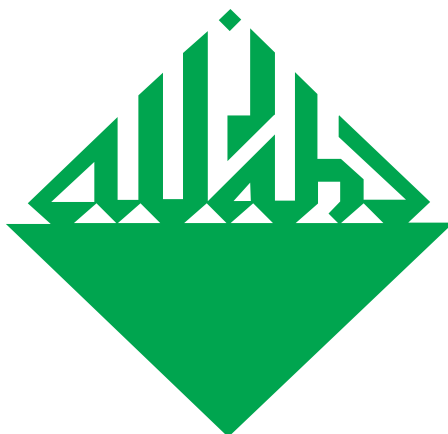


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP AND ELECTION
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Exploring Modernity, Nurturing Tradition:
The Pesantren Leaders' Journey in Japan

Hyung-Jun Kim

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

Abstract: *Muhammadiyah advocates for the equal and rational standing of Muslims, underscoring that judgment lies solely with Allah and discouraging hierarchical leadership privileges. This viewpoint permeates its organizational structure, portraying leaders as dedicated members without elevated status. Alongside its emphasis on egalitarianism and rationality, Muhammadiyah has developed organizational mechanisms, aimed at preventing the concentration of religious authority in the hands of popular leaders. The article explores two of these mechanisms, collegial leadership and elections. Collegial leadership establishes a collective oversight body, ensuring equal rights for each leader. The unique election system, requiring the choice of thirteen candidates, prevents individual dominance and a potential landslide victory. By minimizing differences, emphasizing similarities, and discouraging the showcasing of individual merits and popularity, these mechanisms effectively diffuse religious authority within Muhammadiyah's leadership.*

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, Collegial Leadership, Religious Authority, Indonesian Islam, Block Voting.

Abstrak: Muhammadiyah menganjurkan untuk perlakuan yang setara dan rasional terhadap umat Islam, menekankan bahwa keputusan sepenuhnya berada pada Allah dan menolak hak istimewa kepemimpinan hierarkis. Pandangan ini menggambarkan para pemimpin berproses sebagai anggota yang berdedikasi tanpa status khusus sebelumnya. Selain penekanannya pada egalitarianisme dan rasionalitas, Muhammadiyah telah mengembangkan mekanisme organisasional dengan tujuan mencegah konsentrasi otoritas keagamaan di tangan para pemimpin yang populer. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi dua dari mekanisme ini, yaitu kepemimpinan kolektif dan pemilihan dalam struktur organisasi Muhammadiyah. Kepemimpinan kolektif membentuk badan pengawas kolektif, memastikan hak yang setara bagi setiap pemimpin. Sistem pemilihan yang unik, dimana pemilihan mensyaratkan adanya tiga belas kandidat untuk mencegah dominasi individu dan jarak hasil pemilihan yang besar. Dengan meminimalkan perbedaan, menekankan kesamaan, dan mencegah eksploitasi keunggulan dan popularitas individu, mekanisme ini secara efektif menyebarluaskan otoritas keagamaan di dalam kepemimpinan Muhammadiyah.

Kata kunci: Muhammadiyah, Kepemimpinan Kolegial, Otoritas Keagamaan, Islam Indonesia, Sistem Pemilihan Blok.

ملخص: تروج المحمدية لوجهة نظر مفادها أن المسلمين متساوون وعقلانيون وأن الله وحده هو الذي يحكم عليهم. وعندما يتم تطبيق هذا الرأي على الحياة التنظيمية، فإنه يشير إلى أنه لا ينبغي منح القادة مناصب خاصة. بالإضافة إلى تأكيدها على المساواة والعقلانية، طورت المحمدية آليات تنظيمية لمنع تركيز السلطة الدينية في أيدي القادة الشعبيين. وتركز هذه الورقة على اثنتين من هذه الآليات: القيادة الجماعية والانتخابات. ويتطلب نظام انتخابات القيادة في المحمدية من الناخبين التصويت لثلاثة عشر مرشحاً بهدف منع مرشح واحد من تحقيق فوز ساحق، وطمس الفروق بين المرشحين الأكثر نفوذاً وشعبية والمرشحين الأقل شعبية. ومن خلال التقليل إلى أدنى حد من الاختلافات والتأكيد على أوجه التشابه بين القادة وكذلك قمع العرض الفردي للمزايا والشعبية، فإن هذين النظامين يعملان بشكل فعال على نشر السلطة الدينية للزملاء في المحمدية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المحمدية، القيادة الجماعية، السلطة الدينية، الإسلام الإندونيسي، الهيكل التنظيمي الإسلامي، كتلة التصويت.

