

THE QUR'ANIC MOVEMENT *GERAKAN AYO MENGAJI* (GERAMI) IN JAMBI

An Intersectional Analysis of Women, Gender, and Class

Moona Maghfirah and Ahmad Rafiq

Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

email: maghfirahmoona96@gmail.com

Abstract

This article demonstrates that women's experiences within religious movements are diverse and multifaceted, shaped by a complex interplay of social factors. By investigating 'Gerakan Ayo Mengaji' (GERAMI) as Qur'anic movement in Jambi City, it applies an intersectional lens to examine how gender and class dynamics influence Muslim women's experiences within the movement, such as their space, roles, and performance. Drawing on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and the movement's archival materials, the study analyzes the identities and activism of GERAMI's women members. The findings suggest that the intersectionality of gender identities enables the movement to function not only as a source of Muslim women's identity formation but also as a means of reinforcing or contesting gendered social structures. The intersection of various forms of individual capital significantly shapes members' roles and performances within the movement, thereby constructing internal hierarchies. The article argues that the convergence of diverse social identities within a Qur'anic movement can inadvertently produce hierarchical power dynamics, leading to the emergence of new gendered public spaces and class structures within the movement itself.



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

© 2025
M. Maghfirah; A. Rafiq

al-jāmi'ah
JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

ISSN: 0126-012X (p); 2338-557X (e)

Al-Jami'ah Research Centre, Yogyakarta- Indonesia
<https://aljamiah.or.id>

[Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman perempuan dalam gerakan keagamaan bersifat beragam dan memiliki banyak sisi, yang dibentuk oleh interaksi kompleks faktor-faktor sosial. Dengan mengkaji 'Gerakan Ayo Mengaji' (GERAMI) sebagai gerakan Al-Quran di Kota Jambi, penelitian ini menggunakan lensa interseksional untuk menganalisis bagaimana dinamika gender dan kelas memengaruhi pengalaman perempuan Muslim dalam gerakan tersebut, termasuk ruang, peran, dan aktivitas mereka. Menggunakan wawancara mendalam, pengamatan partisipatif, dan bahan arsip gerakan, studi ini menganalisis identitas dan aktivisme anggota perempuan GERAMI. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa interseksionalitas identitas gender memungkinkan gerakan ini berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai sumber pembentukan identitas perempuan Muslim, tetapi juga sebagai sarana untuk memperkuat atau menantang struktur sosial yang berorientasi gender. Selain itu, persilangan berbagai bentuk modal individu secara signifikan membentuk peran dan kinerja anggota dalam gerakan, sehingga membentuk hierarki internal. Pada akhirnya, artikel ini berargumen bahwa konvergensi identitas sosial yang beragam dalam gerakan Qur'anic dapat secara tidak sengaja menghasilkan dinamika kekuasaan hierarkis, yang mengakibatkan munculnya ruang publik berjenis kelamin baru dan struktur kelas di dalam gerakan itu sendiri.]

Keywords: intersectionality, Qur'anic movement, muslim women, gender and class.

A. Introduction

The interaction between Muslim communities and the public sphere of Qur'anic tradition, particularly in relation to women, has long presented a complex and dynamic narrative. Numerous studies on the history of Qur'anic traditions have highlighted the predominance of male participation, while women's contribution have been often overlooked both in historical accounts¹ and in the Indonesian context,² as well as in

¹ Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, 1st edition (Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an* (Cairo and New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2010).

² Wawan Djunaedi, *Sejarah Qira'at Al-qur'an di Nusantara*, 2nd edition (Jakarta: Pustaka STAINU, 2008); Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, *Memelihara Kemurnian Al-Qur'an: Profil Lembaga Tahfiz Al-Qur'an di Indonesia* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2011); Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, *Para Penjaga Al-Qur'an* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2011).

contemporary Qur'anic performances on social media.³ Nevertheless, a growing body of literature has demonstrated that Muslim women have played active roles in the dynamics of Qur'anic transmission,⁴ and have contributed to bringing the practice of Qur'anic recitation into the public sphere.⁵ These studies often portray women merely as supporting figures, treating their participation as supplementary rather than central. The increasing participation of Muslim women in Indonesia's public sphere, including religious practices,⁶ is transforming Qur'anic traditions. This article examines a contemporary phenomenon wherein women have orchestrated large-scale Qur'anic movements, creating and mobilizing religious discourse through successful collective action.

The Qur'anic movement, as a religious movement, encompasses local initiatives dedicated to deepening engagement with the Qur'an and applying its teachings in daily life. Its specific form, however, varies according to context and local terminology. Following Nisa's study of One Day One Juz (ODOJ),⁷ this article defines a Qur'anic movement as a social-religious movement that emerges from within society and

³ Imas Lu'ul Jannah, "Qari Selebriti: Resitasi Alquran dan Anak Muda Muslim Indonesia di Era Media Sosial", Master Thesis (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020).

⁴ Maḥmūd as-Sa'danī, *Alḥānus as-Samā'* (Kairo: Dār Akhbār al-Yaum 1996); Fathiyaturrahmah, *Perempuan dan Transmisi Al-Qur'an: Peran Transmisi Perempuan dalam Sejarah Al-Qur'an Abad I-X Hijriah*, 1st edition (Yogyakarta: Istanaagency, 2021); Muḥammad Khayr Yūsuf Ramaḍān, *Qāri'at Ḥāfiẓāt* (Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzaymah, 1993).

⁵ Anna M. Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion, and the Recited Qurān in Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004); Anne K. Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, 1st edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Eva F. Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia", *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 46, no. 134 (2018), pp. 24–43.

⁶ Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997); Eva F. Nisa, "Negotiating a Space in the Mosque: Women Claiming Religious Authority", in *Mosques and Imams: Everyday Islam in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. by Kathryn M. Robinson (Singapore: NUS Press, 2020), pp. 143-70; Rachel Rinaldo, "Women and Piety Movements", in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2010), pp. 584–605.

⁷ According to Nisa, *One Day One Juz* (ODOJ) can be understood as part of Indonesia's online *dakwah* movements. The initiative encourages Muslims to engage in daily Qur'anic recitation by reading one *juz* (section) per day. Since the Qur'an is divided into 30 sections comprising 114 chapters (*surah*), each *juz* averaging around 20 pages, consistent participation allows members to complete a full reading of the Qur'an within a month. See Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement".

demonstrates innovation and creativity in adapting to complex social situations. Aligned with this framework, GERAMI is a women-led Qur'anic movement focused on learning to read the Qur'an from the basics, primarily using the *Iqra'* method. The movement is built upon regular group learning sessions held in various mosques. GERAMI is no doubt a Qur'anic movement.

The movement challenges the prevailing narrative that religious movements must be pioneered by established authoritative figures. It was initiated by a housewife, a former corruption convict,⁸ and its membership consists largely of middle-aged women (45 years and above) with limited formal religious education. The instructors, referred to as *relawan* (volunteers), are recruited directly from GERAMI's membership and are dispatched to teach participants, termed *jama'ab* (members), across a network of mosques. Despite its origins with ordinary housewives and no formal affiliation with major Islamic organizations, it has rapidly evolved into a large-scale network comprising approximately 3,000 *jama'ab* (members) and 327 *relawan* (volunteers).⁹ This swift growth underscores the significant agency of Muslim women in creating new public religious spaces.¹⁰ This phenomenon is particularly compelling in Jambi, a city with a Malay population and a historical context of a deeply rooted patriarchal culture, often perceived as less dynamic than other Indonesian regions.¹¹

⁸ During the research in 2022-2024, we explored the life journey of Mastura as the initiator by conducting multiple interviews with her and a number of their followers. One particular experience of Mastura has been also published in various online media. See "Masturo Kembali Ke Penjara - Berita Jambi Ekspres," *JambiEkspres.co.id*, 12 Feb 2017, <https://jambiEkspres.co.id/read/2017/02/12/2448/masturo-kembali-ke-penjara>, accessed 10 Mar 2021; "Masturo Divonis 1 Tahun 8 Bulan - Berita Jambi Ekspres," *JambiEkspres.co.id*, 12 Feb 2017, <https://jambiEkspres.co.id/read/2017/02/12/2100/masturo-divonis-1-tahun-8-bulan>, accessed 10 Mar 2021.

