to live in peace. Having lectures that touch on political matters could serve to address the inequality present in society and align it with the teachings of the Islamic religion. However, ulama should not engage in politics for personal or group gain, as it would tarnish their image as community role models" (Informant 4).

Democracy in Indonesia should be rooted in the local wisdom of its people. While it's acceptable to learn from other countries' democratic practices, it should be adapted to fit Indonesian ideology and culture, particularly the Pancasila democratic understanding.

The Indonesian people hold strong beliefs in religious teachings, with religious values deeply embedded in their souls. With many religions recognized by the state, Islam, as the majority religion, plays a significant role in national and state life.

"In the general election, candidates for national leadership and legislative members are chosen. Unfortunately, attempts to bribe people to win elections are not uncommon. This is unacceptable in a democratic country. Ulama must provide warnings through religious messages about the prohibition of bribery in Islamic teachings. They should also offer examples of leadership that align with the teachings of Islam

and the exemplary leadership of the caliphs" (Informant 5).

Islamic da'wah should encompass all aspects of life. Therefore, when delivering Islamic religious lectures on social media, ulama must remind state officials, political activists, and all interested parties. These reminders are necessary to ensure that the implementation of political policies remains in accordance with religious values and teachings.

Practical meaning of Ulama's political messages on social media

Based on searches on social media, there are clerics who often convey political messages while giving Islamic religious lectures on social media. According to participants' confessions, five clerics are familiar among the younger generation of Indonesia. Table 2 describes ulama characteristics and the practical meaning of the political messages in their sermon. (See attachment 1).

Ustaz Habib Ja'far, a young cleric from East Java, is quite famous in Indonesia. His full name is Habib Husein Bin Ja'far Al Hadar, S.Fil.I., M.Ag., and he completed his final education in the field of Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. He is active as an Islamic preacher in the community and also through social media.

In his view, as a cleric, political activities are beneficial. He believes that

one of the most effective ways to change a nation's condition is through politics. According to him, participating in general elections is the right of every citizen, and every citizen must use this right to the best of their ability. He advocates that individuals should choose whichever leader candidate they find convincing. In a talk broadcasted on the Q&A Metro TV YouTube channel, he stated:

"The Prophet Muhammad was a politician. He succeeded in building a country called Medina. The Medina Charter inspired laws throughout the world. This is the first moment of perspective citizenship in the world. A person is not seen from his race, ethnicity, and religion. Everyone is a citizen who has rights and obligations that must be implemented in full."

He also mentioned that individuals with high political potential should not necessarily be chosen as potential leaders. He believes that those with excessive political power often lack competence, have a poor track record, and believe that any means justify their ends.

Ustaz Adi Hidayat is an alumnus of the "Darul Arqam" Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School in Garut, West Java. He pursued his Islamic religious education at several universities in the Middle East. Apart from delivering Islamic religious lectures directly to the public, he is also active in giving lectures via social media. Through the social foundation he founded, he often

aids Muslims in Palestine and provides scholarships for Palestinian students to study in Indonesia. He has been elected as one of the leaders of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Tablighi Council.

Although he is not involved in political party activities, he often delivers national and state political messages in his lectures. He has expressed both appreciation and criticism toward the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. One of his criticisms is related to investment plans in the liquor sector. As the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, and drinking alcohol is strictly prohibited for Muslims, he raised concerns about these investment plans.

In a political communication process conducted via social media, he appreciated the actions of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, who revoked some of the attachments to government regulatory permits regarding liquor. He also emphasized the importance of paying attention to and implementing the aspirations of ulama and community leaders in development. In one of his testimonials on social media, he said:

"Of course, we all support and appreciate his (President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo) steps and policies. And what makes him happy is that he heard the aspirations of various regions. This includes ulama, especially mass organizations and also national figures. This is important as a

basis for making future policies which are, of course, related to the benefit of national and state life."

Based on existing data, he is among the ulama who openly responded to the liquor investment plan. For Ustaz Adi Hidayat, the fight against investment in alcoholic beverages needs to be voiced by ulama. This is in accordance with the vision and mission of the Constitution and Pancasila, which aim to guide the nation and state toward a better way of life.

