



Majelis Taklim and the Shifting of Religious Public Role in Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

Majelis taklim is a very special Islamic medium in Indonesia. Its existence is quite phenomenal not only because of the large number of worshipers but also because it is very close to the lives of people both in rural and urban areas. Its development is quite massive in demand by many groups and social classes, especially among women so that it is often identified as a religious group that is "genre" women. This research will reveal how the development of majelis taklim in urban society? How does a shift in the social role of religion in urban society? This study uses a qualitative method with a sociological approach, at the Taklim Women's Assembly in the Setiabudi area of South Jakarta. This research found that the development of the majelis taklim was very dominant among women and had shifted socio-religious roles that had previously been in the hands of men. Majelis taklim has become a gateway that connects women with the outside world, also becomes a door for access and social mobility of women and even gives birth to women's leadership authority in religious public spaces.

Keywords: majelis taklim; shifting; religious public role; urban areas

ABSTRAK

Majelis taklim menjadi sarana syiar Islam yang sangat khas di Indonesia. Keberadaannya cukup fenomenal bukan saja karena jumlah jamaahnya yang besar akan tetapi juga karena sangat dekat dengan kehidupan umat baik di pedesaan maupun di perkotaan. Perkembangannya cukup massif diminati banyak kalangan dan kelas sosial, terlebih di kalangan kaum perempuan sehingga kerap diidentikkan sebagai kelompok keagamaan yang "bergenre" perempuan. Penelitian ini akan mengungkapkan perkembangan majelis taklim pada masyarakat perkotaan? Bagaimana terjadi pergeseran peran sosial keagamaan pada masyarakat perkotaan? Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan sosiologis, pada Majelis Taklim Perempuan di wilayah Setiabudi Jakarta Selatan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa perkembangan majelis taklim sangat dominan di kalangan kaum perempuan dan telah menggeser peran-peran sosial keagamaan yang sebelumnya berada di tangan kaum laki-laki. Majelis taklim telah menjadi pintu gerbang yang menjadi penghubung kaum perempuan dengan dunia luar, juga menjadi pintu akses dan mobilitas sosial kaum perempuan bahkan juga melahirkan otoritas kepemimpinan perempuan pada ruang publik keagamaan.

Kata Kunci: majelis taklim; pergeseran; peran publik keagamaan; perkotaan

INTRODUCTION

Majelis Taklim is a very well known and distinctive religious institution for spreading Islam in Indonesia and a non-formal religious education for both male and female. Now the term majelis taklim is often identified to women because it has developed among women, both the middle class and the upper class. The development of Majelis taklim for women is developed quite rapidly, including in urban areas, and one of urban areas is Jakarta, as the focus of this research.

Majelis Taklim is one of the largest religious groups in the country and its development has become one of the indicators of religious life and the development of Islamic preaching in Indonesia. Together with other da'wah models and movements the dynamics of homeland da'wah enlivened. Majelis taklim are one of the elements that move the world of da'wah through religious broadcasts targeting to all muslim segments. The development of the majelis taklim is quite rapid and has contributed to the coloring of Islamic diversity in Indonesia, both in rural and urban areas (Winn, 2012).

Majelis taklim Juridically is included in one of the non-formal educational institutions as stated in Indonesian Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in 2019, there are 50.384 majelis taklim groups recorded by Indonesian Ministry of religious affair (Kemenag RI, 2019). Meanwhile, according to data from the BKMT, (Institution for Contact of Majelis Taklim), the audience of majelis taklim are currently spread in 33 provinces with the number of groups spread over 400 districts / cities with the number of congregations reaching 20 million people (Ismail, 2012, p.24). The actual number could be greater than the data mentioned above, because not all majelis taklim are members of the BKMT or are registered at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Not all majelis taklim are resident and based on the environment where they live as residence, mosque or educational institution, or usually based on community, organizations, profession, as well as other regional connections.

The phenomenon of returning to religious spiritual values in urban areas can at least be seen from the emergence of Islamic movements, studies and studies carried out in several mosques, prayer rooms, offices, hotels and also housing and apartments in several urban areas, especially in Jakarta. The phenomenon of the emergence of the spirit of spiritualism among ordinary people and the urban middle class as an indicator of urban Sufism (Bruinessen & Howell, 2008). With the growth of institutions, organizations and groups that are concerned with religious studies and practices.

Various elements of society from various social levels, including ordinary people, middle and even middle-class elites and professionals also joined many religious studies, spiritual needs and spiritual thirst to open "Market Iman" to borrow the term Mona Abaza (2004). The growth of such institutions is part of

the framework of fulfilling market needs, then also gives birth to the phenomenon of "Sufi chic" or elegant Sufi which has penetrated the middle groups that are undergoing changes, as has also happened in Egypt (Abaza, 2004).

Apart from formal organizational movements or institutions and conventional dakwah groups, currently there are also new style dakwah communities through social media networks targeting professionals and urban communities, such as the alms movement, the dawn movement in congregation, on the track da'wah and others. The da'wah movement through social media also fosters preaching activities among urban communities, both young and old.

According to Azyumardi Azra, the Islamic spiritual movement is a common phenomenon that occurs in almost all Muslim countries in the post-modern era. Even in countries with Muslim minorities such as America and Britain, because modernism is considered to have failed to meet and answer the spiritual needs of modern society (Azra, 1999, p.15). With the emergence of this phenomenon, the movement of the spirit to return to the spiritual values of religion also shows that modernization and industrialization are unable to shift and eliminate religiosity. As stated by Ernest Gellner, in which the Islamic society in achieving development and progress tends to increase religiosity and loyalty to Islamic norms (Gellner, 1992).