Established in 1912, Muhammadiyah is the second-largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. Its followers are estimated to number from thirty to forty million adherents (Azra 2006, 61); its local and overseas branches (*cabang* and *ranting*) have approximately eighteen thousand and affiliated schools and social service facilities have more than ten thousand (Muhammadiyah 2022a, 5-6).

Since its establishment, Muhammadiyah has been critical of traditional practices within the Indonesian Muslim community. These practices include strict adherence to the exegeses of established religious scholars (*kiai*), an unquestioning respect for their decisions, and the belief in seeking their blessings (Arifin 1990, 42–47). Muhammadiyah proposes a return to and adoption of rational interpretations of the Scriptures. Behind this proposal lies the view that Muslims are rational, equal and only to be judged by Allah.¹ When applied to organizational life, this view implies that leaders have no special position; they are simply members of the organization who sacrifice more time and energy for Islam than others and are thus more qualified to lead the organization (Djazman 2010, 50–51; Josopranoto 2010, 116–19). As exemplary figures, such leaders deserve due respect, but should not be treated as extraordinary. They should not be free from criticism and that their authority should not be always protected.

Muhammadiyah's emphasis on rationality and egalitarianism has impeded the emergence of authority figures. In addition, to prevent influential and popular leaders from accruing undue religious authority, Muhammadiyah has implemented various organizational mechanisms, including the promotion of collegial and collective leadership, the practice of electing leaders, the granting autonomy to branches and affiliated entities and making decisions through consensus-based processes (Kim 2010a).

The leadership structure and religious authority in Muhammadiyah have not been extensively researched by scholars of Indonesian Islam. For example, a publication regarding religious authorities in Indonesian Islam (Azra, Dijk and Kaptein 2010) did not include Muhammadiyah as its main subject, treating it as if it lacked separate religious authority. This differed sharply from scholarly approaches to Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, which focused predominantly on its leaders and leadership. This neglect of Muhammadiyah has resulted in missed opportunities for investigating the construction and

functionality of Muhammadiyah's leadership structure and the diversity of religious authority in Islamic organizations.²

The purpose of this paper is to explore why and how the rise of authoritative leaders in Muhammadiyah has been hindered by institutional factors. Among the several mechanisms employed to impede the development of authoritative figures, the focus is on the leadership structure and elections—topics chosen to narrow the scope of the paper and provide insight into little-explored subjects. The first part of this paper deals with the background of Muhammadiyah's collegial leadership and election systems, along with the ways these systems operated in the organization's nascent period. The next section examines the consolidation of the election system and its effects on the 1920s leadership structure. The following sections consider the controversy surrounding collegial leadership in the early 1950s, the development of the election system since the 1950s, and the dominant discourse on elections and leadership. The collegial leadership and elections effectively prevent the emergence of authoritative leaders in Muhammadiyah.

As leadership in Muhammadiyah has not been extensively investigated, this study provides data to support a balanced understanding of Islamic leadership in Indonesia. Elucidation of the leadership structure will help readers appreciate Muhammadiyah's approaches to engage with political and sociocultural realities. Moreover, the study may contribute to a better understanding of how modern institutional systems can be adopted and effectively implemented in Islamic organizations.

The main sources for this investigation are twofold. The first source consists of materials published by Muhammadiyah and the second comprises of data collected from ethnographic research carried out from January to August 2010 complemented by further data gathered during short research trips between 2011 and 2019. The fieldwork was mainly conducted at Muhammadiyah's headquarters in Yogyakarta (hereafter *Yogya*) and its provincial branch in *Yogya*. The author regularly attended five committee meetings in 2010, including the weekly board meetings of *Yogya* provincial branch, took part in activities at all levels of the organization from the headquarters to provincial, district, subdistrict and village branches³ and interviewed activists with diverse backgrounds. The data on the dominant discourse on elections and leadership were collected during the two congresses in 2010 and 2015.

Introduction of the Collegial Leadership and Election Systems

Muhammadiyah members call their leadership system *kepemimpinan kolektif dan kolegial* (collective and collegial leadership). The phrase is widely used, but its origin is unknown.⁴ Asked to give an indigenous word for the phrase, a few informants provided the terms *syuro* or *dewan*, but most did not answer. Instead of thinking about equivalent phrases, these informants preferred to talk about elections as a way to realize collegial leadership. They pinpointed two electoral regulations that they believed connected elections with collegiality. First, voters must select 13 names⁵ for the ballot paper, thus choosing leaders as a “package.” Second, the number of votes a candidate acquires does not necessarily lead to that person becoming a chairperson or vice-chairperson. Instead, each of the 13 elected members is eligible for the position of chairperson, chosen from among those members. In order to put the informants’ explanations in historical perspective, the following section explores Muhammadiyah’s nascent period, when elections first began, procedures were revised and the basic structure of the election system gradually formed.

