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**A Snapshot of Muhammadiyah Social Change and
Shifting Markers of Identity and Values**

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A Snapshot of Muhammadiyah Social Change and Shifting Markers of Identity and Values

INTRODUCTION

Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second largest mass-based Muslim organization, claims a membership of approximately 25 million people, and an internal infrastructure that includes over 11,700 branch offices (at provincial, district, subdistrict, and village levels) throughout the nation, 450 hospitals and clinics, 174 universities and over 10,000 schools (including kindergartens) nationwide.¹ Founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Muhammadiyah is the institutional manifestation in Indonesia of the reformist/modernist movement sweeping the Muslim world at the turn of the century.² Its leaders and intellectuals draw on the thought of Islamic scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida in articulating a vision of a modern, scripturalist Islam drawn from the Qur'an and hadith rather than the interpretations of the ulama of the middle ages, and holding up the practice of *ijtihad*³, or individual interpretation of scriptures as a key element of modernist Islam.⁴

Muhammadiyah has been historically an urban-based and oriented organization, its membership predominantly lower-middle to middle class, and more likely to be professionals, bureaucrats and teachers than farmers, laborers, or fishers. Muhammadiyah played an important role through its representation within the bureaucracy during the New Order (1965-1998), especially within the Ministry of Education. Amien Rais, head of Muhammadiyah at the end of the New Order, was seen as one of the key reformist leaders calling for democratic transition in 1998, and post-Suharto, Muhammadiyah has been an important social and political force determining the trajectory of a democratic Indonesia.

The past 15 years has been a time of transition, introspection, and sometimes heated internal division, as Muhammadiyah has navigated its course and sought to solidify its own identity and relevance in the 'new' Indonesia.⁵ Often occupying the middle-to- conservative range of the spectrum of Islamic thought and practice in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah under Suharto often reinforced state policies, and through ICMI and other vehicles, facilitated Suharto's engagement

¹ These figures are found on the official Muhammadiyah website at <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/id/content-49-det-profil.html> (accessed 22 Oct, 2012).

² Howard Federspiel positions Muhammadiyah as part of the Muslim orthodox reformation of the twentieth century, distinguishing it from syncretic Islam and secularistic Islam. Federspiel, "The Muhammadiyah: A Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia," *Indonesia* 10 (October, 1970): 57-79. James Peacock characterizes Muhammadiyah as a puritan movement, in *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Berkeley: 1978).

³ Although the actual practice of '*ijtihad*' is actually based on collective interpretation of the Majlis Tarjih, the body within Muhammadiyah with the authority to make doctrinal decisions for Muhammadiyah. Thanks to Michael Feener for this insight.

⁴ Sirajuddin Syamsuddin argues that Muhammadiyah synthesized Abduh's Islamic liberalism and attention to the "modernizing spirit of the West" with Rida's strict scripturalism and salafism. Syamsuddin, "Religion and Politics in Islam: the Case of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia's New Order", unpublished dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1991; p.220.

⁵ Mitsuo Nakamura eloquently describes the multitude of often contradicting forces assailing Muhammadiyah in the post-New Order Indonesia in his preface to the second edition of his seminal *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town, c.1910-2010*, (ISEAS: 2010).

with mainstream/conservative Islam.⁶ After 1998 however, Muhammadiyah cadre found themselves in a new political environment, and began to explore more actively the world and discourse of NGOs, activism, and a reformist democratic agenda.⁷ At the same time, with the democratic freedoms of post New Order Indonesia, Islamist groups and parties began to proliferate – Muhammadiyah found itself competing with many other Islamic and Islamist groups for influence and allegiance amongst modernist and conservatively-inclined Muslim communities. Groups like Hizbut Tahrir and parties like PKS (Partai Kesejahteraan Bangsa: Justice Welfare Party) began to make inroads in the Muhammadiyah membership and school and mosque networks. Finally, in the urban spaces where Muhammadiyah predominates, globalization and modernization are bringing many new distractions and alternative vehicles for engagement that draw on the time and allegiance of the students, young professionals, and bureaucrats of Muhammadiyah.

Recognizing the extent of the external and internal forces of change that have buffeted Muhammadiyah for more than a decade, The Asia Foundation (TAF) sought to take a snapshot of the organization to see, across a few key sectors, what the Muhammadiyah of today looks like. TAF partnered with LSI (Lembaga Survey Indonesia: Indonesia Survey Institute) and PPIM (Pusat Pengajian Islam dan Masyarakat: Center for Islam and Community Studies) to conduct a nation-wide quantitative survey, followed by in-depth Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) aimed at gathering both quantitative and qualitative data on a range of issues related to how Muhammadiyah members perceive their own group's identity, and how it may be changing. This is truly a snapshot in the sense that there are no baseline/endline comparisons that can be made – a survey like this was not conducted 10 or 20 years ago.⁸ Nevertheless, there is enough strong historical and ethnographic scholarship and knowledge of what Muhammadiyah has been in the past to be able to get a sense of change and trendlines. This paper will discuss the results of this survey, in particular focusing on four key areas: a) consumption of social services- particularly health and education, b) the role of religious leaders within Muhammadiyah, c) the relationship between Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, and d) views on democracy, gender, and pluralism.⁹

⁶ For more on ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia; Union of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) and its relationship with the state during the New Order, see Robert Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class" *Indonesia* 53 (October 1993).

⁷ See Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press: 2007) pp 204-207 for a nuanced discussion of the new directions in Muhammadiyah spurred by thinkers such as (the late) Moeslim Abdurrahman and activists of JIMM (Jaringan Islam Moderate Muhammadiyah; Network of Moderate Muslims of Muhammadiyah) and contrasting (and more conservative) elements within the Majelis Tarjih of Muhammadiyah.

⁸ That said, both PPIM and LSI have been taking public opinion polls over the past decade, and PPIM's survey of 2002 includes questions of Muslim attitudes on tolerance, Islamism, and democracy that may offer some general comparison benchmarks to this survey. It was written up in Saiful Mujani and William Liddle, "Politics, Islam, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Democracy* Volume 15, Number 1 (January 2004); pp 109-123.

⁹ At the time this survey was conducted, the author was the Country Representative of The Asia Foundation in Jakarta, and commissioned this research. While the author is no longer affiliated with TAF, survey data is used in this paper with full knowledge and permission of current Asia Foundation leadership.

Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest mass-based organization, and Muhammadiyah have a long and often-times contentious historical relationship, at times related to doctrinal conflicts between "traditionalist" (NU) and "modernist" (Muhammadiyah) Islam, and at other times more contemporary political contestations.¹⁰ The survey commissioned by TAF was designed to gather data on both Muhammadiyah and NU. While the charts presented in this paper include the data on NU as that is how they were originally formatted, this paper focuses primarily on developments with Muhammadiyah. That said, some comparative analysis is woven throughout, as often the organizations are understood (and understand themselves) in contrast to the other, as a quintessential "Other" and thus comparative data can provide deeper insights into some identity questions.

SURVEY METHODS

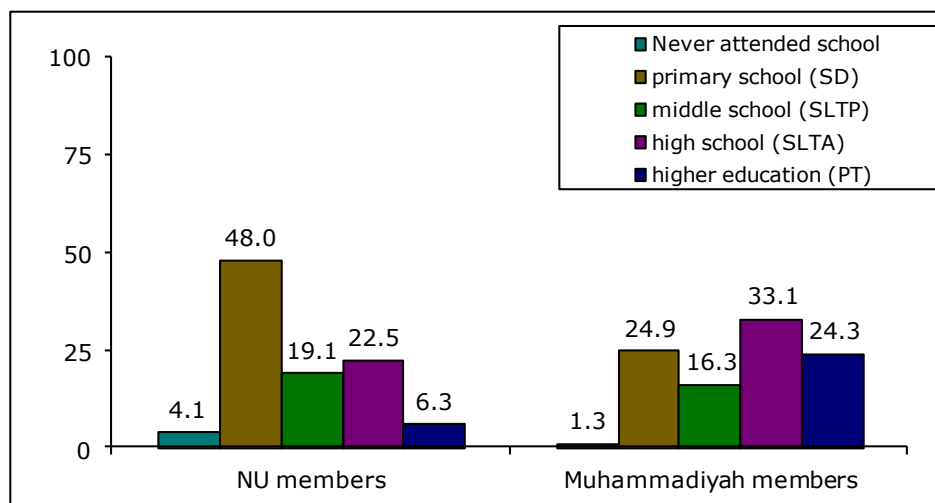
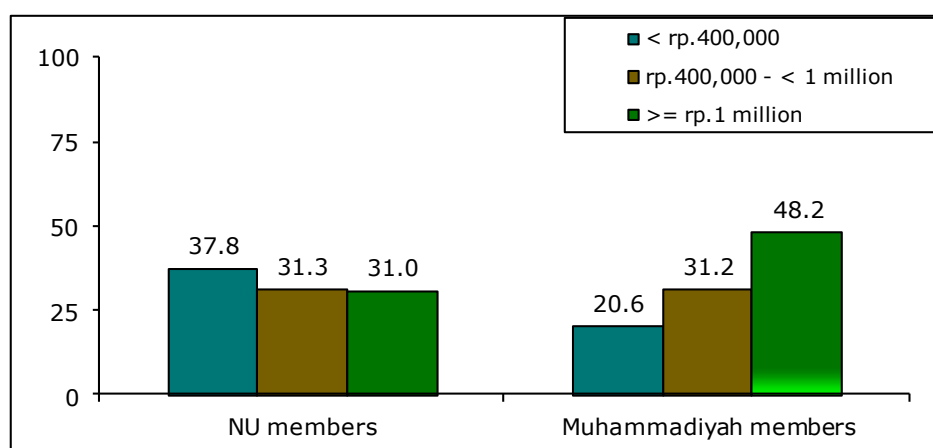
The survey data was collected from August 18–30, 2010. The population sample was randomly selected from Indonesian citizens with the right to vote, i.e., people who were at least 17 years old, or married, when the survey took place. The sample size was 1,850 people (after oversampling in Yogyakarta Special Region [DIY] and East Java, each with 400 respondents), using multistage random sampling with a margin of error of +/- 3% at a 95% level of reliability. The sample came from 33 provinces, distributed proportionally. Respondents were randomly chosen from five neighbourhoods (RT) in each village selected. In each neighbourhood, two family heads (KK) were chosen. For the KK that were selected, one person with the right to vote was randomly (with regard to gender) selected. Respondents were interviewed by trained interviewers in groups of 10 respondents per interviewer. Quality control was performed on the interview results (a supervisor conducted checks on selected respondents, covering 20% of the total sample). The quality control found no significant errors.

