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THE HIJRAH PHENOMENON AS A SOCIAL IDENTITY AMONG MUSLIM MILLENNIALS IN INDONESIA

Mohammad Izdiyan Muttaqin[1], Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im[2]
[1]Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
[2]Department of Islamic Studies, Emory University, United States

✉ Corresponding author: moh.izdiyan@ui.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The hijrah phenomenon a contemporary Islamic revivalist movement signifying a personal and communal turn toward more devout Muslim practice has emerged as one of the most salient socioreligious dynamics shaping the identity landscape of Indonesian Muslim millennials in the post-Suharto era. This article examines how hijrah functions not merely as a spiritual transformation but as a complex social identity marker that intersects with digital media consumption, peer-group dynamics, market forces, and broader socio-political configurations in contemporary Indonesia. Drawing on an integrative review of empirical studies published between 2019 and , this article synthesises findings from multiple urban and semi-urban contexts across the archipelago, including Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Medan, Aceh, and Lombok. Theoretically anchored in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner), the sociology of religion (Giddens' reflexive modernity), and the concept of "popular piety," the article argues that hijrah constitutes a multi-layered identity project in which millennials negotiate selfhood between religious authenticity, digital performativity, and consumer culture. The article further explores how Islamic influencers, da'wah communities, and social media ecosystems serve as key agents in the production and circulation of hijrah as a social identity. It concludes by reflecting on the tensions inherent in the commercialisation of hijrah, the risk of superficial religiosity, and the potential of the movement to serve as a vehicle for genuine moral and civic transformation.

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A. INTRODUCTION

In the lexicon of classical Islam, hijrah refers to the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE a foundational act of flight from persecution toward a space where the nascent Muslim community could flourish. This ancient concept has undergone a remarkable semantic transformation in contemporary Indonesia, where it now describes a deeply personal yet demonstrably collective act of turning toward a more pious Islamic life. For Indonesian Muslim millennials broadly defined as those born between 1981 and 1996 hijrah denotes not simply a spatial relocation but a radical reorientation of identity, values, and social affiliation (Farchan & Rosharlianti, 2021; Hamudy & Hamudy, 2020).

The scale and velocity of the hijrah phenomenon in Indonesia is remarkable by any measure. Since approximately 2015 and accelerating sharply through the late 2010s, tens of thousands of urban young Muslims across the archipelago have embraced the hijrah label, joining community organisations, attending lecture circuits, reshaping their sartorial choices, and reconfiguring their social networks in alignment with a more explicitly Islamic lifestyle (Hasan, 2019; Jati,). This movement has been catalysed by a confluence of factors: the rapid expansion of smartphone penetration and social media platforms; the democratisation of Islamic knowledge production through YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok; the emergence of charismatic young da'i (preachers) with massive online followings; and a broader anxiety among young urban Muslims about questions of purpose, identity, and moral coherence in an era of rapid social change (Hartono et al., 2023; Muthohirin, 2021; T. Rahman et al., 2021).

What makes the hijrah phenomenon particularly compelling as an object of sociological and religious inquiry is its deeply ambivalent character. On one hand, it represents a genuine grassroots spiritual movement in which young people seek authentic religious grounding amid the disorienting currents of modernity, consumerism, and global media culture. On the other hand, it has been rapidly colonised by market logics, giving rise to a burgeoning "hijrah economy" comprising Islamic fashion labels, lifestyle brands, halal tourism packages, and commercially produced religious content (Beta, 2019). Scholars have noted the paradox of a movement ostensibly oriented toward spiritual purification that simultaneously generates new forms of conspicuous religious consumption (Faiz et al., ; Wildan & Witriani, 2021).

Equally significant is the role of hijrah in processes of social identity formation. Drawing on Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, this article contends that hijrah functions as a powerful mechanism through which millennials construct, perform, and negotiate their sense of self in relation to both in-group (fellow hijrah participants) and out-group (those perceived as less devout or spiritually uncommitted) dynamics. The hijrah identity is not a static achievement but a continuous project, shaped by ongoing engagement with religious communities, digital media, and the evolving standards of piety circulated within da'wah networks (Fajriani, 2019; A. Taufik et al., ; Zahara et al., 2020).