⁹ In this movement, they refer to or call the Quran teachers as '*relawan*', and their students '*jama'ab*'. These two terms became special appellations within their movement.

¹⁰ In their effort to expand outreach, GERAMI has recently begun experimenting with a broader recruitment strategy, including not only women but also young male volunteers to teach Qur'anic literacy at junior high schools. However, this development is not the focus of the present study, since it is a very recent phenomenon and falls outside the scope of the five-year trajectory of GERAMI's emergence and consolidation that constitutes the empirical basis of this research.

¹¹ In some literatures, the introduction of Islam to Jambi in the 18th century is attributed to an Arab descendant from Tarim, Yemen, named Habib Husen bin Ahmad Baragbah. Coinciding with this period, there was a migration of Al-Jufri *Habib* families from Arabia to Jambi. Some of them established family ties with the Jambi Sultanate. The influence of Islam from the Middle East was further strengthened after the return

The emergence of such a vibrant, women-led movement within this socio-historical setting offers a critical opportunity to examine how traditional norms are contested from within.

At a glance, movements like GERAMI might appear to be merely routine religious activities. However, we argue that the movement is not only a manifestation of activism in Qur'anic learning but also a platform where the intersectionality of gender and class plays a central role. The diverse backgrounds of its members, from urban housewives to women with non-formal religious education, reflect how various gender and class identities intersect, influencing their space, roles, and performances within their religious practices. Women's roles within the movement are shaped by the interplay between their gender identity and the various forms of capital they possess. Their middle-class position provides them with crucial economic capital (financial capability), social capital (personal networks), and cultural capital (practical knowledge) that a purely grassroots initiative would otherwise lack. Differences in the ownership of this capital create an informal hierarchy within the movement. For example, women with greater economic capital may act as funders, while those with high social capital become key connectors and recruiters. This demonstrates that women's agency is not a monolith but a product of a complex dynamic in which gender and class mutually shape unique roles, spaces, and performances in the public sphere.

The intersectionality of Muslim women's identities is thus a central

of several native residents from studying at the Saulatiyah Madrasah in Mecca, who subsequently became influential *ulama* in spreading Islamic teachings and establishing the first madrasah in Jambi City. They were Abd al-Shamad bin Ibrahim (d. 1942), Ibrahim bin Abd al-Majid (d. 1922), Kemas Muhammad Shaleh bin Muhammad Yasin, Ahmad bin Abd al-Syukur (d. 1923), Utsman bin Ali, and Sayid Ali bin Muhammad. Therefore, various arguments have emerged suggesting that the institutionalization of a religio-sociological construction viewing women as subordinate to men is a result of the adoption of past traditions and reinforced by the prohibitions of past Jambi *ulama*, who tended to emulate a cultural system that seemed to originate from the actual values and doctrines of Islam. See Hasan Basri Bagus, *Pejuang Ulama, Ulama Pejuang Negeri Melayu Jambi* (Jambi: Pusat Kajian Pengembangan Sejarah dan Budaya Jambi, 2013), p. 30; Ali Muzakir, *Pemikiran Islam di Jambi: Memperkuat Kajian Naskah Islam di Indonesia melalui Naskah-Naskah Lokal Jambi* (Jambi: Sulthan Thaha Press, 2012), p. 75; Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Kesultanan Sumatra dan Negara Kolonial: Hubungan Jambi-Batavia (1830-1907) dan Bangkitnya Imperialisme Belanda*, trans. by Noor Cholís (Jakarta: Banana, 2008), p. 165; Muhammad Fadhil, "Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam KH. Abdul Qadir di Madrasah As'ad Seberang Kota Jambi 1951-1970", PhD. Dissertation (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2009), p. 84.

concern in understanding GERAMI. Previous research on women's social-religious movements has tended to focus on groups like the *hijrah* movement, which generally involves young Muslim women, activists, or members of organizations with specific ideologies. These movements are often exclusive¹² or, conversely, explicitly advocate for women's rights in line with their religious beliefs.¹³ In contrast, this article shows that women in GERAMI are working to revitalize community-based Qur'anic learning by emphasizing active participation, contributions, and the enhanced social mobility gained from becoming volunteer teachers. We, therefore, use intersectionality as a framework to explain how interconnected factors like gender and class influence women's space, roles, and performance within the movement. Intersectionality explores how various social factors, including gender, class, and ethnicity, overlap to form an individual's social identity, which in turn influences their position in social hierarchies.¹⁴ While prior studies have primarily used an intersectional lens to analyze discrimination against Muslim women,¹⁵ it is also a useful framework for understanding their identities

¹² Eva F. Nisa, "Cadari of Wahdah Islamiyah: Women as Dedicated Actors of Ultra-Conservatism", *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 30 (2012); Yuyun Sunesti, Noorhaidi Hasan, and Muhammad Najib Azca, "Young Salafi-Niqabi and Hijrah: Agency and Identity Negotiation", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2018), pp. 173–98; Zusiana Triantini, "'Terpasung Tak Terasa' (Melihat Eksistensi Politik Perempuan HTI)", *Unisia*, vol. 32, no. 71 (2009), pp. 67–80.

¹³ Pieternella van Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qur'an in Indonesia*, 1st edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Wasisto Raharjo Jati et al., "Revisiting Women's Piety Movements in the Indonesian Context", *Studia Islamika* vol. 31, no. 2 (2024), pp. 251–79; Rachel Rinaldo, "Envisioning the Nation: Women Activists, Religion and the Public Sphere in Indonesia", *Social Forces*, vol. 86, no. 4 (2008), pp. 1781–804; Rachel Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Rachel Rinaldo, "The Women's Movement and Indonesia's Transition to Democracy", *SocArXiv*, 2019.

¹⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989), p. 139; Carol Hardy-Fanta, *Intersectionality and Politics: Recent Research on Gender, Race, and Political Representation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020).

¹⁵ Memoona Tariq and Jawad Syed, "Intersectionality at Work: South Asian Muslim Women's Experiences of Employment and Leadership in the United Kingdom", *Sex Roles*, vol. 77, no. 7 (2017), p. 510; Rabiya Yaseen Bazaz and Mohammad Akram, "Exploring Gender and Caste Intersectionality among Muslims: A Sociological Study", *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2021), pp. 190–210; Sirma Bilge, "Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of

and experiences within religious practice. Building upon Pnina Werbner's work,¹⁶ we argue that class and its associated social dimensions, alongside gender, are crucial in shaping religious experience.

This article presents an ethnographic research conducted between 2022 and 2024, employing in-depth interviews with 19 purposively selected informants, including the movement's initiator, supervisory board, and selected volunteers who were actively and continuously engaged in the movement's activities. Interview data was supplemented with participant observations, collection of documents and membership archives, and analysis of social media content. The data were analyzed using an intersectionality framework, which served as a theoretical lens to categorize and interpret the women's roles, spaces, and experiences through the intersection of gender identity and class position.

B. GERAMI: Qur'anic Movement by a Woman for Women

Unlike the ODOJ movement which is rooted in the Tarbiyah movement,¹⁷ GERAMI originated from the independent initiative of an ordinary woman named Mastura, who is unaffiliated with any formal Islamic mass organization. Prior to her religious engagement, Mastura was a successful bureaucrat with a management background. However, a corruption case profoundly altered her life, leading to an identity crisis between 2012 and 2015. After her release from prison, she dedicated herself to her family as a full-time housewife. A year later, she began a

Veiled Muslim Women”, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2010), pp. 9–28; Cara Donegan, “Thinly Veiled Discrimination: Muslim Women, Intersectionality and the Hybrid Solution of Reasonable Accommodation and Proactive Measures”, *European Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2020), pp. 143–79; Elsa Mescoli, “Intersectionality and Muslim Women in Belgium”, in *Gendered Lives: Global Issues*, ed. by Nadine T. Fernandez and Katie Nelson (New York: State University of New York Press, 2022).

