

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

There are two formal institutions through which the *kiai's* relationship with society is established. These institutions have simultaneously created two different patterns of relationship; and they constitute important avenues which sustain the *kiaiship* in Java. The two institutions are *pesantren* and *tarekat*. Although the *pesantren* and the *tarekat* constitute two important institutions associated with *kiaiship*, each of them has its own character. In addition, there exists variation and nuances that differentiate one *pesantren* or *tarekat* from another.

The *pesantren* in Jombang are not stereotypical. In addition to the traditional *pesantren*, there are some modern *pesantren* as far as their educational system is concerned. The large *pesantren* in Jombang constitute modern educational institutions with little of their traditional character remaining. In the *tarekat*, emerging variation is marked by an increasing number of *aliran* (factions), each of which has different ritual practices. Both the *pesantren* and the *tarekat* are led by *kiai*. The *pesantren* and *tarekat* worlds in Indonesia are associated with NU society. They are, however, not structurally established within the NU organisation. They are culturally recognised as associated with NU because the *kiai* of the *pesantren* and of the *tarekat* are members of NU. Since NU has two (informal) affiliated institutions, the *pesantren* and the *tarekat*, we can infer that within NU there exist various sub-cultures, each of which differs from others in many respects. Although all of these institutions remain under the umbrella of NU, their differences are indicated through the attitudes and behaviour displayed by their followers.

As the roles of the *pesantren* and the *tarekat* are so dominant in the life of some NU members in Jombang, their allegiance is given to the *pesantren* and the *tarekat* rather than to NU itself. This means that NU's strength, in practice, lies in its sub-institutions. To put it another way, the strength of NU leadership has been established and centred on the leadership of the *kiai* in these two institutions. Popular emotional attachment towards NU has for a long time been built through the *pesantren* and *tarekat*. It is the *kiai*, as leaders of *pesantren* or *tarekat* who, due to their closeness to local society, have established an ideological commitment among NU members and related them to NU as an organisation. In other words, it is the *kiai* who run *pesantren* or lead *tarekat*, not NU itself, who have mass followers identified as NU members.

There are several main points which arise from my discussion in regard to *kiai* leadership in Jombang. Firstly the relationship between the *kiai* and his society is extremely strong, marking a special characteristic of Muslim lives in Jombang. The *kiai* occupy a highly respected position in this society. This is because

Muslims in Jombang have a society which has been moulded by the existence of so many *pesantren*. The *kiai's* knowledge of Islam is hence an important factor which makes him a respected person in his society. Compared to that of the *pesantren kiai*, however, the relationship between the *tarekat kiai* and their followers is stronger. The emotional attachment, imbued with religious overtones, is more clearly expressed. The *murshid* in the *tarekat*, who is seen as a spiritual guide who would bring those individuals involved in the *tarekat* closer to Allah, is very decisive in establishing this relationship. That is why the influence of the *murshid* in the *tarekat* is so strong, enabling the *murshid* and his *khalifa* to build a cohesive community held together by the same emotion. Certain members of society hope that they can receive *baraka* by getting in touch with the *kiai*. It is commonly believed that *baraka* flows from the hand of the *kiai*.

However, each *kiai*, as an informal Islamic leader, is independent from another. Thus conflicts which may arise from the *kiai's* different political views can lead to indirect conflict between their followers. This conflict, which does not usually impinge on the ideological domain, actually constitutes an expression of the tension among the *kiai* as leaders of *pesantren* or of *tarekat*. The conflict which emerged in the *Tarekat Qadiriyyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah* when its leader joined the government party is a good example. This conflict demonstrated the power of the *kiai* in influencing Muslims in Jombang. *Kiai Musta'in*, the leader of the *Tarekat Qadiriyyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah* and the national leader of the *Jam'iyah Ahli Thoriqoh Al-Mu'tabaroh*, was abandoned by a large number of his followers who left him to follow other *kiai*. This case indicated that the authority of even a greatly admired *kiai* to influence society is limited. The *kiai* who held a different political opinion at that time left their colleague, *Kiai Musta'in*, and tried to establish another *tarekat* from the one that he led. Followers who left *Kiai Musta'in* joined the new *tarekat* led by these *kiai*. Another example of the independent authority of a single *kiai* was the conflict which followed the introduction of free political affiliation after NU launched its 'back to khittah' policy. The *kiai* in Jombang split into three groups, followed by their followers or sympathisers. In addition, these conflicts also indicate that NU as an organisation in Jombang does not have a monopoly of power. In certain cases it might be powerless, since the existing power is spread among the *kiai* running the *pesantren* or heading the *tarekat*. Such dispersion of power indicates the fragility of the social structure in NU society. This structure can easily incur social tension, or even lead to conflict, when the different attitudes held by the *kiai* of the various *pesantren*, the *kiai* of the *tarekat*, or differences between the *kiai* of the *pesantren* and the *tarekat*, cannot be reconciled.