The existence of the Majelis Taklim which is also of interest to the urban community is one of the phenomena that strengthens the above thesis. Majelis Taklim is not only a space in order to fulfill intellectual and spiritual needs, but also a means of increasing religious understanding and practice as well as strengthening social relations.

Majelis Taklim in language consists of two words, namely Majelis which means a seat, and Ta'lim which means teaching. Meanwhile, etymologically, majelis taklim can be interpreted as a place to carry out teaching or recitation of Islam. Although using Arabic terms, the word majelis taklim itself is not very popular among the Arab nation or society (Dewan Redaksi, 2003, 120-121). The word Majelis itself means a gathering place or place for discussion of a number of people already known at the time of the Prophet. This word is used to indicate an activity sitting around a number of friends. There are many traditions including the history of Imam Bukhari using the word Majlis to denote an activity. Meanwhile, the word Ta'lim which means teaching is often used to refer to the teaching of the al-Quran. Imam Bukhari gave the title of the chapter of teaching Al-Qur'an to children with the name, Bab al-Ta'lim al-Shibyan al-Qur'an (Al-Bukhari, 1422 H.).

Meanwhile, the term which combines the words *Majelis* and *Taklim* refers to the emphasis on the existence of an institution as a place of teaching. The definition of the majelis taklim in terms is defined as one of the non-formal Islamic educational institutions that have congregations that are held regularly, aiming to increase the faith and piety and noble morals of the congregation, also to realize

grace for the universe (Dirjen Pendis Depag RI, 2008 & Huda, 1984). The activities of the majelis taklim are generally held in mosques, mushalla, madrasa, Islamic boarding schools, houses, halls and assemblies that are specifically designated as places of recitation Qur'an.

Recitation activity is a term that used for majelis taklim, although not all recitations use the term majelis taklim, some use the terms *muzdakarah*, *balaqah*, study and recitation, listening, reading, *bandungan*, *sorogan*, the following terms are the learning model in pesantren (Dhofier, 2011, p.79). However, the substance of these activities actually has similarities, namely the form of educational activities, sharing, socialization of Islamic teachings to the wider community, but it has slight differences in terms of methods of delivery and in-depth analysis.

This study reveals the development of majelis taklim in urban communities, specifically how there is a shift in the socio-religious role of urban communities. This study used a qualitative method with a sociological approach to the Women's Majelis taklim in the Setiabudi area of South Jakarta.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Initiation of Majelis Taklim for Women

The use of the term Majelis Taklim as a designation for recitation groups was first popularized by a Betawi ulama KH. Abdullah Syafe'i in the 1930s. He used the word Majelis Taklim for the majelis taklim under his guidance, namely Majelis Taklim al-Barkah. This Majelis taklim not only fostered male congregations but also fostered female congregations under Hj. Rogayah's wife KH. Abdullah Syafe'i (Alawiyah, 1997, p.91). Previously, people in Indonesia in general and Jakarta in particular used the term religious recitation or recitation only to describe these activities. The term Majelis Taklim then became popular and became a special term that referred to the recitation activities of both men and women.

The majelis taklim which was fostered by KH. Abdullah Syafei, is the next generation of the majelis taklim which was founded and developed previously. According to Ridwan Saidi and Alwi Shahab, the majelis taklim or the oldest and largest recitation place in Jakarta is the Kwitang recitation assembly. The Majelis taklim was founded by Habib Ali Al-Habsyi since April 20, 1870 (Kiki, 2011, p. 42-34). This Majelis taklim teaching was then continued by his son, Habib Muhammad Al-Habsyi. After his death, the Majelis taklim was then followed by its next successor, Habib Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi.

The majelis taklim of Kwitang is the center of Islamic teaching and recitation in Jakarta. Until now, the Majelis taklim of Kwitang still exists. The Majelis taklim, which is currently under the leadership of Habib Ali bin Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi, is always packed with thousands of worshippers who come from the Jabodetabek area to attend recitation which is held every Sunday morning (Republika, 2015, p. 11).

This majelis taklim has produced many great scholars. Some of the great Betawi scholars such as KH. Abdullah Syafe'i and KH. Thahir Rohili was among the great scholars who studied at majelis taklim. These two great scholars were students of Habib Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi. KH. Abdullah Syafei later founded the As-Syafiiyah Islamic school, as well as KH. Tohir Rohili who later founded the At-Thahiriyah Islamic College.

As-Syafiiyah and Ath-Thahiriyah are well-known Islamic colleges in Jakarta. As the largest center of Islamic education in Jakarta at that time, moving from elementary to tertiary education. Likewise with the existence of the Majelis taklim which became the center of reference for the emergence of other Taklim Committees both in Jakarta and other areas in Indonesia. This majelis taklim had a major influence in building the majelis taklim network, especially in Jakarta and generally in Indonesia. In fact, the existence of majelis taklim has become a driving force for the development of these two Islamic universities (Bakti, 2012).

The presence of majelis taklim for mothers cannot be separated from the role of these two Islamic colleges. Majelis Taklim al-Barkah under the guidance of KH. Abdullah Syafe'i who was then raised specifically by his wife Hj. Rogayah can be said to be the pioneer of the majelis taklim for women. This Majelis taklim became known as the Asy-Syafiiyah majelis taklim under the care of his daughter Hj. Tutty Alawiyah grew rapidly and became a reference for the birth of many majelis taklim for women in Jakarta (Murodi, 2002, p. 197).