¹⁶ Pnina Werbner compares *the Khatam Qur'an* ritual celebrated by Muslims in Pakistan and North India with the *Slametan* ritual in Indonesia. Werbner highlights how both rituals create interdomestic spaces managed by women and focused on female social networks. This article underscores the importance of understanding intersectionality in the context of religious rituals, given that an individual's identity cannot be separated from other social factors. See Pnina Werbner, “Between *Khatam-e Qur'ans* and *Slametans*: Gender and Class in South Asian and Indonesian Interdomestic Rituals”, in *Food, Faith and Gender in South Asia: The Cultural Politics in Women's Food Practices*, ed. by Usha Sanyal and Nita Kumar (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), pp. 121–38.

¹⁷ Nisa discussed this movement which is associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, - a *dakwah* movement which started gaining ground in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s. See Nisa, “Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement”.

spiritual journey by establishing a *taḥfīẓ* house, which evolved through two configurations: first under the affiliation of Yusuf Mansur, and a year later as an independent entity.¹⁸ While managing the *taḥfīẓ* house, Mastura initiated a Qur'anic learning program for women in mid-2017. This endeavour began when she volunteered to teach the Qur'an to a parent of one of her *taḥfīẓ* students. The group quickly grew to include 15 women and was formally named Majelis Al-Barokah, holding weekly sessions at a nearby mosque. It should be noted that detailed information regarding Majelis Al-Barokah remains limited within the scope of this research.

Her experience in Qur'anic learning programs led to her selection as a participant in the 2019 Daiyah¹⁹ Development Program, held by the Jambi City PKK (*Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*/Family Welfare Programme).²⁰ During this program, Mastura observed the limited Qur'anic recitation skills of her fellow participants, which motivated her to create a more comprehensive and structured learning initiative. To realize this plan, she sought the support of Anisa, the head of the program and a close friend. Their longstanding friendship, forged through shared experiences in government service, gave Mastura confidence in Anisa's support. This further underscores Mastura's ability to identify and leverage opportunities to establish new platforms for religious education.

Mastura's ingenuity was also evident in her design of a program aimed at reaching all women in Jambi City. She envisioned forming study groups in mosques, supported by specially trained volunteers. Mastura designated them 'Relawan Allah' (God's Volunteers) to symbolize their selfless dedication. Unlike traditional Islamic institutions, GERAMI's teachers are recruited from its membership; these *relawan* are then assigned to teach other members, referred to as *jama'ah* (congregants), in various mosques, using the *Iqra'* book²¹ as a foundational text. Anisa

¹⁸ The *taḥfīẓ* house of Mastura has been examined, see Moona Maghfirah, "Performasi Al-Quran dan Konstruksi Identitas: Tren Rumah Tahfiz Pada Masyarakat Urban di Kota Jambi", Master Thesis (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021).

¹⁹ *Daiyah* is an Arabic term that refers to a woman who conducts religious preaching. Thus, a *daiyah* is a Muslim woman who actively spreads Islamic teachings to others, both verbally and in writing.

²⁰ PKK is a national movement in Indonesia aimed at improving the welfare of the community, especially at the family level. PKK has an organizational structure that extends from the national level down to the village level.

²¹ The *Iqra'* book is a widely used and popular textbook among Muslim communities, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia, for learning to read Arabic letters

warmly agreed to Mastura's idea and involved 20 *dā'iyah* (female preacher) members from six sub-districts to support the program. Mastura then trained them to become the first cohort of volunteer Qur'an teachers, formalizing the initiative into the movement known as GERAMI. This development reflects what Kalmbach describes as a space for women's religious leadership that is not merely a product of 'state action' or 'male-dominated religious institutions'. Instead, it is a space created and expanded by Muslim women themselves,²² representing a female initiative, a space conceived and actualized by Muslim women, intended exclusively for women.

The birth of GERAMI automatically elevated Mastura's position. Not only was she the owner of the *tabfiḥ* house and the *Majelis Al-Barokah*, but she also became the initiator of the Qur'an movement in Jambi City. This also led to Mastura being unanimously elected as the chairperson of the organization. Mastura then assigned tasks to the appointed 20 volunteers. Six of them were also appointed and inaugurated as district coordinators to lead the *relawan* in their respective areas. Their first task was to find at least five students (*jama'ah*) in each mosque as an initial process of forming the GERAMI study group, especially among women in their neighbourhoods. These volunteers become a resource utilized in the movement, not only for mobilization but also as a medium for expanding the movement. Maximizing the mobilization of relevant resources is a crucial variable in forming a massive and effective social movement.²³ Mastura effectively gathered the volunteers to train them to become teachers and to influence others to achieve the movement's goal of expanding mobility by influencing the community.²⁴

and their correct pronunciation. This book is systematically structured, starting from the most basic Arabic alphabet to short words and simple sentences

²² Hilary Kalmbach, "Introduction: Islamic Authority and The Study of Female Religious Leaders", in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, ed. by Masooda Bano and Hilary E. Kalmbach (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2012), pp. 1-27.

²³ Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermands, eds., *Social Movements and Culture*, 1st edition (Minneapolis, Minn: Univ of Minnesota Press, 1995); Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, 6th edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

²⁴ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 82, no. 6 (1977), pp. 1312-46; *Al-Jāmi'ah*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2025 M/1447 H

August 2019 marked a historical milestone for GERAMI. Following the efforts of a dedicated *relawan* who successfully gathered ten *jama'ah* in the Pal Merah District, the inaugural study group was established at the Babussalam Mosque. Mastura formally inaugurated this group in recognition of this achievement. Shortly thereafter, volunteers from the Alam Barajo and Kota Baru Districts also successfully formed their respective study groups. As the movement progressed, an increasing number of *relawan* followed suit. Consequently, twenty volunteers officially commenced teaching the *Iqra'* method in various mosques across Jambi City, signifying the broader launch of the movement. Soon after, the program has shown significant growth in its network of mosques, volunteers, and congregants. By 2022, the movement had established 143 mosques as centers for Qur'anic study groups across five sub districts in Jambi City: Alam Barajo, Danau Sipin, Kota Baru, Pal Merah, and Telanai Pura. These locations were supported by 278 volunteers and 2,752 active members. According to Mastura, a rise in public interest regarding religious activities after the pandemic contributed to a surge in requests from women seeking to establish study groups in their local mosques.

By 2024, the GERAMI network had expanded to include 183 mosques across the same five sub districts. The movement then involved 327 *relawan* and 2,851 *jama'ah*. The *relawan* play a critical role in this expansion. They not only mentor the *jama'ah* but also help inspire and cultivate future volunteers. Their activities are highly structured. Twice each week, they attend morning training sessions with the movement's management. In these sessions, they study Qur'anic grammar and pedagogical methods. Following the training, from afternoon until evening, they travel to various mosques to conduct their teaching sessions. Their dedication is reflected in demanding schedules. For example, one volunteer named Kartini teaches at sixteen different mosques in a single week, while another, Farida, teaches at ten mosques over five days.

This demonstrates a remarkable commitment, especially given that the volunteers work without financial compensation and cover their own expenses. Our research found that some rely on ride sharing applications for transportation, with commutes from distant neighbourhoods to the training classes often exceeding forty minutes. This voluntary ethos distinguishes the initiative from other community based Qur'anic learning models, where teachers typically receive a salary for their work. The volunteers teach at mosques out of their own volition, fully aware they 1212–41.

will not receive any wages from the movement.

GERAMI's development is further marked by the transformation of private space into public infrastructure. Mastura's home, which initially served as a training center for volunteers, has become the operational heart of the movement. She renovated her residence to include a large room functioning as movement headquarters, equipped with air conditioning, floor seating, storage cabinets, whiteboards, and other necessary facilities. To enhance institutional stability and secure financial support, Mastura established an advisory and supervisory board comprising four influential figures. The board includes two male members: a representative from the provincial leadership of BAZNAS (the National Board of Zakat), and a headmaster of a local Islamic boarding school. The two female members are a member of the governor's family and the wife of a university rector. These individuals represent Mastura's long term professional connections established during her previous government service.

