Chapter 8: The Kiai's Effort in Remoulding Relationships with Other Muslim Groups

Islam in Indonesia is not homogeneous in terms of its religious practice. There are what are commonly called the traditionalist and the modernist groups. The traditionalist in Jombang is represented by NU\(^1\) while the modernist by Muhammadiyah. The traditionalists are those who usually acknowledge themselves as following one of the four madhhab (school of law) in Islam, while the modernists base their practice of Islam on their reasoning. The traditionalists often relate their practice of Islam to Syafi‘i, Hambali, Maliki or Hanafi, while the modernists relate to no one. In addition, the traditionalists always refer to the Qur'an, the hadith, the ijma’ (consensus) of the ‘ulama and qiyas (analogy) as their sources in practising Islam, while the modernists only refer to the Qur'an and hadith. The NU tradition of referring to one of the four madhhab and its use of the ijma’ make its members constantly refer to the work of salaf (earlier) ‘ulama for any interpretation which they make, while Muhammadiyah members try to use only the Qur'an and the hadith to come to the correct interpretation of any problem, without having to refer to the work of salaf or kholaf (later) ‘ulama to justify their current interpretation.

In addition, there is also another group which, compared to the above groups, is more syncretic in their Islamic practice. This group consists of those Muslims considered less devout from the Islamic perspective compared to the above mentioned groups. Members of this group derive from former abangan and their younger generation. The process of Islamic reassertion which is taking place among the abangan makes their younger generation's practices of Islam closer to that of devout Muslims.

This chapter highlights the nature of the relationship between the three groups. These groups are also the social base that gave rise to larger various socio-political groupings in Jombang. In the past, the political orientation of each group is defined by its ideological practice of Islam. As the relationship in the past was generally marked by conflict, it is worth seeing it in present day Jombang. Although this change is attributed to the modernisation process in general, it became more evident after Muslims changed their politics at the end of the 1980s. In present day Jombang some changes accordingly have impinged on the ideological lines of demarcation between various Muslim groups. This chapter aims to illuminate the social context in which the socio-political leadership of the kiai takes place.

\(^{1}\) See also my description about NU in Chapter II.
8.1 Differences and Locality

In general, Muslim society in Jombang is divided into two groups in terms of orientation. The first one is the devout group, and the other is the less devout group or the *abangan*. These groupings express the existing social reality of the Jombang population. By the devout I mean those Jombang population who practise Islam in a more orthodox way, while the less devout are members of society who, due to their ignorance of Islam, tend to practise syncretic Islam (cf. Fox and Dirjosanjoto, 1989). The devout group is represented by NU (the traditionalist) and Muhammadiyah\(^2\) (the modernist).

I nonetheless recognise that such a grouping is not adequate. Not only does it not cover all various existing groups in Muslim society in Jombang, but it also lacks the specificity and detail of the variety of characteristics of each group. In addition, what is important to emphasise is that the characteristic commonly ascribed to NU and Muhammadiyah, as the orthodox Muslims, are not necessarily applicable to the current situation. The development of NU, as described by Bruinessen\(^3\), exhibits the same dynamics as that of a modern Islamic organisation. At least, the idea of adapting to the changing socio-political situation warrants the attention of its leaders. In addition, the general characteristics of these Islamic organisations are obscured by local characteristics.

Nevertheless, there are a general characteristics which differentiates the devout Muslims from the *abangan*. The same holds true with the characteristic of the traditionalist and the modernist. In the following discussion I will focus on the different characteristics of these two Islamic groups. The sociological bases underlying the existence of these two Islamic groups are different. The modernist group is generally more preoccupied with idealised efforts and is trying to change the social reality of Muslim society in regard to its religious practice. Current practice, in the modernist's perspective, is neither ideal nor religiously correct. There must be a socio-political movement to alter it. On the other hand, the traditionalist\(^4\) group has been trying to coordinate, nurture and even develop existing religious beliefs, practice and culture in general. This attitude is based on a religious formula: *al-muhafaza bi'l-qadim al-salih wa'l-akhdhu bi'l-jadid al-aslah* (lit. preserving the good existing order and adopting the new one which is better). The former is trying to develop toward an idealised situation, while the latter is working within the real social situation.

\(^2\) Muhammadiyah is only one among several modernist Muslim organisations.

\(^4\) Some scientists suggest that the emergence of NU in 1926 was a reaction to what was being done by Muhammadiyah. This suggestion derives from the fact that NU was established after Muhammadiyah had been in existence for about 15 years.
For the purpose of analysis of these differences in religious practice, I will try to focus on the doctrinal and social dimensions of these two Islamic groups. The doctrinal dimension which differentiates them derives from their difference in interpreting the precepts of the Qur’an. Their differences do not actually impinge on the basics of Islam, like theology, but rather they touch only on parts commonly called *furu’* (lit. branches). Although the differences between NU and Muhammadiyah occur only in the domain of *furu’* which touches only on aspects of the application of their interpretation of *fiqh* matters, such differences are expressed through their praxis of Islamic rituals in everyday life and influence the world view and social behaviour of their members.

The different interpretation of the available doctrine by the modernists has provoked an unfavourable and latent situation of conflict with the traditionalists since the modernist has been trying to purify traditional practices of Islam such as those practised by NU society. This situation has been heightened by differences in political orientation\(^5\), and each group disparages the other due to its feeling of superiority in regard to its own culture and practice of religion. A member of Muhammadiyah considers his Islamic practice purer and better because he discards anything less Islamic. On the other hand, an NU member regards Muhammadiyah’s practice of Islam as too rigid because of its tendency to be puritanical, and its avoidance, in many respects, of the existing socio-cultural environment. Since these differences occur in the more practical domain of daily religious life, they have been more salient. This situation marked a general tendency among Muslims in Java, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, although in Jombang it has been less pronounced.

There is one important Islamic concept which became the basis of their cultural and religious practice but was interpreted differently by both groups. This concept is related to the perception of religious practices which were not performed by the Prophet Muhammad and the earlier generation of his *sahaba* (companions). These practices are conceptualised in what is commonly called *bid’a* (heretical practice). The interpretation of the concept of *bid’a* at the grassroots level occurs in a rather haphazard manner (salah kaprah). Members of Muhammadiyah conceptualise what they call *bid’a* in terms of black and white. Everything not practised by the Prophet Muhammad is deemed to be *bid’a* by lay followers of the modernist stream. This understanding derives from the Islamic doctrine according to which “each heresy is going astray, and those going astray would go to hell” (“*qullu bid’a zolala, wa qullu zolala fi al-nar*”). On the other hand, NU society, which grounds its perspective in a less black-white format, classifies *bid’a* into two kinds, that is *bid’a hasana* and *bid’a*

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\(^5\) In the 1950s, these two groups became affiliated with different political organisations. Muhammadiyah affiliated with the Masjumi and NU stood as another Islamic political party. NU established itself as a political party in 1952 after being in the Masjumi for about 6 years.
sayyi’ā (bad and good bid’ā). This difference in interpretation derives from the different sources which they use or from the way they understand the norms which must be established in Islam.

The underlying difference in understanding the concept of bid’ā which marks the Muhammadiyah and NU practice of religion in Jombang is limited to what is called ‘ibada (Islamic ritual). However, this has occurred not only at the level of interpretation of Islamic precepts but also at the level of worldview. Based on their understanding of the concept of bid’ā and their adaptation to the existing order, the members of NU society have always grounded their understandings of Islamic social relations on the concept of ‘harmony’. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah society is inclined to attribute such social reality to what they call ‘diperintahkan’ (divinely ordered).