In the various Islamic religious lectures he delivers, Ustaz Abdus Somad often conveys messages with political nuances. He frequently criticizes or corrects government policies that he views as not in line with real development goals. Despite his frequent criticism of the government, many government officials or political activists invite him to give lectures on Islam throughout Indonesia. He also frequently appears to give lectures on Islam via social media.

In an Islamic religious lecture published on social media, Ustaz Abdus Somad delivered political messages to Muslims, including government officials. According to him, many people think that working in an office or a government agency is not worship. This misconception leads many officials to commit crimes or cheat while working. However, he emphasizes that all work is worship if it is intended to obtain the blessing of Allah SWT.

"Many people think that worship only happens in the mosque. Worship in Mecca, reading Yasin, that's worship. But when you're in the office, they don't consider it worship. So when you are at the mosque, you are solemn. But when you're in the office, it's rotten. Because they think that going to the mosque is worship, and going to the office is not. That's wrong. Worship happens in the mosque, and it also happens in the office. So those in the office who come in at 8 in the morning, leave at 4 in the afternoon, work overtime, travel out of town, all of that, God willing, is worship."

He added that worship should not be an excuse to cover up mistakes and misconduct. Even if the boss isn't watching, even if the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) doesn't see it, even if the inspectorate general overlooks it, Allah SWT is always watching.

Sheikh Ali Jabeer, originally from Saudi Arabia, became an Indonesian citizen after marrying an Indonesian woman. After becoming an Indonesian citizen, he was very active as an Islamic preacher, traveling all over Indonesia at the invitation of local audiences. According to the author's notes, he survived an assassination attempt while giving a lecture in Lampung Province. However, he succumbed to his injuries some time later, after being hospitalized for an extended period. Despite his passing several years ago, his religious lectures can still be followed via social media.

In one of his lectures, which was broadcast on social media, he emphasized that in the eyes of Allah SWT, government officials and the public are equal. In the face of death, positions in the government sector or other socio-economic statuses will no longer matter. This means that government officials do not have any privileges in the afterlife. What makes a person special is their good deeds while living on earth.

"Even if they are kings. Even if they are sultans. Even if they are ministers. Even if people are rich. Whatever the position. Even if people are poor. Maybe you have a different world at home. Rich people have palaces, nice houses. Poor people have simple houses. But in the grave, everything is the same. No difference. But what is different is the good deeds. The grave may look the same, but it's actually different. People who do good deeds will have a spacious grave. But the grave can also become a pit leading to hell for those who do not do good deeds."

He advised the audience that every human being will face death. Every Muslim will enter the grave. This includes government officials and political activists. In the grave, everyone's status is the same, there is no difference. The important message here is that everyone should avoid committing crimes while living on earth. Instead, they must fulfill the mandates and responsibilities entrusted to them.

Another popular cleric among Indonesian Muslims is Ustaz Dasad Latif. He is also well-known outside the country, including in Malaysia, and has been invited to lecture in various countries in Asia and Australia. Hailing from Pinrang Regency, South Sulawesi, he completed his doctoral studies at the National University of Malaysia and the Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar. Currently, he serves as a permanent lecturer at the Department of Communication Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar.

One of the strengths of Ustaz Dasad Latif is his willingness to criticize and provide important input to the state, state officials, and political activists. In his lecture published on social media titled "Message before the regional elections," he advises people to engage in politics politely and properly. He emphasizes that nothing should be done to win elections, including bribing voters, as this goes against Islamic teachings.

"If a member of the DPR offers political money, record it and make it viral. If a member of the DPR is elected because of bribery, by Allah, many ulama are of the opinion that as long as you receive a salary as a member of the DPR, then during that time you are also consuming haram money."

He also gives special advice to women when choosing potential leaders. Since the majority of voters in Indonesia are women, they must be politically aware and actively advise their children

and husbands. He emphasizes that women should not accept bribes in politics.

