

# The Authority of the Fatwa of the Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid on Fajr Time in Ponorogo East Java: Between Scholarly Authority and Organizational Compliance

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**Abstract:** Fatwas are a significant tool in Islamic jurisprudence, regulating human behaviour and shaping society's knowledge and interpretation. In an organization, fatwas have more binding power. However, in responding to it, each faces other societal structures. This research focuses on implementing a tarjih decision (*putusan tarjih*) by the Tarjih and Tajdid Council (*Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid - MTT*) of Muhammadiyah regarding changes in the Fajr time. Using Max Weber's theory of Social Action, this study investigates how the Council's legal-rational authority impacts compliance among followers. The findings show that organisational structure and acceptance of MTT influence Muhammadiyah members' obedience to the fatwa as an authority according to the criteria of Islamic jurisprudence. This study adds to the scholarly understanding of religious authority in contemporary Islamic organizations by focusing on how fatwa-making and its implementation steps affect community behaviour and religious practice. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of contextualizing Islamic law in response to local social dynamics, laying the groundwork for future research on the relationship between religious edicts and societal norms in organisational settings.

**Keywords:** *Muhammadiyah; tarjih decision; fatwa; fatwa institution; fajr time*

**Abstrak:** Fatwa memainkan peran penting dalam yurisprudensi Islam dan merupakan alat untuk mengatur perilaku manusia dan membentuk pemahaman dan interpretasi masyarakat. Dalam konteks organisasi, fatwa memiliki kekuatan yang lebih mengikat. Namun, dalam menanggapi, setiap individu juga dihadapkan pada struktur lain dalam masyarakat. Penelitian ini berfokus pada implementasi putusan tarjih oleh Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid (MTT) Muhammadiyah terkait perubahan waktu subuh. Dengan menggunakan teori Max Weber tentang tindakan sosial, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana otoritas legal-rasional MTT berdampak pada kepatuhan para pengikutnya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepatuhan anggota terhadap fatwa dipengaruhi oleh struktur organisasi dan penerimaan terhadap MTT sebagai otoritas menurut kriteria yurisprudensi Islam. Studi ini

menambah pemahaman ilmiah tentang otoritas keagamaan dalam organisasi Islam kontemporer dengan berfokus pada bagaimana pembuatan fatwa dan langkah implementasinya mempengaruhi perilaku masyarakat dan praktik keagamaan. Selain itu, studi ini menekankan pentingnya kontekstualisasi hukum Islam sebagai respons terhadap dinamika sosial setempat, yang menjadi dasar bagi penelitian di masa depan tentang hubungan antara fatwa agama dan norma-norma masyarakat dalam konteks organisasi.

**Kata kunci:** *Muhammadiyah; putusan tarjih; fatwa; lembaga fatwa; waktu subuh*

## Introduction

Fatwas have an essential position in Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>1</sup> Fatwas are a form of fiqh that responds to the reality of the subject, place, and time. Fatwas provides practical guidance in various aspects of life, especially for the laity. However, each person ends up having a different attitude towards a fatwa.

Fatwa institutions play an essential role in producing fatwas.<sup>2</sup> Muhammadiyah as a religious organization plays a role in forming Islamic law and religious views on *kebilafiyah* issues and contemporary issues that arise in society. In the organizational structure, this authority is held and is the responsibility of MTT. This council is an ijtihad body of competent scholars who will conduct ijtihad in the congregation and produce fatwas.

However, implementing a fatwa is still inseparable from the dynamics of social life around it. This includes the implementation of Tarjih Decision XXXI of 2020 regarding Fajr time, which is considered to have the potential to cause polemics.<sup>3</sup> Especially when the inauguration of this decision came out before the arrival of Ramadan, Muhammadiyah members were required to pay attention to social conditions in their respective environments so that there was no uproar

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<sup>1</sup>Shaheen Whyte, 'Are Fatwas Dispensable? Examining the Contemporary Relevance and Authority of Fatwas in Australia', *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* (30 December 2022), rwac015, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwac015>.

<sup>2</sup>Mohd Aliff Mohd Nawi and Mohd Isa Hamzah, 'The Integration of Islamic Fatwa Through Mobile Technology', n.d.

<sup>3</sup>Rahnat Hidayat Rahnat, 'PERUBAHAN KRITERIA AWAL WAKTU SUBUH MUHAMMADIYAH', *ELFALAKY: Jurnal Ilmu Falak* 7, no. 1 (2023), pp. 1–24.

regarding the start of fasting.<sup>4</sup> Based on this decision, the height of the sun that is guided changes to a height of  $-18^{\circ}$  in contrast to the Ministry of Religion and NU which remains at a height of  $-20^{\circ}$  so that dawn time is approximately eight minutes behind other time schedules.

In the context of fatwa authority studies in Indonesia, most studies have focused on MUI fatwas which face numerous obstacles in Indonesia's pluralistic society. Azmi (2023) as an example illustrates that fatwas issued by the MUI, which have an impact on both public policy and individual behaviour, are often controversial, especially when they intersect with non-Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Suaedy (2023) states that the digital era complicates MUI's job even more, as regional bodies and independent scholars, influenced by online sources, contribute to the debureaucratization and decentralization of fatwa.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, MUI's involvement in the halal market and impact on government policy, particularly during crises such as COVID-19, emphasize the conflict between retaining religious authority and adjusting to modern society expectations, as highlighted by other research.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the studies above which focused on MUI, this study attempts to look at a fatwa of a religious authority with organizational affiliation, namely Muhammadiyah as one of the most prominent Islamic organizations. Muhammadiyah has members who are affiliated

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<sup>4</sup> *Sosialisasi Perubahan Awal Waktu Subuh* || Majelis Tarjih PDM Ponorogo, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGvnimo3K7c>.

<sup>5</sup> M. Azmi, 'Implementasi Fatwa MUI Tentang Hukum Menggunakan Atribut Non-Muslim Perspektif Pekerja Publik Di Kota Malang', *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syariah* 12, no. 2 (2023), pp. 297–311, <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v12i2.15695>.

<sup>6</sup> A. Suaedy et al., 'Language, Authority, and Digital Media: The Impact on the Legitimacy of Fatwas', *Abkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (2023), pp. 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v23i1.28875>.