This article addresses three interrelated research questions: First, what are the primary sociological drivers that have rendered hijrah such a potent identity marker for Indonesian Muslim millennials? Second, how do digital media ecosystems shape the production, circulation, and performance of hijrah as a social identity? And third, what are the internal tensions and contradictions within the hijrah phenomenon, and what implications do they carry for Indonesian civil society and religious life? By synthesising a substantial body of empirical research conducted across diverse regions of Indonesia between 2019 and , this article aims to offer a theoretically informed, empirically grounded, and critically nuanced account of one of the most significant religious movements of contemporary Southeast Asia.

B. METHOD

1. Research Design and Approach

This study employs an integrative literature review as its primary methodological framework. This approach was selected because it allows for the synthesis of findings drawn

from a diverse range of empirical studies encompassing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of a complex social phenomenon (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016)). Unlike a systematic review, which demands highly rigid selection protocols, an integrative review affords greater latitude for theoretical interpretation and is particularly well suited to research questions that are explanatory and critical in orientation (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). In the context of the present study, this approach was applied to address three interrelated research questions: the sociological factors that have rendered hijrah a potent identity marker among Indonesian Muslim millennials; the role of digital media ecosystems in shaping the production and performance of hijrah as a social identity; and the internal tensions within the hijrah phenomenon along with their implications for Indonesian civil society and religious life.

2. **Search Strategy and Data Sources**

The studies examined in this article were identified through a systematic search of several major academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and nationally accredited Indonesian journal portals indexed under SINTA (Science and Technology Index). Searches were conducted using a combination of keywords in both Indonesian and English, including: "hijrah," "Muslim millennials Indonesia," "social identity Islam," "digital da'wah," "Islamic revivalism Indonesia," and "identitas Muslim milenial." To ensure the relevance and currency of the findings, the search was restricted to publications issued between 2019 and . This temporal boundary was established on the grounds that this period represents the phase of consolidation and geographical expansion of the hijrah movement following its initial acceleration between approximately 2015 and 2018 (Farchan & Rosharlianti, 2021; Hasan, 2019).

3. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were included in the review if they met the following criteria: (1) they empirically examined the hijrah phenomenon or Islamic identity formation among Indonesian Muslim millennials; (2) they were published in peer-reviewed academic journals; (3) they were grounded in primary data collected within Indonesian contexts, whether urban or semi-urban; and (4) they made a substantive analytical contribution to at least one of the study's core dimensions namely social identity, digital media, or da'wah community dynamics. Studies that were purely normative in character without an empirical basis, as well as those conducted outside the Indonesian context, were excluded from the primary synthesis, although several were retained as comparative theoretical references. This selection process yielded a corpus of approximately fifty articles that were substantively drawn upon in constructing the article's arguments.

4. **Theoretical Analytical Framework**

The synthesis of empirical findings in this study is organised through a theoretical analytical framework constructed upon three complementary conceptual pillars. The first is Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel & Turner, (1986), which explains how group membership shapes individual self-concept through processes of social comparison, in-group favouritism, and out-group differentiation. The second is Anthony Giddens' (1991) concept of reflexive modernity, which understands identity under conditions of late modernity as a reflexive project that is continuously constructed through lifestyle choices, rather than something fixed by tradition or social position. The third is the concept of popular piety in the sociology of Islam, which refers to the aestheticisation, popularisation, and mass mediation of Islamic religious practice a process that generates new forms of religiosity that are simultaneously authentic and commodified, sincere and performative (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). These three frameworks are employed in an integrative rather than rigid manner, in order to capture the complexity of the hijrah phenomenon as an identity project operating at the intersection of spirituality, community, digital media, and consumer culture.

5. **Data Synthesis Procedure**

The synthesis was conducted thematically, following the procedure of thematic synthesis as outlined by Thomas & Harden (2008), which involves three stages: (1) close reading of each selected study to identify key findings; (2) the development of descriptive codes that capture the empirical content of the studies; and (3) the generation of higher-order analytical themes through cross-study theoretical interpretation. Particular attention was paid to the geographical and socio-cultural context of each study, given that the hijrah phenomenon exhibits significant regional variation across the diverse cities and territories of Indonesia from Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta in Java, to Aceh, Lombok, Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan (Makmur. & Sewang, 2020; Wati et al., 2022). This context-sensitive approach to synthesis was intended to guard against unwarranted generalisation while nonetheless identifying cross-contextual patterns that carry broader sociological significance.

C. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Social Identity Theory and Religious Belonging

The conceptual scaffolding of this article rests primarily on Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (SIT), which holds that individuals derive a significant portion of their self-concept from membership in social groups. Crucially, SIT emphasises that group membership is not passive but actively maintained through processes of social comparison, in-group favouritism, and out-group differentiation. Applied to the religious domain, SIT illuminates why the hijrah community's adoption of distinctive visual markers (the jilbab syar'i for women, the shortened trousers and beards for men), specialised vocabulary, and shared behavioural norms is not merely incidental to the spiritual transformation but constitutive of it. These markers are boundary-maintenance mechanisms that define and consolidate group identity (Wibisono et al., 2019)

Complementing SIT is the sociological framework of Anthony Giddens' reflexive modernity, which argues that in late modern conditions, identity is no longer fixed by tradition or social position but becomes a reflexive project that individuals must continuously construct and revise through lifestyle choices. This insight helps explain why hijrah has resonated so powerfully with millennials who, by virtue of their generational position in a period of compressed social change, face acute pressures around identity formation. The hijrah movement offers a compelling resolution to what might be characterised as an identity vacuum: it provides a ready-made identity framework, replete with community, shared narrative, aesthetic sensibility, and moral horizon (Fansuri,).

2. Popular Piety, Commodification, and the Digital Turn

Beyond SIT and reflexive modernity, this article engages the theoretical concept of "popular piety" as developed in the sociology of Islam. Popular piety refers to the aestheticisation, popularisation, and mass mediation of Islamic religious practice, which generates new forms of religious expression that are simultaneously authentic and commodified, sincere and performative (Wildan & Witriani, 2021). In the Indonesian context, popular piety intersects with what has been described as the "Halal Economy," in which Islamic values are packaged and marketed as lifestyle products for a growing Muslim middle class (Faiz et al.,).

The digital turn specifically the rise of social media as the primary arena for the production and consumption of Islamic content is inseparable from the hijrah phenomenon. Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have functioned not merely as distribution channels for religious content but as generative environments that reshape what counts as authoritative Islamic knowledge, who qualifies as a legitimate religious guide, and how piety is performed and evaluated (Aidulsyah, ; Nurfitria,). This digital mediation of piety introduces a productive tension between authentic spiritual commitment and the performative demands of social media visibility a tension that this article returns to in its critical analysis.

3. The Socio-Historical Context of Hijrah in Indonesia
   a. Post-Suharto Democratisation and the Islamic Public Sphere

      To understand why hijrah has taken the particular form it has among Indonesian millennials, it is necessary to situate the movement within the long arc of Indonesian Islamic history, particularly the transformations that followed the fall of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998. The post-Suharto era of Reformasi unleashed a dramatic expansion of civil society, religious freedom, and media pluralism that had been suppressed under the authoritarian order. Islamic organisations proliferated, new media outlets emerged, and a more assertive public Islam began to take shape developments that provided the institutional and discursive infrastructure on which the hijrah movement would later build (Chaplin, 2018; Hamayotsu, 2011).

      The rise of the Indonesian Muslim middle class is another crucial contextual factor. Rapid economic growth during the 2000s produced a new urban Muslim bourgeoisie with disposable income, high levels of education, and exposure to global media and travel. This demographic was simultaneously aspirationally cosmopolitan and increasingly invested in asserting a distinctive Muslim identity a combination that made it particularly receptive to religious movements that offered Islamic authenticity as a form of cultural capital (Alam et al.,). The hijrah movement, with its emphasis on visible piety, curated Islamic aesthetics, and community belonging, offered precisely this combination.

   b. The Emergence of Hijrah Communities and Da'wah Organisations

      The hijrah movement crystallised institutionally through a network of da'wah communities that emerged across major Indonesian cities during the 2010s. Among the most influential are Shift (Pemuda Hijrah) in Bandung, Terang Jakarta, Teras Dakwah in Yogyakarta, and various campus-based Islamic student organisations. These communities share a common formula: combining Islamic learning with contemporary cultural aesthetics, deploying social media strategically, and cultivating charismatic young figures as movement ambassadors (Haryadi & Munandar, 2021; E. Saputra, 2022; Setia & Dilawati, 2021).

      The role of celebrity da'i such as Ustaz Hanan Attaki and Felix Siauw deserves particular attention. These figures, who command millions of social media followers, have been instrumental in reframing Islamic piety as something young, cool, and socially desirable. Their communication style blends theological depth with casual idiom, sophisticated visual aesthetics with accessible emotional messaging creating a form of Islamic content that travels effectively across digital platforms (Arifin, 2022; Muthohirin, 2021). The Hijrah Festival in Jakarta in 2018, which drew tens of thousands of participants and generated massive social media activity, epitomises the movement's capacity to generate collective effervescence at scale (Hasan, 2019).