The development of the Majelis taklim for women in Jakarta cannot be separated from the role of Hj. Suryani Thahir, daughter of KH. Thahir Rohili the founder of the Ath-Thahiriyah Islamic College. As it is known, in the 1960s preaching in Jakarta was not very lively. Likewise, the existence of majelis taklim for women is still limited and not as many as it is today. Even the two majelis taklim in the neighborhood are only for men. The recitation of mothers is still in the form of small recitation in several ustadhah houses, such as Hj. Aisyah in the Malay village, Hj. Munawaroh in Mampang and the recitation of the mothers under the care of Hj. Salmeh di Tebet (Rosyidah, 2002, p. 184-185). Seeing this condition, Hj. Young Suryani Thahir felt compelled to mobilize the recitation of women. Thanks to the support of her parents and family, Suryani then founded the Majelis taklim which was intended for women. This recitation was held at Mushala Al-Taqwa which is also in the Ath-Thahiriyah complex. This Majelis taklim was later known as the Majelis Taklim for Women of Ath-Thahiriyah (MTKIA).

The majelis taklim also gave birth to many ustadhahs and muballighahs who were widely recognized by the public. From time to time, majelis taklim many women appear in Jakarta. In 1981 Hj. Tutty Alawiyah succeeded in inviting 735 Majelis Taklim in Jakarta which later succeeded in establishing the Council for Contact of the Majelis taklim (BKMT) (Alawiyah, 2002, p. 197). Thus, the existence of the Women's Majelis taklim is difficult to separate from the role of

Hj. Tutty Alawiyah and Hj. Suryani Thahir, who can be said to be the pioneer. Until now, the recitations held by the two majelis taklim have always been attended by many congregations who come not only from Jakarta and its surroundings, but also from other areas. The progress of the two institutions is also supported by the facilities and infrastructure including the control of the media (radio) which is the mouthpiece for publication and socialization of its programs, especially in the distribution of routine recitation activities.

Outside the mainstream, the two prominent Betawi women (Ulama) figures above. According to [Ridwan Saidi](#) (2011), there were other names that were earlier which were also well known during their time. Among them are Ustadhah Saleha Thabrani and Ustadhah Hj. Siti Zubaidah Hasbiyallah. Ustadhah Saleha Thabrani was known as a famous preacher in Jakarta in the 1950-1960s. Meanwhile, Ustadhah Hj. Siti Zubaidah is one of KH's wives. Hasbiyallah, the founder of the Al-Wathaniyah Islamic college. He is also known as the caretaker of the Al-Banatul Wathaniyah women's boarding school. Apart from caring for Islamic boarding schools, he is also widely known in the community for his work teaching in many majelis taklim. He is also known to be diligent in writing several treatises in Malay Arabic, such as: Kaifiyah prayer Tarawih and Eid prayer ([Kiki](#), 2011, p. 1999). That is the role of several women figures in Betawi in developing majelis taklim.

Tutty Alawiyah (As-Syafiiyah) and also Suryani Thahir (Ath-Thahiriyyah) are examples of Islamic female scholars who were born and raised through the Majelis taklim ([Burhanuddin](#), 2002). Majelis Taklim then produced many female figures as ustadhah or muballighah. Even now, many ustadhah majelis taklim whose appearance are not only known among their majelis taklim congregations, but are also known throughout the archipelago through their preaching which is often broadcast via radio or television. Mamah Dedeh is one example, her face adorns the screen almost every day. His da'wah is broadcast regularly on one of the private television stations in Mamah and AA programs. A religious event is packaged by means of a talk show which is broadcast live by a private television station. This event was not only watched and attended by many congregations of majelis taklim from various regions. In fact, according to the information from the majelis taklim group that wanted to attend as Dedeh's congregation on television, they had to queue for months or even years to get their turn to appear.

Along with the development of majelis taklim, not only in Jakarta but also throughout the archipelago an institution is needed to become a coordinating forum. That was one of the recommendations from the DKI Jakarta majelis taklim Conference held by the Jakarta Islamic Da'wah Coordination (KODI) on 9-10 July 1980 which later became the starting point for the birth of the BKMT ([Dewan Editor](#), 2003, p. 121). On January 1, 1981, Tutty Alawiyah gathered more than 735 majelis taklim recitation groups that were widespread in Jakarta. The result of this meeting was the formation of the Coordinating and Communication Agency for

the Majelis taklim in the form of the BKMT (Council for Contact of the Majelis Taklim). This institution is a network and communication forum for majelis taklim in Indonesia. Hj. Tutty Alawiyah is the leader to this day. BKMT is one of the largest majelis taklim networks and has members in almost all parts of Indonesia, with the number of members of the congregation reaching tens of millions of people (Alawiyah, 1997).

The presence of this organization aims to improve the quality of religious understanding and practice of every Indonesian Muslim person, which refers to the balance between faith and piety with science and technology. BKMT is synonymous with mothers, its existence increases the scientific and religious capacity of women who have responsibility for themselves, their families and society. The principle of the activity is independence and self-help. In addition to improving the management's ability to manage the majelis taklim, it is also to improve the quality of preachers and ustadhahs and also to improve the quality of its programs.