<sup>7</sup> S. Hardiyanto et al., 'Analysis of the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council Supporting Halal Certification and the Progress of Indonesian Muslims', *Pharos Journal of Theology* 105, no. 1 (2024), pp. 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.10521>; M. Asrorun Ni'Am Sholeh, 'Towards a Progressive Fatwa: MUI's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Abkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 2 (2020), pp. 281–98, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v20i2.17391>; A.M. Purba, N.F. Nasution, and I.C. Bangun, 'Islam and Cults: A Study of the Implementation of the Fatwa Policy of the Indonesian Ulema Council', *Pharos Journal of Theology* 105, no. 2 (2024), pp. 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.216>.

with it. Studies on Muhammadiyah's fatwa are still minimal.<sup>8</sup> Many previous studies related to fatwas in Muhammadiyah discuss the paradigm and method of *ijtihad* such as the value of moderation in fatwas in research by Ikhwan I and research by Tasnim Rahman Fitra, the dynamisation of fatwas by Syamsul Anwar, and its evolution by Ahwan Fanani.<sup>9</sup> Another focus of previous studies is content analysis of fatwas produced by MTT such as research related to social media fatwas by Niki Alma Fauzi and pandemics by Fajar Rachmadani and B Edyar.<sup>10</sup> This research emphasizes the social context of fatwas by trying

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<sup>8</sup> Rista Laily Prestyana and Gandhung Fajar Panjalu, 'Pembatasan Keturunan (Studi Komparasi Fatwa MUI Dan Putusan Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah Perspektif Maqasid Syariah)', *Maqasid: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (9 February 2018), <http://dx.doi.org/10.30651/mqsd.v6i2.1364>; Silmi Fitrotunnisa, 'Hukum Memakai Cadar (Studi Komparatif Terhadap Putusan Hukum Lajnah Bahtsul Masail Nahdlatul Ulama Dengan Majelis Tarjih Dan Tajdid Muhammadiyah)', *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama*, no. 0 (21 December 2018), <http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/medag/article/view/3972>; Syamsurizal Yazid, 'ANALISIS OTENTISITAS HADIS DALAM HIMPUNAN PUTUSAN TARJIH (HPT) MUHAMMADIYAH KE XXI DI KLATEN JAWA TENGAH', *Jurnal Humanity* 9, no. 1 (2013), <https://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/humanity/article/view/2516>; Supardi Mursalin, 'AKOMODASI BUDAYA LOKAL DALAM PUTUSAN TARJIH MUHAMMADIYAH', *JURNAL ILMIAH MIZANI: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi, Dan Keagamaan* 5, no. 2 (2018), pp. 159–66, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v5i2.1444>.

<sup>9</sup> I. Ikhwan and B. Bakhtiar, 'Pergeseran Pemikiran Fiqih Muhammadiyah: Analisis Terhadap Kitab Fiqih Jilid III', *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 10, no. 2 (2020), pp. 67–77; T.R. Fitra and A. Silvana, 'Moderate Islamic Jurisprudence: Study of Muhammadiyah's Decision on Changes in Criteria for Fajr Prayer Time', *Mazahib Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2021), pp. 43–76, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v20i1.3150>; Syamsul Anwar, 'Fatwā, Purification and Dynamization: A Study of Tarjih in Muhammadiyah', *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (2005), pp. 27–44, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1568519053123894>; Ahwan Fanani et al., 'Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih: An Evolution of a Modernist Approach to Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6942>.

<sup>10</sup> N.A.F. Fauzi and Ayub, 'Fikih Informasi: Muhammadiyah's Perspective on Guidance in Using Social Media<sup>1</sup>', *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, no. 2 (2019), pp. 267–93, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i2.267-293>; F. Rachmadhani, M. Mochammad Sahid, and A. Wifaq Mokhtar, 'IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHANGE IN ISLAMIC LAW (TAGHAYYUR AL-AHKĀM) DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MAJELIS TARJIH MUHAMMADIYAH IN INDONESIA', *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 10, no.

to apply Weber's social action theory. The core academic problem this research addresses is understanding the dynamics of religious authority and compliance within Islamic organizations, particularly how fatwas are received and interpreted by their followers. This research focuses on the reception and implementation of fatwas, an aspect rarely covered in previous research. As such, it also provides a more comprehensive insight into how fatwas influence people's social behaviour and attitudes. By using a social action theory approach, this research's focus is to examine the acceptance, response, and implementation of a tarjih decision, especially the Tarjih Decision XXXI of 2020 related to Fajr time with the location of Ponorogo, which in addition to representing the microcosm of Indonesia's diverse Muslim population, blending traditional Javanese culture with modern Islamic practices, the development of Muhammadiyah in its society is perceived as a tolerant, open, and egalitarian movement.<sup>11</sup>

The importance of researching the public's reaction to Muhammadiyah's fatwa stems from understanding the interplay between religious authority and community reception, which is critical for measuring fatwas' impact on society's behaviour. Muhammadiyah's Fajr prayer time choice, which deviates from commonly accepted standards, has provoked controversy. Analysing the public's reaction, particularly in Ponorogo, illustrates how religious commandments are integrated into broader cultural norms. This study sheds light on the challenges that Islamic organizations face in maintaining religious coherence in a pluralistic society, as well as contributing to the broader discussion of religious authority in modern Indonesia, where digital

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1 (2022), pp. 108–17, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol10no1.345>; B. Edyar, 'Kontekstualisasi Doktrin Ibadah Dalam Irisan Pandemi Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (Covid-19)', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (2021), pp. 383–408, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v6i2.3496>.

<sup>11</sup> Anang Masduki, Dani Fadillah, and Fajar Dwi Putra, 'Ngenger Tradition and Ideology Transformation in Inter-Cultural Communication', *Journal of Social Studies (JSS)* 17, no. 1 (31 March 2021), pp. 37–64, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v17i1.36949>; Arik Dwijayanto and Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh, 'PONOROGO, THE LITTLE JAVA: POTRET KEBUDAYAAN DAN KEBERAGAMAAN MASYARAKAT MUSLIM PONOROGO ABAD XX', *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 13, no. 01 (3 September 2018), pp. 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v13i01.2>.

platforms and alternative voices are increasingly challenging traditional structures.

This research applies a qualitative field approach to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Muhammadiyah members in implementing the tarjih decision by using social action theory which positions Muhammadiyah members in Ponorogo East Java as social agents who participate in social structures and influence societal changes. The names used are pseudonyms for confidentiality reasons. The data is analyzed to understand the subjective meaning and motives of Muhammadiyah members in responding to and implementing the tarjih decision to get insights about a response to organizational fatwas.

