Collegial Leadership and Election in Muhammadiyah: Institutional Ways to Diffuse the Religious Authority of Leaders

Hyung-Jun Kim

An Overview on Ottoman Manuscript Collection in Sayyid Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas Library

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The Rise of Cinematic Santri in Post Authoritarian Indonesia: Figure, Field, and the Competing Discourse

Ahmad Nuril Huda
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The Pesantren Leaders’ Journey in Japan
The COVID-19 pandemic, starting in early 2020, compelled rigorous border restrictions among nations. Travel between countries became virtually impossible in an effort to curb the virus’s rampant spread. All plans involving face-to-face human interactions had to be abandoned except for essential pandemic-related activities. Consequently, the scheduled leaders’ visits from Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to Japan during this period had to be withdrawn as well.

This annual event, initiated in 2004 through collaboration between the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta and the Government of Japan, aims primarily to enhance understanding and cultivate a friendship between Japan and Indonesia, particularly among the Muslim community. For over nearly two decades, this program facilitated the participation of 157 leaders (kiāi and nyai) from diverse regions in Indonesia, enabling them to observe contemporary developments in Japanese society while exchanging insights into the characteristics of Indonesia’s Muslim community with the local people. Domestically, this initiative also desired to strengthen networks among pesantrens.
By the end of 2022, with the global pandemic appearing to decrease, PPIM and the Japanese Embassy in Indonesia agreed to revive this program. The implementation of the leaders’ visits for the fiscal year 2022 was marked by the departure of 10 kiais and nyais from 9 pesantrens to Japan for ten days, commencing on January 23, 2023, and concluding on February 1, 2023.

The Diversity of Pesantren: Beyond Religious Concerns

The visits of pesantren leaders to Japan present an outstanding opportunity for the public to understand comprehensively Islam in its sociological and institutional contexts. Indonesia, home to the world’s largest Muslim population, plays a pivotal role in this mission, thanks to its thousands of long-established pesantrens.

These pesantrens serve as influential institutions in shaping the character of the country’s Muslim population. They go beyond religious teachings and add value by addressing various aspects of human life, such as economics and technology, while contributing to global peace initiatives. Their societal importance lies in their ability to preserve tradition while adapting to a changing world and produce graduates capable of competing on a global educational stage.

The diversity among these pesantrens is evident in their participation in this Japanese exchange program, which falls into three main categories: those focusing on economics and agriculture, those developing modern curriculum systems, and those dedicated to conflict resolution and peace.

A few pesantrens prioritize the economics sector, with examples such as Pesantren Darul Ilmi Murni in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. Dedi Masri, representing this pesantren, shared stories of economic development in various sectors, including tourism and hospitality. Two other boarding schools in this first category are Pesantren El-’Azam in Kuningan, West Java, represented by Bahrudin, and Pesantren Al-Amin in Dumai, Riau Province as represented by W. Zainal Abidin. Both emphasize the concept of ‘green pesantren’ by producing agricultural and farm products intended for internal consumption and external sale.

The second category in which three pesantrens participate include Pesantren Modern Al-Kautsar in Pekanbaru, represented by Ali Muhlisin, and Pesantren Modern Adlaniyah in Pasaman Barat, represented by Mustaqim. These institutions, hailing from the Riau and West Sumatra provinces, adopt modern curriculum systems. Another
school in this category is Pesantren Matholi’ul Huda Al-Kautsar Kajen in Pati, Central Java, which, while maintaining a traditional educational system, also boasts of the vocational and industrial technology skills of its students (santri). Kamilia Hamidah, the pesantren’s representative, is a dedicated peace activist.

Finally, peace and conflict resolution are the primary concerns for some pesantrens, particularly given Indonesia’s cultural diversity, which can lead to intra-societal conflicts. Delegates from this third category include Rahmat Hidayat from Pesantren Daar El-Fatih in Bandar Lampung, Lampung Province, Arieska Rahmawati from Peacesantren Welas Asih in Garut, West Java, and Khatta Mubarak from Pesantren Madinatunnajah, located on Natuna island, Riau Islands Province.

Celebrating Diversity

The pesantren served as the basis for the Japanese Embassy to organize their itinerary during their trip to Japan. During their stay in Japan, they explored Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Kyoto, where they observed various educational advancements in Japanese schools, engaged in interfaith dialogues, and participated in a homestay program.

On the first day, Kei Takagi, Japan’s Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, warmly welcomed the participants. He honored esteemed leaders from Indonesia’s well-known Islamic educational institutions. Takagi encouraged the leaders to fully embrace the experience and gather valuable insights during their visit to Japan.