Meanwhile, specifically BKMT aims to improve the ability and role of the majelis taklim in increasing the syiar of Islam and the intelligence of the people. There are several factors behind the birth of BKMT, including; The content and weight of the material are still lacking, both in terms of attractiveness and relevance. The management of majelis taklim is also seen as still weak. The role and involvement of the preachers is also seen as still minimal in solving problems in society, both in economic problems, education and social inequality. In addition, the insights of administrators and managers are still lacking and have not seen a vision for the future (Alawiyah, 1997).

Local, national and global situations have contributed to this movement, the incessant dakwah movement that has developed in Indonesia, both due to the government's political policies that suppress political Islam "depoliticization of Islam" and also by suppressing student political movements which also nourish the campus da'wah movement, in As well as the development of a global da'wah movement that inspired the development of the halaqah and harakah-harakah movements on campuses and also in community settlements that occurred in the 1980s where in this period the BKMT was also established. Therefore, the majelis taklim movement also took part in this moment by mobilizing women's groups (Winn, 2012).

Likewise, at the national level, the incessant development movement in all fields, where da'wah is one of the important instruments that can drive development, has resulted in the emergence of the New Order government-style da'wah model that carries "Development Da'wah" (Meuleman, 2011), in which majelis taklim exist. considered to have an important role. Especially in the context of increasing women's participation in development, especially the development of women's human resources, so that women increase their participation in national development or what is known as the "Emancipation of Women"

movement. majelis taklim as a large house for women's religious groups with considerable potential, have a significant presence in building awareness of the women's emancipation movement on the one hand, while still strengthening their main role at home as a companion to their husbands and mothers on the other. Thus, the majelis taklim movement later became part of strengthening the ideology of women's roles in the New Order paradigm (Burhanudin and Fathurahman, 2004).

Currently, many institutions have sprung up that are dedicated to increasing the capacity and quality of ustadhahs as well as methods and teaching in the majelis taklim. If Tutty Alawiyah moved through BKMT (Murodi, 2002, p.197), Suryani Thahir went through Majelis Taklim for Women Ath-Thahiriyyah (MTKA). Then formed course institutions such as Arabic language courses (Kurba) and also the Muzdakaroh As-Suryaniyah Council. The Muzdakaroh Council was formed as an institution for regeneration and scientific provision for both ustadhah and muballighah. From the Arabic Language Course (Kurba) and the Muzdakaroh Council, many well-known preachers in Jakarta, such as Khaizarani Thahir, Yatmi Salim, Zubaidah Hasan, and others (Rosyidah, 2002, p. 186).

Religious Public Service

The existence of the majelis taklim has become one of the means for women's social mobility, through this forum female congregations are increasingly mobile from one assembly to another, reciting recitation from one place to another and also serving religious events meeting community invitations. Habibs, religious scholars, asathid and asathidah started their religious careers and became known to the public through majelis taklim. This institution becomes a social facility as the brand ladder is better known and trusted by the public. Majelis taklim have become a space for dedication and struggle to raise public figures. Among them, a million followers of KH. Zainudin MZ, Tutty Alawiyah, Suryani Thahir, Mamah Dedeh. In this forum, they not only study religion, but also meet and share and visit and pray for one another. Each congregation who is part of the majelis taklim women group generally takes turns in leading the reading of the al-Qur'an, praying, reciting, Tahlil, Shalawat, Rawi, Barzanji while the other congregation agrees. Between one recitation group and another recitation group invite each other to know and create social relationships and even share and donate funds in turns, both for donations for the implementation of events, as well as for assistance in building religious and religious facilities, as well as education as well as for the needs of orphans and needy children. poor. This institution has spread its wings to become a means of social mobility and social care.

Having opened up space for women who are equal to men in scientific qualifications and also in their social roles, it raises people's trust, one of which is as religious servants. These activities are not limited to women's events alone, but also involve family and community life. To gain public trust like this is clearly a

long process. Not just a simple action, what James S. Coleman termed as an action taken to fulfill his interests which had no social impact. But when the same action is done by an influential person, it is no longer a simple action (Coleman, 2011, p. 42). Because these actions later attracted a lot of interest and were socially influential, they were practiced massively and were institutionalized in society. Actions carried out by predecessors in religious services, of course, were carried out by persons with authority. They are interpreters of an understanding of certain situations and conditions, namely people who understand how to act for their people and followers at that time according to the reality at hand, so that other societies follow. Although until now it is not clear who the female leaders started performing religious services in society. However, when referring to the institutional aspect, that action cannot be separated from the presence of the majelis taklim women institution or the like.

There has also been a shift in not only the opening of space for women, but also the emergence of female figures and scholars (*ustadzah*) as a source of public reference. Majelis taklim women are not only a broadcasting medium but also a space for women's representation and change. The voices of women began to be heard, their messages were noticed and wanted, their ideas were followed not only by women but also by the wider community.

For the people of Jakarta, the act of women providing services at religious ceremonies has become a new social system. In general, the people in this region have left such matters to the women's recitation group, especially those which are carried out during the daytime which is precisely what the majority of the community does. Meanwhile, the activities carried out at night are still left to the men. The women's majelis taklim community has become a means of fulfilling community needs. Thus its existence is very functional which then places it into a new social structure that is different from the previous structure in the religious life of society. This also shows that the actions of the majelis taklim group, not only make this institution a servant of public diversity, but also perpetuate tradition.