### **Social Action Theory and Its Relevance to Fatwas**

Max Weber's Social Action Theory offers a framework for understanding how subjective meanings and social settings influence people's behaviours. This idea is especially significant for studying the public's reaction to fatwas, as these religious edicts frequently raise complicated social and personal issues. Using this idea, we can investigate whether the public's acceptance or rejection of a fatwa is motivated by traditional values, rational calculations, or emotional responses. In this study, Social Action Theory will examine how Muhammadiyah's fatwa on Fajr prayer hour affects its adherents' everyday practices and social behaviours, emphasizing the connection between religious authority and personal agency.

Weber's main idea defines sociology as the study of social action between social relations. This action is the "meaningful action" of individuals. From here, action and social action have different meanings. Action includes all behaviour carried out by humans, while social action is an individual action directed at others and has meaning or subjective meaning both for oneself and others containing three concepts, namely action, motive purpose, and understanding.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Dr Ib Wirawan, *Teori-Teori Sosial Dalam Tiga Paradigma: Fakta Sosial, Definisi Sosial, Dan Perilaku Sosial* (Kencana, 2012), p. 83, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=9KRPDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA169&dq=info:qiYqJBjuxzkj:scholar.google.com&ots=8ng9A1Dzoo&sig=QC5ec07DXY22gYgdIT0ORbG0JJM>.

Weber further classifies social action into four types.<sup>13</sup> The first is *instrumentally rational* (goal-oriented rational), namely actions aimed at achieving goals that are rationally calculated and pursued by the actors concerned. The second is *value* rationale, an action based on conscious beliefs about essential values such as ethics, aesthetics, religion, and other values that influence human behaviour in life, regardless of the prospect of success. The third is *effectual* (affective), an action determined by the psychological condition and feelings (emotional orientation) of the actor who does it. This action is a type of rationale that boils down to an intense emotional relationship or feeling, so that there is a special relationship that cannot be explained outside the circle. The emotional state of the actor determines this condition. The last is *traditional*, which is an action specified by the actor's usual and customary way of acting. This action aims to fight for values from the community life tradition. An example is a group that maintains ceremonies/traditions from ancestors.

According to Turner, the division of the four types by Weber, tells us about the nature of the actors themselves, because the types indicate the possibility of various feelings and internal conditions, and the manifestation of actions shows that actors can combine these types in complex internal formations that are manifested in a form of grafting orientation towards action.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Talcott Parsons developed this theory by emphasizing the relationship between structure and agency. Parsons argues that human action is influenced by two factors, namely social structure and agency. Social structure is the organized patterns of social relations in society, while agency is the ability of individuals to act freely.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Turner Bryan S., *Teori Sosial Dari Klasik Sampai Postmodern*, ed. Turner Bryan S. and Rr M. Sc Leslie Retno Angeningsih (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), pp. 115–37.

<sup>14</sup> Bryan S., p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Rilus A. Kinseng, 'Structugency: A Theory of Action', *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan* 5, no. 2 (6 September 2017), <https://doi.org/10.22500/sodality.v5i2.17972>; Richard Munch, 'Talcott Parsons and the Theory of Action. II. The Continuity of the Development', *American Journal of Sociology* 87, no. 4 (1982), pp. 771–826.

## Fatwa in Islamic Law

Fatwa, derived from an Arabic word with the original letters *fā`-tā`-yā`*, indicates the meaning of a legal explanation.<sup>16</sup> The questions in fatwa tend to be factual and realistic, so the answers are given using clear language and provide solutions to the problems posed.<sup>17</sup> Fatwas are important in Islamic law because they contextualize Sharia and enable it to respond dynamically to contemporary situations. Unlike judicial rulings, fatwas provide non-binding yet morally compelling instruction that applies Islamic principles to new and changing conditions.<sup>18</sup> This adaptability is crucial in a multicultural context such as modern Indonesia, where fatwas help interpret Islamic law in a way that suits local customs, societal norms, and contemporary issues.

Furthermore, terminologically, a fatwa is defined as a legal opinion given by a qualified individual, usually called a mufti, explaining Sharia law in response to a specific question posed by an individual or group of people.<sup>19</sup> A fatwa is often a decision or opinion responding to a particular question. Fatwas are not required to explain the basis of the argument, and they can be very concise or more in-depth and detailed. Fatwas are often sought by individuals who need a response or legal advice in the context of litigation or a public issue, and the response may be a short answer, agreement, or rejection.

A mufti should be mature, Muslim, trustworthy, reliable, knowledgeable of the law, clear-minded, firm in thought, correct in behaviour and interpretation, and cool-headed. Anyone, regardless of gender, status, or physical ability, can issue a fatwa if they can write or

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<sup>16</sup> Ibnu Faris Al-Qazwini, *Maqayis Al-Lughah*, vol. 4 (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), p. 474.

<sup>17</sup> Ansori Ansori, 'Position of fatwa in Islamic law: the effectiveness of MUI, NU, and Muhammadiyah fatwas', *Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 22, no. 1 (29 July 2022), pp. 53–72, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v22i1.53-72>.

<sup>18</sup> Fuad Mustafid, Khoiruddin Nasution, Ali Sodikin, "Positivization of the Council of Indonesian Ulema's Halal Fatwa: Policy and Position in Indonesian Legislation", *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 23, No 1 (2024), p. 158, <https://ejournal.uinmybatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/Juris/article/view/10859>.

<sup>19</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Syari'ah Law: An Introduction*, Reprinted (Oxford: Oneworld Publ, 2010), p. 174.



make themselves understood.<sup>20</sup> Fatwa criteria are less complicated than those for *ijtihad*.<sup>21</sup> A mujtahid or a scholar of lesser standing can issue a fatwa. It can address matters that have not been explained or those that have been. Therefore, the area of fatwa is broader than that of *ijtihad*.

Fatwas can vary in significance level, from routine to revolutionary issues, and in form, ranging from one-line answers to short-written works. Fatwas are used to confirm already accepted knowledge and warn against errors and determine new responses to changing conditions.<sup>22</sup> In other words, fatwas can relate to matters requiring *ijtihad* and those not. However, a mufti must consider the consequences and implications of the fatwa he issues. A comprehensive fatwa must take into account the consequences that may arise from its implementation.