      The geographic spread of these communities from the metropolises of Java to Aceh, Lombok, Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan indicates that the hijrah phenomenon is not an isolated urban Java trend but a genuinely national movement, albeit one that takes on locally distinctive colours depending on regional religious traditions and sociocultural contexts (Makmur. & Sewang, 2020; M. Taufik & Taufik, 2020; Wati et al., 2022).

4. Hijrah as Social Identity: Mechanisms and Manifestations
   a. Constructing the Hijrah Self: Inward Transformation and Outward Performance

      At its most intimate level, hijrah is experienced as a personal spiritual awakening a moment of crisis, recognition, or conversion that orients the individual toward a more devout Islamic life. Psychological research on the phenomenon has highlighted the role of factors such as guilt, fear of divine judgment, existential meaninglessness, and peer influence as precipitating conditions (Imawati & Lestari, 2022; Saloom, 2021). The

construction of the hijrah self thus begins as an inward journey: a reassessment of one's habits, relationships, and life goals in light of Islamic principles.

Yet this inward transformation is almost immediately externalised and rendered visible. Clothing choices constitute the most immediately legible dimension of hijrah identity. For women, this typically involves adopting the jilbab syar'i a larger, more enveloping headscarf and modest Islamic dress that contrasts markedly with the fashion norms of the secular youth culture from which many hijrah participants come. For men, the adoption of the 'kopiah,' shortened trousers ('celana cingkrang'), and in many cases a beard, serves as a corresponding visual signal of religious commitment (Rijal, 2023; Rozi et al., 2021). These embodied practices are not mere superficialities; they are, as Giddens would recognise, lifestyle choices through which identity is continuously produced and communicated.

The linguistic dimension of hijrah identity deserves attention as well. Participants adopt a distinctive vocabulary frequent use of Arabic phrases such as "mashallah," "barakallah," "ukhti/akhi" (sister/brother) that marks membership in the community and signals alignment with a transnational Islamic culture that extends beyond Indonesia. This linguistic repertoire circulates extensively on social media and serves as an in-group signifier that both coheres the community and differentiates it from non-participants (T. Rahman et al., 2021; Royanulloh et al., 2022).

b. Community, Belonging, and the Da'wah Circle

Hijrah as social identity is fundamentally about belonging. For many millennials who participate in the movement, the da'wah community functions as a primary social world a source of friendship, mentorship, moral accountability, and collective meaning that may supplant or significantly reshape pre-existing social networks. The pengajian (Islamic study circle) is the central institutional form of this community life: regular gatherings in which participants study texts, listen to sermons, and support one another in their religious practice (E. Saputra & Triantoro, 2021; Wahid & Wardatun,).

Research across diverse Indonesian cities documents a consistent pattern: hijrah participants frequently describe their entry into the movement in terms of a community encounter rather than a purely individual spiritual experience. A friend's invitation, a chance encounter at a da'wah event, or social media exposure to hijrah content typically precedes and enables the personal transformation. This underscores the sociological insight that religious conversion and identity change are fundamentally social processes, embedded in networks of interaction and belonging (Hikmayanti & Rahmat,).

The concept of "boundary work" is analytically useful here. Hijrah communities maintain their identity and coherence through a range of boundary-marking practices that distinguish insiders from outsiders not only through dress and language but through social norms around gender interaction (avoiding 'ikhtilath,' or mixing of unrelated men and women), entertainment choices (avoidance of music regarded as haram), and dietary practices. These boundaries are neither absolute nor static they are continually negotiated, contested, and revised within the community but they play a central role in constituting the hijrah social identity (Khotimah & Rosidi, 2020).

c. Hijrah and Gender: Women as Central Actors

A particularly significant dimension of the hijrah phenomenon is the centrality of women as both participants and identity producers. Research consistently shows that young Muslim women constitute a plurality, if not majority, of hijrah community members, and that female Islamic influencers exercise substantial cultural authority within the movement's digital ecosystem (Beta, 2019). The hijrah movement has created a new archetype of Muslim femininity the 'Muslimah shalihah' (righteous Muslim woman) — that combines religious devoutness with aesthetic sophistication, entrepreneurial initiative, and social media fluency.

This feminisation of the hijrah movement complicates simplistic narratives of Islamic revivalism as inherently patriarchal or restrictive for women. While the movement does reinforce certain conservative gender norms particularly around dress, gender segregation, and the valorisation of domesticity and early marriage ('nikah muda') it also creates spaces in which women exercise significant religious and cultural agency (Afriyanti & Surya, 2020). The figure of the female Islamic influencer combining piety, entrepreneurship, and digital visibility represents a genuinely novel social type that defies easy categorisation.