The second stage of the research was a qualitative process using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which were conducted in December 2010. The FGDs engaged leadership from both organizations separately and encouraged leaders to reflect on some key issues revealed by the survey. FGDs were held in Yogyakarta, East Java, West Sumatra, West Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB).

SURVEY RESULTS

Prior to presenting the data on the four thematic areas mentioned above, I would like to present some demographic data on socioeconomic and education levels of average Muhammadiyah membership, as well as on the organization itself – affiliation levels and reasons for affiliation.

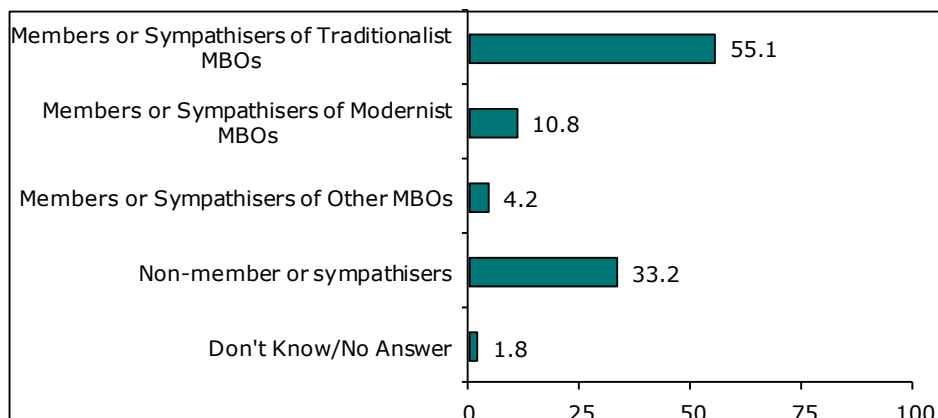
¹⁰ For background and history to the traditionalist/modernist and NU/Muhammadiyah tension, see Chapter Two of Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, (ISEAS: 2009).

Figure 1: Education Levels, by Percent**Figure 2: Monthly Income Levels, by Percent**

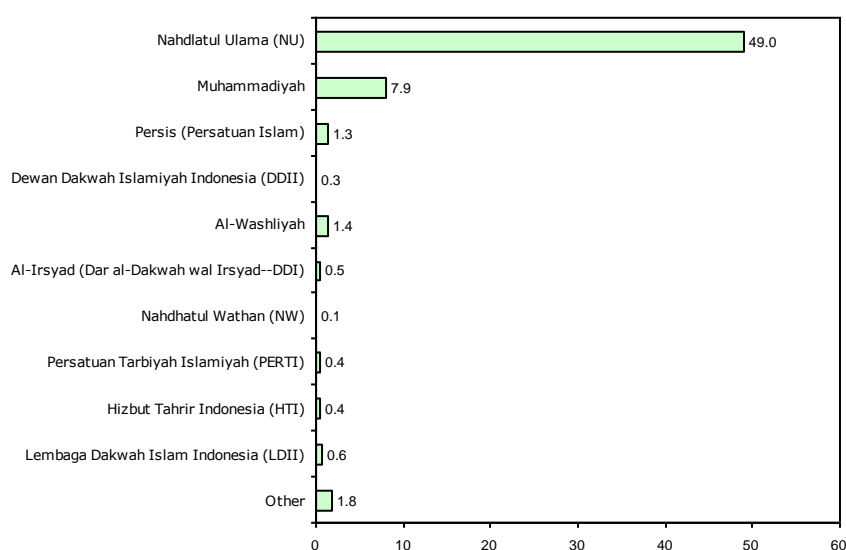
The first two charts indicate that traditional assumptions about Muhammadiyah remain true – that at least vis-à-vis NU, Muhammadiyah members have higher socio-economic standing and are better educated, with over half of Muhammadiyah respondents at least reaching high school, almost a fourth of them having higher education, and nearly half being in the top income category of over Rp 1 million (approx SGD 85) monthly.

There has been much discussion about whether “mass-based organizations (MBO)”¹¹ like NU and Muhammadiyah remain important, relevant, influential social entities in Indonesia given rapid globalization and modernization. Many of the survey questions and results get at this issue, but when asked directly about affiliation with MBOs, we found a surprisingly high proportion of respondents (nearly 70 percent) professing affiliation with a mass-based religious organization of some kind (Figure 3).

¹¹ “Mass Based Organization (MBO)”, or “Ormas” is a term used by the Suharto regime to include, and to depoliticize, the primarily Muslim organizations that hold nation-wide, grassroots membership and infrastructure. This being the prevailing term that encompasses both NU and Muhammadiyah, as well as other large religious organizations, it was the term most frequently used in this survey to denote a mass-based religious organization.

Figure 3: Affiliation with Mass Based Organizations, by Percent

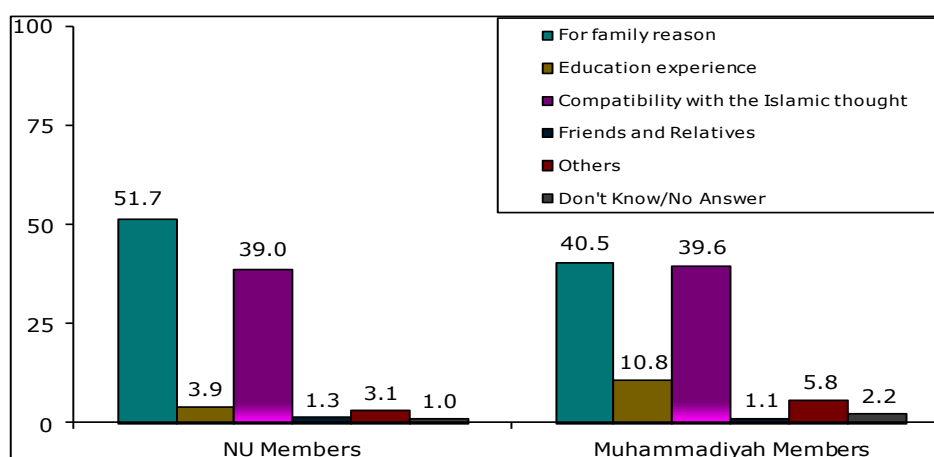
A considerably more surprising result is the relatively low levels of professed affiliation with Muhammadiyah (7.9%), especially when compared with the professed affiliation with NU (49%). The prevailing public narrative is that however many members NU has at any given time, Muhammadiyah membership is about 10 million fewer – however these figures would indicate otherwise (Figure 4). This preliminary finding needs to be followed up by more rigorous research into changes in affiliation and membership levels over time. If it is true that membership in Muhammadiyah is declining, one would want to know a) why, and b) where former Muhammadiyah members have gone? Are they shifting over to NU – a very unlikely prospect. One possibility is alluded to in Hilman Latief’s recent dissertation, in which he documents the extensive philanthropic and social-welfare activity of Muhammadiyah-affiliated organizations.¹² It may be that respondents who are involved in this broad network of NGOs, charities, and social organizations that are loosely associated with Muhammadiyah, do not consider themselves to be “core” Muhammadiyah members when asked such a question in a survey. Again, more extensive research is necessary to unpack this finding.

Figure 4: Affiliation Level Breakdown, by Percent

¹² Hilman Latief, “Islamic Charities and Social Activism Welfare, Dakwah and Politics in Indonesia” unpublished dissertation, University of Utrecht, August 2012.

This survey also explored people's reasons and motivations for joining Muhammadiyah and other MBOs. The results show that for Muhammadiyah members, family reasons and compatibility of religious teachings are equally important motivations for affiliation (40.5% : 39.6% - Figure 5). Comparatively speaking, family reasons appear to be more important to those who self-identified with the Nahdlatul Ulama. This data is consistent with prevailing assumptions about NU as a traditionalist organization in which kinship ties are often important – NU members often say one is “born into” NU, one does not “join” NU, while Muhammadiyah is a more modern organization with a formal membership base and structure.