In contrast to judge decisions (*qaḍā*), fatwas issued by muftis are non-binding personal views. This is the main difference between the authority of judges and muftis. It is essential to understand that the non-binding nature of a fatwa does not mean that a fatwa seeker (*mustafti*) need not follow the fatwa he receives. This should be understood because a fatwa does not have binding judicial power. However, a fatwa contains a moral religious obligation to follow it (*diyānatan*). In Ushul al-Fiqh, when a person not competent in *ijtihad* faces a legal issue, the only source of truth that can be accessed is the fatwa. Ibn Salah explains that if there is only one mufti, his fatwa is binding on the *mustafti* regardless of the *mustafti*'s commitment, actions, or beliefs towards the mufti. However, if there are other muftis, the *mustafti* can seek fatwas from other muftis. In this situation, the *mustafti* must weigh which mufti he trusts more and give preference to him. When the muftis agree on the same ruling, the only morally religious option available to the *mustafti* is to abide by the

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<sup>20</sup> Eugenia Kermeli et al., 'Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas', *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, no. 1/2 (2000), p. 421, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1051538>.

<sup>21</sup> Fuady Abdullah, 'Independensi Dari Mazhab: Ijtihad dalam Perspektif Al-Shawkānī', *Al-Maslahah Jurnal Hukum Islam dan Pranata Sosial* 9, no. 02 (28 October 2021), <https://doi.org/10.30868/am.v9i02.1675>.

<sup>22</sup> Kermeli et al., 'Islamic Legal Interpretation'.

fatwa.<sup>23</sup> From the above explanation, the binding force of a fatwa lies in the moral religious obligation even though juridically it does not have the binding force of a court ruling.

Modern developments have influenced and brought new changes to the practice of fatwas. Unlike when Muslims depended on local authorities and independent jurists to issue fatwas, fatwa seekers now have unprecedented access, primarily through digital platforms. Fatwas are not only given by various individual actors, but also by religious organizations, institutions, and agencies. With this development, mustaftis are shown and confronted with alternative "authorities" that can be referred to more efficiently and in more significant numbers. This has resulted in a global phenomenon known as "fatwa shopping" or "inter-madhab surfing", where mustaftis look for fatwas that suit their personal needs or interests. Easy access to fatwas allows for unlimited plurality and ideological bias. This plurality also will enable parties who do not have the competence and authority to take part in providing fatwas, resulting in another phenomenon called fatwa chaos (*faḍḍawriyat al-fatwā*). This becomes more problematic when the fatwa is removed from its cultural and legal context and applied to a new environment without the same social values. Another dynamic is the declining emphasis on "knowledge and piety" of fatwa authorities.<sup>24</sup> In some cases, the state has stepped in to regulate previously independent fatwas. In some countries, fatwas can only be issued by officially appointed muftis. In other countries, individuals or institutions more closely associated with the government are considered more authoritative.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Abu 'Amr Utsman Bin Abdurrahman Ibn Salah, *Adab Al-Mufti Wal-Mustafti* (Madinah: Maktabah al-Ulum wal-Hikam, 2002), pp. 165–67; Abu Zakaria Muhyiddin Yahya Al-Nawawi, *Adab Al-Fatwa Wal-Mufti Wal-Mustafti* (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), pp. 80–81.

<sup>24</sup> Whyte, 'Are Fatwas Dispensable?'

<sup>25</sup> Isa Ansori, 'Kedudukan Fatwa di Beberapa Negara Muslim (Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam dan Mesir)', *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 17, no. 1 (28 November 2017), p. 137, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v17i1.1790>; Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo and Homaidi Hamid, 'The Power of Fatwā in Indonesia: An Analysis of MUI's Controversial Fatwās', *Afkaruna* 14, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.18196/AIJIS.2018.0085.146-165>; Wildan Imaduddin Muhammad, 'KEBERANJAKAN FATWA DARI LEGAL OPINION MENJADI

## Tarjih and Tajdid Council and Position

Amid an increasingly complex and modern Indonesian society, one of the Islamic organizations that has a dynamic movement is Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan with the central vision to spread the pure teachings of Islam and provide good education for the community.<sup>26</sup> Over time, Muhammadiyah grew into a large organization with thousands of branches and twigs throughout Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> The organization has various educational, health, social, and economic institutions that are essential to people's lives. Even so, Muhammadiyah is still able to carry out its religious functions.

In response to a recommendation from K.H. Mas Mansur, at Muhammadiyah's sixth congress in 1927, it was decided to establish an assembly tasked with taking care of religious matters and providing direction for their movement. The name of this assembly underwent a slight change after it was established, namely Majelis Tarjih and Development of Islamic Thought in 1995, and then at the 2005 congress in Jakarta, the additional words "Development of Islamic Thought" were replaced with "Tajdid."<sup>28</sup> The Tarjih Council has two main tasks: to assist the leadership in the organization and to provide religious guidance. The details of these tasks are listed in the 2003 Decision of the XXVIth Tarjih National Conference.<sup>29</sup> The Tarjih Council is expected to improve the coordination of the implementation

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<sup>26</sup> Fauji Koda, 'The History of Muhammadiyah's Thought and Movement, Study on Personality and Idea of The Founding Figure (KH. Ahmad Dahlan)', *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research* 6, no. 8 (2017), pp. 154–59.

<sup>27</sup> LPCR, 'Sejarah - Lembaga Pengembangan Cabang Dan Ranting | Muhammadiyah', Lembaga Pengembangan Cabang dan Ranting Muhammadiyah, accessed 11 October 2023, <http://lpcr.muhammadiyah.or.id/content-3-sdet-sejarah.html>; Syifa, 'Cabang Dan Ranting Tetap Teguh Dan Tangguh Di Masa Pandemi', *Muhammadiyah* (blog), 11 March 2021, <https://muhammadiyah.or.id/cabang-dan-ranting-tetap-teguh-dan-tangguh-di-masa-pandemi/>.

<sup>28</sup> Anwar, 'Fatwā, Purification and Dynamization', pp. 33–34.

<sup>29</sup> Kholidah Kholidah, 'DINAMIKA TARJIH MUHAMMADIYAH DAN KONTRIBUSINYA TERHADAP PERKEMBANGAN HUKUM ISLAM DI INDONESIA' (Medan, UIN Sumatera Utara, 2021), pp. 63–64.

of Muhammadiyah's religious programs and provide direction following the values espoused by the movement. By focusing on the development of Islamic thought, Muhammadiyah strives to remain relevant to modern Muslim society's times and needs. The Tarjih Council is also expected to guide the addressing of contemporary issues and solutions based on Muhammadiyah's religious views, reflecting the spirit of *tajdid*, which is the main pillar of this movement.<sup>30</sup> Thus, Muhammadiyah can continue to be a positive force in shaping a better and harmonious society that benefits the people and the nation as a whole.