The first statute of 1912 stipulated that Muhammadiyah was led by a *Hoofdbestuur* (central board) consisting of nine leaders elected by members (Djaldan 1998, 1). Giving hierarchical positions to each leader, such as chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, commissioner and ordinary board member, the statute pronounced that a collective body—not a chairperson—should lead the organization. This heralded a leadership system called *kepemimpinan kolegial*.

The first central board, however, was not organized as stipulated by the statute. Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah’s founder and first chairperson, nominated his acquaintances as the other board members.⁶ As this process indicates, Dahlan solely managed the organization’s day-to-day operations, with the other board members providing moral and financial support. He planned and implemented its programs, made decisions, educated the next generation of activists, promoted the organization to the public and financed its activities.⁷

Through his active participation and dedication, Dahlan gained strong religious authority and leadership in Muhammadiyah, especially supported by a group of young activists who, having been attracted by his teachings prior to the establishment of the organization, played pivotal roles in implementing its programs and became its main players

after Dahlan's death (Al-Ghozi 2009, 198). These young followers viewed Dahlan as the one who would bring about a new era of Javanese Islam, characterized by the right interpretation of Islamic teachings and active engagement with society. Their respect for Dahlan is illustrated in the memoir of a follower named Syujak (2009, 129):

Words of K. H. A. Dahlan ... were received by H. M. Syujak as words of revelation (*kata wahyu*) ... [words that] would be remembered for years to come, until [Dahlan's order to establish a company for assisting the Hajj in the 1910s] was finally carried out ... on 18 January 1941.

Syujak's determination to execute Dahlan's 20-year-old order reveals that he held his teacher in high esteem. The use of the word *wahyu*, meaning revelation, is also noticeable in that it is seldom used in everyday conversation to describe others' commands. Syujak's spontaneous use of it demonstrates the profound respect and submission, falling short of idolatry, which he felt toward Dahlan. Dahlan's extraordinary position was also recognized in compilation of the history of Muhammadiyah, which states, "It is as if he [Dahlan] is Muhammadiyah" (Muhammadiyah 1990, 17). This absolute authority indicates that the organization's early leadership system deviated from the collegial style stipulated in the 1912 statute.

Dahlan's charismatic leadership beg the question of why Muhammadiyah adopted collegial leadership and election systems. In view of the lack of historical data,⁸ this question may be pursued by examining the circumstances under which these systems were introduced. The key factor for consideration is Budi Utomo, the first modern mass organization in Indonesia, because Muhammadiyah was founded with the organization's full support.⁹ It can be assumed that Muhammadiyah's basic organizational structure was imported from Budi Utomo without clear recognition of what that would mean for the management of Muhammadiyah.

The first Muhammadiyah statute is shorter than that of Budi Utomo, but its general form and content resemble those of the Budi Utomo statute. This similarity is reflected in the numbers that appear in the statutes of both organizations: the number of board members is nine, the term for board members is three years, the minimum number of members to open a new branch is ten and the votes needed for amendment of the statute is 75% of those attending the relevant meeting (Djaldan 1998, 1–2; Nagazumi 1989, 270–73). The fifth

article regulating leadership structure is almost identical and is written as follows (Djaldan 1998, 1; Nagazumi 1989, 273):

[In Budi Utomo], leadership of the organization is given to the managing body (*Badan Pengurus*), which consists of nine persons elected by members of the organization.

[In Muhammadiyah], governance of the organization is the responsibility of the central board (*Hoofdbestuur*), which comprises nine members elected by members of the organization.

How Budi Utomo conducted elections remains unclear, but there are hints that the organization provided Muhammadiyah with one of the basic features of its election—block voting—whereby voters choose more than one candidate. A regulation (Article 39.3) in the provisional bylaw (*anggaran rumah tangga*) stated that ballot papers containing more names than the prescribed number would be deemed invalid (Nagazumi 1989, 270).

Although no direct historical records exist, it can be assumed that Muhammadiyah based its organizational structure on that of Budi Utomo. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that Dahlan had a strong will to establish a modern organization and that, for him, Budi Utomo embodied modernity. His active involvement in Budi Utomo influenced his views on modernity and gave him ideas for building his own organization based on Budi Utomo's organizational structure (Yusron 2005, 73–77).