Secondly, Islam in Jombang was, and to a certain extent still is, embedded in the life of its society. This is a result of long established *pesantren* there. The *kiai* through their *pesantren* had an important role in inculcating Islamic values and norms into the lives of Muslims in Jombang. This was so, not only because the

*kiai* were informal charismatic leaders in Indonesian society, but also because they were committed to the formation of a society characterised by Islam. In other words, the institutionalisation of Islamic values was made possible by the contribution of the *kiai*. Through their informal leadership role, the *kiai* made society more religious, as conceptualised by Islam, in all aspects of life. The *kiai*, as a group, tried to make the existing social order compatible with religious ideals or to nativise these religious ideals to be compatible with the existing order. The religious requirements which the *kiai* believes in have created ideals which he must strive to realise, for, as Geertz (1965) suggests, those who accept religion as their ultimate source of authority are obliged to bring their worldly experiences into harmony with the world symbolised in religious behaviour.

The success of the *kiai* in inculcating Islamic values owes much to the fact that their leadership is different from other formal and informal leaders in Indonesia. With a charismatic pattern of leadership, the *kiai* form good, close relationships with their followers, a situation which cannot be created by other leaders. Especially in the *tarekat*, the relationship can be described as a 'guru-murid' (master-student) relationship, or more theoretically, clientilism, in which subordination of the clients is a necessity.

Finally, Muslims in Jombang have access to the wider socio-political life of the nation, since they have for a long time included figures with a national reputation. Some *kiai* from Jombang have been national leaders of NU and of PPP, which placed them among the national political elite. It is understandable that the vicissitudes of national politics have often been felt by Muslims in Jombang. In addition, any political conflict among Muslim figures or groups at the national level has also been followed by conflict between various related groups in Jombang. The conflict within the NU faction in the PPP national leadership which occurred at the end of the 1980s is the most obvious example. This conflict gave rise to conflict among *kiai* in Jombang. Two leadership positions appeared in NU, and Muslims at the grassroots level split according to the line taken as a result of their *kiai*'s different political attitudes.

There are some interesting points which need to be presented here in relation to the *kiai*'s political leadership among Muslims in Jombang. Muslims in Jombang exhibit a strong Islamic attitude in relation to their political performance. The close attachment of Muslims to the Islamic political party was not merely because Islam was embedded in their lives but can also be attributed to and influenced by the *kiai*'s continued support for the Islamic party. The *kiai*, as persons who had great concern about Islam, tried to establish what was called 'Islamic politics'. The convergence between the Muslim tendency to support the Islamic party and the *kiai*'s support for it was an important factor which contributed to the popularity of the Islamic party in the eyes of Muslims in the core *kecamatan* in Jombang. This was evidenced by the fact that in this core the Islamic parties

took the lead in the 1971 general election. For example, although it did not represent a majority, the Islamic parties received more than 40 percent of the vote in nine out of 17 *kecamatan* in Jombang. In five *kecamatan*, they received more than 50 percent. This figure continued at nearly the same level in following general elections until the 1987 general election when PPP's share of the vote declined significantly in almost all *kecamatan*.

The *kiai* leadership in Jombang is, however, changing. The change derives particularly from the changing situation in relation to *pesantren* education. The *pesantren* have been transformed by establishing a schooling system that has created a *santri* society which is more modern in character. The same holds true in the wider society in Jombang since the Muslim population is readily influenced by the inevitable change occurring in society at large. These changes in the *pesantren* and in Muslim society in Jombang have impacted on the leadership of the *kiai* in general. There emerges a process of profanisation of charisma. By profanisation I mean that the *kiai's* charisma, which gives them a respected social position in their society, has become less influential. The *santri* demonstration that occurred in *Pesantren Darul Ulum* is an obvious example. A similar event also occurred in *Pesantren Tebuireng*. Such demonstrations would have previously been unthinkable in the world of *pesantren*. It needs to be underlined, however, that this change in regard to *kiai* leadership, as a result of changes in society, has been gradual, since the change in the society itself has been partial, in the sense that it has happened mainly among the younger Muslims, such as the students of the *Universitas Darul Ulum*.