The characteristic of Muhammadiyah, which bases its standpoint on strictness as it is conceptualised by the Qur’an has made its lay members rigid in their understanding of socio-cultural development. Thus Muhammadiyah only does what is religiously ordered (written in the Qur’an and the hadith), while NU always tries to work on what is not definitely prohibited in its practice of Islam. Thus Muhammadiyah members are trying to discard any heretical Islamic practice which may be alive among Javanese since it is not religiously ordered or written. These practices include such activities as tahlil and slametan, the latter of which is deemed to have Hinduistic elements. They strictly suggests that all bid’ā is ‘zolala’ (going astray). NU, on the other hand, does not always consider the bid’ā to be bad. In their opinion, it is only the bad bid’ā that can bring its doer to hell. Thus such ‘ibada as tahlil is of significance, since it is not only classified as good Islamic practice but can also accrue to what is religiously expected of all Muslims. Such practice could therefore be subsumed under what is commonly called sunna (recommended). By performing such thing, a Muslim hopes to add to the other ‘ibada (observance required by the Islamic faith) to his religious obligations, which he might have carried out imperfectly.

Local socio-environmental factors, however, have affected Muhammadiyah and NU. But compared to Muhammadiyah, variation in NU practices of Islam may be lower. This is because NU tries to accommodate to the existing practices, while Muhammadiyah tries to transform them to the idealised. It is therefore not surprising that various local Muhammadiyah organisations might differ in

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6 I am indebted to Dr. Taufik Abdullah for this understanding (informal talk with him, 29 November 1994).
7 Tahlil is a ritual following one’s death. The family performs such ritual to pray for the dead. The essence of this ritual is to stress the oneness of Allah. Tahlil is performed from the first to the seventh day after a death.
8 There are five qualifications of behaviour which the Islamic law and ethics have traditionally categorised (Netton, 1992:22). These are wajib (obligatory), sunna (recommended), muqab (morally neutral), makruh (reprehensible) and haram (forbidden). The obligatory ‘ibada, like prayer five times a day, is clearly written. The recommended ‘ibada, like tahlil, is a matter of interpretation.
their religious practice from the mainstream since the process of change in different regions does not happen in the same pattern or direction because of different local conditions.

Muhammadiyah in Jombang is indeed different from that in other regions in terms of its culture and a few of their Islamic practices. Although it is essentially anti-tradition, its practice of Islam is very much influenced by local culture so that its characteristics are culturally close to that of NU. Abdurrahman, for example, is a Muhammadiyah member living in the district of Ploso. He is a rich man who grew up in a very Muhammadiyah environment, but he is also the leader of a group performing regular tahlil in his district. When he was asked why he was involved in a tahlil activity, a religious practice commonly performed by NU society but deemed bid’a by Muhammadiyah, he rejoindered that he did not discard all religious practices which do not sound Muhammadiyah, but rather he also performs practices such as tahlil, since it is religiously good.

Abdurrahman's practice of Islam constitutes a 'culture representation' which marks the difference between Muhammadiyah in Jombang from that in other cities. His practice is influenced by the existing culture of traditional Muslims in his surroundings, which strongly emphasises the need to carry out good Islamic practices classified as 'ibada. The attitude of Abdurrahman in terms of his religious practice is affected by NU culture in Jombang.

In brief, different interpretations of the existing doctrine which result in the emergence of ideological groupings is affected by local culture. There is no stereotype or model which absolutely delineates the special character of a group of Muslims, like NU, from another. As shown in the case of Abdurrahman, a religious practice which is commonly attributed to traditionalist Muslims can also be conducted by modernist followers. This situation occurs because the doctrinal interpretation of modernist members at the grassroots level varies. In addition, the Muhammadiyah practice of Islam in Jombang seems to be more accommodating to local culture. The members' efforts to purify society's practice of Islam is not as strict as in other areas. This is not only because Muhammadiyah...
members in Jombang have changed their methods of da’wa but also because many of the elite originally come from an NU family background. Also, some of them were educated in NU pesantren. This is very important to illuminate the accommodating nature of Muhammadiyah in Jombang, since at the level where primary socialisation took place, some Muhammadiyah leaders were introduced to traditionalist cultural values which influenced their practice of Islam.

Shiddiq Abbas, a prominent leader of Muhammadiyah in Jombang, for example, was educated in the Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, the oldest NU pesantren. Azhar, a leader of Muhammadiyah in Ngoro, is the son of an NU member who had family ties with the founder of NU, Kiai Hasyim Asy’ari. These two Muhammadiyah leaders are familiar with the NU’s tradition through their primary socialisation and religious education. Their joining Muhammadiyah was inspired by consciousness and an understanding of what it means to purify Islamic practice and what should be done by Muhammadiyah in accordance with its mission. To be a member of Muhammadiyah in their view is not merely to be different from being an NU member in terms of religious practice. This is why Shiddiq Abbas and Azhar differ from other Muhammadiyah leaders in Jombang and in other cities. They have more knowledge of the religious practice of the Jombang Muslim population in general. Their purification movements through Muhammadiyah do not start from a position of ignorance and indifference to the existing local culture, as others do who may be unfamiliar with the actual religious practices and thoughts of the traditionalists. These two leaders ground their actions on a tradition which they know well. It is this situation which gives rise to the general similarity in the religious practice of both Muhammadiyah and NU in Jombang.

Despite the efforts of Muhammadiyah leaders, such as Shiddiq Abbas and Azhar, some Muhammadiyah members tend to maintain a different religious interpretation or practice from NU members just for the sake of being different. Some Muhammadiyah members in Jombang, for example, argued about certain parts of prayer practices performed by their colleagues which they considered not to be Muhammadiyah style. They recommended that their colleagues change such practices. These recommended prayer practices, however, actually resemble those of NU members in another city in East Java.

However, it can be argued that in general the debate between modernist and traditionalist followers at the grassroots level has actually been trivial, with no religious significance. In the 1950s and 1960s, when social tension between the traditionalist and modernist Muslims was great, this tension in villages in Jombang and Java revolved around insignificant matters, such as two azan in Friday prayer or using a bedug in a mosque, which were not essential parts of

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10 Adhan is the call (in Arabic) by a Muslim in a mosque which is commonly used to indicate that the prayer time has come; while the bedug is a wooden drum which is beaten preceding the adhan. Two
the religious ritual. The bedug for the lay modernist is indeed bid’a, in the sense of being novel because it was not found during the Prophet’s life. For the traditionalists, however, the use of bedug is not a primary part of the religious ritual. It is merely used to give a signal to Muslims that the time for prayer has come. It is therefore evident that much of the conflict derived from their tendency to underestimate and humiliate each other. Each group felt its standpoint and interpretation of Islam was the right one.

From a few cases which I observed, my impression is that the different interpretation of both lay members of Muhammadiyah and NU does not derive from solid religious reasoning. On some occasions, they arose just from the intention to be different. The essence of the logic sustaining lay modernist arguments about bid’a, for example, is actually blurred, as is shown when comparisons are made with their colleagues in other cities, since in many respects it is based on unfounded generalisations. So their concept of bid’a can be misleading.

This point is important in order to illuminate the reasoning underlying the modernist understanding of Islam, and how such an understanding is interpreted by lay Muslims at the grassroots level. It is evident that there is inconsistency in the lay modernists’ arguments concerning the concept of bid’a. Not only do their interpretations vary but, in some cases, they were paradoxical. The idea that a bedug is bid’a is interesting when compared it with other modern innovations, such as loud speakers, which are used as tools in all Islamic ritual. Nakamura (1979:259–263) found in his research in Yogyakarta that when Muhammadiyah members were going to mosque for the ‘idul-fitri prayer they were accompanied by a drum band, instead of a bedug.