Tradition in its broad meaning, as in M. Bambang Pranowo's view, states that tradition is not only a legacy of the past but all useful ideas, practices, beliefs and customs that are created now to be passed on to future generations (Pranowo, 2011, p. 24). Currently, the ustadhahs and leaders of the majelis taklim are not only preoccupied with filling recitation activities, but are also asked to lead activities in residents' homes, such as birthdays, thanksgiving, aqiqahan, circumcision, siraman, marriage contract, death, haul and others. so.

In almost all taklim assemblies that the author found in this area, they are the perpetrators of all religious service activities in which the ustadhah is the leader of the recitation and is also the leader of the ceremony (ritual). Meanwhile, men got their share when the event was held at night. Although it is rare for the community to hold it at night (Interview with H. Holidi, 2014).

Majelis taklim women are not only a broadcasting medium but also a space for women's representation and change. The voices of women began to be heard, their messages were noticed and wanted, their ideas were followed not only by women but also by the wider community. Almost every day there are sounds of syahdu recitation of the holy verses of the mother's al-Qur'an. Sometimes also the chanting of dhikr, prayers and barzanji as well as taushiyah, the sounds that come out of the walls of mosques and prayer rooms, as well as from majelis taklim and even from people's homes. The readings above are characteristic of women's taklim assemblies. Both in routine recitation activities as well as commemorations of Islamic holidays or other commemoration.

There are almost no important events in life that are not commemorated by the majelis taklim group by holding religious ceremonies. Rituals that are closely related to the life of Indonesian people, such as the diving tradition which is not only a Javanese tradition. Rituals, ceremonies, tasyakuran, salvation, at the stages of life are found in various traditions, cultures, nations and religions, from primitive societies to the present (Agus, 2006, p. 96).

The difference here lies in the procedures, values and readings and practices which are then packaged with Islamic teachings and traditions which become the identity of Betawi culture (Yatim, 1996, p.13-16). Several public religious traditional ceremonies that are especially served by the majelis taklim for women, include recitation at the Khataman ceremony, Siraman, Walimatul Hamla, Aqikah, Circumcision, Tasyakuran, Tahlilan, Khaul, and others. The khataman ceremony is usually done to be grateful for an important event experienced by children who are learning the Al-Qur'an. After completing thirty juz (*kebatam*), the children and their friends held a thanksgiving guided by the ustadh or ustadhah. By reading certain do'a-do'a together, with a modest serving of food and banquets. Children are usually able to finish the Qur'an at the age of 9 or 10 years. In each majelis taklim in this area generally have a guide that is read in the context of commemoration of Khatmil Qur'an.

Majelis taklim for women also often receive recitation invitations and services in the context of spraying the bride and groom in Javanese. Meanwhile, in the Betawi tradition it is known as "tangas bath" or steam bath which is done the day before the contract or the wedding ceremony. This process is actually carried out to function so that the bride doesn't sweat a lot on important days, namely the marriage ceremony and reception. As in other social events, religion is also present to provide color and legitimacy with the readings of the holy verses of the al-Qur'an (yasinan) and prayers for the length of mate, health and blessings as well as being given righteous and shalihah offspring. In addition, at this event, there was no standard reading guide and a complex series of customs, as in Javanese or Sundanese customs (Mahasin, 1996).

Meanwhile, another religious service that is usually guided by the recitation group of the majelis taklim women is "Walimatul Hamla", which is a warning

during pregnancy for four months and seven months. In this situation, pregnancy is no longer a mere personal or family issue, but has also been published and asks for public attention, at least religious leaders and congregations with prayers for the new generation that will be born.

In this event there is a special guide that is followed by the majelis taklim group by reading letters such as Q.S. Yusuf 1-6, Surah Maryam 1-15, Surah Al-Mukminun 1-16, Surah Luqman 12-19, Surah Muhammad 1-11, Surah Ar-Rohman 1-21, Surah Al-Waqi'ah 1-38, Surat Al-Hadid 19, then continued with prayers for pregnant people.

Another service provided by the women's majelis taklim is aqiqah. The aqiqah ceremony is carried out after the baby is born, as a form of gratitude by slaughtering a goat as ordered by the Prophet (*sunnah Muakkad*). Two baby boys and one baby girl. This ceremony is usually carried out at least when the baby is seven days or 40 days old. The aqiqah ceremony is also accompanied by cutting baby hair and giving names.

Birth events also become social rituals, where public involvement is highly expected in order to accompany prayers for the baby, so that health and safety are given and become a righteous and righteous child. The typical reading at this ceremony is the recitation of the Al-Qur'an letter Yasin and other prayers, also accompanied by the recitation of Rawi and Barzanji which are also known as "marhabanan". The same reading is also carried out by this group, in religious services when boys are circumcised.

The events above, are not merely natural and cultural events, where every human being experiences a stage of life which is ritualized and celebrations. At each stage of life, according to Vionna Bowie (*Humaeni*, 2015, p.83-84), starting from the womb, birth, maturity, marriage to death, have their respective meanings that have important values in their past, present and future lives. Such events are also not just religious rituals and cultural events, but also as a form of public recognition of the existence of individuals in transitional periods and changes in status.

In this case, the role played by the women's recitation group through majelis taklim is not only a form of concern, but also a media for social glue. This condition also becomes the medium of the agent's existence. Anthony Giddens distinguishes between actor and agent, agent and agency, agency means the ability of an individual or group that has the power or power with which he has influence. Meanwhile, the actor is the actor or implementer of the action which is not necessarily an agent (in it there is an element of awareness in action, strength and power) (*Giddens*, 1984). More than the celebration of such events has opened up more space for women's public existence. By returning women to their main habitat who care about the life process starting from the family circle.