DISCUSSION

Every material presented by clerics in Islamic religious lectures, whether conducted face-to-face or delivered via social media, aims to enhance the religious insight of the audience (Rumainur et al., 2022). Islamic religious lectures need to be followed continuously as a means of protecting and nurturing oneself, ensuring firm belief in Islamic teachings. In the current era of globalization, characterized, among other things, by the ease of obtaining information from various parts of the world (Erlangga, 2021), there is both positive and negative information. Therefore, there is a need to make an effort to filter the information received and balance it with useful information that aligns with Islamic teachings. One effective way to achieve this is by attending Islamic religious lectures regularly.

The ultimate goal of Islamic religious lectures, which are always conducted by ulama, is to encourage the audience to continually improve the quality of their faith and devotion to Allah SWT (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). This involves performing good deeds while avoiding bad and despicable ones. Efforts to encourage the public towards goodness can be made through direct lectures and through social media. Da'wah through social media has the advantage of being

repeatable and accessible at any time according to the audience's needs. In today's era, the trend of social media (Islam, 2019) can be effectively utilized as a medium to disseminate the holy and pure teachings of the Islamic religion. Many scholars are adept at preaching using social media.

The material of Islamic religious lectures on social media is similar to that of lectures conducted face-to-face, whether in mosques, auditoriums, people's homes, or outdoors. In general, Islamic religious lecture materials cover topics related to worship, conversion, Sharia, morals, and other social issues (Trimurti & Irfanudin, 2023). However, material related to politics is still relatively limited. Not all clerics choose to include political material in their lectures.

Similarly, not all audiences are interested in listening to lectures that touch on political matters. Some individuals seem to prefer to separate political affairs from Islamic religious lectures (Noer, 2018), especially those with liberal ideas who are influenced by Western thought and have drifted away from the teachings of their religion. This is one of the weaknesses of some Muslims; they tend to adopt concepts popularized by non-religious individuals while criticizing Islamic teachings that do not align with their desires.

Based on the findings of this research, the informants agreed on the permissibility of discussing politics in Islamic religious lectures conducted by

Islamic scholars on social media. There are no obstacles for ulama to convey political messages in their lectures (Nuna & Moonti, 2019). In fact, it is believed that discussing politics can enhance the audience's understanding of national and state affairs. Audiences also receive important information about politics from reliable sources and gain a comprehensive understanding of the discussed aspects (Hermawan, 2020). This contributes to the political education of the public, ensuring they are not politically ignorant and not manipulated by political activists for their own interests, which are solely aimed at gaining power.

Based on the data obtained, there are five important reasons why ulama need to convey political messages in Islamic religious lectures through mass media. These five arguments are: Firstly, discussing politics according to Islamic teachings and advocating for da'wah. Islam encompasses all aspects of human life, including government and state affairs. Secondly, leaders must be responsible to the audiences they lead. Here, ulama warn leaders not to become complacent and abuse their positions. Thirdly, in politics, adherence to ethics and norms is essential. It is not permissible to justify any means to gain power. Religious values must always accompany the process of nationhood and statehood to avoid despicable acts. Fourthly, it is crucial to avoid the abuse of office and rectify the inequalities that occur in society. Fifthly, ulama must

provide examples of successful Islamic leadership when holding office. Furthermore, this research found that the ulama who conveyed political messages in Islamic religious lectures on social media were relevant to the wishes of the informants. Based on an analysis of the political messages of five clerics who delivered lectures via social media, all of them were well-understood. There was nothing strange or worrying about the lectures. The five clerics have noble goals, providing information and advice related to state issues.

The main ideas conveyed by these scholars during their lectures can be summarized as follows: Firstly, before making a choice during the general election, it is essential to consider the competency and good track record of the candidate. Secondly, it is important for state officials or political activists to pay attention to and implement the aspirations of ulama and community leaders in development. Thirdly, politicians and state officials should not commit mistakes or irregularities in carrying out their mandate, even if they are not being monitored by the Corruption Eradication Commission or the Inspectorate. Fourthly, pious deeds and good governance as a leader are provisions for one's future life. Fifthly, the people must avoid money politics, as it will produce untrustworthy leaders.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research found a positive tendency where the

audience accepted and highly appreciated the political messages of the ulama through Islamic religious lectures on social media. Considering the rapid development of social media, which has become the primary alternative for audiences to obtain information, it is acknowledged that the public follows political developments and dynamics occurring within the government, the behavior of state officials, and other political activists. Despite the success in national development, there are still disparities and violations, including development manipulation, corruption, bribery in general elections, and other disgraceful behaviors. As Islamic religious leaders, ulama must participate in providing political messages to government officials, politicians, and other political activists. The involvement of ulama in political discussions is not intended for malevolent purposes or to seek political power but rather to contribute to the improvement of society and the nation.

Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that the audience received and highly appreciated the political messages of the ulama through Islamic religious lectures on social media. The informants unanimously agreed on the ulama's ability to convey political messages in every Islamic religious lecture. The political messages delivered by ulama are trusted by the public and contribute to an increased understanding of national and state affairs. The audience gains important insights into politics from trusted

sources and comprehends the substance of the messages being discussed. This serves as a process of political education for the public, enabling them to understand the importance of paying attention to government and state issues.

Furthermore, the significance of the ulama's political messages in Islamic religious lectures is crucial and necessary for development. A content analysis of the Islamic religious lecture materials delivered by five ulama revealed that the substance of the lectures was positive. They only appealed to or reminded political communication activists to work earnestly and with full trust in building the nation. There were no indications that the lecture materials aimed to seize political power or seek political popularity. Instead, the political messages of these ulama are more directed at making political activists self-aware and encouraging personal self-evaluation. They remind political activists that the life they live now is temporary, and there is an eternal life in the afterlife. The Indonesian nation is a nation that still adheres to and believes in religious teachings, the majority of which is Islam. Therefore, everything done now must be intended as worship solely for Allah SWT. Political activists are reminded that the positions they hold should be used as a means to seek good provisions in the afterlife, rather than becoming a field for harvesting future disasters.

IMPLICATIONS

This research provides valuable insights to Muslims and political communication activists regarding the political messages of ulama in Islamic religious lectures on social media. The information from this research can help in fostering a greater understanding of the efforts made by ulama to participate in the national development of the Indonesian nation, in accordance with their position as religious leaders. It is important for the Indonesian people, especially Muslims, to understand and properly implement the meaning of the ulama's political messages. For political activists, this can increase motivation and enthusiasm for nation-building, understanding that current worldly affairs are a form of worship to obtain provisions for the afterlife. For the Indonesian government, it is crucial to utilize this information to appreciate the involvement of ulama according to their context in providing advice and criticism in the implementation of national development.

LIMITATIONS

This research has several limitations. While some participants focused more on the positive aspects of the involvement of ulama in political communication, obstacles encountered during interactions were not extensively discussed, despite efforts made to explore these issues. To reduce these limitations, future researchers in this topic should allocate more time to data collection. Additionally, although the

informants had different characteristics in terms of age, gender, education level, regional origin, type of social media, and ethnicity, the results of this study may not be generalized to the entire Indonesian population due to the small sample size and single research location, namely in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province. To address these limitations, future research should be conducted on a larger scale and in multiple settings.

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Lampiran : 2

Table 2: Ulamas and their political messages

Scholar's name	Title of Lecture	Theme of Political Messages	Practical Meaning of the Messages
Ustaz Habib Ja'far	Habib Ja'far's response to the 2024 election.	Muslims must use their political rights as well as possible.	Before voting, they must consider the competency and good track record of the candidate they will elect.
Ustaz Hidayat	Adi Exclusive UAH talks about revoking the legality of alcohol	Appreciating the actions of the President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo in revoking alcohol investment permits	The importance of paying attention to and implementing the aspirations of ulama and community leaders in development
Ustaz Somad	Abdus Don't choose the wrong leader.	All types of work are worship if you intend it because of Allah SWT.	A warning to avoid making mistakes and deviations in carrying out people mandate even if the mistakes are not seen by the Corruption

				Eradication Commission or the Inspectorate.
Syekh Jaber	Ali	The afterlife as the goal of life.	Everyone, including kings, ministers and officials, will face the day of death.	Do good deeds and good deeds as a leader to prepare for life in the afterlife.
Ustaz Latif	Dasad	Message before the regional elections	Members of the DPR who bribe their entire salary are haram and not blessed	The people must avoid money politics, because it will produce leaders who are not trustworthy