5. Digital Media and the Mediation of Hijrah Identity
   a. Instagram, YouTube, and the Architecture of Pious Selfhood

      It is impossible to understand the hijrah phenomenon without foregrounding the constitutive role of digital media. Instagram in particular has emerged as the primary platform for the production and circulation of hijrah identity a space where participants document their spiritual journeys, share religious quotations and aestheticised Islamic imagery, seek validation from peers, and consume the curated piety of influencers they admire (Husna, ; Royanulloh et al., 2022). The visual culture of hijrah Instagram characterised by carefully composed images of religious life, modest fashion, Quranic verse graphics, and the documentation of religious events constitutes a specific aesthetic genre that has shaped broader cultural notions of what a 'properly Muslim' young life looks like.

      YouTube and podcast platforms have been equally central, hosting the sermons and talks of celebrity da'i that attract millions of views and serve as primary sources of Islamic knowledge for hijrah millennials. Research notes that these platforms have fundamentally disrupted the traditional authority structures of Indonesian Islam, in which religious authority was vested in formally trained ulama embedded in established organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. In the hijrah digital ecosystem, a young, charismatic preacher with no formal pesantren training can amass greater cultural influence than senior scholars a democratisation of religious authority that carries both liberating and destabilising implications (Kholidi et al., 2023).

      The role of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) mechanism in driving hijrah participation through social media merits specific attention. Husna's () research demonstrates that exposure to hijrah content on Instagram activates social comparison processes in which young Muslims measure their own religiosity against the curated piety displayed by peers and influencers (Husna,). This can generate both motivating and anxiety-inducing effects inspiring some individuals to deepen their practice while creating performative pressure on others to display religious identity for social approval rather than intrinsic spiritual commitment. The concept of 'riya'" (ostentation or showing off in religious practice) a classical Islamic vice has become a recurring self-critical discourse within hijrah communities, reflecting awareness of this tension.

   b. The Fragmentation of Religious Authority and the Rise of Influencer Islam

      One of the most consequential effects of digital media on the hijrah movement is the fragmentation of religious authority. In the pre-digital era, Indonesian Muslims largely derived their religious guidance from established institutions (pesantren, NU, Muhammadiyah), locally embedded ulama, and family tradition. The digital revolution has multiplied the sources of Islamic authority available to young Muslims, enabling them to shop across a global marketplace of Islamic content and construct personalised, eclectic religious identities that combine influences from diverse Islamic traditions (Nurfitria, ; Waliyuddin & Noor, 2022).

      This pluralisation of authority is not without its problems. Several studies document cases in which hijrah millennials, seeking authentic Islamic guidance, encounter content produced by Salafi-oriented da'i whose teachings promote a more stringent, puritan interpretation of Islam that can lead to social withdrawal, intolerance toward religious

difference, or, in more extreme cases, susceptibility to radical recruitment (Aidulsyah,). The line between legitimate Islamic revivalism and radicalisation is not always clear, and the porous digital environment makes it difficult to erect effective barriers. However, it is important to note that the majority of hijrah participants navigate this landscape with considerable sophistication, selectively engaging with diverse Islamic sources while maintaining broadly moderate orientations (Wahid & Wardatun,).

The emergence of peer-group-based intellectualism as an alternative to both institutional authority and individual internet browsing represents one community-developed response to this challenge. Wahid and Wardatun's () ethnographic research among Muslim youth activists in Bima (Eastern Indonesia) documents how young Muslims explicitly reject digital sources as "unreliable" and instead invest in intensive face-to-face study circles as a mode of knowledge production that they regard as more accountable, embodied, and contextually grounded. This finding suggests that the digital mediation of hijrah identity coexists with persistent desires for the kind of thick, embedded community life that digital environments cannot fully replicate.

6. Tensions and Contradictions within the Hijrah Phenomenon
   a. Commodification and the Hijrah Economy

      Perhaps the most extensively documented tension within the hijrah phenomenon is the tension between spiritual authenticity and commercial co-optation. The emergence of a fully-fledged "hijrah economy" encompassing Islamic fashion brands, halal lifestyle products, hijrah-themed books and films, Islamic travel packages, and a vast industry of digital content monetisation raises fundamental questions about the relationship between piety and capital in the movement (Wadi & Bagaskara, 2022).