Central to the program were the delegation’s visits to diverse types of educational institutions across Japan. They made stops at Kinuta Minami Junior High School and Higashi Fukazawa Elementary School, two Japanese public schools. During these visits, the leaders not only observed classroom activities but also engaged in dialogue with teachers and students. This afforded them a deeper understanding of how ethics and discipline, hallmark features of Japanese society, are fostered from a young age in Japanese schools. Unlike the pesantren system, Japanese schools do not provide religious education; instead, they leave such matters to parents. Nevertheless, a commonality between the pesantren education and Japan is their commitment to early education and preserving cultural traditions through an educational framework. A substantial example is the priority of using local scripts for learning over Roman script.
The delegation also discussed Japan’s initiatives to support the development of Islam through education. A visit to YUAI International Islamic School showcased how Muslims from around the world have the opportunity to receive an education in Japan. Nonetheless, Yetti Dalimi, the school’s principal, highlighted substantial challenges faced by privately managed institutions, because of Japan’s exceptionally high educational standards. Inadequate facilities and infrastructure could potentially risk the existence of such institutions.

Dialogue with Japan’s Muslim minority was a significant point of interest for the leaders. Following Friday prayers at Tokyo Camii and Turkish Culture Center, participants engaged in discussions with mosque administrators and members. Shimoyama Shigeru, the Media and Publication Representative of the Center, expressed admiration for how Indonesian Muslims thrive amid the complexities of the modern world. However, he underscored Japan’s strong commitment to maintaining religious neutrality, and the Japanese society’s passive stance on public discussions of religion presents a challenge for the Muslim community in Japan. The pesantren leaders proffered recommendations for the community to grow, including adjusting technology and culture for Islamic education.

Figure 1: After an interfaith dialogue at Taizo-in Temple in Kyoto

In addition to intra-Muslim dialogues, the program facilitated interfaith exchanges. A visit to Taizo-in Temple in Kyoto allowed pesantren leaders to witness Japan’s distinctive approach to religious development. The leaders likened the temple’s role to that of a ‘pesantren’ in Japan. While Indonesian boarding schools aim to develop Islamic
leaders (*kiai*), this temple is dedicated to ensuring the future quality of Buddhist monks. Furthermore, the temple promotes a moderate perspective in addressing recent religious conflicts worldwide.

Figure 2: A warm welcome in Hiroshima

This spirit of moderation pervades Japanese society at large. During the homestay program in Hiroshima, where participants resided with Japanese families for two days, the *pesantren* leaders enjoyed intimate interactions with their hosts and families. They observed daily routines, such as cooking and gardening, and engaged in dialogue about their respective beliefs. Despite striking differences, both sides found values in the program, particularly in mutual respect for one another’s backgrounds. Host families made efforts to understand the warmth and character of Indonesian people. For instance, one host showcased their mastery in playing the Indonesian national anthem on a flute. Another notable gesture was providing a space for prayer for the participants.

The leaders expressed their satisfaction with their participation in this program. They proactively documented their experiences and shared them with journalists in Indonesia for publication. Moreover, the participants celebrated diversity by recording and sharing their insights on various social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This initiative not only reflects their contentment but also underscores the essential importance of diversity in fostering a mutual understanding across humanity.

**Modernity vs Tradition: A Glimpse of Hope**

The return of *pesantren* leaders to Japan this year marks the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of
diplomatic ties between Japan and Indonesia. Tamura Masami, Japan’s Deputy Ambassador to Indonesia, expressed hope that the *kiai* and *nyai* would gain new wisdom during their visit to Japan. He also expected this knowledge to be shared and applied within their respective institutions.

During the welcoming ceremony in Jakarta, Jamhari Makruf, a member of the Advisory Board of PPIM, narrated the origins of the program dating back to 2004 in collaboration with Japanese professor Takeshi Kohno. According to both of them, *pesantren* and Japan share an identical commitment to preserving education while nurturing their distinctive traditions and societal values. Consequently, bringing these two entities together is seen as a means to promote a harmonious way of life in the global community.

Komaruddin Hidayat, the Rector of the Indonesian International Islamic University, underscored Japan’s role as a global model. He added that Japan’s approach to education differs markedly from that of other nations. While many countries excel in education and science, they often neglect the preservation of their unique traditions, which are integral to their identity. Japan, in his view, has successfully advanced in both domains. The technological prowess of the Japanese population to coexist harmoniously with their rich traditions and local character. Therefore, through this program, Komaruddin aspires to see *pesantren* recognize these values to enhance the quality of education offered while maintaining their Indonesian identity and longstanding Islamic traditions.

Ismatu Ropi, the Executive Director of PPIM, added depth to these aspirations. He claimed this program invited *pesantren* leaders to embark on a cultural journey. This was key for expanding the global perspective of *pesantren* leaders, enabling them to navigate differences and diversity in their surroundings more effectively.

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Guidelines

Submission of Articles

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The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10,000-15,000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should
be translated into English. *Studia Islamika* accepts only electronic submissions. All manuscripts should be sent in Ms. Word to: http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika.

All notes must appear in the text as citations. A citation usually requires only the last name of the author(s), year of publication, and (sometimes) page numbers. For example: (Hefner 2009a, 45; Geertz 1966, 114). Explanatory footnotes may be included but should not be used for simple citations. All works cited must appear in the reference list at the end of the article. In matter of bibliographical style, *Studia Islamika* follows the American Political Science Association (APSA) manual style, such as below:


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