These observations invite questions in regard to the essence or the underlying reasoning of what is classified as bid’a and what is not. Why is the bedug classified as bid’a, because it is an unsuitable religious tool for use in a mosque, while a drum band is judged as suitable to accompany Muslims reciting takbir (saying ‘Allahu Akbar’: Allah is the Great) along their way to the mosque? Is the bedug seen as bid’a because it is a cultural product of the traditional Javanese? How does it differ from a loud speaker or a drum band? All are novel or modern additions which function just to complement a religious activity. These questions are the most frequently asked by the traditionalists.

adhan usually occur during the Friday prayer of traditionalist Muslims. The difference between the traditionalist and the modernist in these matters is that the former does adhan when the Friday prayer time has come and when the khatib (sermon giver) is going to start delivering his Friday sermon. For the modernist, the adhan in Friday prayer is done once only, that is when the khatib is going to deliver his Friday sermon. The bedug is a common tool available in any mosque of the traditionalists, which is used to give an indication to society that prayer time has come. Both bedug and the second adhan during Friday prayer are deemed as bid’a by the modernists since both are novel in the sense of not being available during the Prophet’s life.
Such questions seem to undermine the arguments used by people who acknowledge themselves as part of the modernist movement. Their generalisation about what is and what is not bid’a derives from inconsistent principles, particularly at the level of lay Muslims. At the elite level, the arguments are grounded on a deeper understanding of Qur’anic precepts, so that it is unlikely that such salah kaprah (misunderstanding) could occur. Hence, the problem here relates to the uneven diffusion of information. The views of the elite of the modernist at the centre might not reach their fellow members at the grassroots level. The distance from the centre has resulted in distortion in regard to the formal interpretations made by the elites.

The possibility of misunderstanding by lay followers is great in the early stage of the development of Islamic organisation in Indonesia. With just a few qualified thinkers, this misunderstanding is very possible since the political situation which surrounded Muslims in Indonesia encouraged each group to defend its position. This is a side effect which appears when a competing situation exists between religious movements. Such a situation has pushed each group to be persistently different from the other. This misunderstanding nonetheless allows us to see how these religious groups perceive their worldly and religious situation.

8.2 The Conflict Reduced

The conflict between the various groups of Muslims in Indonesia started when contact with the Middle East intensified in the early 20th century. The conflict was more pronounced after various Islamic groups emerged during the second and third decades of 20th century. The emergence of modern Islamic groups such as Muhammadiyah and NU has made manifest the conflict among Muslims at the grassroots level. This conflict was intensified when political competition between the Islamic aliran (streams) reached their peak during the liberal democracy period.

The groups’ various standpoints in terms of Islamic practice have resulted in continuous hidden conflict since each group feels its own interpretation and practice of Islam is better. In addition, each group has tried to extend its own particular practice to groups where other practices of Islam are performed. In

11 Some figures of both Muhammadiyah and NU in Jombang realised the side effects resulting from their competition in promoting their particular practices of Islam. Shiddiq Abbas, a leading figure of Muhammadiyah in Jombang, therefore felt the need to restate his program of purification. In a halal bihalal [a religious ceremony following ‘idul-fitri], he stressed that “in a religious realm, the introduction of novel things is not allowed” (so in his opinion the line is clear). This emphasis was made by reference to a certain group of religious organisations which he deemed to have crossed that line. He emphasised that purification is confined to what is called ‘masalah-masalah ibadah’ (matters relating to religious practices). He suggests that basic reasoning should be more textually Qur’anic or attentive to hadith. It is not allowed therefore to introduce additional practices which are not written in the Qur’an and hadith.
the past, conflict in Javanese villages was commonly expressed in the struggle to manage a mosque or in the struggle to lead the village. As a mosque was not only a symbol of Muslim existence in society but also a representation of a particular practice of Islam, a group which owned or managed a mosque could expand the influence of the group and its Islamic parties. An NU mosque would represent traditionalist beliefs and practices, while a Muhammadiyah mosque would promote ‘more purified Islamic beliefs and practices’. A mosque was a very important medium through which religious beliefs and practices were disseminated since Muslims gathered there five times daily to perform their practice of Islam. Since most of the mosques in Javanese villages were erected by member of the wider society rather than by certain Islamic groups, they constituted a place where the conflict between Islamic groups, especially between NU and Muhammadiyah, was manifest.

The problem of *bid'a* in certain aspects of Islamic rituals, such as *tahlil* or *ziyara*\(^\text{12}\), has been deemed by Muhammadiyah as amounting to *shirk*. Muhammadiyah members consider that much of NU's practice of Islam is mixed with that of other religions, so that NU has been called syncretic. For NU members, however, their practice of Islam can not only enriched the culture of Islam itself due to its adoption of the existing local culture, but can also be backed by strong arguments. In the opinion of one NU member, Islam not only comprises pure ritual practices as described by the Qur'an or the hadith, but also pays attention to understanding the psychological aspect of its adherents' lives. By this he means that any effort to understand the social life of an Islamic society should not neglect the psychological aspect. He suggested further that “the application of a certain interpretation in regard to such ‘*ibada* (devotional action) as *tahlil*, should take into consideration the psychological dimension of the local people's lives”. The ritual practices conducted by NU, in his opinion, have been more ‘*ibada* in character rather than deviating from the ‘real’ Islam itself. “*Tahlil*, for example, which is regarded by Muhammadiyah members as heretical, is actually very Islamic since all the *tahlil* rituals are *dhikr* (stating the oneness of Allah)”, he emphasised. So the *tahlil* itself is Islamic in essence. “What is wrong with doing a lot of such ‘*ibada* as reciting *tahlil* or *tahmid*\(^\text{13}\)”, this NU member asked.

The different Islamic practices have also been emphasised by their proponents’ different political orientations, especially during the liberal democracy period. Throughout Java, the ideological conflict between the traditionalists and the modernists at the grassroots level has been tremendous. The unwillingness of NU and Muhammadiyah members to assimilate or cooperate has been sustained.

\(^{12}\) *Ziyara* is visiting the grave. It aims to pray for the dead. Similar to *tahlil*, *ziyara* practice is embedded in NU tradition but rejected by Muhammadiyah.

\(^{13}\) *Tahmid* is to praise Allah. It is usually performed inherently in any religious ritual. So, *tahlil* and *tahmid* are two terms used by the traditionalists interchangeably.
by the political situation. Relations between the groups have also deteriorated because of their views which encourage them to be continuously different\textsuperscript{14}. As indicated by their unwillingness to marry, few NU members in villages in Java, and especially in Madura, have a negative perception of Muhammadiyah. Such a perception is still alive even today, and can be extreme in regions where NU's embeddedness has been particularly strong, and the Muhammadiyah is less known.