From the circumstances surrounding the establishment of Muhammadiyah, it can be deduced that the election system was introduced with no clear awareness of its possible effects on Muhammadiyah's leadership structure. Since religious authority was held by Dahlan, members may have thought it impossible for elections to bring about real leadership change. Elections conducted under Dahlan's chairpersonship might have simply confirmed his position as leader and highlighted Muhammadiyah's identity as a modern organization. Therefore, the effects of elections could be appreciated only after Dahlan's death in 1923, when elections began to be held according to the organization's bylaw.

The 1922 bylaw regulated two rounds of elections (Djaldan 1998, 56). The first round started when the election committee sought candidate recommendations from branches. Ballot papers were sent to branches by mail, with the guideline that "each branch member

should choose nine people from ... the candidates listed” (*Suara Muhammadiyah* 1931, 1). The ballot papers were then returned to the committee, which counted the papers individually and announced the nine candidates who received the most votes in the congress.

The second round, held to choose the chairperson from among the nine elected members, was conducted in the organization’s congress. The bylaw stipulated that the selection should be made by election but did not provide detailed information about the election procedure (Djaldan 1998, 56). This uncertainty seems to be why the second rounds of the 1925 and 1928 elections were conducted differently. In the 1925 Congress, elections were replaced by consensus. In 1928, members voted, but only three of the nine members elected in the first round ran for the position of chairperson (*Suara Muhammadiyah* 1928, 29).

The deviations in the 1925 and 1928 elections are understandable because elections were a new process for the members. Through trial and error, the basic features of elections gradually crystallized and have been maintained up to the present day. Two basic features are particularly notable. First, voters choose a group of leaders rather than a single leader. Second, elections are conducted twice and the chairperson is chosen in the second round from among those candidates selected in the first round.

The results of the 1925 and 1928 elections and their effects on the leadership system will be analyzed in the following section. Before this, the author will first consider the situation that prevailed in Muhammadiyah after Dahlan’s death.

The Consolidation of the Election System and its Effects

After Dahlan died, the position of chairperson of Muhammadiyah passed to Ibrahim in 1923, not through election but through Dahlan’s will (Alfian 1989, 175–76). The succession proceeded smoothly due to Dahlan’s charismatic leadership and Ibrahim’s position as his brother-in-law. Despite the smooth transition, Ibrahim had many difficulties performing his role, as he was not equipped with the skills needed to lead a modern organization.¹⁰ His role as chairperson was primarily to stabilize the organization following the demise of its founder.

Dahlan’s roles of mobilizing members, expanding the organization, conducting routine programs and searching for new ones were taken

over by a small group of young activists who were taught directly by Dahlan and witnessed his actions (Alfian 1989, 200; Syujak 2009, 197–98). They had the legitimacy to represent the organization and came to the fore in organizational activities.

Anecdotes regarding Dahlan suggest that he had contrasting characteristics. On the one hand, he was thoughtful, tolerant and polite; on the other hand, he exhibited courage, initiative, and vision (Kim 2010b, 66). The young activists tended to internalize one or the other of Dahlan's two sides. Such figures as Syujak, Hadikusumo and Hajid exemplified the former side, whereas Fachruddin exemplified the latter (Hadikusuma 2010, 35–39). This difference made it possible for Fachruddin to emerge as the most popular and influential leader in the 1920s.

Stories about Fachruddin revealed that he possessed qualities that other activists lacked as demonstrated when he was among five young activists who exercised public speech. Although they prepared the speech together, only Fachruddin was brave enough to orate in public and tough enough to repudiate unexpected and malicious criticisms from the audience (Syujak 2009, 94–95). His courage and spirit were again demonstrated in a series of meetings at the Islamic Congress at which national Islamic leaders gathered to debate religious issues. Threatened and criticized harshly by the *kiai*, he was not discouraged, and strongly promoted the righteousness of Muhammadiyah's interpretation of Islamic teachings (*Suara Muhammadiyah* 1922a, 17–29). Fachruddin's keen interest in the sociopolitical issues of the time and his sympathy for the socially disadvantaged were widely known. He participated in a demonstration to oppose colonial policy and was involved in a sugar factory strike. His bravery was demonstrated again when he wrote about the hardships faced by plantation workers and was prosecuted for insulting the colonial government (Anies 1929, 6–13; Mu'arif 2010, 40, 244).