The significant growth and visibility of GERAMI have attracted attention from several influential figures. During election seasons, legislative candidates contacted Mastura with specific objectives. These included Anisa, who was then campaigning for a seat in the Jambi City Regional House of Representatives from an Islamic political party, and a sitting member of the Indonesian House of Representatives from Jambi Province who was seeking re-election. Both were longstanding acquaintances of Mastura, with relationships dating back to her government service; Anisa, in particular, was already involved in the movement's activities. Mastura consequently facilitated their access to seek electoral support from the women within the movement. This dynamic aligns with the phenomenon examined by Fadhilah,²⁵ in which *majelis taklim* often function as vote brokers for specific candidates. These candidates leverage the collective influence, social standing, and networks of the *majelis taklim*'s²⁶ *jama'ah* to garner political support.

The political involvement of these figures has significantly impacted GERAMI in two key areas. *First*, it has enhanced the movement's financial capacity and infrastructure, facilitating the provision of uniforms, laptops, printers, sound systems, and operational funding. These resources

²⁵ Nisaul Fadillah, "Female Brokers: Mobilising Voters within Indonesia's Majelis Taklim Network", *Global Media Journal Australian*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2020), p. 12.

²⁶ *Majelis taklim* is a group of people who meet regularly to learn about Islam. In Indonesia, these meetings often take place in mosques and are attended mostly by women.

are frequently allocated as incentives for the volunteers. *Second*, it has substantially increased the public visibility of the organization's women. Mastura and her volunteers regularly gain opportunities to engage with influential figures, participate in government organized events, and appear on religious television programs. As a contemporary Qur'anic initiative, this case demonstrates that social-religious movements are not necessarily dependent on established religious authorities or formal Islamic organizations. Rather than constituting a radical rupture from existing structures, the findings reveal a more nuanced process. The cultural, social, and economic capital of middle-class Muslim women, many of whom lack formal religious education, functions as the initial catalyst for mobilization. Institutional support from religious figures and organizations subsequently supplies the legitimacy and stability required for large-scale expansion. This trajectory challenges conventional understandings of religious leadership by showing how grassroots initiatives can reshape the religious landscape through strategic co-production. At the same time, the experiences of these women remain complex, shaped by the intersecting dynamics of gender and class within contemporary Islamic public life.

C. Intersectionality within GERAMI: Gender and Class

Our findings indicate that GERAMI, as a Quranic movement, represents a diverse range of experiences for women, experiences that are profoundly shaped by the interaction of multiple social factors, with gender and class being particularly significant. This condition affirms the concept of intersectionality, which holds that individual identities are complex and multidimensional.²⁷ Consequently, a person's experiences are shaped not by a single identity alone, but by the convergence of multiple, overlapping identities. This principle of intersectionality extends to religious rituals.²⁸ The issue of intersectionality in this context underscores that religious practices cannot be understood from a single or monolithic perspective. Instead, it is essential to acknowledge how various social identities interact to shape individuals' experiences within religious contexts. This interaction creates complex dynamics that influence both participation in rituals and the meanings derived from

²⁷ Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*.

²⁸ Hardy-Fanta, *Intersectionality and Politics*; Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"; Bazaz and Akram, "Exploring Gender and Caste Intersectionality among Muslims".

them. Intersectionality in religious ritual thus reflects how multiple social identities, such as gender, class, and ethnicity, intersect to configure an individual's religious experience. While she does not explicitly use the term, the work of Pnina Werbner clearly engages with these ideas. Her research explores the complex ways in which social categories like gender and class intersect to shape women's experiences in specific religious ritual practices, such as the *slametan* in Indonesia and the *khatam Quran* in Pakistan.²⁹

1. *Gender Identity in GERAMI: Women Claiming Public Space*

Unlike institution-based Qur'anic program, GERAMI is a Quranic movement that promotes a collective approach by emphasizing to establish widespread Quranic study groups in mosques for women (housewives) throughout Jambi city. Although at first glance, its activism seem similar to the most of women's mosque-based religious movements studied by Mahmood in Cairo,³⁰ Frisk in Malaysia,³¹ or Salafi and Wahdah Islamiyah in Indonesia,³² in-depth analysis reveals significant differences, especially in terms of the pattern or level of mobility and initiative of its members. In conventional Qur'anic learning settings, instructors are typically drawn from recognized religious authorities,³³ such as *'ulamā*, *ustāẓ/ustāẓah*, or *kyai*, whose legitimacy rests on formal training and established scholarly credentials. By contrast, this movement adopts an alternative model by producing its own instructors through a systematic process of recruitment, training, and regeneration among its members, known as *relawan* (volunteers). Rather than positioning women as passive recipients of religious instruction, a pattern common in many mosque-based religious gatherings, this model actively encourages women's mobility within mosque spaces and their participation as religious public servants in society. Through their roles as Qur'an teachers, program managers, and community organizers, women involved as *relawan* emerge not as objects of religious transmission but as active agents shaping religious practice and public engagement. This configuration offers

²⁹ Werbner, "Between *Khatam-e Qur'ans* and *Slametans*".

³⁰ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³¹ Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2009).

³² Nisa, "Negotiating a Space in the Mosque"; Jati et al., "Revisiting Women's Piety Movements in the Indonesian Context".

³³ Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an*.

an alternative framework for understanding women's religious agency, highlighting how grassroots initiatives can foster inclusive religious public spaces, expand access to Qur'anic education, and reconfigure gendered assumptions about authority and participation in Islamic life.

The phenomenon of GERAMI, especially the activism of Muslim women in this movement, has challenged the traditional norms within the hierarchy of the public sphere of Qur'anic tradition and the social construction of Jambi society. This traditional hierarchy is marked by male-dominated leadership, the passive positioning of women as receivers of knowledge, and the predominant location of religious discourse in male-centred public spaces like mosques.³⁴ As noted in the introduction, the discourse surrounding Qur'anic traditions, including in the context of Indonesia, has been predominantly constructed through masculine lenses, as if it were a discourse exclusively claimed by men. Biographical collections have historically underrepresented women, leading to a marked paucity of women figures in the most of Qur'anic performances. A number of scholars have proposed reasons for the underrepresentation of women in Qur'anic traditions; such a result of the assimilation and transition process of Muslim societies from tribal cultures to imperial cultures led to the integration of cultural practices that were often gender-biased and androcentric;³⁵ and then the process of professionalizing Islamic scholarship, marked by the imposition of criteria that privileged male roles.³⁶ This gender-biased culture was then adopted and seen as part of the norms of Islamic religion, which then spreads alongside the advent of Islam into various regions, where it continues to influence and shape gender roles and relations.

³⁴ Maisah Maisah, "Transformasi Pendidikan Perempuan Dari Tradisional Ke Modern di Seberang Kota Jambi", *Kafa'ah Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2019), p. 96; Abu Bakar Usman, "Pendidikan Islam di Jambi: Corak Madrasah dari Kebudayaan Masyarakat Seberang Kota Jambi", PhD. Dissertation (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1992); Fauzi Mo Bafadhal, "Sejarah Sosial Pendidikan Islam Di Jambi: Studi Terhadap Madrasah Nurul Iman", PhD. Dissertation (Jakarta: SPs UIN Jakarta, 2008).

³⁵ Lies M. Marcoes - Natsir and Johan Hendrik Maulemen, *Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993); Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, Reprint edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Nabia Abbott, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed*, New edition (London: Al Saqi, 1998); Leila Ahmad, *Wanita dan Gender Dalam Islam: Akar-Akar Historis Perdebatan Modern*, trans. by M. S. Nasrulloh (Jakarta: Lentera, 2000); Fathiyaturrahmah, *Perempuan dan Transmisi Perempuan*.