Meanwhile, in the event of calamity or death, women's recitation groups are also involved in "tahlilan" events which are held until the seventh or seventh day.

At this event, ustadhah usually leads the reading of the Al-Qur'an, Yasin, tahlil and prayers for the deceased. This event is usually done twice in the day for the mothers and at night for the fathers. This recitation will be carried out again at the forty days and one hundred days of the death of the deceased, while at the annual gathering there is usually a haul event. Thus, the role of women's taklim assemblies, not only to perpetuate and legitimize tradition, but also to negotiate ties to tradition on the one hand and the dense social mobility of urban communities on the other. Skillful and solution actions carried out by the majelis taklim community in fulfilling community services.

At least there are several factors causing a shift in public services that have been entrusted to women.

First, it shows that there has been a balanced pattern of gender relations in this realm, where women have the same position in public roles, especially in religious public roles. The melting of the monopoly of authority and the transformation of science and religious leadership that previously only existed in the hands of men (Bano & Kalmbach, 2012, p. 3).

Second, because these ceremonies are not just traditions or culture. The packaging for the Koran recitation becomes the legitimacy of the event as a religious tradition. From a psychological perspective, it is because of the aspects of femininity, love and affection that he is given the trust as a caregiver and also a servant (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). That religious ceremonies and rituals are manifestations of the aspect of spirituality, where events of spirituality have a feminine aspect, as described by Annemarie Schimmel (1998).

Third, the modernization and mobility of dense urban communities, where the time and mobility of professional men in urban areas are preoccupied with work (Geertz, 1983). So that such matters are entrusted to women, who in general in this group have the attention, time and opportunity.

Ustadhah, Mobility and Authority

Ustadhah is the main figure who moves majelis taklim. Pesantren, madrasah and majelis taklim are known as institutions that give birth to ustadhahs. Now ustadhah is a popular term in society as a nickname for teachers or teachers in majelis taklim. More than that ustadhah in majelis taklim is also often called with an additional title as daiyah or muballighah, especially for those who not only teach religious sciences, but are also active in spreading religious teachings through lecturing activities in the wider community.

Majelis taklim in Jakarta have produced many well-known ustadhahs, muballighahs, or preachers who are well-known by the wider community both in Jakarta and outside Jakarta, even internationally. Like Hj. Tutty Alawiyah, Hj. Suryani Thahir, Hj. Chaizarani Thahir, Hj. Mamah Dedeh, Hj. Nurma Nugraha, Hj. Lutfiah Sungkar and others.

In addition to several popular names because of their appearance on the

screen as well as their extensive flight hours, many ustadhahs in Jakarta have mobilized majelis taklim at the grassroots level. Those who live their daily lives are close to the congregation, some of the Ustadhah who drive the majelis taklim in the Setiabudi area are also alumni of the majelis taklim and the course institutes fostered by Tutty Alawiyah and Suryani Thahir.

Some of the Ustadhah in this area generally started their careers as ustadhahs through teaching reading the Al-Qur'an or chanting teachers for children and also teachers in madrasas. Only then gave lessons to mothers, including Hj. Muzaenah (MT. Nurussalam), Hj. Fatimah Amsir (MT. Darunnaim), Hj. Maisaroh (MT. As-Shofi) Hj. Khadijah Hamdani (MT. Rabi'atul Adawiyah), and also Titin Rasyidah (MT. Raudhatul Ulum), Hj. Samiroh (Darul Ulum) who is one of the successors of Hj. Khadijah Djumali, Lc. (late). In general, these ustadhahs have formal education from the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level to tertiary institutions, both domestic and foreign (Middle East) graduates. As well as attending non-formal education such as da'wah courses and kuliyyatul Muallimat.

Public trust in ustadhah is not solely based on their competence and ability to teach Islamic sciences, but also because of their attitudes and behavior. The ustadhahs at the grassroots are not trapped in the view of "materialistic pragmatism", which is expecting wages or payment by fixing the rates of their preaching. It is different from the ustadh-ustadhah who are in the popular category, giving birth to the "bourgeois" ustadh who usually serve the upper middle class or ustadh-ustadhah who are in the category of ustadh-ustadhah on glass screens which then seem "expensive" because they are usually given high rewards professionally so that they become habitus which defines the class structure, which gives birth to the categorization of ustadh-ustadhahs who have fallen into the market trap (Abaza, 2004, p.201-202).

The ustadhahs are generally raised by congregations and people who give their beliefs and also follow their fatwas. Trust is an important element that made them survive until now. By gaining the public's trust, they also have a wide network through a network of students and congregations that are spread out. The communication skills carried out by the ustadhah then increase the trust and sympathy of the community, so they are interested in following and becoming their congregation. These elements which Fukuyama, Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman call Social Capital (social capital) have been driven by ustadhah through the media majelis taklim (Fukuyama, 2014; Siianen, 2000; Coleman, 2010).

Through his expertise in the religious sciences and his ability to transform knowledge into the public, ustadhah not only won public trust but was also able to direct and influence his congregation. The power of the influence of the ustadhah can be seen in the respect, loyalty, obedience of the congregation to the message he conveys, even the attention and concern of the congregation for his ustadhah is inherent. So that a close and intimate relationship occurs, it is not uncommon for the congregation to often ask ustadhah for advice not only on

matters of religion, worship and the like, but also in personal matters such as matters of household and children, even on social issues including politics. Ustadhah is not only a Muslim but also has acted as a counselor and role model for his congregation.