The Tarjih and Tajdid Council produces three fatwa products: tarjih decisions, tarjih fatwas, and tarjih discourses.<sup>31</sup> Among these three products, the most structurally strong and binding is the tarjih decision. The tarjih decision results from the Tarjih National Conference (Munas) decision. Hierarchically, the tarjih decision has the highest position as a decision issued by the Assembly. This is because the tarjih decision is the official position of the organization. When a decision has been *made*, it is structurally and formally an organizational demand for the leadership structure from the central level to the branch and all its members to obey the decision.<sup>32</sup>

### **Tarjih Decision on th Beginning of Fajr and Its Dissemination**

One of the latest fatwa products is the tarjih decision related to the beginning of the Fajr prayer time. Following the thinking of Shaykh Taher Djalaluddin Azhari in his book entitled *Nakhbatu at-Taqrirati fi Hisabi al-Auqati*, the beginning of Fajr in Indonesia begins when the sun is 20 degrees below the *true horizon*. Sheikh Tahir's thinking was then continued by the next generation, namely Saadod'ddin Djambek and Abdur Rachim, which later became the basis for the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and various Islamic organizations in

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<sup>30</sup> M Hidayat Ediz and Yecki Bus, 'MAJELIS TARJIH DAN TAJDID SEBAGAI PEMENGANG OTORITAS FATWA MUHAMMADIYAH', 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Kholidah, 'DINAMIKA TARJIH MUHAMMADIYAH DAN KONTRIBUSINYA TERHADAP PERKEMBANGAN HUKUM ISLAM DI INDONESIA'.

<sup>32</sup> 'Anggaran Rumah Tangga Muhammadiyah', Muhammadiyah, 11 July 2020, <https://muhammadiyah.or.id/anggaran-rumah-tangga>.

Indonesia, even Singapore, Malaysia (except for Kelantan), and Brunei Darussalam.<sup>33</sup>

Controversy then arose regarding the validity of the sun's position for Fajr time. This issue became a hot topic of discussion again after the statement that the Indonesian Fajr time was too early. An article in *Qiblati Magazine* entitled "Misunderstanding the Fajr Time" by Shaykh Mamduh Farhan al-Buhairi said that the Indonesian prayer time is too early, about 24 minutes before the *fajr šādiq*.<sup>34</sup> Previously, Hanafi S. Djamari had raised this issue in his article published in the daily *Republika*, on May 21, 1999. When reviewing the zenith distance of the sun at the beginning of Fajr, the relevant figure according to him for today is -18 degrees. Indeed, some falak literature in Indonesia has a variety of different views. Internationally, this review of the zenith distance for Fajr time has been carried out by various parties with results such as Malaysia which is now moving to a height of -18 degrees.<sup>35</sup>

Departing from this dynamic, Muhammadiyah conducted further research. Following the recommendations of the 27th Tarjih National Conference on 16-19 Rabiul Akhir 1431 H / 1-4 April 2010 on the issue of the beginning of Fajr, MTT mandated three institutions to conduct fajr studies and observations, namely the Falak Science Observatory (OIF) of University of Muhammadiyah North Sumatra (UMSU), Medan, the Center for Astronomical Studies (Pastron) of Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD), Yogyakarta, and the Islamic Science Research Network (ISRN) of Hamka Muhammadiyah University (UHAMKA), Jakarta. The research was spread across various regions in Indonesia, which concluded that OIF UMSU found that the altitude of the sun when *fajr šādiq* appears is -16.48 degrees. Meanwhile, Pastron concluded that the lowest point of the sun when *fajr šādiq* appears at an

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<sup>33</sup> Susiknan Azhari, 'AWAL WAKTU SHALAT SUBUH DI DUNIA ISLAM', *Al-Maṣāhib: Jurnal Perbandingan Hukum* 5, no. 2 (20 December 2022), <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-mazaahib.v5i2.2858>; Kemenag, 'Kriteria Waktu Subuh -20 Derajat Benar Secara Fikih dan Sains', <https://www.kemenag.go.id>, 21 December 2020, <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/kriteria-waktu-subuh-20-derajat-benar-secara-fikih-dan-sains-qq3pfh>.

<sup>34</sup> A.Syalaby Ichsan, 'Isu Perbedaan Waktu Subuh Sudah Terjadi Sejak 2009', *Republika Online*, 23 December 2020, <https://republika.co.id/share/qls40i483>.

<sup>35</sup> Susiknan Azhari, 'Memahami Koreksi Waktu Subuh', *Republika ID*, 25 March 2021, <https://republika.id/posts/15265/memahami-koreksi-waktu-subuh>.

altitude of -15.75 degrees. Meanwhile, ISRN concluded that from 750 days of dawn rise data from various regions the altitude is from -18 to -7 degrees. In addition to the research results of the three internal institutions, the MTT invited astronomy experts from the Bandung Institute of Technology, Dhani Herdiwijaya and Mahasena Putra. Their studies show that most of the sun's altitude at the beginning of Fajr is -18 degrees. The research results were corroborated by several Tarjih National Conference participants who made independent observations, such as Sugeng Riyadi, Bahrul Ulum, and Adi Damanhuri. Similarly, the results of research entitled *Reevaluation of The Sun's Altitude for Determination Beginning of Fajr Prayer Times in Malaysia* by Mohd Zambri Zainuddin et al concluded that the sun's altitude at the beginning of *Fajr* time is -18. Several countries, such as Turkey, England, France, Nigeria, and Malaysia, also use the criterion of the beginning of Fajr time at a sun altitude of -18 degrees. Some classical literature also indicates an altitude of -18 degrees. Moving on that this determination is a matter of ijthadi, Muhammadiyah finally decided that Fajr time coincides with the first *fajr šādiq* at an altitude of -18 degrees.<sup>36</sup> The decision was made at the XXXI Tarjih National Conference held via video teleconference from November 28, 2020, to December 20, 2020. This tarjih decision was then confirmed on March 20, 2021.<sup>37</sup>

Responding to this decision, MTT of Ponorogo, as a structure below, conducted socialization and dissemination with several considerations.<sup>38</sup> First, this dissemination will help the community understand and follow the fatwa confidently and correctly. Secondly, there is a need to explain the arguments to prevent blind *taqlid* or otherwise ignoring the fatwa. Third, this dissemination also aims to avoid confrontation at the grassroots between Muhammadiyah members and their society. This anticipatory step is crucial in

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<sup>36</sup> Decree of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership No.734/KEP/I.0/B/2021 Regarding Tanfidz Decision of the XXXI Tarjih Muhammadiyah National Deliberation on the Criteria for the Dawn Dawn Time.