As the culture or religious practice of the Javanese is essentially traditional and syncretic, and hence very close to that of NU society, the Muhammadiyah's efforts to change the existing practice represent a threat to most Javanese Muslim villagers. The conflicts which flourished among Muslim groups in Indonesia during the 1950s has given rise to another situation where every group feels that it has done the correct thing in terms of its practice of religion. This ideological conflict resulted in a situation where each group humiliated the others. Among Javanese villagers there even emerged a subtle accusation that the conduct of Muhammadiyah members was less Islamic or outside Islam itself. A simple but significant case illustrates this problem in the relationship between the modernist and traditionalist (orthodox) Muslims in Java. Due to its simplicity, this case has become a joke in any conversation or social encounter between Islamic intellectuals. I will quote an extract written by an NU intellectual and published in an NU magazine of East Java. This intellectual was disappointed with the fact that among members of NU society there still exist such naive perceptions of other Islamic organisations. He wrote and I translate and paraphrase:

One night I was visited by a guest (I was told that he had come to my house five times but had not found me available). I thought he must have very important things to discuss. But when I asked him, I realised that his problem concerned his daughter. He mentioned that a young man from Banyuwangi (East Java) had asked to marry his youngest daughter, my student at the Islamic University of Malang in Semester VII. He had not responded to this request because the young man came from a different religious background. The guest realised that this young man was indeed a student of the Islamic University of Malang, but objected because the latter's religion was Muhammadiyah. My guest thus regarded Muhammadiyah as a religion. So, what is the problem? My guest's problem was that his daughter loved the young man very much (they could not be separated). His question was whether it was religiously legitimate to marry his daughter to this young Muhammadiyah man.

\textsuperscript{14} There is a hadith which suggests that: “difference (in standpoint) between my umma could be a blessing”. This hadith may establish a positive situation where Islam actually allows its people to have different standpoints in understanding a particular problem or a different ideological orientation as a means to pursue Islamic goals. Islam could actually instill a freedom of thinking among its umma.
It is evident that some NU members at the grassroots level have a very negative view of Muhammadiyah. This is expressed not only in their unwillingness to allow inter-marriage, but also in their perception that Muhammadiyah is not Islamic. I need also to give a description of how the conflict still continues to the present time. The following quote from a report in the monthly magazine, AULA, concerns the battle between NU and Muhammadiyah for ownership of an Islamic educational institution in a regency in East Java:

**NU VS MUHAMMADIYAH IN BOJONEGORO**

There are some NU properties which have changed to other ownership. The causes are ‘left unmanaged’, greed and ignorance. Today we found that a madrasa (Islamic educational Institution of NU) has been taken illegally.

…In Bojonegoro there is a land case that involves NU and Muhammadiyah. The case is concerned with ownership of the land and building of the ‘Madrasah Islahiyyah’ in Panjuna village, Kalitidu district, Bojonegoro.

…The land was *waqf* (endowment) land from H. Nurhasim, a local NU member. On this land was built ‘Madrasah Islahiyyah’ under the legal act No. 240/87 signed by Yatiman Hadisuparjo (and then renewed by the legal act No.750/1991). The legal document concerning this *waqf* mentions that the ‘Madrasah Islahiyyah’ is given as a *waqf* property to NU.

In 1990, another *waqf* document about this ‘Madrasah Islahiyyah’ was made by the KUA (the office of Ministry of Religion at the district level) of Kalitidu district suggesting Muhammadiyah as the *nazir* (recipient of the *waqf*). The village head of Panjuna asked that the latter *waqf* document be withdrawn. The NU branch at Kalitidu gave authority to the local ‘Private Office for Legal Aid’, which then reminded the KUA of the facts and accused the office and the local branch of Muhammadiyah of procuring a false *waqf* document.

—(Translated from AULA, August 1991)

The Muhammadiyah tendency in Jombang to try to increase its influence in society, in addition to its efforts of purification, has not only provoked internal conflict in Islamic society, but has also resulted in confusion among members of society who are mainly NU members or sympathisers. For lay Javanese, who have no appropriate basic knowledge in regard to their Islamic understanding, the competition between Muhammadiyah and NU has made them unsure about the essence of Islam itself.

What happened in Puton, a village in Jombang where the majority of the population were less devout Muslims, can illustrate this phenomenon. In the
beginning of the New Order government, Muslims in Puton were trying to practise Islam in a more correct way. Their reassertion of Islam pushed them to be more active Muslims in terms of Islamic practice (not just nominal Muslims as before). Their practice of Islam was traditionalist, since in this village NU had long been the sole representative of Islamic organisations. In a *tarawih*\(^\text{15}\), however, a Muhammadiyah member tried to introduce a practice commonly performed by modernists. As this practice differed from that of NU members, many people were confused, since they were new in their practice of *tarawih* and in their acquisition of Islamic knowledge. The people in Puton and in many other villages in Jombang have not been inclined to accept Muhammadiyah practice. Not only have most people in these areas been oriented to NU for a long time but also the practice of Islam offered by Muhammadiyah is culturally alien to them\(^\text{16}\).

This conflict between the two dominant Muslim groups in Jombang, which basically derives from their different interpretation of Islamic precepts as applied in their daily Islamic practice, has extended to other areas. It has impinged on the social and political domain of Jombangese lives. ‘*Asabiya* or group fanaticism\(^\text{17}\) is the driving force that affects the relationship between Muslims in Jombang. Such ‘*asabiya*, according to a Muslim intellectual in Jombang, has even weakened the pillars of unity which had been established for a long time.

The change in the bureaucratic structure brought about by the Suharto government at the beginning of the 1970s had a big impact on the relationship between various Muslim groups in Jombang. The promotion of a Muhammadiyah intellectual, Mukti Ali, to the position of Minister in the Ministry of Religion, not only constituted government social engineering that aimed to curtail the influence of NU in this department, which it had dominated for a long time, but it also changed the constellation of the social structure in the bureaucracy of the

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\(^{15}\) *Tarawih* is a prayer performed by Muslims during Ramadan (one of the months in the Muslim calendar). It is carried out after Muslims conduct *'isha* prayer in the evening. This prayer is *sunna* (recommended). The different between *tarawih* practised by NU and Muhammadiyah is that NU performed it in 20 *raka'at* (lit. bowing, unit of prayer), while Muhammadiyah 8. Both NU and Muhammadiyah base their practices of *tarawih* on the hadith. This difference was an issue of debate during the 1950s in various villages in Java.

\(^{16}\) As I mentioned in a previous section, Muhammadiyah has been trying to purify the existing religious practice of local people, which in its view is syncretic. NU, on the other hand, has been accommodating to such practice by absorbing and colouring it with Islam. Hence, NU society has a similar practice of *slametan* to that of *abangan*. The difference is that in the former the *slametan* is transformed into a more Islamic situation, while in the latter it is syncretic. All the prayers in the former are recited in Arabic, while in the latter Hindu elements are still dominant.

\(^{17}\) ‘*Asabiya*, or group fanaticism, is a sociologically common phenomenon that can occur in any society. From the Islamic perspective, ‘*asabiya* is condemned, since it can not only disadvantage the Muslim community, but can also disrupt the promoted unity between Muslim groups. Islam actually introduced a concept of brotherhood, which has been deliberately misinterpreted by various groups which are driven by political interest. ‘*Asabiya* is obvious in the Indonesian Muslims’ lives. It is interesting to look at how the promotion process for the office of Ministry of Religion at the regency or district level in Jombang and other regions is affected by a tendency towards ‘*asabiya*.}
Ministry of Religion. The change in the political map by the promotion of Mukti Ali was followed by the restructuring of all personnel in the Ministry of Religion throughout Indonesia from the central office down to the district level. NU's domination of this department was replaced by Muhammadiyah's even in cities like Jombang where the number of NU members constitutes an absolute majority.