      Critical scholars have argued that the commodification of hijrah represents a form of what might be called "pious capitalism" a configuration in which market actors absorb and monetise the genuine spiritual aspirations of young Muslims, producing a simulacrum of piety that serves the interests of capital rather than the genuine transformation of self and society. The premium Islamic fashion label worn by the hijrah influencer, the commercially produced 'hijrah story' shared for engagement metrics, and the corporate-sponsored religious festival all partake in this logic (Garwan, 2020; Wildan & Witriani, 2021). Yet it would be reductive to characterise the entire phenomenon in these terms: many participants navigate the commercialised landscape with considerable critical awareness, and the market dimension of hijrah coexists with genuine practices of spiritual discipline, communal solidarity, and ethical transformation.

      The shifting semantic content of hijrah itself reflects these tensions. Mustofa et al., () document how hijrah has come to function as a floating signifier whose meaning is contested across different actors: for traditionalist ulama, it implies a comprehensive moral and spiritual renovation; for Salafi-oriented movements, it denotes a strict purification of practice from perceived innovations; for market actors, it designates a consumer lifestyle segment; and for many millennials themselves, it signifies a more personal and experiential journey of becoming a better Muslim. These competing constructions coexist in the same discursive space, generating productive tensions but also significant confusion about what hijrah actually demands.

   b. Authenticity, Performance, and the Limits of Digital Piety

      A second major tension concerns the relationship between religious authenticity and digital performance. The social media environments in which hijrah identity is most visibly produced and circulated are structured by logics of visibility, engagement, and social comparison that sit in fundamental tension with Islamic teachings on sincerity (ikhlas) and the avoidance of ostentation (riya'). Several studies document the experience of what might be termed "piety fatigue" among longer-term hijrah participants a recognition that the

performance of religious identity for social media audiences can hollow out the interior spiritual life it purports to express.

This tension is not unique to the digital age the Islamic tradition has long grappled with the relationship between outward practice and inward sincerity but the social media environment intensifies and accelerates it in distinctive ways. The instantaneous social feedback loop of 'likes,' comments, and follower counts creates a powerful incentive structure that can reshape religious motivation from intrinsic (pleasing God) to extrinsic (pleasing audiences). Some hijrah communities have developed explicit counter-practices encouraging members to refrain from posting religious activities on social media, to maintain secret acts of worship, and to cultivate interior spiritual life through means that resist digital capture (Setia & Dilawati, 2021).

c. Hijrah, Radicalism, and the Question of Tolerance

A third tension concerns the relationship between the hijrah movement and attitudes toward religious diversity, political pluralism, and civic identity. Several studies document cases in which the hijrah turn toward more stringent Islamic practice is associated with increased social distance from non-Muslims, greater sympathy for Islamist political agendas, or vulnerability to more extreme interpretations of Islamic duty (Wibisono et al., 2019; Syam et al., 2020; Ahmad, 2021). The Salafi dimension of the hijrah movement, in particular, has been scrutinised for its potential to promote exclusivist religious identities that sit in tension with Indonesia's constitutional pluralism and the 'Islam Nusantara' tradition emphasised by Nahdlatul Ulama (Chaplin, 2018).

However, it is crucial to resist the conflation of religious conservatism with radicalisation. The overwhelming majority of hijrah participants embrace forms of Islamic devoutness that are entirely compatible with democratic citizenship, inter-religious respect, and national belonging. Indeed, several studies document how hijrah communities actively cultivate civic engagement, social philanthropy, and cross-community solidarity as expressions of Islamic values (Anoraga,). The hijrah movement contains both centripetal forces toward intolerance and centrifugal forces toward civic engagement and the outcome in any specific community or individual trajectory depends on a complex of contextual factors including leadership, institutional affiliation, and the specific Islamic traditions to which participants are exposed.

7. Regional Variations and the Diversity of Hijrah Identities

While the hijrah phenomenon exhibits broad commonalities across Indonesian contexts, it also displays significant regional variation that complicates any monolithic account. In Aceh, where Islamic law ('Syariat Islam') is formally implemented under provincial autonomy, hijrah intersects with a distinctive politico-religious landscape in which the boundaries between personal piety and institutional religious authority are configured differently from Java (Sufyan et al., 2020). In Lombok and other contexts where adat (customary tradition) and syncretic religious practice remain influential, hijrah can represent a more radical rupture with local religious culture than in more uniformly Sunni contexts (M. Taufik & Taufik, 2020).