Figure 5: Reasons for Affiliation with MBOs, by Percent

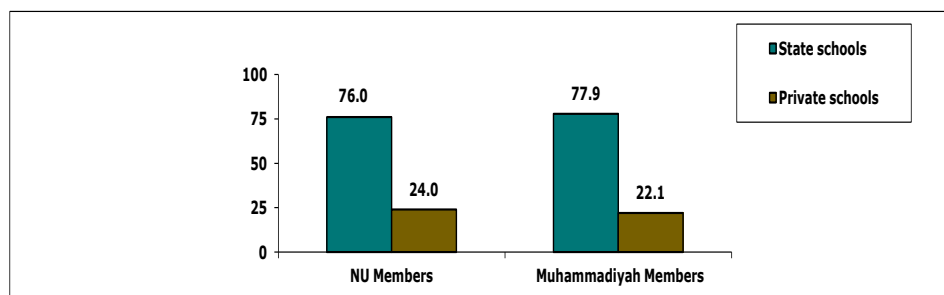


CONSUMPTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES – EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Education

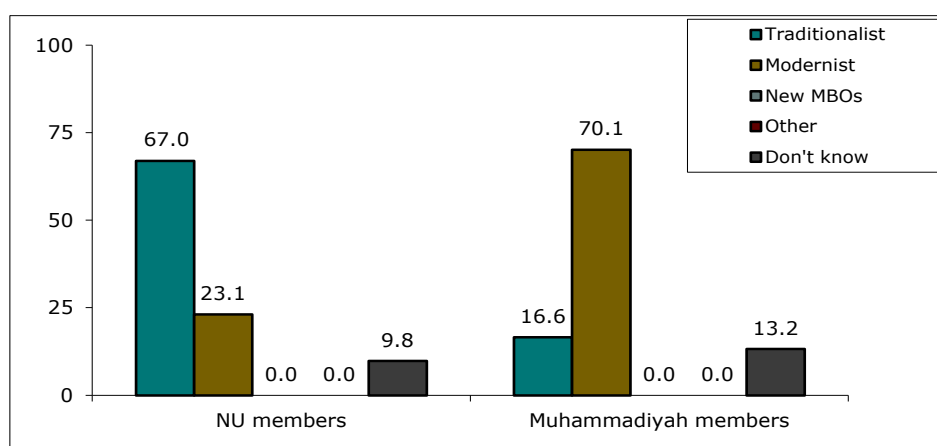
As has been mentioned, Muhammadiyah has a long history and important track record in the education sector in Indonesia. In fact, as we can see in Figure 5 above, 10% of Muhammadiyah members choose to affiliate themselves with Muhammadiyah because of their experience in this sector. Nakamura and others have described the decline in quality and reputation of Muhammadiyah schools, so one may not be overly surprised to see from this survey that almost 78% of Muhammadiyah respondents choose to school their children in state (public), rather than Muhammadiyah, schools (Figure 6). That said, this phenomenon is seen amongst Christian schools in the country as well – a decline in student numbers, in favor of public schools, which have improved significantly in quality over the past ten years.

Figure 6: Percentage of NU and Muhammadiyah Respondents Sending Their Children to State Schools



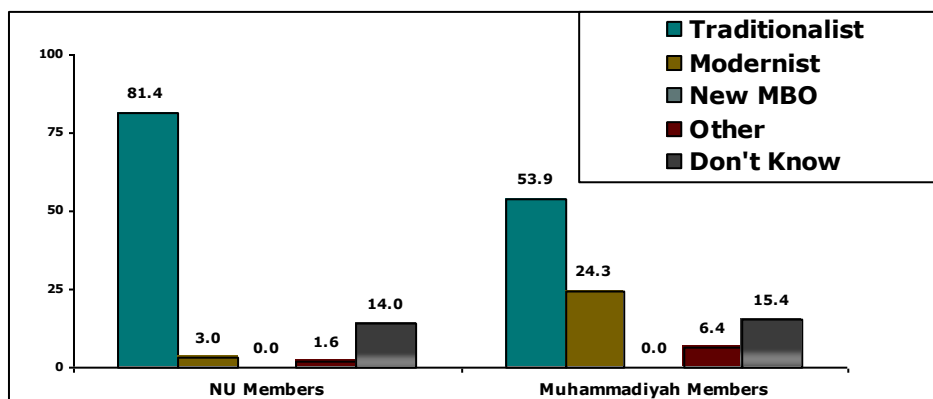
Of those who educate their children in private schools, Muhammadiyah members appear to be less willing to educate their children in traditionalist schools (16.6%) than are NU members to school their children in schools managed/owned by Islamic modernists (23.1% - Figure 7). This may be due to the still-prevailing view that Muhammadiyah schools are of high educational quality, and are often more synchronized with the national curriculum than are traditionalist schools.

Figure 7: Choice of Islamic Private School Type, by Percent



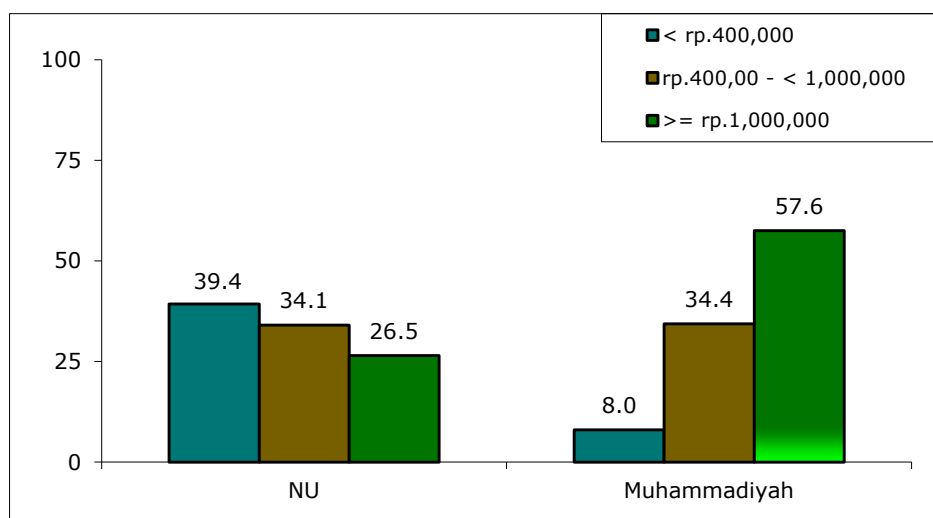
Furthermore, an unsurprisingly small number of Muhammadiyah members (16.7%) choose to school their children in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) – that said, of those who do choose *pesantren*, a strikingly high number of Muhammadiyah members, in fact, over half (53.9%), choose to send their children to traditionalist *pesantren* rather than modernist *pesantren* (Figure 8). This, when combined with data discussed later on propensity of Muhammadiyah members to consult traditionalist *ulama* on religious issues, may indicate that traditionalist institutions (*ulama*, *pesantren*) may fill a need amongst some Muhammadiyah communities that is not being met by their own institutions. It also serves to complicate a stark traditionalist/modernist cultural and ideological divide.

Figure 8: Background of Pesantren Choice

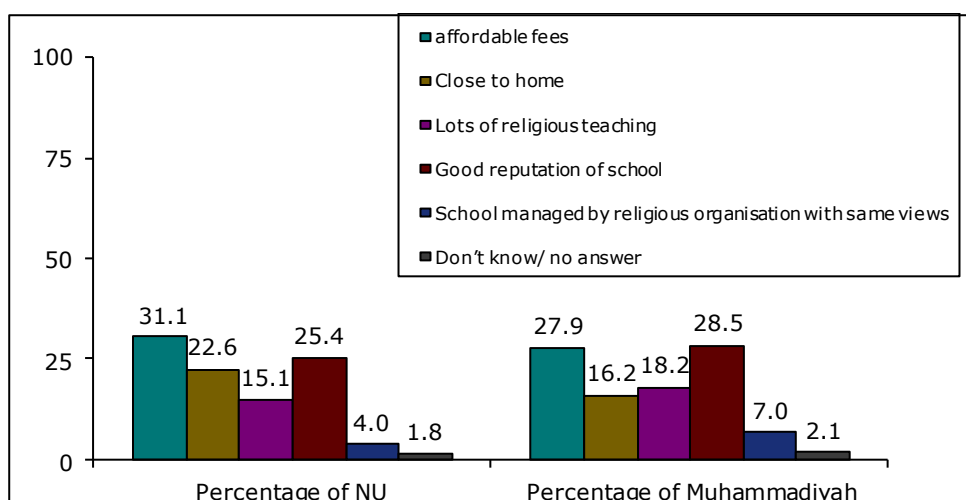


Interestingly, Figure 9 appears to corroborate the notion that *pesantren* selection amongst Muhammadiyah respondents is about something other than economics – the largest number of Muhammadiyah members selecting *pesantren* for their children came from the highest income bracket. *Pesantren* are often a choice made on the basis of their affordability – but apparently not in the case of Muhammadiyah parents sending their children to *pesantren*.

Figure 9: Income Level of Members Choosing Pesantren Education, by Percent



When asked about their criteria for school selection, Muhammadiyah respondents indicated that the school's reputation was of approximately equal importance to its affordability (28.5%, 27.9% - Figure 10). Ideological considerations ranked much lower – only 18% considered the prevalence of religious teaching to be a top factor, and 7% prioritized similarity of religious affiliation.

Figure 10: Reason for Choosing an Educational Institution

In preliminary conclusion, this section of the survey shows Muhammadiyah members largely making their choices based on criteria of quality and cost rather than ideological considerations, though in some cases it appears that a particular kind of religious education is sought, and quite often outside of their own circles.