Fachruddin's active involvement in religious and sociopolitical affairs established him as an ideal leader to represent Muhammadiyah in public. His capability and popularity were acknowledged when he was elected in 1924 as one of three delegates to the World Islamic Congress. The votes he received exceeded those obtained by Cokroaminoto (the chairperson of Sarekat Islam) and Wahab Hasbullah (an influential *kiai* who later founded NU) (Alfian 1989, 218). He was well known

to the people in Yogyakarta and was regarded as a leader in civil society (Surjomihardjo 2008, 158). He was the influential leader within Muhammadiyah, receiving full support from young activists and playing the role of problem-solver whenever difficulties arose (Hadikusuma 2010, 27–30).¹¹

After Dahlan's death, Fachruddin emerged as a prominent leader in Muhammadiyah, widely regarded as the real successor to the charismatic former leader. Similar to the claim that "Dahlan is Muhammadiyah," it was asserted that "whether Muhammadiyah is to be white or red is in the hands of Fachruddin" (Anies 1929, 55). Given his important position, the election results of 1925 and 1928 and their effects on leadership should be examined.

In the 1925 election, 31 members were nominated as candidates, 4,000 ballot papers were distributed and 1,394 were returned. Fachruddin was ranked first, with 1,338 votes, signifying that approximately 96% of all voters nominated him as one of the nine leaders. One surprising outcome was that Ibrahim, the incumbent chairperson, could not secure a place among the top nine candidates. Instead, he was ranked eleventh with a total of 878 votes. In the 1928 election, out of the 8,000 ballot papers distributed, 3,685 were returned. Among the 41 candidates, those who received more than 1,500 votes made it to the top nine positions. To analyze the disparities between the two elections, the author compares their respective outcomes.

Table 1. Central board elections in 1925 and 1928

No	1925			1928		
	Name	Votes	%	Name	Votes	%
1	M. H. Fachruddin	1,338	100.0	M. H. Fachruddin	3,172	100.0
2	M. Muhammad Husni	1,325	99.0	M. Yunus Anies	3,013	95.0
3	M. H. Hadikusumo	1,299	97.1	M. H. Muchtar	2,941	92.7
4	M. Ng. Joyosugito	1,298	97.0	K. H. Ibrahim (11th)*	2,904	91.6
5	R. H. Hajid	1,256	93.9	R. H. Hajid	2,596	81.8
6	R. Pringgono	1,056	78.9	M. H. Hadikusumo	2,115	66.7
7	M. H. Muchtar	1,043	78.0	M. H. Syujak	1,880	59.3
8	M. H. Syujak	1,002	74.9	M. H. Hasyim	1,575	49.7
9	K. Moh. Fakhir	1,000	74.7	M. H. Hisyam (13th)*	1,536	48.4

Note: The rank shown in parentheses is the 1925 rank.

Source: *Suara Muhammadiyah* (1925, 202; 1928, 29).

Of the nine leaders elected in 1925, five maintained their positions in 1928, whereas four did not. This observation seems to indicate that elections could, in fact, bring about substantial changes in leadership composition. However, the circumstances that dropped the four from the central board in 1928 preclude this interpretation. Of the four, two were unable to run as candidates: Mohd. Fakhri passed away and Pringgono moved to Jakarta (Muhammadiyah 1927a, 145).¹² The other two, M. Husni and Joyosugito, could not run because they were expelled from the organization in 1928 (Beck 2005, 236–37). Thus, it is unlikely that any dramatic leadership change occurred.

Of the four newly included leaders in 1928, Ibrahim and Hisyam had been ranked eleventh and thirteenth in the 1925 election, respectively, while Yunus Anies and Hasyim were new faces. The inclusion of Anies is surprising because he was just 25 years old (Suratmin 1999, 5) and obtained the second-highest number of votes. His inclusion, therefore, provides insight into the effects of the election system on leadership composition.

In both elections, Fachruddin received the highest number of votes, reflecting his popularity and influence on ordinary members. Another commonality was the narrow margin between the number of votes received by the first and second-ranked candidates. In 1925, the gap between Fachruddin and Husni was 13 votes and it was 159 votes in 1928. After converting these votes into percentages, Husni and Anies obtained 99% and 95% of Fachruddin's votes, respectively.