³⁶ Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The GERAMI phenomenon is a stark contrast when viewed against the historical backdrop of women's dynamics. As a city with a Malay population, Jambi has a historical record as a region deeply rooted in patriarchal culture, less dynamic than other regions in Indonesia. Some scholars³⁷ have pointed out that, particularly in terms of access to education, educational equality for men and women was not yet accepted. Women were prohibited from pursuing education and were confined to domestic matters. The limited space for women was rooted in the prohibitions of the earlier local *ulama* who had studied in Mecca. This condition was underpinned by the implementation of an educational model that imitated the Madrasah Shaulatiyah and Darul Ulum in Mecca, which adhered to the *abl as-sunnah wa'l-jama'ah* school of thought.³⁸ Consequently, there was a dearth of female teachers, inadequate facilities, and limited learning opportunities for women compared to men. This also led to the profession of '*ulama*' in Jambi City being exclusively reserved for men, with women being excluded.³⁹ Instead of education, this patriarchal system also have been a major obstacle to women's participation in various aspects of public life, such as in social community⁴⁰ and politics.⁴¹

It becomes apparent that the public sphere within the Muslim tradition has undergone a profound transformation. A comparison of Muslim women's experiences demonstrates a significant shift from male dominated spaces toward spheres that are increasingly inclusive of women, coinciding with the growing presence of women in urban and

³⁷ See Bafadhal, "Sejarah Sosial Pendidikan Islam Di Jambi"; Usman, "Pendidikan Islam Di Jambi"; Zarfinayenti, "Partisipasi Perempuan dalam Politik: Studi Peran, Peluang, dan Tantangan Perempuan dalam Politik di Provinsi Jambi Masa Reformasi Sampai Sekarang (Pengalaman Beberapa Politisi Perempuan)", PhD. Dissertation (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2018); R. Zainuddin, *Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Jambi* (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional. Bag. Proyek Inventarisasi dan Pembinaan Nilai-nilai Budaya, 1982); Maisah, "Transformasi Pendidikan Perempuan" p. 96.

³⁸ Ali Muzakir, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Jambi: Dari Madrasah ke Pesantren," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2017), pp. 8–20.

³⁹ Karlina Helmanita and Sihabudin Noor, "Bahasa Kuasa dalam Relasi Perempuan dan Ulama di Kota Jambi Seberang", <https://api.uinjkt.ac.id/> (2020).

⁴⁰ Putri Indah Amalia Pasaribu, "Ikatan Wanita Pengusaha Indonesia dan Pergerakan Perekonomian Perempuan di Kota Jambi Tahun 1978-2018", Undergraduate Thesis (Jambi: Universitas Jambi, 2022).

⁴¹ Zarfinayenti, "Partisipasi Perempuan dalam Politik; Sutri Destemi Elsi et al., "Pengaruh Konstruksi Sosial Budaya terhadap Keterwakilan Politik Perempuan di Provinsi Jambi," *Journal Publicubo*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2022), pp. 776–89.

religious public life. However, this inclusion occurs exclusively among women themselves. We highlight that while women have gained access to the public sphere and can challenge traditional male domination, a significant degree of gender norm internalization continues to limit their full agency. Mastura's experience of declining requests to teach men, citing concerns about *'aurat* (part of body that must be covered according to Islamic law),⁴² exemplifies this internalization.⁴³ Her recruitment of two prominent male religious figures for the advisory board, and her continued reliance on their counsel, underscores the persistence of gendered constraints within her subjectivity as a Muslim woman. This indicates that she, and others within GERAMI, maintain a belief in distinct gender roles and spaces, thereby reinforcing the notion that men hold superior religious authority.

An intersectional perspective helps illuminate this tension. As discussed earlier, the movement exemplifies the complex interplay of Muslim women's identities within religious practice. In this setting, participants simultaneously inhabit multiple social positions: they are Muslim and urban women, with each identity carrying internalized norms that shape their subjectivity. When engaged in the movement's activities, these intersecting identities interact and become visible in everyday practices. Despite their backgrounds as housewives, participants actively challenge patriarchal arrangements by asserting themselves in public religious spaces, drawing in particular on their urban social identities. At the same time, they continue to uphold gendered boundaries between male and female spaces, thereby reproducing norms deeply embedded in their social environment. This dual process, of contestation and reproduction, demonstrates how intersectionality operates not as a linear movement toward emancipation, but as a negotiated and situational practice. Such intersectional positioning has the potential to reconfigure social norms by enabling the emergence of new forms of women's religious public

⁴² We interviewed Mastura in April 2024. She recounted that a number of men had asked her to also teach them how to recite the Quran. She declined, citing the reason that a woman's voice is considered *'aurat*.

⁴³ While Mastura's personal decision to decline teaching adult men reflects her internalization of traditional *'aurat* norms, the movement's recent program to recruit young male volunteers to teach at middle schools raises questions about whether this is an inconsistency or a strategic and dynamic adaptation. This tension between a leader's personal beliefs and the pragmatic demands of organizational growth poses a critical question for future research on how female leaders in grassroots movements navigate such challenges.

space. In this respect, the findings resonate with the argument advanced by Valkonen and Korkalo,⁴⁴ who contend that religion functions as a site where distinctions based on gender, religious practice, and ethnicity are both produced and negotiated. Intersectionality, in their formulation, captures how overlapping social categories generate distinctive lived experiences rather than uniform outcomes.

2. *Shaping Social Class: Women's Capital and Performance in GERAMI*

Class dynamics significantly influence women's activism within GERAMI, shaped by the distribution of individual capital. This capital is constituted by a variety of intersecting factors, including socioeconomic background, social relations, literacy, and personal experiences. When individuals possessing diverse forms of capital converge within a social movement, their interactions can generate new, internal class structures. As Bourdieu contends, capital empowers individuals, providing them with a tangible source of authority to shape social relations within a community.⁴⁵ GERAMI operates through a well-defined hierarchical structure that extends from a central leadership level down to individual mosque study groups. This structure includes an advisory and supervisory board, a leader, a deputy leader, a secretary, and treasurers. The advisory board comprises influential figures who provide legitimacy and resources: two prominent male religious leaders, a headmaster of an Islamic boarding school and a provincial chairman of the BAZNAS, and several influential women, including the wife of a former university rector, a member of a former governor's family, and Anisa, a former member of the Regional House of Representatives. Mastura, as the initiator, holds the position of leader. The remaining administrative and coordinating roles at the district and village levels are filled by dedicated volunteers.

The internal structure of GERAMI resembles a pyramid, with each tier defined by specific roles, capital, and a distinct potential for upward mobility. At the apex are the sponsors (the advisory and supervisory board members) who possess significant social, symbolic, and economic capital. While they do not engage in daily teaching, their patronage is crucial for the movement's sustainability, providing financial support,

⁴⁴ Sanna Valkonen and Sandra Wallenius-Korkalo, "Embodying Religious Control: An Intersectional Approach to Sámi Women in Laestadianism," *Culture and Religion*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1–16.

⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, ed. by Nicole Woolsey Biggar (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2008), pp. 280–91.

extensive networks, and public legitimacy. This tier is exclusive and inaccessible to volunteers or congregants, as membership is predicated on the possession of substantial pre-existing capital.

Below them is Mastura, the founder and leader. Her authority is fortified not only by her initiating role but also by her close personal relationships with the sponsors. This connection grants her privileged access to resources and symbolic legitimacy that other volunteers lack.⁴⁶ Consequently, Mastura functions as an irreplaceable broker, connecting the sponsors to the grassroots operators. The next layer consists of the *relawan*, who serve as the primary executors of the movement's fieldwork. Their duties include teaching, recruiting new members, and managing daily activities. Some volunteers also hold administrative roles. While they are vital to the movement's operation, their upward mobility is constrained; they cannot advance to Mastura's position or that of the sponsors due to their limited symbolic capital and social connections.⁴⁷ The base of the pyramid is composed of the *jama'ah*, the student congregants. They can ascend to the volunteer level based on demonstrated teaching ability and commitment, but their mobility is capped at that tier. This configuration renders Mastura's position exceptionally powerful, as she controls the flow of resources and legitimacy from the sponsors downward. Thus, the structure is not merely an organizational chart but a clear representation of how capital and social relations create and maintain a distinct internal hierarchy.