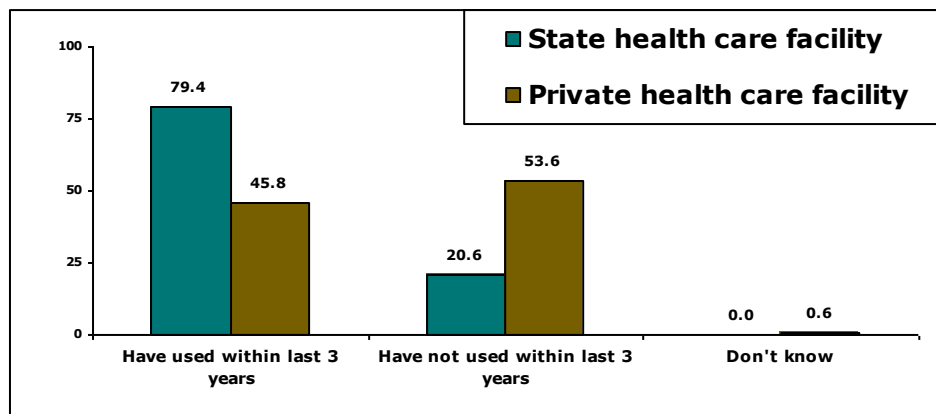
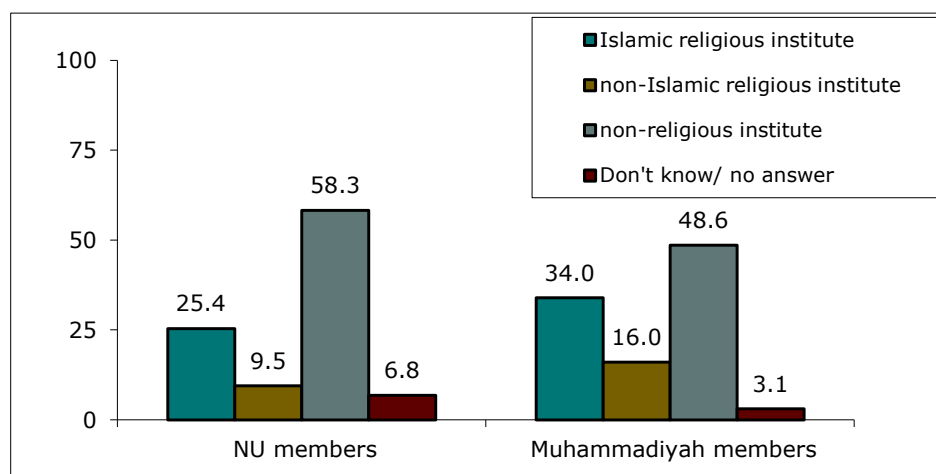
Health Care

Health care is arguably as much a part of the identity of Muhammadiyah as is education. Historically Muhammadiyah has emphasized provision of health care for the poor, however in recent years, facing considerable economic constraints and a competitive health care environment, Muhammadiyah health services have shifted their target population from the “poorest to the lower middle classes,”¹³ in order to be more commercially viable. Hicks also suggests that due to the “qualified success” of the state health insurance for the poor (Jamkesmas), more are likely selecting state health care rather than private health care.¹⁴

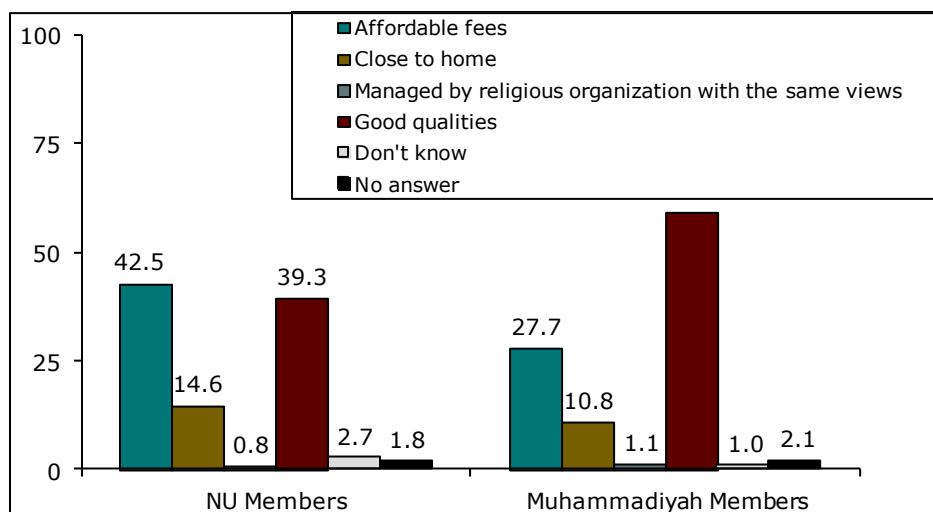
Our survey results do indicate that when asked if they have used a public/state or private health care facility in the last three years, an overwhelming majority of respondents (79.4% – Figure 11) have used state facilities. However, almost 50 percent of respondents reported also using private health care facilities in the past three years, which means that private health care institutions continue to be important alternatives for many Indonesians. Among those who use private health care facilities, a significant number of Muhammadiyah members prefer to use Islamic health care institutions (34%), though the largest category of Muhammadiyah respondents (48.6%) preferred non-religious institutions (Figure 12).

¹³ Sciortino and Ridarineni (2008), quoted in Jacqueline Hicks, “The Missing Link: Explaining the Political Mobilization of Islam in Indonesia,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 42:1, p. 53.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 54.

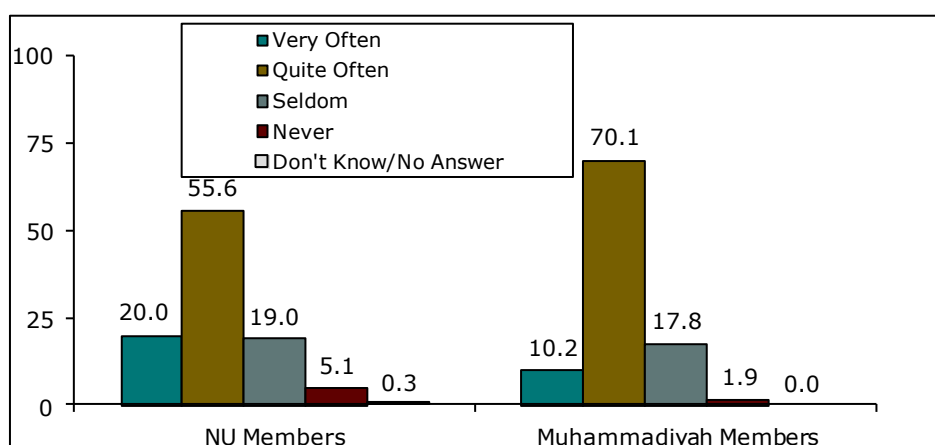
Figure 11 – Use of Public/Private Health Facilities in the Last Three Years**Figure 12: Choice of Private Health Care Facilities, by Percent**

When choosing a health care facility, Muhammadiyah respondents strongly prioritized quality (59.4%) over cost (27.7%) and a negligible number said religious factors were a priority (1.1% - Figure 13). These results may reflect the lower-middle to middle class vantage point of the majority of Muhammadiyah members, and may provide an additional rationale (other than commercial viability) for a shift in target population of Muhammadiyah-owned health services from the poorest to a mid-range socio-economic population.

Figure 13: Reasons for Choice of Health Care Provider, by Percentage

ROLES OF RELIGIOUS FIGURES, RELIGIOSITY, AND POLITICS

In order to explore religiosity at the community level, a question was asked about the frequency of participation in community-based religious activities such as qur’anic study groups or discussions (*pengajian*), religious study groups (*majlis taklim*), or local celebratory rituals (*yasinan* or *selamatan*). A strong majority of Muhammadiyah members (70.1%) responded that they participate “quite often” in these religious activities. Ten percent more NU than Muhammadiyah respondents answered “very often” to this question -- on the other hand, if the “quite often” and “very often” categories are collapsed, Muhammadiyah have a slightly higher proportion of members participating “often” in religious activities than NU members (80.3% to 75.6% - Figure 14). Nevertheless – clearly religiosity and religious activities continue to be an important part of life at the community level.¹⁵

Figure 14: Participation in Religious Activities, by Percent

¹⁵ These results correspond with similarly high levels of religious activity found in other recent surveys – for example, see *Values, Dreams and Ideals: Muslim Youth in Southeast Asia*, a survey conducted by LSI, at <http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/pro/jugendstudie/REPORT%20Malaysias%20Final.pdf>.

Traditionally in Indonesia, religious leaders such as Muslim scholars and teachers (*ulama*, *kyai* and *ustadz*) not only advise communities on spiritual matters but provide input on a wide range of social and community issues. Classic modernization theory and a prevailing narrative in Indonesia maintains that with the rapid movement of globalisation and modernisation in Indonesia, the influence of religious leaders on a range of issues, but especially non-spiritual matters, is on the decline.¹⁶

While this survey cannot speak to change over time on this issue, it does indicate that currently only 44% of the Indonesians surveyed have consulted religious leaders on socio-religious issues (Figure 15). For a nation that is concerned with piety and religious observance as discussed just above, one might expect this figure to be higher. Furthermore, over half of the Muhammadiyah respondents (52.5%) state that they have never sought the opinion of religious figures on social-religious issues (Figure 16).

Figure 15 – Have You Ever consulted a Religious Leader on a Socio-Religious Issue?