The change in the pattern of bureaucratic leadership through politics is impressive, ignoring as it does the objective condition of the local society. It is likely that a gap has emerged which characterises the relationship between local society and these bureaucrats. The character of the bureaucratic machine is impersonal, and this condition can be attributed or applied to the existing bureaucracy from the central government to the regency level. At the district level in Java, however, the bureaucracy had been better staffed by personnel well known to local society. At the district level individual members of society know each other. Furthermore, their understanding of Islamic precepts and norms is applied more directly in their daily lives. The fact that a Muhammadiyah officer of the Ministry of Religion at the district level (Kantor Urusan Agama=KUA) has a different understanding of these precepts from the surrounding NU society can lead to problems.

An important conflict also occurred between these organisations and the LDII (the preaching institution of Islam). LDII was formerly called Islam Jamaah (lit. the group of Muslims). This group is more responsive to the existing condition of Muslim society. Socially, however, it is more exclusive since what it conceptualises as “the real Islam” is restricted to the group's own practices. Accordingly, they regard both Muhammadiyah and NU as outside Islam. The group's first move when it emerged in Ngoro, was to burn kitab\textsuperscript{18} (books) which had been used by traditionalist kiai as their references. In the opinion of members of this movement, these books would lead to stagnancy among Muslims in Java. They could divert Islam from its true course. This very exclusive and extreme conceptualisation of Islam estranged the followers of this organisation from the rest of the Islamic community. The feeling that they are the only Islamic group provoked a negative relationship with other Muslim groups since such an attitude is offensive. Due to its exclusivism, other Islamic groups cannot help but be suspicious of LDII.

The members' relations with the rest of society are not established and maintained with reference to the existing social order. The concepts of purity and impurity, derived from their self acknowledgement as the only pure Muslim group, have guided the development of such a relationship. I was told by people that a member of Ngoro society, Muhadi (my next door neighbour during my research; not his real name), has maintained very rigid relations with other members of

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with Azhar, 12 December 1992.
society. He is a small trader in Ngoro, selling such daily needs as rice. Being a member of LDII, he looked down on other Muslims who did business with him. In his shop, Muhadi tried to avoid any hand contact with his customers just because the latter were deemed impure.

Societal suspicion of this Islamic group pushed the government to ban it. The group changed its name twice following the government’s ban. In spite of kiai pressure, the government is reluctant to ban it again. The tendency of the group to emphasise the importance of zakat (alms giving) has made it self-sufficient in terms of financial support. Members are urged to allocate some of their income to support their organisation, since zakat is an important task they have to perform on the path of Allah. The former Minister of Home Affair, Rudini\(^\text{19}\), suggested that this group is potentially very strong, since it is economically independent.

Despite these facts that characterise the life of Muslim groups in Jombang and their relations, the degree of tension between them, especially between NU and Muhammadiyah, in present day Jombang has decreased significantly. The tendency to reconcile and reach mutual understanding about their differences is also growing. The NU kiai are occasionally invited to Muhammadiyah pengajian, and vice versa. Also the domination of Muhammadiyah in the management of a mosque as big as Mesjid Jami’ (the great mosque) of Jombang is much reduced. The imam (the person who leads the prayer) and the sermon giver at Friday Prayer in this mosque, for example, may come from Muhammadiyah or NU. If the imam is of Muhammadiyah background, the Friday Prayer will follow the Muhammadiyah style. If the imam is an NU member, it will be carried out in the NU style.

From several interviews with NU members in Jombang, I did not find a negative perception of Muhammadiyah, such as I have described above, since Muslims here are more open to the modern situation. NU society now rarely tries to humiliate Muhammadiyah. The term ‘Kamandulah\(^\text{20}\), which was popularly used among NU society of East Java to humiliate Muhammadiyah adherents, is not known among the younger generation in present day Jombang. Several factors sustain this situation in Jombang. Firstly, Jombang is strategically located and connects many cities in East Java. This made the flow of information concerned with either Islamic development or its politics easier to reach the Muslim society in Jombang. This was because Muslims in Jombang were more sensitive to their problems, including their internal conflicts. Secondly, Jombang has produced some well known national Islamic figures, such as Kiai Hasyim Asy’ari or the

\(^{19}\) Interview with Kiai Aziz Masyhuri, 19 April 1993.
\(^{20}\) Kamandullah is taken from Muhammadiyah. Altering a word in this way was intended to disparage. Muhammadiyah members also called NU ‘Wanao’, from the word NO (In the past NU was spelled as Nahdlatul Oelama).
current Muslim intellectuals, Dr. Nurkholis Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU national chairman. The emergence of national leading figures in Jombang has made its Muslim population proud. This has reduced differences among groups, since these figures derive not only from NU but also from Muhammadiyah. Thirdly, around one third of the devout Muslims in Jombang are involved in the tarekat movement. The existence of the various tarekat movements in Jombang has not only resulted in the clear delineation of Muslim groupings but can also broaden their members’ perspectives. Despite the divisions between the various groups due to different political orientations, they are sociologically still bound together, since these tarekat groups have the same cultural roots. NU members’ affiliation with various tarekat groups has laid down the basic principles of unity. The consciousness of the members has been raised and they can see that similarity in membership (in NU) can be complemented by different affiliations (with the tarekat movements). Their grouping as members of NU does not prevent them from acknowledging the existence of other Islamic groups, such as Muhammadiyah which tends to be anti-tarekat. In practical Islam, the practices of other Islamic groups must be acknowledged as real a practice of Islam as their own. Finally, Muhammadiyah in Jombang is relatively small in size and poses little threat to the established culture of traditional Muslims. In addition, most Muhammadiyah leading figures in Jombang come from families with NU background.

In brief, it is evident that the socio-political situation that surrounds the life of Muslim society in Jombang has not provoked extreme antagonism between Muslim groups. There has been no significant conflict between the traditionalist and modernist Islamic groups in present day Jombang. This situation is supported by the fact that the number of followers on both sides is not comparable. The traditionalist followers constitute half of the Muslim population in Jombang, while the modernists only exist in a few districts as a minority. The rest are abangan and others.

The discordant situation based on different ideological understandings has declined significantly, although each Islamic group retains a cynical attitude deriving from such differences which are expressed in everyday life. The pengajian (religious teaching) is a common forum used by Islamic groups to criticise or even humiliate others. In one pengajian session, for example, I noticed that a Muhammadiyah leader in his speech criticised a certain group of Islam for persisting in doing what he called a blind taqlid, that is following a madhab.

21 In the past the different background of Islamic groups could mean everything. Those who come from an NU background do not like any achievement of Muhammadiyah figures, and vice versa. Such a feeling has declined significantly among Muslims in Jombang, especially if such an achievement happens at the national level. Accordingly, NU members would be proud if a person from Jombang became a national figure, no matter which organisation he or she comes from. Muslim groupings in present day Jombang therefore seem to raise no problem, since they have been replaced by a more general categorisation.
(school of Islamic thoughts) without being critical. He suggested that among a certain group of Muslims all texts spoken or written in Arabic are deemed as sacred, whereas the content or meaning of these words might not have any relation to Islam or could even be classified as ‘bahasa cinta’ (words of love). The failure to understand correctly what comes from religion and what is added to it, in his opinion, is due to people's ignorance (kebodohan, literally stupidity). This criticism was actually made and directed to those Muslims, that is NU members, who due to their tendency to be more religiously minded, are inclined to be uncritical of everything that sounds Arabic.

8.3 Reformulation of Ukhuwa Islamiya

NU's effort to return to being Jam'iya Islamiya (lit. an Islamic organisation), a move which marked the defeat of Islamic politics, has produced a favourable situation for the emergence of a new consciousness among members of the necessity to work on Islamic development generally rather than becoming involved in politics. The consciousness has also pushed them to reevaluate the nature of their relationship with other Muslim groups. They try to have recourse to the source which they usually used, that is Islam itself, by revaluing the concept of ukhuwa Islamiya (Muslim Brotherhood). This new consciousness has brought them to the notion that the ideological differences between various Islamic groups should be put aside.