The change in the *kiai* political leadership began when NU launched its 'back to khittah' policy. This change in the *kiai's* politics gave rise to the change in the position of Islamic politics. The *kiai* who introduced the religious obligation on Muslims in regard to politics cancelled this injunction when they freed politics from any religious involvement. Thus despite the external factors which contributed to the decline in political Islam in Jombang, such as the introduction of 'Azas Tunggal' by the government, by which Islam was no longer an ideology for any political party, the change in the *kiai's* politics was actually a decisive factor. The political attitude of the few *kiai* who became affiliated with Golkar gave rise to various political affiliations among devout Muslims in Jombang. As the *kiai* through NU's 'back to khittah' freed themselves and Muslims in general from affiliation with a particular political party, their politics has given rise not only to the emergence of various political orientations among devout Muslims but has also resulted in a redirection decline in Islamic politics and in the *kiai's* political influence as well. It is not surprising that in almost all cases, the politics of individual *kiai* were not followed by all their followers. While some followers of the *kiai* who have supported Golkar since 1987 copied their lead, others continued to support PPP. In the same way, although a large number of followers of individual *kiai* who supported PPP have continued to support this party, a

few of them have deviated from their *kiai* by joining Golkar. These facts indicate that an individual *kiai's* political lead is not necessarily followed by all his followers. To put it differently, in present day Jombang, following the *kiai's* political example is not an absolute obligation for all Muslims. Not only is there no longer a convergence between Muslim ideas of politics and that of the *kiai*, there is also no longer a moral obligation in regard to politics.

Looking at this change in regard to *kiai* political leadership in Jombang, we can assume that a similar pattern has occurred in other regions of Indonesia. As the embeddedness of Islam in the life of Muslims and their politics is not a characteristic solely applicable to Jombang, the change in political Islam brought about by either the introduction of 'Azas Tunggal' or by the change in *kiai* politics has generally affected Muslim politics in other regions. The pattern of local conflict which has occurred in Jombang may also have occurred in other regions. A pattern of *kiai* leadership similar to that in Jombang is also found in other regions. One can therefore infer that a change in the pattern of political leadership is also occurring in other regions, especially in East Java.

It is interesting to note that although the change in Islamic politics in general actually marks an apparent decline in Indonesian Muslim politics, the conflict of NU members with those of other components in PPP has enabled NU leaders and the *kiai* in general to rethink the principle of the 'struggle for Islam'. The 'back to khittah', which essentially pushes *kiai* and NU leaders to focus on developing NU society's religiosity, has encouraged NU *kiai* not just to be politically oriented. They focus now on expanding their *da'wa* activities and developing their Islamic educational programs. This means that their efforts can be directed to the benefit of Islamic society in general. This tendency has had an impact on improving the relationship of NU members with members of other Islamic groups. The ideological line which demarcated various Muslim groups became blurred after NU's involvement in politics was altered.

The efforts not to be politically oriented has benefited the NU society at the grassroots, because *kiai* can now focus their attention more on developing society, and has consolidated the *kiai's* position in their society. The conflict in PPP highlighted the *kiai's* changing political position, as expressed by the decrease of NU influence in this party. NU's return to being a socio-religious organisation can thus be seen as an effort to retain a position for *kiai* in the society. This means that although the *kiai's* position in the formal electoral process is less influential since they have offered Muslims an open political orientation and affiliation, through 'back to khittah' the *kiai* have consolidated and restrengthened their moral position. Furthermore, this restrengthening of their moral position means also restrengthening their political position in a wider context, since by retaining their moral position the *kiai* retain their position as the leading figures in Javanese Muslim society.

The efforts of not being politically oriented received support especially from a large part of NU's younger generation. Nevertheless, a number of NU *kiai* in Jombang and Java in general tried to revive the old paradigm which encouraged NU to be involved in politics after almost a decade of NU's 'back to khittah' policy. The enthusiasm of these *kiai* in politics was expressed by their eagerness to seize the position of President in the PPP national leadership. They held a meeting in a *pesantren* in Rembang, East Java, preceding the PPP congress in the second half of the 1994s. This indicated not only their inclination to be politically oriented as shown by their being continuously active in PPP but also their efforts to bring NU's flag into PPP. Thus despite the formal NU decision not to be politically oriented, the old perspective of a close relationship between Islam and politics or, in a more precise words, of using politics as a means of struggling for Islam remains strong among *kiai*.

Having two distinct political orientations among its members, one can speculate that for the near future the NU's *kiai* will remain important figures. They will play an important role socially and politically. This is because Muslims' willingness to regard the *kiai* as the guardians of the morality of society will continue their dependence on *kiai* legitimation. It is not surprising that the government, for example, will also continue to seek the *kiai's* legitimation for the acceptance of sensitive and crucial policy. Thus the success of *kiai* efforts in introducing an open political orientation, which led to the decrease in their political influence as shown by the changing pattern of electoral behaviour, does not necessarily mean a loss of *kiai* influence in society. Instead, it gave a chance for the *kiai* to consolidate and strengthen their position in society. As 'back to khittah' has enabled NU members to be affiliated with any political party, it means also that the *kiai's* influence is not confined to members of the former Islamic party but also includes those in Golkar and PDI.