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Women issuing fatwas: female Islamic scholars and community-based authority in Java, Indonesia

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Propositions

1. In Indonesia, female Islamic scholars have emerged as agents of change, capable of effectively advocating for progressive understandings of Islamic gender norms.
2. While, in Indonesia, institutional fatwa-making largely remains the prerogative of men, in everyday, community settings as well as in the public sphere, women scholars have gradually come to destabilise the exclusiveness of male Islamic authority.
3. Community-based authority is a gender-neutral concept, meaning that both women and men may exert authority on the basis of community recognition. However, when it comes to building community-based authority, Indonesian women struggle more than men due to dominant gender norms and ascribed roles.
4. Islamic juristic authority as exercised by women has particular limitations when it comes to the concepts of *qiwamah* (family leadership) and *wilayah* (guardianship). Conservative religious justifications still restrict women from becoming imams in mixed gender congregations, marriage guardians, or religious marriage officials.
5. The Indonesian movement of female Islamic scholars sets an example for the world.
6. Islam in Indonesia is a contested field between conservative and progressive proponents, and the strength of both streams in promoting their Islamic interpretations depends on the durability of their network and professionalism.
7. An important trend in the broader movement for social change and gender justice in Indonesia is the convergence of secular and Muslim women activists and the active involvement of men within that movement.
8. The ability of Islamic teachers and preachers to influence their followers is not solely determined by their charisma or education, but also by their ability to successfully employ mass and digital media.
9. In the study of Islam, it is crucial to consider women's experiences as a source of legitimate religious knowledge.
10. Fieldwork with a seven-month-old child can strengthen the multitasking skills of a researcher, e.g. by handling tantrums and breastfeeding while doing interviews and making observations at the same time.