Previously in Jombang, as I have noted, the conflict between various Islamic groups was not as sharp as in other cities. Nevertheless, it was a common phenomenon, especially during the 1950s and the 1960s. In the opinion of a Muhammadiyah leader in Ngoro, Azhar, it was rare and almost impossible for NU members previously to sit together with Muhammadiyah members in a pengajian. This was due to the negative attitude of NU members towards Muhammadiyah. He further said that a few NU members even regarded Muhammadiyah as kafir. During the period of communist killing, according to Azhar, one kiai suggested that “setelah menyembelih PKI, ya menyembelih Muhammadiyah” (lit. after killing communists, the second step is to kill Muhammadiyah). Azhar nevertheless realised that the attitude of NU members towards his organisation is changing. When I asked some Muslim villagers about their perception of a group other than their own, for example, the response was always the same: “mereka sama-sama Islam” (they are all Muslims). This change in consciousness in respect of the relationship between various groups is significant.

Most Muslim figures in Jombang realise that group fanaticism previously marked the relationship between various Muslim groups. According to them, the political

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22 See the discussion in Chapter VII.
23 Interview with Azhar, 20 January 1993.
situation made the relationship between Muslim groups deviate from what is conceptualised by Islam, and politics made the differences between these groups an issue which estranged one group from another. Islam actually provides guidelines on how the relationship between Muslims should be. A precept of the Qur'an states that “verily Muslims are brothers”. In a well known hadith it is suggested that “a Muslim relationship's to another is like a building in which all parts are meant to support each other”. The relationship between Muslims is conceptualised in what is called *ukuwu Islamiya*. Each Muslim should treat another Muslim as a brother or sister. The concept of *ukuwu Islamiya* hence tries to bind Muslims together. As Islam is the underlying factor in this relationship, the emotional factor, arising from being similar in faith, has actually provided Muslims with a large house, that is the *umma* (Muslim society).

The essence of the concept of Muslim brotherhood, according to Kiai Arwani24, is actually inherent in the acknowledgement of the oneness of Allah. This acknowledgement can juxtapose one Muslim to another, since everything is owned by Allah. Everything done by a Muslim will essentially return to Allah, not to the individual's group or for his own benefit. In practice, the essence of this concept is applied in the life of some Muslims. For example, the concept of hadiya (offering prayers for the dead) in the *tarekat* world, according to Arwani, is an expression of such brotherhood, since Muslims in this sense are praying for other Muslims. The application of this concept is thus not limited to living Muslims but can also extend to relations between them and dead Muslims. It is very common for a *tarekat* member to offer a hadiya for his brother or another Muslim who has died.

The re-evaluation and application of *ukuwu Islamiya* in a more appropriate way represents a self critique by Muslims of themselves after they experienced and acknowledged their misconduct in regard to their relationships with each other. One may then ask: what is the attitude of Muslims towards the existence of a number of Islamic organisations, which were in fact the source that gave rise to internal conflict between them. As the *umma* or *ukuwu Islamiya* would lead to the unification of all Muslim interests for the sake of Islam, the availability of so many Islamic organisations may hinder efforts to reach such a feeling of unity. There is no single answer to this question, since there are a number of variables which should be taken into consideration. One thing that is clear, however, is that the effort to apply the concept of *umma* does not necessarily mean putting Muslims into one big institution. Not only would this be impossible, but it also contradicts the nature of Islam, which acknowledges a variety of Muslim groups either in terms of ethnic differences or differences of interests.

24 Interview with Kiai Arwani, 14 December 1995.
From the interviews which I conducted, it is interesting to note that the majority of respondents disagreed with any effort to merge the various existing Islamic organisations into one. They suggested (71.4 percent) that Islamic organisations “harus dibiarkan apa adanya” (should be kept as they are). There is no need to reduce their number. Those who advocated the formation of a sole organisation for all Muslims in Indonesia accounted for about 13.7 percent. Only 6.0 percent of respondents recommended that the number of other Islamic organisations be reduced and their members be absorbed into the respondents’ own organisation (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. Percentage of Respondents’ Attitude to the Availability of Many Islamic Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadiyah</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
<td>4 (66.7)</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>11 (7.5)</td>
<td>19 (13.0)</td>
<td>108 (74.0)</td>
<td>8 (5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5 (16.7)</td>
<td>18 (60.0)</td>
<td>7 (23.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11 (6.0)</td>
<td>25 (13.7)</td>
<td>130 (71.4)</td>
<td>16 (8.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 182.
(Source: questionnaire).

Explanation of symbols:

I. Should be grouped into my organisation
II. Should be united into one organisation
III. Should be kept as they are
IV. Do not know

The change in the perception of NU members about other Muslim groups, particularly Muhammadiyah, can be attributed to the change in attitude of NU's da’i (preacher). There are two points I would like to highlight here. The first relates to the Muslim idea of Islam. The second relates to the relationship between the various groups, or more specifically, to the Muslims’ perception of each other. If NU has changed from being political to being cultural, such a change in village life is marked by the intensification of da’wa. In the opinion of one kiai, politics is only one among several means to promote or spread Islam. Muslims are now trying to mould society's religiosity not through politics but rather by increasing society's awareness through da’wa.

Thus some Muslim leaders and kiai who have long seen the process of Islamisation by the state and by society as an inseparable effort, are inclined to choose society as their means of Islamisation rather than the power structure and political authority (Abdullah, 1988:17). It seems that kiai within NU now focus on managing education and spreading Islam generally rather than being involved in practical politics. This phenomenon is significant compared to that which existed during the 1950s when the idea of the Islamic state was so prevalent among Muslims. This phenomenon at least indicates that the number of Muslims
pursuing the idea of an Islamic state or stressing everything by relating it to Islam, such as the application of Islamic law, has decreased. It is interesting to note that when I asked some respondents what the ideal form of society was, a large number did not refer to the application of Islamic principles. In contrast, they chose other options. From my survey of 182 respondents in four villages of Jombang, only 32.4 percent preferred to have Islamic law applied in society. About 26.9 percent of respondents chose to have a prosperous society, while around 17.0 percent suggested that they wanted their society to live morally (see Table 8.2).

**Table 8.2. Percentage of Respondents’ Perspective of the Ideal Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prosperous society</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moralistic society</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Society applying Islamic law</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Society in which worldly and religious life are in balance</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Safe and harmonious society</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do not know</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: questionnaire)

Although the proportion of respondents who wanted to see the application of Islamic law is larger than any other single preference, it still only accounts for one third of all respondents. These findings indicate that the respondents are attempting to find a balance between religious matters and prosperity in their lives. The existence of pesantren, which emphasise the need to strengthen religiosity, on the one hand, and the invasion of the inevitable modernisation process on the other, have influenced respondents’ perception of what a good society is. In one respondent's view, the ideal society is not only one which is affluent but one which is also religious.

The change in the attitude of Muslims of various organisations in Jombang about their inter-relationships cannot be separated from the change in perspective among the elites of Muhammadiyah and NU at the national level. The national Muhammadiyah and NU leaders, for example, held a joint conference to discuss their problems and to try to reach mutual understanding. Some of the leaders of both Muhammadiyah and NU even proposed that these organisations should provide the same identity cards for their members.