In urban Java particularly in the megacities of Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta the hijrah movement takes on its most visible and media-saturated form, driven by the concentration of da'wah infrastructure, celebrity preachers, and digital creative industries. Here, hijrah identity is deeply entangled with middle-class consumer culture and the aesthetics of young urban Islam (Alam et al.,). In smaller cities and semi-urban contexts, the movement tends to be more community-embedded, less commercially elaborated, and more directly continuous with traditional Islamic education networks such as pesantren (Aidulsyah,).

The phenomenon of hybrid identity is worth noting in this context. Several studies document cases in which hijrah participants synthesise elements from different Islamic

traditions Salafi, Sufi, NU-affiliated, Muhammadiyah producing eclectic religious identities that do not map neatly onto any established organisational allegiance (Waliyuddin & Noor, 2022). This hybridity reflects both the pluralised religious marketplace of the digital era and the generational characteristics of millennials, who tend to relate to institutions through selective engagement rather than wholesale belonging. The hijrah identity is thus not a fixed religious typology but a dynamic, contested, and context-dependent process of self-construction.

8. Hijrah, Cultural Production, and the Aestheticisation of Piety

One of the most culturally creative dimensions of the hijrah phenomenon is its engagement with artistic and cultural production. The movement has generated significant activity in music, film, visual art, and fashion, producing a distinctive aesthetic vocabulary that blends Islamic sensibility with contemporary youth cultural forms. The phenomenon of musicians undergoing hijrah leaving behind secular musical careers to adopt Islamic performance genres or abandon music-making altogether in accordance with certain Islamic rulings has attracted considerable scholarly attention (Qomaruzzaman & Busro, 2021). These individual trajectories illuminate broader questions about the relationship between aesthetic pleasure, religious obligation, and cultural identity in the hijrah movement.

The aestheticisation of hijrah identity through carefully curated visual culture what Wildan & Witriani (2021) call the "aestheticisation of Islam" represents a significant cultural formation in contemporary Indonesia. This process involves the production of Islamic content that is simultaneously religiously earnest and aesthetically sophisticated, designed for consumption in the attention economy of social media. The result is a distinctive visual culture of popular piety that circulates across platforms, shaping popular notions of Muslim beauty, virtue, and social success. This aestheticisation is not without critics: some Islamic scholars and community voices argue that the beautiful packaging of the hijrah lifestyle can obscure or distort its substantive religious demands, reducing complex spiritual disciplines to consumable aesthetics.

The emergence of the 'hijrah festival' as a large-scale cultural event is emblematic of this dynamic. Hasan's (2019) detailed study of the Jakarta Hijrah Festival of 2018 documents how this event combined elements of a religious gathering, a music festival, a fashion showcase, and a commercial exhibition, attracting tens of thousands of participants and generating substantial media coverage. Such events epitomise the capacity of the hijrah phenomenon to mobilise large audiences by synthesising religious aspiration with cultural entertainment but they also illustrate the difficulty of maintaining a clear distinction between genuine religious mobilisation and commercially driven spectacle.

9. Implications and Future Directions

a. Implications for Indonesian Civil Society and Religious Life

The hijrah phenomenon carries significant implications for Indonesian civil society and religious life that extend beyond the movement itself. At the most fundamental level, hijrah represents a generational renegotiation of what Indonesian Muslim identity means in the twenty-first century. The millennials who constitute the movement's core are the first generation to grow up in post-Suharto democratic Indonesia and the first for whom digital media are constitutive (rather than merely supplementary) features of social life. The religious identities they construct through the hijrah phenomenon will shape Indonesian Islam for decades to come (Fansuri,).

For Indonesian pluralism and democratic culture, the hijrah movement presents both challenges and resources. The challenges are real: to the extent that the movement strengthens exclusivist religious identities, reduces engagement with non-Muslim fellow citizens, or provides vectors for more radical influences, it poses genuine risks for

Indonesia's tradition of religious pluralism and civic coexistence. The resources, however, are equally real: to the extent that the hijrah movement cultivates genuine moral seriousness, civic engagement, social solidarity, and critical consciousness about the ethical dimensions of economic and social life, it can contribute positively to Indonesian democracy. The outcome is not predetermined but will depend on the choices made by hijrah communities, their leaders, and the broader institutions educational, religious, and political that engage with them (Nilan & Gr, 2021).

b. Implications for the Study of Islam and Youth Identity

The hijrah phenomenon contributes important empirical and theoretical insights to the broader comparative study of Islam, youth, and identity in the contemporary world. It offers a compelling case study in the ways that global Islamic revivalism is refracted through local cultural, historical, and institutional contexts producing movements that are simultaneously connected to transnational Islamic currents and deeply embedded in specifically Indonesian dynamics. The Indonesian case is of particular comparative interest given the country's status as the world's largest Muslim-majority democracy, its tradition of religious pluralism, and the distinctive character of its Islamic civil society (Hamayotsu, 2011).