<sup>37</sup> Tanfidz Munas Tarjih XXXI/i/Res resmi.

<sup>38</sup> *Sosialisasi Perubahan Awal Waktu Subuh || Majelis Tarjih PDM Ponorogo*; Bambang Wahrudin, Sosialisasi Putusan Tarjih XXXI tentang Perubahan Waktu Subuh oleh PDM Ponorogo, (7 October 2023).

maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict, especially since this tanfidz coincides with the arrival of Ramadan.

The method of socialization and dissemination of decisions uses two approaches. The first method was carried out by issuing an official edict numbered 002/III.1/E/2021 even a day earlier than the tanfidz. The second method involved studies and socialization activities involving all parties under the coordination of the Ponorogo leadership.<sup>39</sup> One of the emphases conveyed in disseminating this decision is that determining the astronomical degree of dawn time is an area of *ijtihad* that offers open space in perspective, the method used, the object determined, and the results and application. Therefore, this *tarjih* decision needs to be addressed wisely and gracefully by prioritizing communication and social dialectics because the implementation of this decision has the potential to cause pros and cons, especially related to practices that have been widely perpetuated in society. The result of *ijtihad* is not the same as the application of a text that is certain (*qath'ī*) both in terms of authenticity (*tsubūṭ*) and the designation of its meaning (*dalalah*). In this case, the *ijtihad* is related to observing natural events so that it correlates with the development of science, culture, and human civilization. *Ijtihad* is carried out to obtain time more accurately. In other words, the *ijtihad* narrative is used to strengthen the results of the *tarjih* decision on the one hand and open up space for tolerance on the other hand, either so that this decision can be accepted more or so that its implementation can be carried out wisely by taking into account social conditions.

### **The Implementation of the Tarjih Decision**

As an authoritative assembly in the organization, Muhammadiyah Ponorogo members view MTT as a credible and trusted authority in this task. MTT is seen as the main authority to refer to. Even when asked in the context of fatwas compared to the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), most respondents stated that Muhammadiyah fatwas produced by the MTT are more critical to follow. In contrast, some stated that both are equal institutions. When there is a difference between Muhammadiyah and government provisions in determining religious issues, they prefer to follow MTT, as in various moments when determining the beginning of the lunar

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<sup>39</sup> *Sosialisasi Perubahan Awal Waktu Subuh* | | Majelis Tarjih PDM Ponorogo.

month. MTT is seen to have carried out a process of deliberation of experts before making certain decisions and fatwas. Therefore, the decisions and fatwas are based on intense scientific research and the guidance contained in the Qur'an and hadith. Apart from being an organizational commitment, the high trust of members shows recognition of the authority of the MTT, which ultimately affects their religious direction and attitude.

More than that, in general, respondents' perceptions show that most regard MTT fatwas as binding. The binding of fatwas here is undoubtedly not juridically (*qadā'an*). The bindingness here needs to be understood in that they see themselves as obliged to comply with MTT fatwas in a religious moral sense (*diyānatan*). They position themselves as laypeople committed to obeying the fatwas of the authority they follow.<sup>40</sup> Their commitment is based on the view that MTT fatwas are always based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and are the result of in-depth *ijtihād* from the minds of a group of competent scholars from various fields so that the resulting fatwas are more in-depth and integral.<sup>41</sup> Especially in cases such as time determination related to observing natural phenomena, MTT fatwas are seen as maximizing scientific developments. From here, members view MTT fatwas as the correct guidance in life according to religious guidance.

At a glance, the above description can provide insight into the perceptions of members in Ponorogo towards MTT, its authority, and the fatwas issued. Based on the typology created by Weber, by looking at the reasons expressed by members, MTT appears to have religious authority that tends to be legal-rational although it is also not entirely separated from its charismatic nature.<sup>42</sup> MTT's legal-rational authority can be characterized in two ways: through its organized organizational architecture and the authority structure inherent in Islamic

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<sup>40</sup> Ibn Salah, *Adab al-Mufti wal-Mustafti*, p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> Pauzi M, Darul Hipni, and Anwar M. Radiamoda, 'The Importance of the *Ijtihād Jama'i* Method in Contemporary Fiqh Formulations', *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 1 (16 June 2023), pp. 13–20, <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v23i1.1322>.

<sup>42</sup> Iván Szelenyi, 'Weber's Theory of Domination and Post-Communist Capitalisms', *Theory and Society* 45, no. 1 (1 February 2016), pp. 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-015-9263-6>; Martin E. Spencer, 'Weber on Legitimate Norms and Authority', *The British Journal of Sociology* 21, no. 2 (1970), pp. 123–34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/588403>.



jurisprudence (fiqh). To begin, MTT functions within a defined organizational framework in which fatwas are issued by the assembly in charge. This feature of legal-rational power is reflected in the formal and systematic procedures developed by Muhammadiyah's organizational structure. Members see adherence to fatwas as a structural consequence inherent in being a member of the organization. In their view, as a member of the association, it is only natural to uphold and obey fatwas issued by the MTT. Thus, compliance ultimately becomes an integral part of identity as a Muhammadiyah member, forming an emotional bond.<sup>43</sup> Second, MTT's authority is inextricably linked to the conventional fiqh framework, in which the legitimacy of religious rulings is derived from conformity to established principles of Islamic law. MTT scholars, known for their skill in fiqh, work within this legal framework, bolstering their authority as rational and legally justifiable.<sup>44</sup> Thus, MTT's authority is classified as legal-rational since it is based on a modern organizational structure and the traditional legal traditions of Islamic jurisprudence. This dual foundation assures that MTT fatwas are both organizationally binding and profoundly anchored in Islam's authoritative legal system. As a result, in the context of contemporary fatwa dynamics, it can be said that MTT fatwas still have innate authority and significant effects on the mindset and religious actions of the association members.<sup>45</sup>

Many members responded positively to the tarjih decision to change the Fajr prayer time. Faruq, an activist and member of the mosque takmir of Muhammadiyah in Jetis, immediately accepted the decision. He believes that tarjih fatwa is binding because it is an organizational provision. He believes that the fatwa is based on arguments considered strong by competent scholars of the MTT. In particular, he supports the change because it is more appropriate based on his personal experience in Saudi Arabia and adjusting to other countries' standards. Joko, a member living in a heterogeneous

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<sup>43</sup> Anwar, 'Fatwā, Purification and Dynamization'.