Although this change in attitude among Muslims in Jombang has occurred most importantly at the elite level of each Muslim organisation, it has also led to similar changes at the grassroots level. The effort of reformulating the concept of ukhuwa (brotherhood), for example, has not only warranted attention from the general Muslim population in Jombang, but has also affected daily behaviour, including the attitude of NU members towards marrying their children to members of other Muslim groups. I collected data related to marriage because of its widespread importance. Socially, intermarriage between Muslim groups can
trigger changes in other aspects of their relations. For example, intermarriage between Muslim groups can reduce feelings of mutual mistrust or prejudice and can lead to better relationships in general. Previously intermarriage was a great issue among Muslims in Jombang.

The data I collected indicate that the unwillingness of NU members to marry with a member of the modernist group, Muhammadiyah, has declined significantly. Although the data only relate to attitudes, it is not rare to find members with an NU family background in Jombang married to members of Muhammadiyah. Only a small number of respondents remained uneasy about intermarriage. A common reason underlying this minority view revolves around the worry of being influenced by Muhammadiyah religious thoughts and practices. From Table 8.3 we can see that only a small percentage of respondents mentioned their dislike of intermarriage between Muslims of various groups (14.3 percent). About 82.9 percent respondents with NU background agreed with intermarriage; while 15.8 percent disapproved of such intermarriage.

Table 8.3. Perception of Intermarriage Between Members of Various Muslim Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Right</th>
<th>Do not like</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>121 (82.9)</td>
<td>23 (15.8)</td>
<td>2 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>31 (86.1)</td>
<td>3 (8.3)</td>
<td>2 (5.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>152 (83.5)</td>
<td>26 (14.3)</td>
<td>4 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 182
(Source: questionnaire)

This change in attitude, especially among NU members, may create a favourable situation for the development of Islam in Jombang in the future. Most NU respondents in present day Jombang do not see Muhammadiyah as a threat but as a partner in the obligation to develop Islam. Their acceptance of intermarriage indicates that they acknowledge that their difference with other groups is a matter of different Islamic practice and that the interpretation of Islam can vary from one group to another. It is hence feasible for various Islamic practices to be performed in one Muslim family. The wife may follow NU’s practice of Islam, while her husband can follow Muhammadiyah practice. Masyhuri, an NU respondent, told me that he had a new member in his big family, who was Muhammadiyah in background. In his opinion, this did not raise any problem since all members of the family, including the new one, had a mutual understanding of their different practice of Islam.
Table 8.4. Reasons to Accept and Refuse Intermarriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Right</td>
<td>135 (88.8)</td>
<td>8 (5.3)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9 (5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Like</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>23 (88.5)</td>
<td>3 (11.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 178
(Source: questionnaire)

Explanation of Symbols:

I. They are Muslims
II. Human right
III. Worried about adverse influence
IV. No reason

Despite this positive tendency, many respondents still prefer to marry their children to people from the same Islamic organisation as themselves. Religious reasons are dominant in sustaining this preference. In the respondents’ opinion, other people's religious background, as expressed through their affiliation with certain Islamic groups, is an important factor when considering whether to accept someone as a member of the family. This preference is understandable. Most people still think that their practices of Islam are the best compared to those of other groups, though this no longer necessarily involves disparaging the latter.

Table 8.5. Percentage of Respondents’ Preference as Marriage Partner for their Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Preference of NU background of the partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. NU</td>
<td>105 (71.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Others</td>
<td>15 (41.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 182
(Source: questionnaire)

Of the 120 respondents who chose NU members as their first preference as marriage partners for their children, 105 of them are affiliated with NU. This means that around 71.9 percent of the total number of NU respondents preferred to have their children married to people with NU family background. Only 3 respondents with NU background chose members of another Islamic organisation as their preferred choice of marriage partner for their children. They chose Muhammadiyah. The same pattern holds true of Muhammadiyah respondents. Most preferred people with Muhammadiyah background for their children. Of
the various Islamic organisations in Jombang, the majority of respondents with NU background chose Muhammadiyah members as their second choice.25

8.4 Expanding Da’wa

Since there is no longer any real problem in regard to the relationship between the various Muslim groups in Jombang, as illustrated by their willingness to strengthen the ukhuwa Islamiya, the major effort of Muslims in Jombang is hence focused on moulding people’s religiosity by extending da’wa activities. While the da’wa has traditionally been performed among the devout Muslims, in present day Jombang it is also conducted among the less devout. For NU activists, such extensions of da’wa are a realisation of the policy of ‘back to khittah’. With this policy NU is not only trying to accelerate its program of education and da’wa among its members, but also to extend such effort to the less devout.

The pattern of da’wa (preaching) carried out by Islamic leaders or da’i (preacher) in Jombang has changed. Some da’wa are planned by Islamic organisations, but such da’wa do not touch on the existing socio-cultural life of the less devout society in any radical way. The da’wa is merely a medium to deliver Islamic messages. In Ngpeh village which used to be a communist village in Ngoro district, the pengajian movements organised by the Muslimat (female NU organisation) and alhidayah (a government sponsored institution) are established on a family basis. These pengajian move from house to house every fortnight. Similar pengajian are found in other districts. They are a breakthrough which not only indicates the increased interest of Muslims in giving da’wa, but also a change in the relationship between various Islamic groups.26 This pattern of da’wa will not only prevent open conflict, derived from group exclusivism, but will also introduce new values that are properly pious from an Islamic perspective.

Factors contributing to the success of such da’wa include the persuasive nature of the da’wa conducted by kiai and other da’i in Jombang, and the current culture of the kiai and their practice of Islam. There is no significant conflict with or refusal of such da’wa on the part of the less devout. The adaptive nature of Jombang’s NU society has made the da’wa of its kiai acceptable. The kiai, for example, does not prohibit the practice of slamentan. This is not only because NU has a similar practice but also because there is clearly some Islamic influence.

25 The respondents were asked to rank preferred organisational background of people with whom their children would marry. There are five Islamic organisations I asked the respondents to choose, that is NU, Muhammadiyah, SI, MI and LDII.

26 I was told by an informant that during the 1950s relations between the devout and the less devout or abangan in Ngoro were terrible. His mother was always worried any time she had to go to the market. The mother, who was a devout Muslim, had to pass through the abangan village when she went to the market. A few abangan villagers often disturbed her by pulling down their trousers, and pointing their naked bottoms at her when she passed through their village. The same experience held true with other devout female Muslims.
in the slametan practice of the less devout. For the kiai, the problem is not how to exclude such a syncretic practice from his da’wa, but rather how to incorporate it and colour it with Islam.

It is commonly understood that da’wa should be conducted in a very smooth way. Da’wa should not confront or criticise other groups. According to one pesantren leader, such da’wa is in line with what is ordered by Islam. In his view, the existence of pluralistic Islamic groupings in Indonesia should be properly understood. Such groupings should be accepted in the context of the different understanding of Islam itself held by various segments of the Islamic community. Islam in Indonesia, he said further, varies in terms of its practice of ‘ibada and of the religious quality of its adherents. The level of devoutness is hence just a nuance or a degree of the quality of belief that can be attained by any Muslim. The difference between the devout and the less devout is therefore a matter of quality; it does not touch on the theological domain. This kiai asked his colleagues to delete terms or jargon such as abangan which can split the umma. He mentioned several misconceptions regarding the concept of abangan. Not only is such a concept politically disadvantageous for the unity of the Islamic community, but also the content or meaning of this concept is misleading, since it has been distorted for political ends.