The high numbers of votes for Husni and Anies may be attributed to their positions as the secretary of the central board just before the congress, which exposed them to ordinary members and helped them attract votes. However, their actual popularity and influence did not compare with those of Fachruddin. Husni only began to be active on the central board in 1921 (Muhammadiyah 2004, 1), and his devotion to the organization proved doubtful when he disobeyed Muhammadiyah's decision to sever its relationship with Ahmadiyah, leading to his eventual dismissal from the organization (Beck 2005, 236–37). Anies assumed the position of secretary in 1927 shortly after returning to Yogyakarta (Suratmin 1999, 36).

Instead of relying on popularity and influence, what allowed Husni and Anies to secure a comparable number of votes to Fachruddin was block voting. The electoral system prevented Fachruddin from achieving

a landslide victory since the rule mandated voters to select nine names on the election ballots. Ordinary members, especially those living outside Kauman had few chances to meet leaders and had difficulty choosing nine names on the ballot papers. Consequently, they tended to select names that were familiar, such as those of the secretaries. This voting behavior does not mean that the elections did not reflect voters' preferences. For example, the incumbent chairperson Ibrahim was ranked eleventh in 1925 and fourth in 1928, showing that elections mirrored voters' preferences. What should be emphasized, however, is that representation in a bloc voting system is more indirect than in systems for selecting one or two candidates.

The notable effect of bloc voting was that Fachruddin's popularity and influence could not be expressed and confirmed institutionally. Despite being more popular and influential than other leaders, he only managed to secure slightly more votes. Consequently, the election process provided members with an opportunity to ensure that power was not concentrated on one individual but rather distributed among a group of leaders.

The second round of elections to choose a chairperson from among the nine elected candidates also prevented the transfer of first-round votes to the second-round election because the latter was held directly in congress and was heavily influenced by a local context where seniority mattered. Consequently, Ibrahim could secure his position irrespective of his lower ranking in first-round votes in 1925 and 1928. The second round of elections helped offset the influence and authority of popular leaders, enabling the organization to be managed according to the collegial system.

In the 1920s, Muhammadiyah proceeded to actualize the leadership system prescribed in the statute, which had not been practiced before. It is likely that the rules and regulations promulgated by Dahlan were the key to achieving consensus among members from diverse backgrounds and thus to uniting an organization deprived of its founder. This process of what can be called the "routinization of charisma" was articulated via elections. Reminding people of the importance of equality among members and preventing the popularity and influence of leaders from becoming institutionalized, the elections worked to strengthen the collegial leadership system and thereby decreased the possibility of the rise of authority figures.

Debates on Collegial Leadership

Dahlan's death encouraged discussions about how the leadership system should operate. In an official account of its organizational structure, Muhammadiyah pronounced that it was steered by a central board, which was treated as a single unit (Muhammadiyah 1927a, 134). All leaders, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson, had the same rights and participated in board meetings on equal terms (Djaldan 1998, 56). Equality among members was also highlighted in explanations of the leadership system, which stated that ordinary members should not think they were commanded by the central board. Rather, the opposite was the case because ordinary members had the power to choose leaders from amongst themselves (Muhammadiyah 1927a, 134).

As the collegial system continued and its effects on leadership became evident, opposing views began to emerge. In the early 1950s, criticism came from a vocal leader named Hamka, who published an article, "Pimpinan dan Imamah" in *Suara Muhammadiyah*, (Hamka 1953, 2–6) which seldom discussed controversial ideas. The inclusion of this article suggests that Hamka's view was shared by some Muhammadiyah activists.

Hamka began the article by stating that the central board had assigned him the responsibility for reviewing the election and leadership systems. He then criticized the collegial leadership from three perspectives—the religious, the organizational and the historical. From a religious perspective, he claimed that Muhammadiyah did not follow the example (*sunnah*) set by the Prophet Muhammad. According to Hamka (Hamka 1953, 3), Islamic leadership should be based on the principle of *imamah*, which teaches that, as one *imam* leads collective prayer, one leader should lead the organization. In organizational terms, Hamka highlighted the challenges for the chairperson under this system:

The chairperson cannot enjoy his full rights and has to accept [opinion from] eight others ... even if he is not in harmony with them. Consequently, it frequently happens that leadership cannot be exercised smoothly.

In historical terms, Hamka cited the 1937 leadership crisis during which protests by the younger generation forced elected leaders to resign. Hamka posited that rules and regulations could not be observed without the authoritative support of the chairperson. Hamka added

that coping with the crisis strengthened the power of the *tanwir* (a collective body consisting of the central board members and the regional representatives), thus further weakening the chairperson's authority.