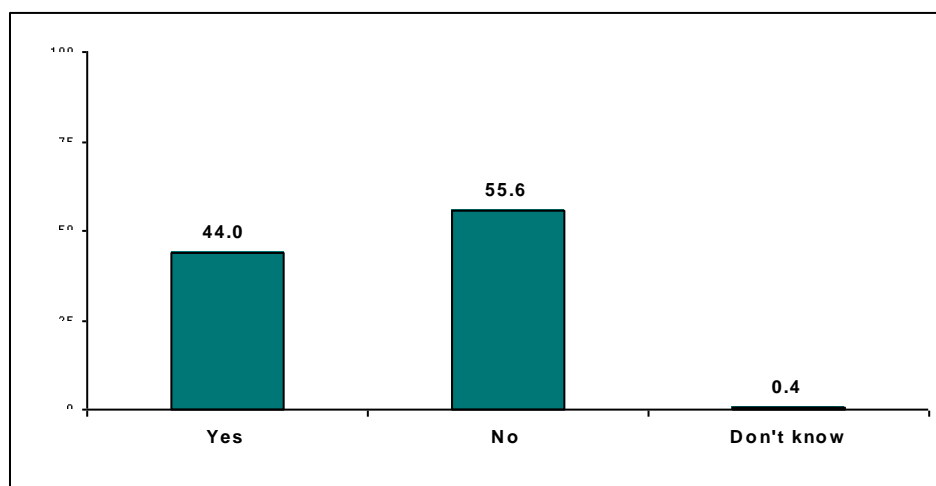
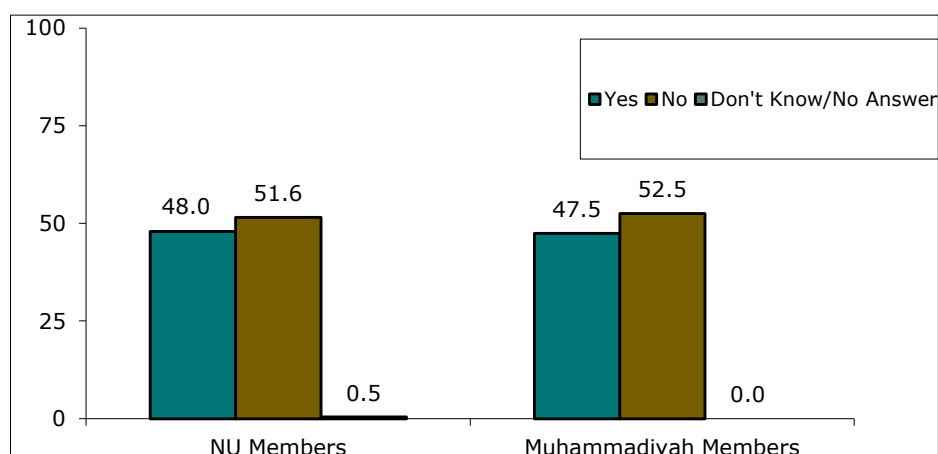


Figure 16: Have You Ever Consulted A Religious Leader on a Socio-Religious Issue?

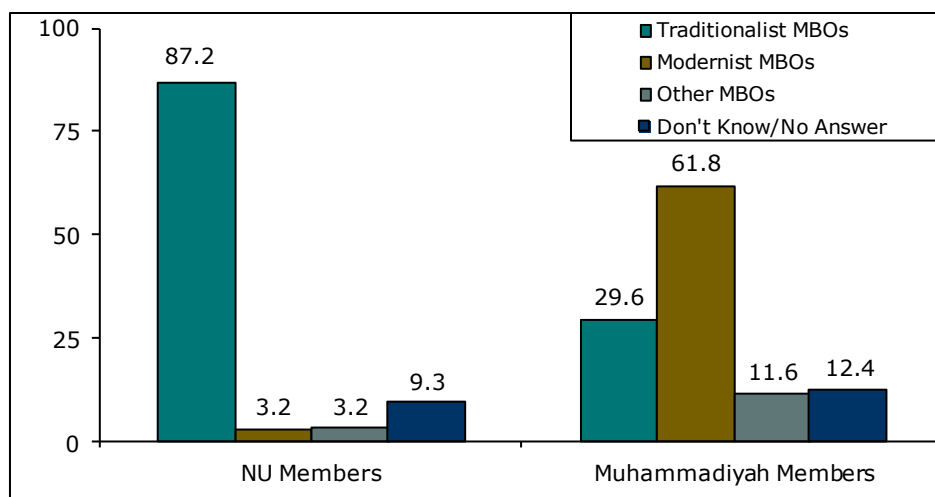


¹⁶ See for example Joe Cochrane, "A secular democracy: Indonesia's multifaith success," *Newsweek* (11 July 2009);

These findings raise multiple questions that need to be addressed in further research. If over half of Muhammadiyah members are not consulting their religious leaders on religious issues – where are they getting their input? Or, do they not feel the need for input on religious matters, perhaps they are prioritizing other concerns – economic imperatives, family matters, etc. If indeed Muhammadiyah does not serve the purpose for these members of providing religious guidance, what is its purpose – does it provide a vehicle for social or political activism rather than pious activity? Many of these issues can be taken up with ethnographic and/or anthropological approaches.

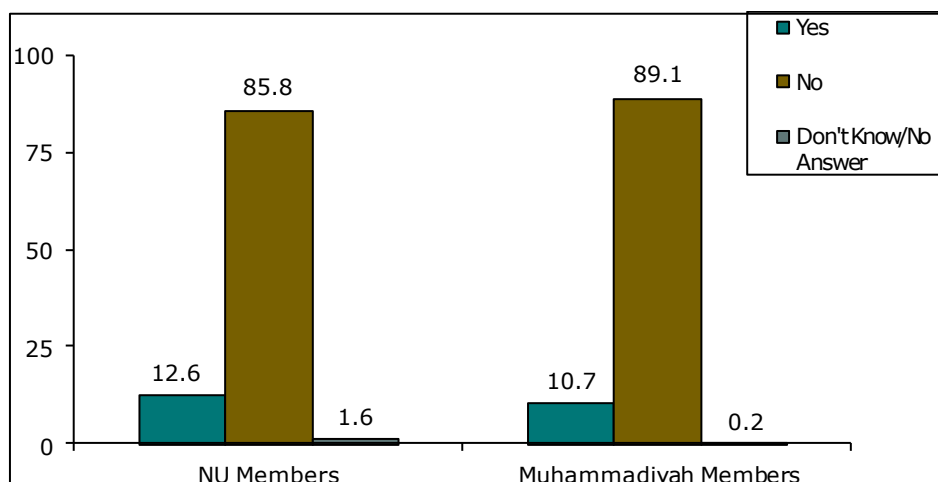
It is interesting to note however, that our survey results indicate that when they consult religious leaders on general social issues, NU members tend to consult NU *ulama*, as expected; but a significant number of Muhammadiyah members (29.6%) also consult an NU or traditionalist *ulama* when seeking religious counsel (Figure 17). This finding is even more pronounced in East Java, where half of Muhammadiyah respondents (50%) say that they approach traditionalist *ulama* when they need advice. Again, as with the finding on Muhammadiyah members sending their children to traditionalist *pesantren*, there may be an element of religious education and/or guidance that is not being met by the modernist Muhammadiyah institutions.

Figure 17: Religious Affiliation of Ulama Consulted on Socio-Religious Issues, by Percent

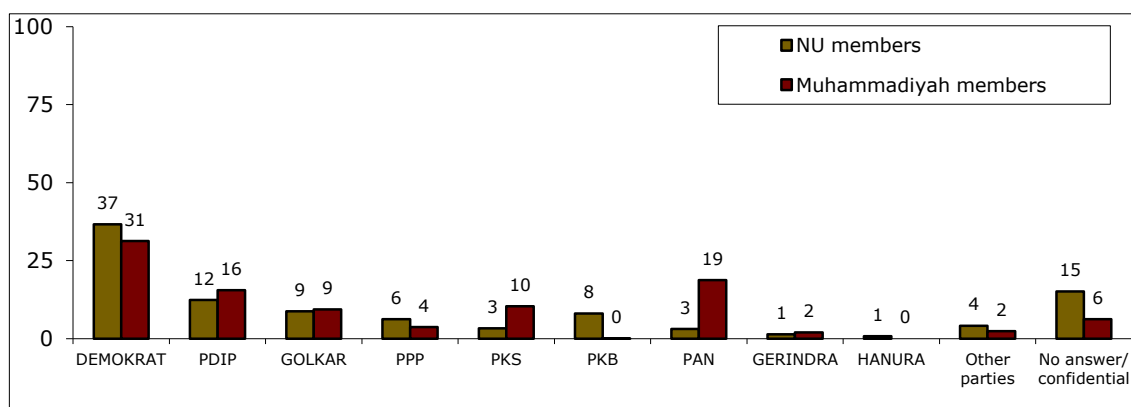


The survey findings are even more interesting when it comes to consultation with religious leaders on political affairs. The data indicates that only 10% of Muhammadiyah members seek guidance from religious figures on political affairs, whether concerning elections of village heads, political parties, regents, or various other political issues (Figure 18). This is a striking finding, given the assumption of many political analysts and scholars that religious leaders have, or at least historically had, a great deal of influence on the political choices of Indonesian Muslims.¹⁷

¹⁷ This is of course the premise of Geertz' famed "*aliran*" theory, which has been subsequently critiqued and problematized in multiple ways; nevertheless the fundamental assumption of the political influence of religious leaders persists in contemporary scholarship on Indonesia.

Figure 18: Percentage of MBO Members Who Seek Opinion of Religious Elites on Political Issues

The decline in political influence of religious leaders is a trend that has had visible ramifications on elections since 2004, but was clearly evidenced in the most recent parliamentary elections in 2009 (Figure 19). According to the survey respondents, only 19% of Muhammadiyah members voted for PAN (National Mandate Party, and the political party most closely affiliated with Muhammadiyah) and 31% voted for President Yudhoyono's Democratic Party.