<sup>44</sup> Rabie Mohammed, 'The Scientific Method For Issuing Fatwas In The Face Of Variables And Changes المتغيرات والنوازل والإفتاء في مواجهة التغيرات', *International Journal of Advanced Research on Law and Governance*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.21608/ijarlg.2021.91949.1023>.

<sup>45</sup> See: Jeremy Menchik, 'The Politics of the Fatwa: Islamic Legal Authority in Modern Indonesia', *Indonesia* 114, no. 1 (October 2022), pp. 75–97, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ind.2022.0012>.

neighbourhood in Siman, also readily accepted the ruling. He follows the decision in obedience to the organization and believes in the truth of the decision, especially if it has been passed (*tanfidz*). Joko agrees that MTT is a religious authority whose fatwas and decisions he will always obey. The authority of the MTT is enough to be the foundation for obedience to the fatwa.

Following the above statement, Heri, an imam of a Muhammadiyah mosque, immediately accepted the tarjih decision. He even stated that the mosque's active congregation enthusiastically accepted it and implemented it sincerely. Nevertheless, he feels compelled to explore the arguments supporting the decision. As the imam of the mosque who directly interacts with the congregation and the community around the mosque, he feels obliged to be able to help explain the arguments of the decision if there is confusion and questions from anyone. According to him, this is also necessary in coordination and socialization with the surrounding community.

On the other hand, some members chose to be more cautious before actually accepting this verdict. Wandu, a resident from Soko, feels that he needs more information and needs to confirm several things before accepting the verdict. For him, clarifying the arguments and providing a better understanding to the entire congregation is essential to solidify their views and broaden the acceptance of the fatwa. Anas, a member of the minority in his neighbourhood, felt that he needed to understand more about the data and arguments supporting the verdict to accept it. He wanted to ensure the verdict was based on the proper considerations. In addition, some consequences are considered, such as the time of completion of sahur, the validity of the previous Fajr prayer, the obligation to repeat it, and matters related to daily worship practices. The frequent differences between the MTT fatwa and other parties require him to be more critical, primarily since the mosque in his neighbourhood is directly affiliated with another organization.

From here, the acceptance of the decision to change the Fajr time indicates the need for effective communication and in-depth explanation to the community in explaining the arguments and implications of the change. Adequate explanation and good understanding are essential so that people understand the tarjih decision well and can implement this change in their daily worship. As

part of a larger heterogeneous community, members also felt the need to get clarification and more detailed explanations to be better equipped to explain the opinions they follow. Furthermore, this highlights the importance of intensifying in-depth study and discussion regarding fatwas and fiqh decisions issued by the MTT. In other words, good and effective communication is essential to influencing and strengthening the acceptance of tarjih decisions.<sup>46</sup>

At the level of implementation of this decision, Muhammadiyah members show attitudes and actions that adjust to the conditions of the community and the surrounding community environment. In a solid congregational condition, this decision is directly implemented in the congregational mosque, especially in mosques under the direct coordination of Muhammadiyah. In these mosques, the previous takmir simply delivered by reading the edict issued by the MTT PDM Ponorogo. Discussion of the decision argument did not take place. The implementation is carried out directly without significant dynamics between worshipers, such as at the Darul Muttaqin Nglegok Mosque where Nglegok hamlet and surrounding hamlets in Plalangan Jenangan Village are strong bases for Muhammadiyah members. Likewise at the Ar-Rohmah Mosque in Jetis. Meanwhile, when the surrounding community is not a Muhammadiyah base, several things arise in the congregation's discussion regarding relations with the surrounding community. At the Mujahidin Mosque in Tanjungsari, one of the conversations that emerged was psychologically related to the concern of the surrounding community's perception that the delay in the Fajr adhan was associated with the indiscipline of the adhan at the beginning of the prayer time, while so far the Mosque has always been known to be disciplined in the adhan at the beginning of all prayer times. At the start of the implementation, the iqamat did not use speakers because it was too late compared to other mosques. In addition, the congregation still came early even though the call to prayer had not been announced.

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<sup>46</sup> Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 'The Impact Of Social Media On The Acceptance Of Fatwas Among Malaysian Muslims', *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* (1 October 2021), pp. 17–36, <https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol26no1.389>; Asadullah Khizr Ul Mulk Siddiqi, 'Definition of Fatwa, Its Importance and Legitimacy', *Ihya' al'ulum - Journal of Department of Quran o Sunnah*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.46568/ihya.v21i1.95>.

In a neighbourhood of a mosque that is not affiliated with Muhammadiyah, members show a dynamic attitude. If there is a conducive space to discuss changes in Fajr time with other communities, members tend to be brave and active in discussing the postponement of Fajr time to adjust to the tarjih decision. Members see that the more plural the congregation is, the more likely it is to throw this discourse. Local community leaders are the main interlocutors in this matter. Through good communication and discussion, several mosques, although not affiliated with Muhammadiyah, adjusted the Fajr time according to the tarjih decision, such as Darul Muttaqin Josari Mosque and Al-Husaini Jambon Mosque. Even so, some mosques are still reluctant, especially considering the surrounding mosques that continue to use the old standard.

It is different when seeing the conditions of the discourse space that are less likely, Muhammadiyah members tend to prefer to be passive. If possible, discussions about changes in Fajr prayer time must be carried out carefully because they are related to established things. This condition is especially true if the mosque congregation in the neighbourhood is more homogeneous and the mosque is affiliated with other organizations that still hold the -20 degree time standard. Although some members initially prefer to congregate at mosques that have adjusted their Subuh time even though they are quite far from their homes, members eventually pragmatically follow the congregation at the mosque around their homes even though the call to prayer is earlier. Members position themselves more as worshipers who follow the imam in their neighbourhood. Like a passenger who follows the driver. Members see how the status of the prayer congregation, including whether it is valid or not, is the responsibility of the imam. Moreover, in this Fajr time provision, the governmental religious authority, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, still uses the -20 degree time standard.<sup>47</sup> This is also because of a lack of mastery of the argumentation of the decision so members are not ready to discuss it with people outside the organization. From here, it can be seen how the environment can influence religious attitudes and behaviour, as well as the views and opinions of Muhammadiyah members.