While undoubtedly supported by some, Hamka's criticism was not immediately responded to. It was neither included as an official agenda item nor discussed in depth at the congress (Muhammadiyah 2007, 127–33). It is unclear why his bold claim that the current leadership was incongruent with Islamic teachings did not instantly attract public attention. The probable answer is that the collegial system was regarded as the key pillar of Muhammadiyah and it was worried that debates about it might destroy organizational unity, which was a supreme virtue to be preserved at all costs.¹³

Although not discussed openly, Hamka's criticism was not considered trivial. A year later, Sutan Mansur, the then-chairperson, addressed Hamka's argument in his annual speech. Sutan noted the absolute position of the *imam* in prayer, stating that the *imam's* posture should be followed by others. Defining *imamah* as leadership with the quality of *imam*, he then explained the difference between the roles of the *imam* in prayer and leading the organization: the *imamah* of an organization lies "in the unity and totality centred on a *syuro* [a council]." Thus, "members of the *syuro* are not permitted to act individually," and "when forced to do so in an unavoidable situation, they should account for their actions later to the *syuro* to obtain *ex post facto* approval or to amend their previous actions" (Sutan 1954, 2–5). Finally, commenting on an *imam* who does not adhere to Islamic teachings, he claimed that it is not obligatory for Muslims to obey such an *imam* and, in terms of Islamic law, it is a sinful act to be loyal to such an *imam*. By referring to a non-adherent *imam*, it appears that Sutan was alleging the superiority of collegial leadership over a one-person leadership system.

In his address, Sutan did not refer to any scriptural sources to legitimize the "collective *imamah*" of an organization. Despite this limitation, the fact that the chairperson officially responded to the problem proposed by a member was significant. Because those involved in the debate, including Hamka, did not raise the issue again, the controversy could subside. From that point onward, no serious attempt to question collegial leadership has appeared in the discourse of Muhammadiyah and the collegial leadership system has become a "sacred" issue that cannot be disputed.¹⁴

Elections and Leadership since the 1950s

The 1950s gave rise to several modifications to the process by which leaders were elected. The most important was the introduction of a representative system whereby only branch representatives were eligible to elect the central board. A similar change was made to the process of nominating candidates and the right to nominate was transferred from all members to members of the *tanwir* (Djaldan 1998, 25).¹⁵ Both of these modifications signaled a shift from direct to indirect democracy, but in organizational terms, they did not result in a fundamental transformation of the basic structure of elections. The right to choose leaders remained in the hands of the members.¹⁶

The second notable change was in the method of selecting the chairperson. Since its establishment, members of the congress and, since 1947, members of the *tanwir*, chose the chairperson from among the nine elected leaders. After 1959, this right was granted to the elected leaders themselves (Djaldan 1998, 25). However, this modification did not substantially transform the collegiality of the leadership, because equal rights were granted to them regardless of the votes that they obtained in the first round of elections.¹⁷

In summary, procedural changes implemented since the 1950s have not generated a significant impact on the fundamental structure of elections. The overall outcomes of the elections under this modified system also reveal continuity. The gap between the winner and the others has not undergone drastic changes, although it has tended to widen over time. The author will analyze the election results from the 1950s onwards, but due to limited historical data, only a few selected results will be investigated.

After 1928, elections were conducted in 1931, 1934, 1937, 1941 and 1947, but not all of the results were reported in *Suara Muhammadiyah*. From 1950 onwards, elections were held once every three years, but starting from 1985, the interval increased to once every five years. Out of the total 18 elections held since 1950, this analysis will examine the results of the elections held in 1950, 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1968, as along with those held after 1985. For the earlier period, the number of elected leaders was nine, whereas for the later period, the number was 13. For convenience of discussion, the analysis will primarily focus on the number of votes received by the winners, the runners-up and the candidates who finished in last place.

Table 2. Central board elections since 1950 (selected years)

Year	Votes			Percentage	
	1st	2nd	13th (9th)	2nd/1st	13th (9th)/1st
1950	6,765	6,227	3,677	92.0	54.4
1953	10,945	10,812	5,038	98.8	46.0
1956	29,005	28,202	15,345	98.8	52.9
1959	13,525	11,781	6,675	87.1	49.4
1968	933	797	535	85.4	57.3
1985	1,059	982	401	92.7	37.9
1990	997	993	516	99.6	51.8
1995	1,245	1,048	589	84.2	47.3
2000	1,282	1,048	706	81.7	55.1
2005	1,718	1,374	776	80.0	45.2
2010	1,915	1,650	797	86.2	41.6
2015	1,947	1,928	968	99.0	49.7
2022	2,203	2,159	1,001	98.0	45.4

Source: *Kompas* (1985), Muhammadiyah (1950, 4; 1953, 49; 1960, 1–2; 1991, 8; 1995, 7–8; 2000, 8; 2007, 519–20; 2010; 2015; 2022), *Suara Muhammadiyah* (1968, 2), and *Suara Ummat* (1956).