Figure 19: Voting Preferences in 2009 Election, by Percent

This is not to say that Muhammadiyah is no longer influential politically or involved in party politics. The FGD conducted by the PPIM research team with Muhammadiyah leaders in Yogyakarta shed some explanatory light on this issue. One of the points expressed by a Majelis Tarjih leader was that in the case of Muhammadiyah, while *ulama* or clerics are no longer as influential as they may have been previously, Muhammadiyah as an organization still does hold political power:

“Now, religious figures, or *ulama*, in Muhammadiyah circles no longer play a powerful role, especially in the political process. So, if cadres are looking for political support, they do not usually go to these religious figures, but go directly to Muhammadiyah office in Yogyakarta. For example, in the case of DPD candidacy, we (Muhammadiyah) had a number of candidates who wanted to compete in the DPD election. If I am not mistaken, last time there were four candidates being considered to represent Muhammadiyah. Eventually, we decided to hold a convention to sift

through the candidates. Who would win was determined by the convention proceedings. Did we win? Actually the convention winner was a female candidate. But in the DPD election results, we lost. The winner was a candidate connected with the royal court (*kerabat Kraton*) who was supported by the Demokrat party. The point I want to make is that the process of obtaining political support for a candidate does not directly involve the *ulama*. Rather, support is obtained from the Muhammadiyah [organizational] leadership itself. It is done through a convention.”¹⁸

Further input from the FGDs with Muhammadiyah leadership indicates that the organization does have a fairly strong internal discipline with regard to endorsing members for political leadership, but that the focus is more on the individual rather than the party. Muhammadiyah political candidate endorsed by the organization may seek office within a range of political parties. A Muhammadiyah Youth (Pemuda Muhammadiyah) leader in Yogyakarta, Muhammad Ridho, says that the pattern of the relationship between Muhammadiyah and political parties is not actually very rigid. Muhammadiyah leaders are often mobilised for the victory of a particular candidate or figure within a certain party; however, he says, “there is no direct instruction from Muhammadiyah leaders to ensure that we choose a certain party.”¹⁹

Nevertheless, as Lukman Hakim, another Muhammadiyah leader, acknowledges:

“Muhammadiyah actively encourages its members to become involved in politics. For example, for the DPD, we put forward Muhammadiyah members. Our candidates were considered able to voice regional interests at the center, especially voicing public policy. Nationally, Muhammadiyah gave guidance that suggested support be given to Muhammadiyah members who put themselves forward.”²⁰

From the perspective of the political parties, NU and Muhammadiyah and other MBOs are ideal sources of well-connected, influential candidates. Most political parties in Indonesia do not have an effective practice of recruiting membership, consolidating their cadre, and socializing party platforms internally – and as such, with no cadres of their own, political parties more often than not turn to mass-based organizations to run their tickets. They bring in candidates from mass organisations who often win because they are already popular at the local level. Muhammadiyah, especially at the sub-national level, plays an important role as an association for educated middle-class Muslims. This position enables Muhammadiyah to have some influence on public policy locally, at the same time as being a base for political recruitment.

It has also been noted that Muhammadiyah’s relatively strong internal discipline and organizational coherence means that political gains accrue to the organization rather than just to individual members involved in politics. The opposite can also be true, however. When a Muhammadiyah leader has a legal problem, is accused of corruption or poor performance, etc, the organisation itself will suffer the consequences in terms of a negative image. Other difficulties are that Muhammadiyah members may be unable to be critical of its members that hold executive positions. A Muhammadiyah leader in East Java explains:

¹⁸ Quote from Ratno Lukito, member of Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, expressed during FGD held on 9 December 2010 in Yogyakarta.

¹⁹ FGD with Muhammad Ridho, Muhammadiyah Youth Leader in Yogyakarta, 12 December 2010, in Yogyakarta.

²⁰ FGD with Lukman Hakim, leader of Muhammadiyah in NTB, 11 December 2010, in Mataram.

“The problem that arises is how to deliver criticism in a manner that does not create problems for Muhammadiyah with a Regent who is a Muhammadiyah member, or at least is supported by PAN colleagues. In Bojonegoro, for example, we found problems with the social budget and expenditures budget. Now, when that became a finding, we then had to deal with PAN colleagues in the national legislature (DPR). That can be tough.”²¹

Even in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah has had to deal with a member who became deputy mayor and was suspected of corruption. A leader of Muhammadiyah Youth in Yogyakarta, Muhammad Ridho, says:

“Some years ago, Muhammadiyah faced some difficult choices. They included, to take an example, when we received a statement that one of our cadres who was a deputy mayor was suspected of corruption. In this matter, Muhammadiyah did not take a position on whether to use the legal process so that the corrupt practices would not be exposed, or to resolve it by way of a familial settlement. This sort of thing can easily make Muhammadiyah uncertain as to whether to follow the interests of developing good governance or to defend a cadre who is suspected of being guilty.”²²

In summary, again, according to this data, very few members of Muhammadiyah consult religious leaders on political affairs (nationally or regionally). When asked why, in the FGDs, many of the responses sounded like textbook modernization theory- as people increasingly think independently, especially in the political context, their dependence on guidance from religious figures regarding political affairs decreases. That said, a significant percentage (44%) of Indonesians still consult their religious leaders on a range of social, community-related, and religious issues. Thus religious leaders continue to play an important and meaningful role in community life.

MUHAMMADIYAH – NU RELATIONSHIP

Muhammadiyah’s relationship with NU has been well-explored²³ and as noted above, very often the two organizations are defined in contrast to the other. Elsewhere I have argued that the modernist-traditionalist divide (as manifested by NU and Muhammadiyah) is one of the principle if not the primary, divisions within Islam in Indonesia.²⁴ As such, historically the tension and competition between NU and Muhammadiyah has been a defining characteristic of their relationship. Some have argued that in recent years, these divisions have lessened, as both organizations increasingly find themselves in a more ‘mainstream’ position vis-à-vis militant or Islamist organizations.²⁵ And some of the evidence from this survey already presented, with respect to Muhammadiyah members consulting NU *ulama* on religious issues, does indicate that ties between the two are often complex.

²¹ FGD with Nadjib Hamid, PWM Secretary in East Java, 9 December 2010, in Surabaya.

²² FGD with Muhammad Ridho, Muhammadiyah Youth Leader in Yogyakarta, 12 December 2010, in Yogyakarta.

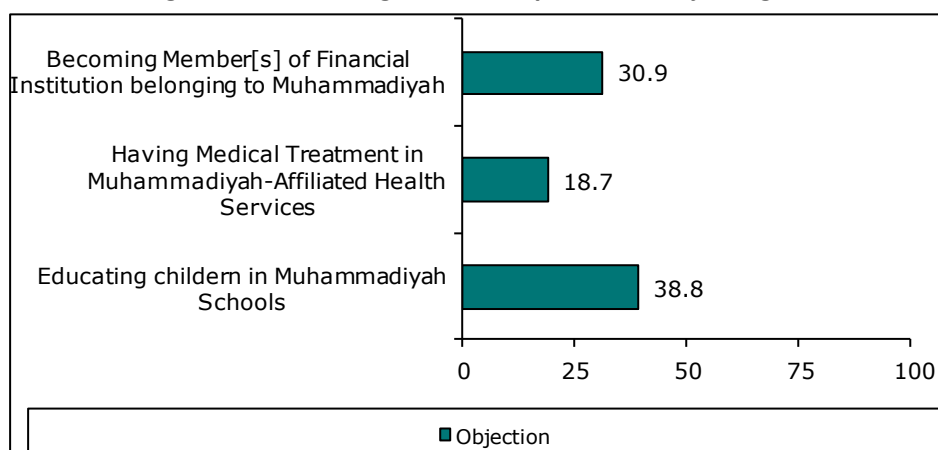
²³ *Muhammadiyah-NU: Mendayung Ukhusah di Tengah Perbedaan*, Eds Ma’amun Murod Al-Barbasy, Faozan Amar, Imam Santoso, Khoirul Ikhwan (UMM Press; 2004); Suaidi Asyari, *Nalar Politik NU & Muhammadiyah*, (LKIS: 2009); Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power*, op cit;

²⁴ Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power*, op cit.

²⁵ Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity*, (University of Hawai’i Press; 2010).

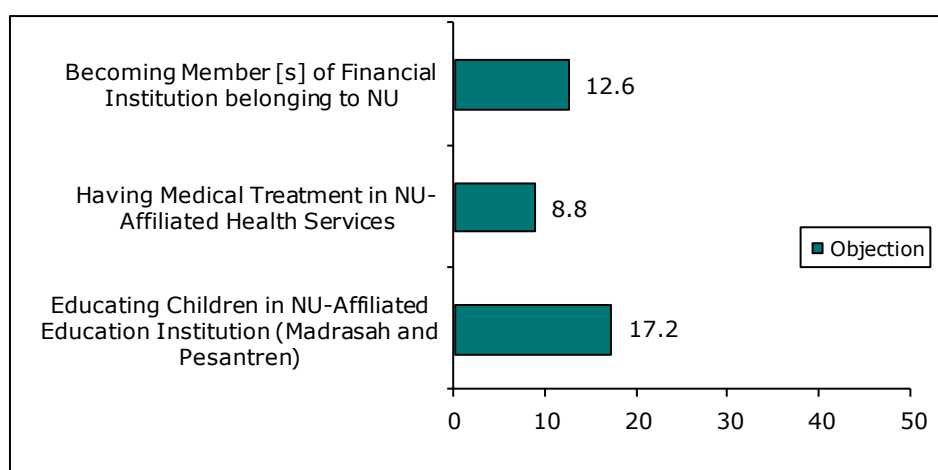
This survey sought to ascertain to what extent this tension is still present between NU and Muhammadiyah. To do this, we measured the level of resistance of the respective members of each organization to using the social services facilities (education, healthcare, and financial facilities) affiliated with the other. The results indicate that NU members' resistance to using Muhammadiyah-affiliated social service facilities is greater than the resistance of Muhammadiyah members to using NU services. This reluctance on the part of NU was most visible in the area of education. According to this survey, 38.8% of NU members would not allow their children to attend a Muhammadiyah school. Almost a third (30.9%) of NU members would also refuse to join a financial institution (bank or cooperative) owned by Muhammadiyah, and a smaller percentage (18.7%) would not seek treatment at a health institute owned by Muhammadiyah (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Percentage of NU Respondents Objecting to:



Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah members did not display the same level of resistance towards using NU institutions. According to the survey, only 17.2% of Muhammadiyah members would refuse to send their children to an NU school and only 8.8% would refuse to seek treatment at an NU health facility (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Percentage of Muhammadiyah Respondents Objecting to:



These survey findings generally emphasize the important role that education and educational institutions play in inscribing and reinscribing ideology and identity. Both NU and Muhammadiyah were more reluctant to school their children in the others' schools than they were to join a bank or

go to a clinic owned by the other organization. Health clinics and banks are more likely to be seen as neutral institutions, whereas schools play the role of regeneration of particular religious values.