Majelis Taklim Become a Political Magnet

The existence of the majelis taklim is not only a place for the Koran and the mobility of women but also a place for the potential power of the congregation to unite. That is why making this group a separate magnet for many groups, including politics. It is not uncommon for politicians to regularly visit majelis taklim, especially during pileg and regional elections, both for gathering, asking for blessings to support, and even attracting ustadh-ustadhah in the political world.

In some areas there are public figures based on the majelis taklim who play a political role, as well as in Jakarta, where the political role of the majelis taklim community is carried out either directly or indirectly. An active role in the world of politics as has been done by Hj. Tutty Alawiyah, who is the chairman and founder of the institution Contact of Majelis Taklim (BKMT), who has been actively involved in the world of practical politics, both as a member of the MPR from group delegates, has also been a Golkar chief. Finally, he also participated in the convention of candidates for DKI Jakarta Governor in the Golkar party in 2012.

His position as chairman of the BKMT and mobilizer of the Majelis taklim has a strategic political role. BKMT which is institutionally independent both from the aspect of religious understanding and political choice, however, factually interests and political interests often characterize the life of the Majelis taklim. The existence and development and support of the New Order government, especially for BKMT itself, were often linked to power politics. The position of the head of this institution, namely Tutty Alawiyah, who has also served as a member of the Legislative Council (MPR) from the Group element and has also been a Golkar campaigner, strengthens these allegations. The climax was with the election of Tutty Alawiyah as Minister of Women Empowerment in the Soeharto and B.J. Cabinet. Habibie. Thus, it was difficult to avoid public assumptions at that time that connected BKMT as a medium to power and also the patron client of the New Order government (Murodi, 2004).

During the New Order era, majelis taklim had an intimate relationship with the government, either through BKMT or Al-Hidayah. Even the Kwitang Majelis taklim, as the oldest majelis taklim in Jakarta, where on October 17, 1971 President Soeharto made this majelis taklim the Indonesian Islamic Center (ICI). More than that, it is said that the Majelis taklim Kwitang under the leadership of Habib Abdurrahman Al-Habsyi who is also the father-in-law of Ali Ba'auqil, a friend of Tomy Soeharto, Habib Abdurrahman also later became known as Suharto's spiritual advisor (Abaza, 2004).

The attitude and support of the New Order government towards the existence of majelis taklim and religious life in general, on the one hand gave birth to an attitude of respect for the community towards the government, in the form of loyalty and positive government image. Thus eliminating the negative stigma as in the previous era, where the government was so repressive towards the Muslim movement. This condition also has a significant influence on strengthening public religiosity at least symbolically. On the other hand, the government also benefits from the support of Muslims and increasingly affirms the identity of its government that protects the lives and interests of Muslims. According to Bahtiar Effendy, this attitude also reinforces his identity as an anti-communist regime (Effendy, 1998, p.47).

The presence of the Majelis Taklim Al-Hidayah is proof of the strengthening support of the New Order government. The Majelis taklim is spread from the center of Jakarta, the Province, Regency / City and District to villages / wards. As an institution, Al-Hidayah has a genealogy with Golkar. This organization was founded on 5 October 1979 in Jakarta. The founder is Dr. H. Amir Murtono who was also the chairman of Golkar at that time (Fitrianto, 2009).

The presence of Al-Hidayah as one of Golkar's political wings has direct significance as a Golkar political machine that has proven capable of boosting Muslim support for Golkar. The formation of this religious mass organization could be one of Golkar's political strategies to attract Muslim voters as the majority group (Mulkan, 1989, p.74). Apart from the political interests of power, the existence of this majelis taklim on the one hand also adds to the spread of majelis taklim and the liveliness of religious life, especially the religious liveliness of women.

Although currently Golkar is no longer the ruling party, the existence of this majelis taklim is still closely related to government institutions. This is due to activities that are still synergized and integrated with village or sub-district or sub-district institutions or facilities. In the eyes of the community, the majelis taklim of Al-Hidayah is synonymous with recitation activities carried out in village or sub-district or sub-district halls. A success of the government at that time had strengthened the "image" of Al-Hidayah as the government's majelis taklim even though it had now changed regimes.

Likewise, the formation of BKMT in every Province, Regency / City to District, is able to improve the consolidation and communication of each majelis taklim. In contrast to the previous ones, which were carried out naturally, so that the broadcast was not heard widely. The existence of the above institutions is not only a consolidating and coaching force, but also a medium for mobilizing women's voices in the framework of the spread of Islam. Strengthening the existence and recognition of the important role of women in the socio-religious field began to be created massively.

The presence of such institutions has created a network that creates public

trust through the role and influence of "figures" or personal influence, in Everett Rogers' terms (Littlejohn & Foss, 2004, p.308). The existence of an institution or organization is also a medium for affirming authority by giving birth to women's leadership, because authority comes together with rational legal authority (Littlejohn & Foss, 2004, p.242), thus majelis taklim has become a medium for negotiating women's authority. especially in the socio-religious field.

By looking at Tutty Alawiyah's actions politically, it is actually proof that majelis taklim are not allergic to politics as a reflection of the world of the public and the world of men. It's just that the active role and involvement directly in the political sphere has not been of great interest to the members and cadres of the majelis taklim for women, including those in the Setiabudi area.