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<sup>47</sup> Kemenag, 'Kriteria Waktu Subuh -20 Derajat Benar Secara Fikih dan Sains'.

Responding to the dynamics of the position and behaviour of these members, Bambang, one of the ranks of Majelis Tarjih and Tajdid PDM Ponorogo, noted that not a few members in Ponorogo in general also still tend to taqlid and fanaticism towards the organization. What is often expressed by these members is not how the arguments are, but they instead ask, "What is the leadership's decision?" There is limited interest in understanding the arguments and reasoning of tarjih fatwas and decisions. In fact, by understanding the arguments of decisions, members can be wiser and ready when asked to respond to discourse related to a decision. This is not only for changing the dawn time but also for other choices. In this case, the change in dawn time is more related to the ijihad of astronomical determination, which in an overly technical scientific context may not be easy to understand and not enjoyable for lay people to follow. Although this taqlid can be seen as an acknowledgement and obedience to the MTT as a religious authority, uninformed obedience can lead to rigid attitudes that cause friction, especially social, so that a decision is not implemented gently and wisely.

From here, the socialization and communication of leaders at all levels with the people they supervise are important in implementing this decision, both regarding arguments and sociological, cultural and religious considerations of the surrounding community. Socialization needs to use concepts that are easily digested by the wider community. Socialization needs to provide direction on how to behave wisely. More in-depth communication, dialogue and understanding measures need to be considered to ensure wider acceptance and support from the congregation. More inclusive measures also need to be taken to strengthen community understanding.<sup>48</sup> This will also affect the resilience of MTT as a religious authority.

### **Resilience of Religious Authority: Muhammadiyah and Its Fatwas in Social Dynamics**

In the description of data related to the views of Muhammadiyah members in Ponorogo on organizational fatwas, it can be seen that most respondents consider the fatwas and fiqh decisions

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<sup>48</sup> Mohammad Hasan Bisryi, 'Fatwa as a Tool of Social Engineering: The Study of Fatwa of Tarjih Muhammadiyah', *JURNAL PENELITIAN* (16 December 2020), pp. 131–44, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jupe.v17i2.2986>.

of Muhammadiyah and its Tarjih Assembly as binding. The authority of Muhammadiyah's fatwas and decisions is recognized and considered binding by respondents because it is believed to be the correct guide in carrying out worship and other religious matters. This view also reflects an understanding and respect for authority and hierarchy in the Muhammadiyah organization. In other words, Muhammadiyah as a religious structure in the current context remains effective in influencing and shaping the religious practices of its members in Ponorogo as in the implementation of the tarjih decision at the beginning of Fajr time.

The stability of Muhammadiyah's authority should be appreciated in the midst of a complex landscape in terms of religious authority in Indonesia when modernization and the development of information technology have enabled individuals to access information more quickly and easily where one does not rely solely on traditional authorities.<sup>49</sup> Muhammadiyah in the view of its members shows adaptability in responding to changing circumstances and adopting various technological developments like the adjustment in the Fajr time standard based on data collected with the latest technology.<sup>50</sup> The organization's ability to adapt to the challenges of the times is one of the keys to its success in maintaining authority. Besides the social solidarity of Muhammadiyah members, what also plays an important role in maintaining the recognition of the MTT's authority is the effort to disseminate its decisions and the ability to compose arguments that strengthen members' trust and obedience to it. Therefore, MTT fatwas are considered religious authoritative that must be respected and followed.

According to Max Weber, individuals follow rules and act based on recognized authority.<sup>51</sup> These members' actions reflect value-

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<sup>49</sup> Whyte, 'Are Fatwas Dispensable?'; Arif Zamhari and Muhamad Ibtissam Han, 'Traditional Religious Authorities in New Media: A Study of the Cariustadz. Id Platform as an Alternative Cyber Fatwa and Da'wah Media among the Middle-Class Urban Muslims', 2021, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/58060>.

<sup>50</sup> Fanani et al., 'Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih'; A. Burhani, 'Pluralism, Liberalism, and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah', *Studia Islamika* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.15408/SDI.V25I3.7765>.

<sup>51</sup> Szelenyi, 'Weber's Theory of Domination and Post-Communist Capitalisms'.

rational actions based on their beliefs and values. Value rational action arises because MTT is considered a religious authority that must be respected and followed, by their beliefs and values. This action is strengthened by rational considerations, such as belief in the arguments and arguments underlying tarjih decisions and belief in the validity of its *ijtihad*. This authoritativeness in the view of the community can be the basis for continuing to provide and improve the understanding of *fiqh* of the community.

The dissemination and implementation of the tarjih decision at the beginning of dawn can also be an example of how an agency interacts with structure. Muhammadiyah, as a religious authority, has the competence to act as a structure that directs norms and values while shaping the religious views its members follow. The structure also reflects the roles and rules within Muhammadiyah as a religious organization that provides official edicts and directives related to changes in Fajr time. In other words, Muhammadiyah holds expert authority and rational-legal authority. Members' attitudes also show more of a rational-value action pattern towards the decision than an effective action pattern that can lead to identity suppression. On the other hand, in its implementation, members face surrounding communities and their social norms and structures. Muhammadiyah Ponorogo members, as an agency, interact dialectically with existing structures to show dynamic actions and attitudes. Members follow tarjih decisions with conviction and commitment and are even encouraged to strive for its implementation as widely as possible but still wisely act to adjust their society, especially with flexible discussions.

## **Conclusion**

This research shows that Muhammadiyah as a religious structure can remain effective in shaping and influencing Islamic law adopted by its members in Ponorogo, East Java, such as in the issue of Fajr time determination. This is reflected through their conviction and commitment to implement. This attitude shows the tendency of a value-rational action category based on the value of trust in the authority of the MTT and the argumentative value of the tarjih decision in addition to authority based on organizational structure. This shows the importance of socialization and dissemination of the arguments of each decision issued. However, members can also show a dynamic and

wise attitude when responding to it, especially in the context of differences in their local communities.

Further research can be conducted using a larger sample with a broader area in several decisions to obtain a more comprehensive picture of Muhammadiyah's organizational religious authority. In addition, further research can also deepen the analysis related to the dynamics of the implementation of tarjih decisions and the factors that influence members' compliance with the following choices.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest with any party in writing this article.

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