It is interesting, but not surprising, to find that NU members are more biased against Muhammadiyah schools than vice versa. Answers to the question on 'Reasons for Affiliation with MBOs' show that more than 10% of Muhammadiyah members said that they considered themselves to be Muhammadiyah because of the education they received in Muhammadiyah schools. Less than 4% expressed the same answer for NU. Schools seem to be a more effective socialization ground for Muhammadiyah than for NU – and therefore, it is not surprising that NU members showed reluctance to sending their children to Muhammadiyah schools.

Looking further into this phenomenon, the survey also indicates that educational levels clearly affect tolerance and openness within the members of these two MBOs. Those who object to using the other's institutions mostly come from lower-educated circles; meanwhile, the proportion in highly educated circles that are intolerant is much smaller – this is true of both NU and Muhammadiyah members.

Figure 22: Education Level of NU Members Who Object to Educating Their Children at Muhammadiyah Schools, by Percent

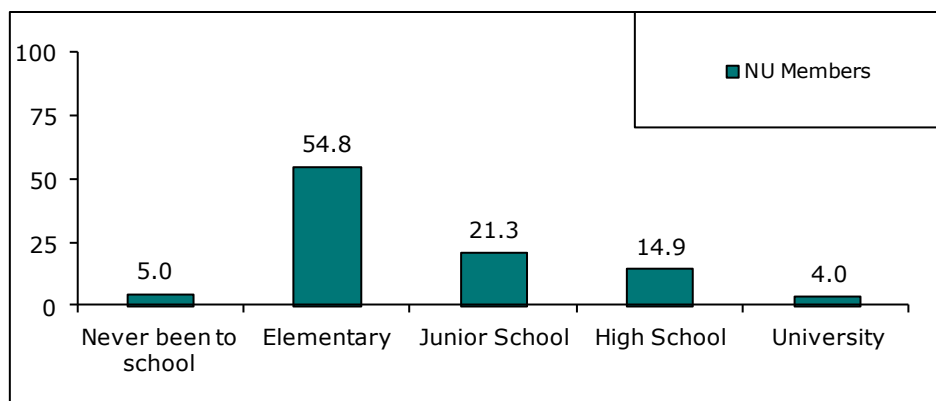
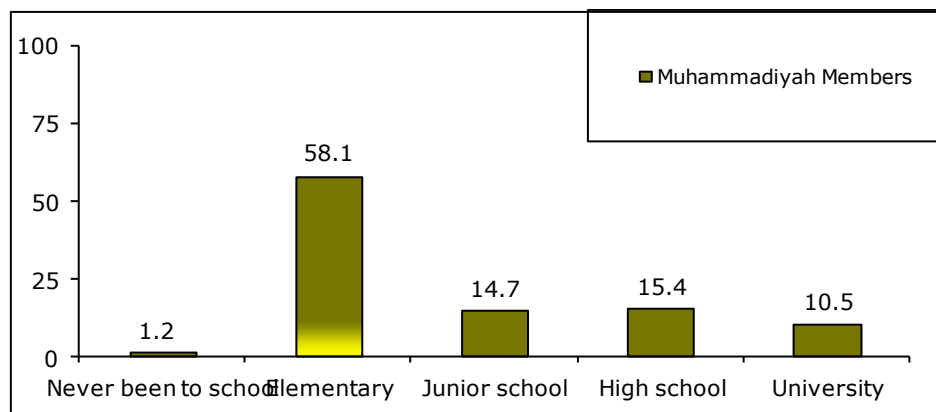


Figure 23: Education Level of Muhammadiyah Members Who Object to Being Treated at NU Health Institutions, by Percent

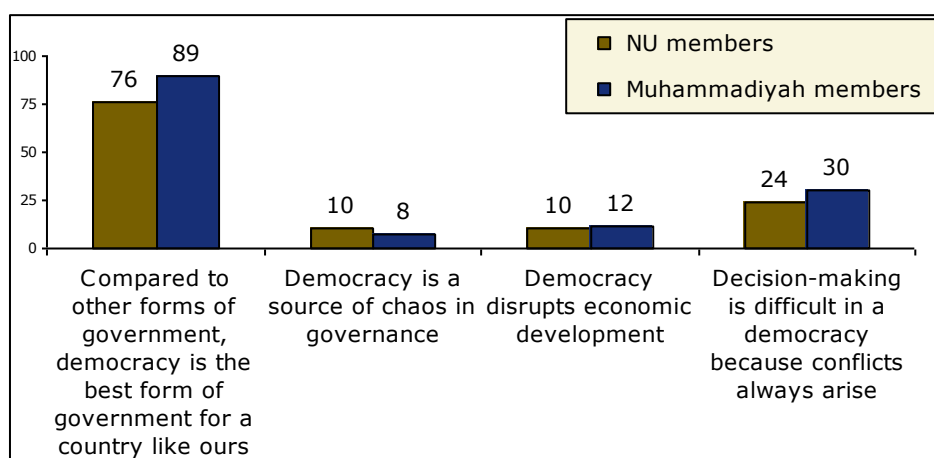


This section of the survey results can only offer a very cursory glance at the subject of NU-Muhammadiyah relations. However, it can give us a general sense that on the whole, Muhammadiyah members are relatively open to participating in NU affiliated institutions, and it also indicates very roughly that resistance to this openness is loosely correlated with lower educational levels.

VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY, GENDER EQUALITY, AND TOLERANCE

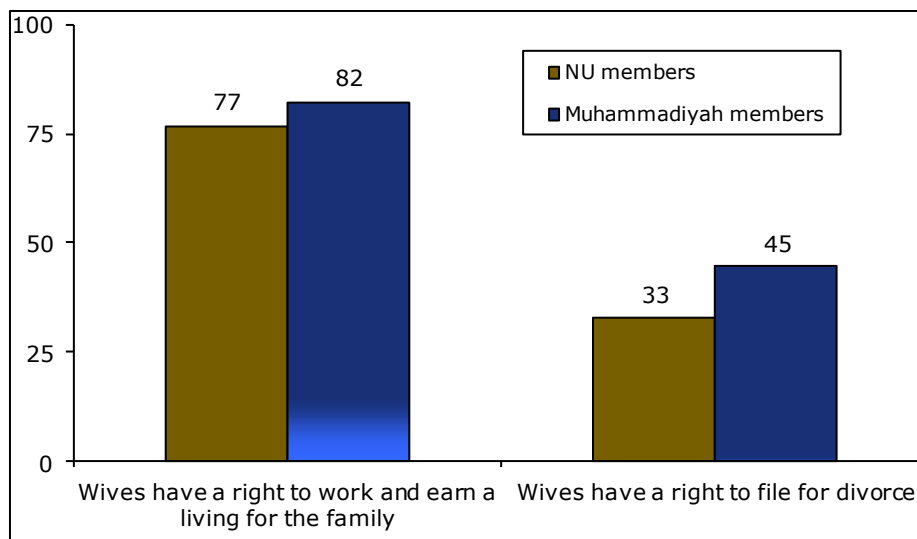
The survey reveals strikingly high levels of support for democracy among Indonesian Muslims -- between 75-89% (Figure 24). In general, Muhammadiyah members more strongly believe that democracy is the best political system for Indonesia, at 89%, compared to NU at 76%.

Figure 24: Percentage of Respondents Agreeing:



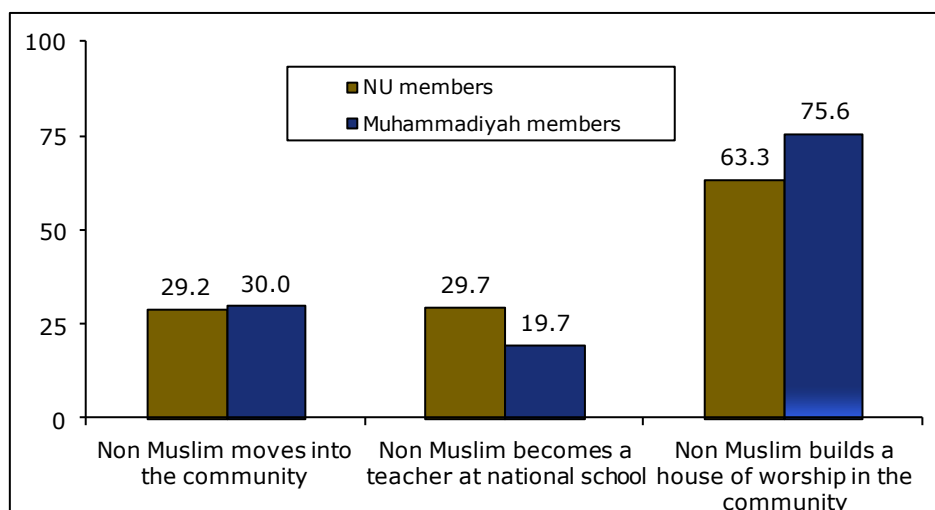
In response to questions assessing commitment to gender equality, more Muhammadiyah respondents (82%) than NU respondents (77%) said a wife had right to earn income for the family and to be consulted on economic issues within the family. Both groups were less enthusiastic about the question of whether a wife has the right to seek a divorce, but more Muhammadiyah respondents accorded her that right (45%) than did NU (33% - Figure 25).