Through an intersectional lens, Mastura's position can be more precisely analyzed using Bourdieu's theory of capital. She functions as a social broker, connecting different social classes within the movement. Her privileged position derives primarily from social capital: a dense network of personal and bureaucratic relationships accumulated during her previous career, which enables her to bridge elite sponsors and the volunteer base. This form of capital allows her to mobilize both economic resources and public legitimacy. From the perspective of social network theory, her strategic role as a connector grants her a distinctive degree of control over the circulation of resources and power within the organizational structure. While the movement succeeds in constructing a new public space in which women can act as visible religious agents,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Ronald S. Burt introduced the concept of "structural holes" and the role of a broker who gains power by bridging the gap between various social groups. See Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition* (Harvard University Press, 1992).

its internal configuration reveals a complex hierarchy that does not eliminate social stratification but rather reconstitutes it in new forms. This tiered arrangement, with sponsors positioned as patrons, Mastura occupying the role of central broker, volunteers operating as field-level agents, and congregants forming the base, demonstrates that even within a women-led initiative, gender and class intersect to produce nuanced power relations and emergent patterns of social differentiation.

3. *New Complex Hierarchies*

The GERAMI hierarchy is concretely manifested through the different positions and forms of capital held by its members, focusing on three distinct social class segments: upper middle class serves as supervisory board, middle class as a key actor, and lower middle class as volunteers. In the supervisory board, there are three powerful women serving on the organization's supervisory board: Anisa, a former head of the daiyah program at the PKK and a member of the Jambi Regional House of Representatives (DPRD); the wife of a rector from a local Islamic university; and a woman from a prominent Jambi conglomerate family. When assessed against theoretical characteristics of social class, these women originate from upper middle class backgrounds, possessing significantly greater financial stability than its general membership. This socioeconomic distinction is substantiated by accounts from Mastura and several volunteers, who confirm that Mastura regularly solicited financial support from these three women for organizational needs. For instance, Mastura contacted Fira, the member from the conglomerate family, to secure funding for volunteer uniforms. Similarly, Anisa distributed financial assistance and headscarves to volunteers during her regional election campaign. These board members frequently provided financial backing for holding events, both in response to direct requests and through their own initiative. Mastura explicitly acknowledged that their economic power was a primary reason for their inclusion in the movement.

The presence of these three women has substantially elevated the movement's public visibility and expanded its networks. Their social standing functions as a form of symbolic capital, enabling access to prestigious arenas such as gubernatorial breaking-fast gatherings, regular Islamic study circles (*pengajian rutin*) at the governor's office, and appearances on local television programs. Through a reciprocal exchange, the movement has also featured these women, alongside other

prominent figures, at its own events, a strategy that has significantly enhanced its public stature and legitimacy. Their involvement, however, was strategically circumscribed. They were neither expected to undertake teaching responsibilities nor to participate in day-to-day operational activities. Instead, Mastura positioned them as key assets for long-term sustainability, leveraging their roles primarily as financial patrons and sources of public validation. In this configuration, the functions of the advisory board reveal a concentration of individuals endowed with substantial forms of capital, particularly economic resources. Theoretically situated within the upper-middle class, a category encompassing elites and senior professionals in economic, managerial, and administrative fields,⁴⁸ these women are distinguished by their privileged access to and command over critical material and symbolic resources.⁴⁹

The prominence of the advisory board should not overshadow Mastura's pivotal role in the movement's inception and growth. The latter comes from middle class playing as a key actor. She possesses a unique blend of Bourdieusian capital that has been instrumental in shaping and sustaining the organization. Although her financial resources are less substantial than those of the board members, Mastura's cultural, social, and symbolic capital have proven invaluable to the movement's advancement. *First*, Mastura benefits from stable economic capital through her affluent family. Both she and her husband are retired civil servants, and their three children hold established professional positions as a police officer, a bank employee, and a university lecturer. *Second*, she possesses significant cultural capital derived from her family heritage, a master's degree in management, and substantial leadership experience as a department head in a government agency. While her formal education was secular, she acquired proficient Quranic literacy from her grandfather, a Quran teacher, which later enabled her to establish and develop the movement. *Third* and *fourth*, Mastura commands considerable social and symbolic capital. Her former position as a provincial-level government official provided extensive professional networks and established her as a respected community figure. This social capital allowed her to recruit

⁴⁸ Kntayya Mariappan, *Ketidaksamaan Sosial* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Pub & Dist., 2000).

⁴⁹ Daniel Dhakidae, "Lifestyles and Political Behavior of the Indonesian Middle Classes", in *Exploration of the Middle Classes in Southeast Asia*, ed. by Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (Taipei: Program for Southeast Asian Area Studies, Academia Sinica., 2001); Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, *Sosiologi Jilid 2*, trans. by *Aminuddin Ram*, 6th edition (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2008).

influential supporters for her initiatives, while her leadership background enhanced her symbolic capital, lending credibility and authority to her endeavours.

These interconnected forms of capital were fundamental to GERAMI's establishment and development. As Bourdieu suggests, these different forms of capital are interconnected and can reinforce one another over time.⁵⁰ Given her background, Mastura aligns with Dhakidae categorization of the middle class, which includes professionals with stable incomes that cover living and educational expenses.⁵¹ Furthermore, her initiatives reflect Hasan's observation that the urban middle class drives religious resurgence by creating "market-friendly piety" that caters to contemporary preferences.⁵² Mastura's ownership and strategic deployment of capital underscore her leadership and middle-class status. This position provides her with a unique advantage: the ability to bridge social strata by connecting with both the upper middle class for resources and the lower middle class for membership, thereby significantly expanding the movement's reach.

It is clear that Mastura is the principal initiator and driving force behind the emergence and development of the GERAMI movement in Jambi City. Her middle-class background and the forms of capital associated with it were instrumental in facilitating the movement's initial growth. However, its sustainability and expansion cannot be attributed to her role alone. They are equally the product of the collective labor of *relawan* (the volunteers) from lower middle class, particularly women, whose everyday participation constitutes the backbone of the movement. This section examines the social profile, roles, and motivations of these women. The majority of female volunteers are over the age of forty and are either housewives or not formally employed. This is evident both from internal profile records⁵³ and from their consistent participation in activities held during regular weekday working hours. Most volunteers conduct Qur'anic sessions in the afternoon (1:30–3:00 PM and 4:00–5:15 PM), with significantly fewer teaching in the morning slot (10:00–11:30 AM). Educational records further show that most possess a high school

⁵⁰ Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital".

⁵¹ Dhakidae, "Lifestyles and Political Behavior of the Indonesian Middle Classes".

⁵² Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islam in Provincial Indonesia: Middle Class, Lifestyle, and Democracy", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2011), pp. 119–57.

⁵³ The authors recapitulated the volunteers' biodata and found that the majority of them were housewives with mostly Senior High School level education.

education or lower, while only a smaller proportion hold bachelor's or diploma degrees.

Interviews reveal multiple motivations underlying their involvement. Most prominently, participants expressed a normative religious drive rooted in perceived deficiencies in their Qur'anic recitation skills and limited prior access to structured learning opportunities. This motivation reflects a pursuit of religious fulfilment and spiritual self-improvement. Alongside this, a less explicit yet equally significant aspiration concerns personal fulfilment and social participation. As urban housewives, many articulated a desire to contribute beyond the domestic sphere, mirroring broader aspirations associated with urban social life. Yet these ambitions are frequently constrained by intersecting factors such as ageism, limited education, restricted employment opportunities, domestic responsibilities, and entrenched gender norms. In this sense, the *relawan* embody broader structural challenges faced by women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Unlike Mastura, whose accumulated capital enables her to pursue public leadership, many volunteers lack the resources required to translate aspiration into opportunity. The movement thus functions as a critical enabling platform, providing access to Qur'anic literacy, social engagement, and public participation. Through their involvement, these women not only address personal spiritual needs but also contribute to communal religious life and subtly renegotiate gendered expectations by occupying visible roles within religious public space.