The same strategy has been adopted by other Islamic organisations. Muhammadiyah has changed its pattern of da’wa among Muslims in Jombang, especially among the less devout. Muhammadiyah, with its idea of purification, has traditionally tried to cut off or cleanse Islam from traditions adopted by the less devout (abangan). It typically applies a concept of bid’a, which basically rejects religious beliefs such as practised by the abangan. But with its efforts to be more accommodating to the existing culture, it has tried to be less radical in its da’wa among the abangan. Muhammadiyah in Jombang is gradually gaining new members from among former abangan. A young Muhammadiyah activist in Ngoro suggested that the change in strategy to be more accommodating to

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27 From the opening address by Hajj Yusuf Hasyim, the leader of Pesantren Tebuireng, in accordance with NU's bahsul masa 'il (discussion on religious problem) held in Tebuireng, 12 January 1993.

28 Hajj Yusuf Hasyim further suggested that to relate political affiliation to the quality of one's religiosity could be misleading. He here is referring to a categorisation of Javanese political affiliation based on religiosity as conceptualised by Geertz (1965) and Feith (1970). These scholars suggest that those who were affiliated with the PNI (Indonesian National Party) or the communist party were abangan, while those who were affiliated with NU or Masjumi were santri. Hajj Yusuf Hasyim gave the example about Subandrio, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Soekarno government, whom he knows well. In his opinion, Subandrio is a good Muslim. Based on a story which was told by Subandrio himself, Hajj Yusuf Hasyim jokingly stated that not one of NU's kiai would be as devout as Subandrio in regard to 'ibada. Subandrio at that time was in prison. He was said to perform tahajjud (midnight prayer) very often. So Hajj Yusuf Hasyim questioned whether Subandrio could be subsumed among the abangan because he was not affiliated with an Islamic party. In his opinion, one's Muslimness, therefore, cannot be reduced to or determined by one's affiliation with any political party. His attitude as expressed here is political. He is eager to promote the same perception that Muslims are not divided due to their various practices of Islam.
the existing socio-cultural situation is a necessity if Muhammadiyah wants to be accepted by Jombang society. He conducted a door-to-door *da’wa* encouraging the people around his neighbourhood (who are mostly *abangan*) to attend *pengajian* and practise Islam in their daily lives without promoting his Muhammadiyah message. He avoided the criticisms commonly made by a few NU *da’i* which impinge on the *abangan’s* way of life. He helped the poor and sick *abangan* who could not afford medical treatment by asking Muhammadiyah clinics in his district to give free medical treatment.

The accommodative nature of Muhammadiyah *da’wa* in Ngoro district has resulted in the sympathetic acceptance of the *abangan* who attend its *pengajian*. In a Muhammadiyah *pengajian*, I was initially surprised when I met my young neighbour in Ngoro. I was surprised because I knew that in his daily life this young Javanese was *abangan* in character. He organised cock fights, and on certain occasions, such as the festival for commemorating Indonesian independence, he was assigned to be one of the committee members of the ‘Jaran Kepang’ performance (a Javanese performing art). When I asked him why he attended Muhammadiyah’s *pengajian*, he told me that the Muhammadiyah *da’i* focused more on what Islam is and what Muslims should do to face the future rather than criticising the Javanese way of life. He noted further that some NU *da’i* often made criticisms which impinged on ethical problems of Javanese daily life, such as going to the toilet and other matters. This was offending to him in many respects.

It is clear that the effort of *da’wa* of various Islamic organisations and the change in their attitude towards the less devout has resulted in a change in their religiosity. At least the younger generation of the less devout Muslims in Jombang differ from their parents in their view of Islam and the devout society in general. A number of important factors have contributed to this change. One already discussed is the *da’wa* program carried out effectively by various Islamic organisations. Another relates to changes in the process of primary socialisation among children in general in Jombang. An increasing focus on Islam and a growing identification with it as a social entity has followed the establishment of Islamic schools in a large number of villages in Jombang. In Puton and Bareng, two villages which had no mosque during the 1960s, there are now *madrasa* (Islamic educational institutions) which provide Islamic teaching at primary school level. In villages that are located very close to capital district towns, there are Islamic kindergarden or pre-school programs. This level of Islamic education is called “Taman Pendidikan al-Qur’an” (TPA, Qur’anic Education of Kindergarten) which provides formal lessons in the recitation of the Qur’an.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{29}\) I have to differentiate between this kind of formal education and me-*ngaji*. Me-*ngaji* is a traditional system of education in reciting the Qur’an which is conducted informally. Children usually come to a *guru* (teacher) to learn Qur’anic recitation. Me-*ngaji* sessions are usually conducted after *magrib prayer*, around 7 pm. In contrast, Qur’an Education in Kindergarten is held during school hours, usually in the
In Puton and Bareng, such schools are attended by children whose parents are less devout or *abangan* in background. Moreover, the introduction of Islamic norms and values is not restricted to *madrasa* or TPA and *pesantren* in general but also occurs in public school, since in the latter Islam is also taught as a subject. For those children who continue their education to a higher level, their introduction to Islam is more extensive, since in most big cities and campuses in Java, Islam is obviously taught and practised by students in their daily lives. The students who then return to their villages introduce these new ideas and Islamic concepts which they have obtained from their period of living in a more urbanised situation. In Bareng, for example, there is a young man who is studying at Brawijaya University in Malang. He has been organising a *pengajian* group among his friends in Bareng, although his parents are of *abangan* background.

It is therefore not surprising that a change in religiosity is occurring among villagers in Jombang. Even if this cannot be subsumed under ‘Islamic reassertion’, it certainly marks a decrease of *abangan* practice in general. ‘Upacara adat’ (traditional ceremony), for example, is only preserved by the older generation of villagers. Only this generation acknowledge the meaning of such ceremonies. The younger generation, who have been socialised into popular culture, are not interested in understanding such religious practices. In Puton, for example, it is difficult to find anyone who can lead an ‘adat ceremony’, a situation which leads to less qualified people occupying the religious position of *tukang ujub* (local term for an expert to lead the traditional religious ceremony). Formely in Puton, *tukang ujub* constited a specialist in the various types of expertise in the religious domain. In contrast to a *modin*, a government promoted religious position which functioned to carry out Islamic rituals, *tukang ujub* specialised in leading religious rituals which were more traditional or Javanese in character. When a person in Puton intended to hold a wedding ceremony, he would ask a *modin* to conduct it. However, in the case of a *slametan* ritual, such as ‘hajat bumi’ (lit. rituals to have good soil), he would invite the *tukang ujub* to conduct the ritual. The shortage of experts in the domain of adat (lit. tradition) in present day Puton has resulted in a changed pattern for the adat ceremony itself. This situation has also resulted in a former *santri* occupying the *tukang ujub* position. This promotion occurred because this former *santri* was the only person who was expert in ritual practices. It is therefore not surprising to find a ritual such as *slametan*, which was *abangan* in character now furnished with more *santri* symbols.

In brief, there is an expansion and intensification of *da’wa* program promoted by Muslims in Jombang. Various Muslim groups despite their differences carried out this program and expand it to reach what was commonly called the *abangan* morning. *Pengajian*, although it literally has the same meaning as me-nga*jì*, refers to a religious gathering and sermon among older Muslims.
society. Thus there is a process of Islamic reassertion among the *abangan* villages which marks not only the success of the NU program of ‘back to khittah’ but also the Muslim program in general in introducing Islam. As the *kiai* is the guardian of the Islamic society in villages in Java, the expansion of Islamic influence among the *abangan* means also the expansion of the *kiai* influence. In other words, the *da’wa* program is a means to remould the *kiai* leadership after they experienced a decline in their political influence.