Figure 25: Gender Equality, Respondents That ‘agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ with the Following Statements



The survey revealed a fair level of tolerance across the board. While roughly 70% of respondents indicated tolerance of non-Muslims playing most roles within a community, 20% of Muhammadiyah respondents would object to having a non-Muslim teaching at a state school (Figure 26). On the other hand, a dramatic shift took place when respondents were asked their views on the building of non-Muslim houses of worship in their community – with over 60% objecting. Interestingly, in contradiction to earlier discussed responses, Muhammadiyah is significantly less tolerant than NU on this issue – 75% of Muhammadiyah respondents compared to 63% of NU respondents object to non-Muslims building houses of worship in their communities (Figure 26). This may be partially a reflection of the fact that most churches are built in urban areas, where Muhammadiyah is more heavily represented than NU.

Figure 26: Socio-religious Tolerance, by Percent of Those that ‘Object’ or ‘Strongly Object’ to the Following Scenarios



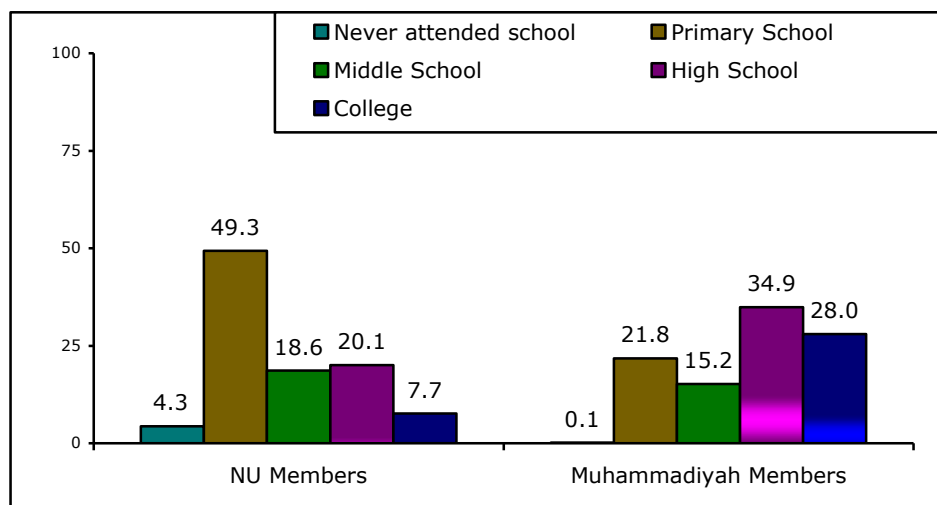
This finding is of concern given recent outbreaks of religious violence in the country, aimed against religious minorities including the Ahmadis, Shia Muslims, and Christians. There is some indication that intolerance and violence related to intolerance has been rising in Indonesia over the past five years. A Lingkaran Studi Indonesia survey in 2010 found a 30% approval rate for violence on religious grounds, up from 13.9% who approved of such violence in 2005.²⁶

Looking more closely at the respondents who object to followers of other religions building a place of worship in their neighborhood, Figure 27 shows a surprising relationship between intolerance and education with regard to Muhammadiyah. Another Lingkaran Studi Indonesia survey released recently found strong correlation between intolerance and lack of education among the general population – for example 67.8 percent of those from a lower-educational background were uncomfortable having neighbors of a different religious background or sexual orientation, while only 32% of higher educated respondents felt uncomfortable with such neighbors.²⁷ This is a finding which has a certain logic to it, and this relationship between education and tolerance is also reflected by the TAF survey among NU members, in which close to 50% of NU respondents who objected to non-Muslims building a place of worship in their area had received only primary level school education. However, over 60% of Muhammadiyah members who were resistant to non-Muslims building houses of worship in their neighborhood were from a higher education background, i.e. high school or university (Figure 27). This is not consistent with the relationship between education and intolerance between NU and Muhammadiyah. As we have discussed above and showed in Figures 22 and 23, both NU and Muhammadiyah members that were resistant to each other's services were in the lower education brackets, perhaps indicating that increasing levels of education are usually marked by increasing tolerance levels among citizens. However, Muhammadiyah's higher educated members' resistance to non-Muslims building houses of worship challenges this assumption. This raises important questions for further research within Muhammadiyah. More extensive surveys should be done to ascertain to what extent this is a reliable finding, how pervasive it is within Muhammadiyah membership, and whether this correlation holds true only for issues of houses of worship, or for other social intolerance issues as well. One might also want to explore whether it is the schools (state or private?) that are a key factor in disseminating messages of resistance to other religions (in depth analysis of curriculum and pedagogy could be done) or whether this messaging is linked more closely to Muhammadiyah institutional activities or groups, that are primarily attended by those with higher education levels.

²⁶ Rangga Prakoso, "Survey Reveals Rising Intolerance in Indonesia," *The Jakarta Globe*, October 22, 2012, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/survey-reveals-rising-intolerance-in-indonesia/551599>, accessed on Oct 23, 2012.

²⁷ Ibid.

Figure 27: Respondents Who Objected to Non-Muslims Building Houses of Worship in their Communities



CONCLUSION

If we attempt to derive from this data a composite picture of Muhammadiyah today, we see an organization made up of a membership that is relatively well-educated with a relatively secure socio-economic status, and whose choices and behaviors by and large correspond with those realities. Muhammadiyah members appear to have enough economic security and purchasing power to allow them to prioritize quality when it comes to health and educational choices.

We see a picture of Muhammadiyah membership as being religious, and very active in their religiosity. Religious considerations are important, though often times not the most important, considerations made when considering education, schooling, and other facilities. At the same time, it is clear that religious leaders are declining in influence within Muhammadiyah as well as within Indonesia more generally, on all fronts, but especially with regard to politics. Further exploration needs to be made to fully understand the implications of this – how are Muhammadiyah members seeking and receiving spiritual guidance? And what does that mean for the purpose and identity of Muhammadiyah as an organization that was established primarily to provide spiritual inputs through education and dakwah activities?

Further with regard to institutional identity, this data provides a picture of an organization whose reputation for internal coherence and discipline continues to resonate with its membership. When it comes to political activity, this internal discipline can be advantageous in terms of keeping centralized control over the Muhammadiyah “brand”, which means the benefits both financial and political of formal political involvement can accrue more easily to the organization itself. However the risks of this tight branding is that the negative fall-out from corruption or other problems will affect the organization institutionally as well.

Finally, with regard to contemporary social values, we see an overall picture of Muhammadiyah members as being largely open, democratically inclined, generally tolerant of difference and supportive of social equity. Interesting anomalies related to resistance to the building of houses of worship, and the correlation of that resistance to those with higher education within Muhammadiyah, present important sites for further research and in-depth analysis.

Clearly, again, the data presented offers us only the most cursory of glances from a birds-eye view at the organization as a glossed-over whole. As we know, the internal cleavages and difference in culture, norms, and values within Muhammadiyah are deep – from its doctrinal council Majelis Tarjih to its leadership-grooming wings such as Pemuda Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Youth) and Aisyiyah, to its NGO sector such as JIMM, the variance is wide and requires much more nuanced analysis than presented here. This can be at best a starting point to spark the interesting research questions and point researchers towards potential research sites which require more grounded methods and approaches.

Finally, beyond pointing to the need for more in-depth analysis of Muhammadiyah itself, this research points to the potential utility, as well as the challenges, of values surveys more generally²⁸. Survey research has certainly blossomed in Indonesia over the past decade, with highly varying but increasingly solid quality, and there are increasing numbers of data-sets that can be used for baseline or comparative purposes. The two LSIs – Lembaga Survey Indonesia (Indonesian Survey Institute) and Lingkaran Survey Institute (Indonesian Survey Circle), and two new outfits - Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting, and Indikator, all produce fairly well-reputed survey research, including values research. Smaller and less-well-known institutes like PPIM (Center for the Study of Islam and Society) and Wahid Institute, also have produced survey research and annual reports on values, especially related to Islam and ideas of pluralism and tolerance. Thus while it may take some exploration, potential base-line data is available for the enterprising researcher who wishes to examine change over time, especially on issues related to religious tolerance and attitudes about democracy. It is true that methodologically it would be a challenge to construct rigorous comparative analysis using much of this data as a baseline, due to differing terminology and survey instrument construction. However, given the rather surprising proliferation of surveys conducted in Indonesia post-Suharto, it might be possible to construct some 'composite' data-sets, combining similarly constructed survey instruments, in order to set up a more rigorous baseline, or base and mid-line. This might provide some benchmarks (contestable, but still valuable) for attitudinal change over the past 15 years of democratic transition and consolidation. Given that Indonesia is entering what is likely to be another period of significant change, with a new president for the first time in a decade, such benchmarking would be particularly valuable for future comparative values-related research.

²⁸ My thanks to an anonymous reviewer of this article for suggesting exploration of this point.