Theoretically, the hijrah phenomenon challenges approaches to religious identity that emphasise either pure structural determinism (reducing religious change to socioeconomic forces) or purely voluntarist accounts of individual spiritual seeking. The movement is simultaneously a product of specific structural conditions the growth of the Muslim middle class, the expansion of digital infrastructure, the post-Suharto liberalisation of religious life and a genuine expression of agency, aspiration, and spiritual creativity on the part of the young Muslims who participate in it. Capturing this combination requires theoretical frameworks such as the integration of SIT, reflexive modernity, and the sociology of popular piety attempted in this article that can hold together structure and agency, institution and experience, sincerity and performance.

c. Directions for Future Research

This review identifies several dimensions of the hijrah phenomenon that remain insufficiently researched and warrant sustained empirical attention. First, longitudinal research is needed to track the trajectories of hijrah participants over time: do they maintain their hijrah identity, deepen it, modify it, or abandon it? The life-course dimension of hijrah how it interacts with transitions such as marriage, parenthood, and career development is almost entirely undocumented (Hikmayanti & Rahmat,). Second, comparative research across Southeast Asian Muslim-majority societies would help determine which features of the Indonesian hijrah phenomenon are specifically Indonesian and which reflect broader regional or global dynamics of Islamic revival.

Third, there is a need for more fine-grained research on the relationship between hijrah and political attitudes. While several studies touch on the question of how hijrah relates to political Islam, the empirical picture remains fragmentary and contested. Systematic research examining the political orientations of hijrah participants across different community types and regional contexts would make a significant contribution to both the sociology of Indonesian Islam and broader debates about the relationship between religious revivalism and political behaviour ((Syam et al., 2020; Wibisono et al., 2019). Finally, the psychological dimensions of hijrah identity including its relationship to mental health, self-esteem, and wellbeing merit sustained investigation, given the significant therapeutic and self-improvement discourses that are woven through the movement (M. Rahman & Mufti, 2021; Saloom, 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

The hijrah phenomenon among Indonesian Muslim millennials is neither a straightforward story of religious revivalism nor a simple tale of commercial co-optation. It is a complex, multi-layered social formation in which genuine spiritual aspiration, community building, digital performance, market dynamics, and identity politics are inextricably intertwined. This article has argued that hijrah functions as a powerful social identity project through which Indonesian millennials navigate the disorienting currents of late modernity constructing stable senses of self, community belonging, and moral purpose in conditions of rapid social change and epistemological uncertainty.

Theoretically, the article has demonstrated the productivity of integrating Social Identity Theory with the sociology of reflexive modernity and popular piety to analyse the hijrah phenomenon. This theoretical combination enables a nuanced account of hijrah that neither reduces it to social-structural determination nor romanticises it as pure spiritual voluntarism, but instead illuminates the complex interplay of agency, structure, community, and media that constitutes it as a lived social phenomenon.

Empirically, the article has synthesised a substantial body of research conducted across diverse Indonesian contexts to document the movement's institutional forms, cultural practices, regional variations, digital dimensions, and internal tensions. This synthesis reveals a movement of considerable vitality, creativity, and sociological significance one whose trajectories will continue to shape Indonesian Islamic life in ways that scholars, policymakers, and civil society actors would do well to follow closely.

The ultimate significance of the hijrah phenomenon may lie less in its specific religious content than in what it reveals about the broader dynamics of identity, community, and meaning-making in contemporary Muslim societies navigating the intersections of faith, modernity, and digital culture. In this sense, the study of hijrah is not only the study of Indonesian Islam but a window onto some of the most fundamental questions of our time: how do human beings construct meaningful identities in conditions of radical uncertainty? How do traditional religious resources intersect with the new architectures of digital sociality? And how can communities of genuine moral and spiritual commitment sustain themselves in cultural environments that commodify everything they touch? These questions, to which the hijrah phenomenon offers no final answers but rich empirical materials for reflection, deserve to remain at the centre of the scholarly agenda.

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