Based on established social classifications,⁵⁴ most *relawan* belong to the lower middle class, a group characterized by limited access to resources. Their constrained capital means they can primarily contribute to the movement through their labor and effort, a direct reflection of their socioeconomic status. Most are housewives whose husbands work as construction laborers, drivers, mechanics, or small-scale food vendors; a minority have spouses who are teachers or contractual office staff. Their financial precarity is illustrated by personal narratives. For instance, Fatimah, a volunteer from Danau Sipin, described how her family's reliance on her husband's daily wages often precluded celebrating Eid holidays.⁵⁵ Similarly, Farida and her driver husband borrowed money for medical bills,⁵⁶ while Tia worked as Mastura's domestic helper to

⁵⁴ Dhakidae, "Lifestyles and Political Behavior of the Indonesian Middle Classes"; Horton, *Sosiologi Jilid 2*.

⁵⁵ Interview with Fatimah, September 2023, in GERAMI sekretariat, Jambi.

⁵⁶ Interview with Farida, September 2023, in Gerami sekretariat, Jambi.

repay her child's online loan.⁵⁷ These accounts highlight the struggles of the lower middle class in meeting basic needs, aligning with MacLeod's observations of this demographic grappling with economic pressure and constrained social mobility.⁵⁸ In conclusion, the role of *relawan* is predominantly filled by lower middle class women navigating domestic challenges while aspiring for public engagement. GERAMI facilitates their access to this public space and provides a pathway to empowerment.

This analysis underscores how the ownership of capital intersects to shape an individual's role and performance within a Qur'anic movement, revealing its internal class structure. Typically, individuals with privileged economic capital occupy the highest positions, as seen in GERAMI's upper class supervisory board. However, Mastura, a middle class woman, has played the most significant role in the movement's development. Her influence stems from a remarkable ability to mobilize various forms of capital—not merely economic, but also social, cultural, and symbolic. By effectively leveraging her networks, knowledge, and charisma, she has challenged traditional power dynamics within social movements. This confirms Bourdieu's concept of capital as diverse resources that individuals can leverage for power and demonstrates how the accumulation and intersection of these capitals enable individuals to achieve their goals. Mastura's power aligns with Davis's argument that intersecting social identities within individual lives and institutional arrangements fundamentally impact power dynamics.⁵⁹

D. Concluding Remarks

This research provides new insights into women's roles within Quranic practice, using contemporary Indonesia as its primary reference. It demonstrates how an intersectional perspective can illuminate the dynamics of women's identities in modern Quranic movements. This study also documents a new phenomenon that reveals the diversity of Muslim women's identities in creating novel practices and accommodating Quranic tradition within the public sphere. The intersectional lens reveals that women's experiences in religious movements are not merely varied

⁵⁷ Interview with Tia, December 2023, in her house, Jambi.

⁵⁸ Arlene Elowe MacLeod, "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo", *Signs*, vol. 17, no. 3 (1992), pp. 533–57.

⁵⁹ Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful", *Feminist Theory*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2008), pp. 67–85.

but are structured by the convergence of gender and class, which in turn produces distinct roles, access to resources, and internal power dynamics. Ultimately, the intersection of gender and class significantly configures women's experiences, including their space, roles, and performances.

Women's participation in the GERAMI movement reveals a complex interplay of gender, religion, and power. As Muslim, urban, and female subjects, participants bring with them deeply internalized social norms that shape their religious engagement. Within this setting, intersectionality enables women to challenge patriarchal arrangements while simultaneously reproducing certain gendered boundaries. The movement thus operates not only as a site of identity formation but also as a social mechanism through which existing structures are both contested and reaffirmed. This dynamic generates distinctive religious experiences for women and carries the potential to reconfigure religious and social relations, particularly within the public sphere of Qur'anic practice. At the organizational level, the distribution of roles reflects a stratified class structure shaped by differentiated forms of capital. Individuals endowed with substantial economic capital tend to occupy upper-tier positions on the supervisory board. Those with moderate economic capital but strong social and cultural capital, exemplified by Mastura, constitute the central leadership. Meanwhile, participants with more limited resources primarily contribute as *relawan*, positioning them within the lower-middle strata of the movement. These patterns demonstrate that internal hierarchy is not determined by economic capital alone but emerges from the intersection of multiple forms of capital. Mastura's trajectory, in particular, underscores the decisive role of social and cultural capital in shaping leadership and sustaining collective action.

Grounded in Qur'anic engagement, the movement mirrors the complexities of the broader society, especially the lived realities of women navigating intersecting identities and constraints. Its internal dynamics are shaped by the convergence of diverse gendered positions, socioeconomic backgrounds, and life experiences, which in turn influence patterns of participation and authority. This study therefore argues that religious movements composed of heterogeneous social actors may inadvertently generate new hierarchical arrangements, even as they open up alternative gendered public spaces. An intersectional approach is thus essential for understanding the differentiated experiences of Muslim women in religious practice and for capturing the nuanced ways in which gender, class, and culture intersect in shaping religious agency.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbott, Nabia, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed*, new edition, London: Al Saqi, 1998.
- Ahmed, Leila, *Wanita dan Gender dalam Islam: Akar-Akar Historis Perdebatan Modern*, trans. by M. S. Nasrulloh Lentera, 2000.
- Bafadhal, Fauzi Mo, "Sejarah Sosial Pendidikan Islam di Jambi: Studi terhadap Madrasah Nurul Iman", PhD. Dissertation, Jakarta: SPS UIN Jakarta, 2008.
- Bagus, Hasan Basri, *Pejuang Ulama, Ulama Pejuang Negeri Melayu Jambi*, Jambi: Pusat Kajian Pengembangan Sejarah dan Budaya Jambi, 2013.
- Bazaz, Rabiya Yaseen and Mohammad Akram, "Exploring Gender and Caste Intersectionality among Muslims: A Sociological Study", *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2021, pp. 190–210, <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.2.190.210>.
- Bilge, Sirma, "Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2010, pp. 9–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860903477662>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, "The Forms of Capital", in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, ed. by Nicole Woolsey Biggar, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2008, pp. 280–91, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470755679.ch15>.
- Burt, Ronald S., *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*, Harvard University Press, 1992, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1kz4h78>.
- Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, pp-139-67.
- Davis, Kathy, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful", *Feminist Theory*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2008, pp. 67–85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108086364>.
- Dhakidae, Daniel, "Lifestyles and Political Behavior of the Indonesian Middle Classes", in *Exploration of the Middle Classes in Southeast Asia*,

- ed. by Hsin-Huang Michael Hsia, Taipei: Program for Southeast Asian Area Studies, Academia Sinica., 2001.
- Djunaedi, Wawan, *Sejarah Qira'at Al-qur'an di Nusantara*, 2nd edition, Jakarta: Pustaka STAINU, 2008.
- Donegan, Cara, “Thinly Veiled Discrimination: Muslim Women, Intersectionality and the Hybrid Solution of Reasonable Accommodation and Proactive Measures”, *European Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2020, pp. 143–79, <https://doi.org/10.2924/EJLS.2019.032>.
- van Doorn-Harder, Pieterella, *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qu'ran in Indonesia*, 1st edition, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Elsi, Sutri Destemi et al., “Pengaruh Konstruksi Sosial Budaya Terhadap Keterwakilan Politik Perempuan Di Provinsi Jambi”, *Journal Publicuho*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2022, pp. 776–89, <https://doi.org/10.35817/publicuho.v5i3.30>.
- Fadhil, Muhammad, “Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam KH. Abdul Qadir di Madrasah As'ad Seberang Kota Jambi 1951-1970”, PhD. Dissertation, Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2009.
- Fadillah, Nisaul, “Female Brokers: Mobilising Voters within Indonesia's Majelis Taklim Network”, *Global Media Journal Australian*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2020, pp. 1-17.
- Fathiyaturrahmah, *Perempuan dan Transmisi Al-Qur'an: Peran Transmisi Perempuan dalam Sejarah Al-Qur'an Abad I-X Hijriah*, 1st edition, Yogyakarta: IAIN Jember Press, 2021.
- Frisk, Sylva, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2009.
- Gade, Anna M., *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion, and the Recited Quran in Indonesia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
- Gole, Nilüfer, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Hardy-Fanta, Carol, *Intersectionality and Politics: Recent Research on Gender, Race, and Political Representation in the United States*, New York: Routledge, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203726303>.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi, “Islam in Provincial Indonesia: Middle Class, Lifestyle, and Democracy”, *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2011, pp. 119–57, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2011.491.119-157>.