This condition also occurs in general among Indonesian Muslims, especially among women. The involvement of women in the public sphere, especially in decision making, both at the local and regional levels is still very low. So, it is natural when government regulations and budget allocations are still not gender responsive. Likewise, the involvement of women in formal political institutions is smaller than that of men, although affirmative action with a quota of 30% for women has been implemented (Rahman, 2005), the representation of women in Parliament is currently decreasing. From earlier in 2009 there were 99 women from 560 seats or around 17.86%. Whereas in 2014 only 79 women who sat in parliament were out of 560 seats or around 14% (Salisisiana, 2009).

In this case the political role of the Majelis Taklim group which is involved and directly involved in politics is still very small. Currently, it is difficult to find a figure like Tutty Alawiyah who is not only active in the Majelis taklim but also penetrates the political, socio-religious world which is not only known nationally but also internationally. Although in fact many of the female religious figures have also been offered direct involvement in the world of politics, such as ustadhah Suryani Thahir, she refused because she wanted to stay on track as a community leader. Likewise, with other ustadhahs such as, Hj. Ramlah Adnan, ustadhah Titin Rosyidah who is also not willing to get involved in politics. The world of politics is still regarded as a world of men, a world that is harsh and certainly must have strong capital (Salisisiana, 2009).

Even though they are outside the path of practical politics and power (government), the political role of religious leaders (*ustadhah*) is quite active and decisive in conveying their criticism and political attitudes. Attitudes of support and rejection of women religious leaders and members of the majelis taklim to government policies as well as the legislature continue to be voiced. Especially if it is seen as contrary to religious life and the moral values of the nation, as indicated by ustadhah Suryani Thahir both in her lectures and in her political attitudes (Rosyidah, 2002, p. 190).

Tutty Alawiyah together with ustadhahs in Jakarta who went directly to the field in a demonstration movement of a million people supporting the

enforcement of the Anti-Alcohol and Tobacco Regional Regulation and demands for the ratification of the 2005 Anti-Pornography and Porno-action Law. Through lectures and recitation forums, as recently there has been a political attitude towards rejection of the congregation of the Setiabudi Subdistrict Majelis taklim towards non-Muslim leaders in DKI Jakarta.

Political agents make majelis taklim not only in the form of mobilization, but also institutionalization, namely by institutionalizing the network organizationally. One of the things that happened in the Setiabudi sub-district was that the establishment of a special communication forum for the Majelis taklim (FKMT) was inseparable from political nuances. The Majelis Taklim Forum, which fostered nearly 128 majelis taklim groups in Setiabudi District, was formed by H. Ashraf Ali, a member of the Jakarta Legislative Assembly from the Golkar Party who was also a candidate from the same party in the 2014 election.

The Majelis taklim Communication Forum (FKMT) was formed ahead of the 9 April 2014 election, namely on 28 February 2014 in Puncak-Bogor. Its formation was carried out at the same time as a gathering for the Majelis taklim for the Setiabudi District which took place from 28 February - 1 March 2014 at Puncak Bogor. This activity was attended by 120 groups of majelis taklim delegates from 6 urban villages. This means that there are about 8 groups of majelis taklim who did not participate in the workshop. On April 1, the FKMT board was inaugurated at the Al-Bakri mosque, chaired by Dra. Titin Rasyidah who also serves as the Secretary of the BKMT Setiabudi District.

The support of the majelis taklim group to H. Ashraf Ali was carried out openly. Through the significant support of the majelis taklim group, it has become one of the bases for the strength of the masses which has become one of the strengths / supporters of H. Ashraf Ali to sit back as a member of the DKI Jakarta DPRD. According to Titin, the Chairperson of the Setiabudi Sub-district FKMT 2014, this support is also based on the agreement and high religious commitment of the candidates, channeling the aspirations and interests of Muslims, one of which is the guidance of the Majelis taklim for women in this region (Interview with Titin Rasyidah). The hope of the ustadhah and congregation with this support has representatives of the people who are committed and caring for the interests of the Muslim community through simultaneous policies and powers.

On the one hand, this condition made the independence of majelis taklim and its figures tested. Majelis taklim often seem to be used as a political tool, although support for support is the right of citizens, but when it carries and acts on behalf of a religious institution, it often becomes a debate. That is one of the reasons why Majelis Taklim Nurussalam and Darul Ulum do not openly support candidates or political parties to avoid division among congregations and respect different choices. Even so, political education is important for the congregation to know the track record as well as the vision and mission and direction of their struggle, without imposing choices on the congregation, (Interview with Ustadhah

Hj. Muzaenah and Ustadhah Hj. Samiroh, Lc).

Thus, the majelis taklim is still seen as the barn of votes by political elements, although it is not the only determinant, majelis taklim are still the hope of many people, especially those with political power interests. As a gathering place for many people, majelis taklim are very potential for voting panning platforms. Many legislative candidates and regional head candidates make the majelis taklim their political base and network, especially in the political years (Mulkan, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Majelis Taklim is a religious public spare that has become a social facility and for some muslim segmentation it is also a ladder up of life stage in social structures. This institution is also a place for the regeneration of women's leadership, both in religion and in public leadership. The journey of figures of women majelis taklim figures such as Tutty Alawiyah, Suryani Thahir and others was able to move beyond their main bases. Through majelis taklim he was able to gain greater public trust, not only in religious positions but also in public positions on the national and even international stage. This fact has shattered the minus stigma on the Majelis taklim which is often seen as being village and has restricted women's movements. Majelis Taklim not only has an important role in social and religious life in society, more than that, now its existence also has a bargaining position in which many parties are waiting for its attitude and authority.

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