Horton, Paul B., and Chester L. Hunt, *Sosiologi Jilid 2*, trans. by Aminuddin Ram, 6th edition Jakarta: Erlangga, 2008.

Jambiekspres.co.id, "Masturo Kembali ke Penjara - Berita Jambi Ekspres", *Jambiekspres.co.id*, 12 Feb 2017, <https://jambiekspres.co.id/read/2017/02/12/2448/masturo-kembali-ke-penjara>, accessed 10 Mar 2021.

----, "Masturo Divonis 1 Tahun 8 Bulan - Berita Jambi Ekspres", *Jambiekspres.co.id*, 12 Feb 2017, <https://jambiekspres.co.id/read/2017/02/12/2100/masturo-divonis-1-tahun-8-bulan>, accessed 10 Mar 2021.

Jannah, Imas Lu'ul, "Qari Selebriti: Resitasi Alquran dan Anak Muda Muslim Indonesia di Era Media Sosial", Master Thesis, Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020.

Jati, Wasisto Raharjo et al., "Revisiting Women's Piety Movements in the Indonesian Context", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2024, pp. 251–79, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v31i2.38754>.

Johnston, Hank and Bert Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture*, 1st edition, Minneapolis, Minn: Univ of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Kalmbach, Hilary, "Introduction: Islamic Authority and The Study of Female Religious Leaders", in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, ed. by Masooda Bano and Hilary E. Kalmbach, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2012.

Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, *Memelihara Kemurnian Al-Qur'an: Profil Lembaga Tahfiz Al-Qur'an di Indonesia*, Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2011.

----, *Para Penjaga Al-Qur'an*, Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2011.

Locher Scholten, Elsbeth, *Kesultanan Sumatra dan Negara Kolonial: Hubungan Jambi-Batavia (1830-1907) dan Bangkitnya Imperialisme Belanda*, trans. by Noor Cholis, Jakarta: Banana, 2008.

MacLeod, Arlene Elowe, "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo", *Signs*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1992, pp. 533–57.

Maghfirah, Moona, "Performasi Al-Quran dan Konstruksi Identitas: Tren Rumah Tahfiz Pada Masyarakat Urban di Kota Jambi", Master Thesis, Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021.

Mahmood, Saba, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*,

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Maisah, Maisah, “Transformasi Pendidikan Perempuan dari Tradisional ke Modern di Seberang Kota Jambi”, *Kafa’ab Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 9, no.1, 2019, pp. 96-109, <https://doi.org/10.15548/jk.v9i1.242>.

Marcoes-Natsir, Lies M., and Johan Hendrik Maulemen, *Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, Jakarta: INIS, 1993.

Mariappan, Kntayya, *Ketidaksetaraan Sosial*, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Pub & Dist., 2000.

Mattson, Ingrid, *The Story of the Qur’an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, 1st edition, Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 82, no. 6, 1977, pp. 1212–41.

Mescoli, Elsa, “Intersectionality and Muslim Women in Belgium”, in *Gendered Lives: Global Issues*, ed. by Nadine T. Fernandez and Katie Nelson, New York: State University of New York Press, 2022.

Muzakir, Ali, *Pemikiran Islam di Jambi, Memperkuat Kajian Naskah Islam di Indonesia melalui Naskah-Naskah Lokal Jambi*, Jambi: Sulthan Thaha Press, 2012.

----, “Transformasi Pendidikan Islam di Jambi: dari Madrasah ke Pesantren”, *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2017, pp. 8–20, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v3i1.212.

Nelson, Kristina, *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an*, Cairo and New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2010.

Nisa, Eva F., “Cadari of Wahdah Islamiyah: Women as Dedicated Actors of Ultra-conservatism”, *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 30, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.25911/07VC-MH37>.

----, “Negotiating a Space in the Mosque: Women Claiming Religious Authority”, in *Mosques and Imams: Everyday Islam in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. by Kathryn M. Robinson, Singapore: NUS Press, 2020.

----, “Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia”, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 46, no. 134, 2018, pp. 24–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2017.1416758>.

- Pasaribu, Putri Indah Amalia, "Ikatan Wanita Pengusaha Indonesia dan Pergerakan Perekonomian Perempuan di Kota Jambi Tahun 1978-2018", Undergraduate Thesis, Jambi: Universitas Jambi, 2022.
- Ramaḍān, Muḥammad Khayr Yūsuf, *Qārī'at Ḥāfiẓāt*, Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzaymah, 1993.
- Rasmussen, Anne K., *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, 1st edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Rinaldo, Rachel, "Envisioning the Nation: Women Activists, Religion and the Public Sphere in Indonesia", *Social Forces*, vol. 86, no. 4, 2008, pp. 1781–804, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0043>.
- , "Women and Piety Movements", in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2010, pp. 584–605.
- , *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- , "The Women's Movement and Indonesia's Transition to Democracy", *SocArXiv*, 2019, pp. 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/cfyva>.
- As-Sa'danī, Maḥmūd, *Alḥānus as-Samā'*, Kairo: Dār Akhbār al-Yaum, 1996.
- Sayeed, Asma, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Stowasser, Barbara Freyer, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, Reprint edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Sunesti, Yuyun, Noorhaidi Hasan, and Muhammad Najib Azca, "Young Salafi-Niqabi and Hijrah: Agency and Identity Negotiation", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2018, pp. 173–98, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v8i2.173-198>.
- Tariq, Memoona and Jawad Syed, "Intersectionality at Work: South Asian Muslim Women's Experiences of Employment and Leadership in the United Kingdom", *Sex Roles*, vol. 77, no. 7, 2017, pp. 510-22, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0741-3>.
- Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Triantini, Zusiana, "Terpasung Tak Terasa' (Melihat Eksistensi Politik Perempuan HTI)", *Unisia*, vol. 32, no. 71, 2009, pp. 67-80, <https://doi.org/10.20885/unisia.vol32.iss71.art5>.
- Usman, Abu Bakar, Pendidikan Islam di Jambi: Corak Madrasah dari *Al-Jāmi'ah*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2025 M/1447 H

- Kebudayaan Masyarakat Seberang Kota Jambi”, PhD. Dissertation, Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1992.
- Valkonen, Sanna and Sandra Wallenius-Korkalo, “Embodying Religious Control: An Intersectional Approach to Sámi Women in Laestadianism”, *Culture and Religion*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2015.1023813>.
- Werbner, Pnina, “Between Khatam-e Qur’ans and Slametans: Gender and Class in South Asian and Indonesian Interdomestic Rituals”, in *Food, Faith and Gender in South Asia: The Cultural Politics in Women’s Food Practices*, ed. by Usha Sanyal and Nita Kumar, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan, ed., *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, 6th edition, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Zainuddin, R., *Sejarah Pendidikan Daerah Jambi*, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional. Bag. Proyek Inventarisasi dan Pembinaan Nilai-nilai Budaya, 1982.
- Zarfinayenti, “Partisipasi Perempuan dalam Politik: Studi Peran, Peluang, dan Tantangan Perempuan dalam Politik di Provinsi Jambi Masa Reformasi Sampai Sekarang (Pengalaman Beberapa Politisi Perempuan)”, PhD. Dissertation, Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2018.