Over the period in question, the gap between the winners and runners-up fluctuated. In general, however, the gap was not wide enough to result in a landslide victory for any of the winners, as the runners-up received more than 80% of the votes the winners obtained. The gap between winners and last-place finishers tended to widen, but not significantly. To examine the outcomes from a historical perspective, the gaps in the three periods were averaged.

Table 3. Voting gaps in three periods (percentages)

Periods	2nd/1st	9th (13th)/1st
1920s–1940s (4 cases)	93.9	57.2
1950s–1960s (5 cases)	92.1	52.0
1985–2022 (8 cases)	90.2	46.7

Source: as for Tables 1 and 2, Alpian (2010, 78-79), and *Suara Muhammadiyah* (1947, 28).

Table 3 illustrates the widening gap between the winners and all others. The percentage for the runners-up gradually decreased from 93.9% to 92.1% and further to 90.2%. In spite of the widening gap, however, it is important to note that the runners-up still received more than 90% of the votes garnered by the winners and the last-place finishers received approximately half of the votes obtained by the winners. Hence, it can be concluded that all elected leaders enjoyed significant support from voters, because at least half of the voters backed the chosen candidates.

This historical analysis suggests that leaders in Muhammadiyah cannot truly use elections to display their influence and popularity. The winners cannot overwhelm others with votes, but can only receive slightly more votes than others. In this regard, elections function as a mechanism to blur the differences between those who are more influential and popular and those who are less influential. The right of the elected leaders to choose the chairperson has a similar effect. Irrespective of the fact that the winner is usually chosen as a chairperson, all the elected leaders participate in the deliberation on equal terms regardless of the number of votes they receive in the first round.

The dominant discourse concerning elections has also contributed to diminishing the significance of the winners' victories. The prevailing discourse emphasizes that a leadership position should not be actively pursued because it is determined by Allah. Campaigns for elections and even the promotion of candidates are seen as unnecessary and have rarely been publicly conducted (Abror 2010, 19; Fachruddin 2010, 83). This discourse forces candidates to conceal their desire to win more votes and it is frequently said that those who display ambition should be excluded from leadership. Words such as sincerity (*iklas*), mandate (*amanah*), sacrifice (*korban*), suppression of private interest (*kepentingan*), and arrogance (*sombong*) are constantly reiterated to explain the proper attitude of leaders (Fachruddin 2009, 114–19; Josopranoto 2010, 117–18).¹⁸

Congress is governed by a “forced” indifference to elections because the candidates should conceal their ambition. This does not mean that the participants are not concerned about the elections; on the contrary, they have a keen interest in them. What makes the congress distinct is that participants are unwilling to openly discuss elections and once the elections are concluded, they instantly deny any interest in them.¹⁹

Another typical discourse relates to the second election round. The informants unanimously commented that all of those elected in the first round had an equal opportunity to be chosen as the chairperson. Despite the selection results consistently favoring candidates with the highest number of votes since the 1990s, the informants kept upholding this principle and used a few exceptional cases to support their rhetorical claims. The most frequently mentioned case was A. R. Fachruddin, who, after receiving the most votes, conceded the chairperson's position to Fakhri Usman in 1968. The cases of Hadikusumo and Anies²⁰ were also employed to illustrate the importance of the principle and the sincerity and unselfishness of the leaders.

The dominant discourse tends to devalue the significance of differences in votes. Leaders should not try to win an election but should submit themselves to the members' choice. Furthermore, they should not boast of their victories. This rhetorical device suppresses the expression of individual merits and popularity through elections, highlighting the indistinctiveness of leaders.

Concluding Remarks

In 2010, Muhammadiyah celebrated its centennial anniversary in its birthplace, Yogyakarta. Various activities, including art festivals, writing contests, street parades, exhibitions, cycle rallies and conferences, along with congress meetings, were held and attended by hundreds of thousands of members throughout Indonesia. During the anniversary, the person who was at the fore in almost every activity and whose presence was felt almost everywhere was Dahlan. For example, official guidebooks and brochures were decorated with his portrait, huge outdoor billboards carrying his portrait lined the streets of Yogyakarta, stamps bearing his face were issued, books about his life were published and a film covering his life history was produced under the title *Sang Pencerah* (the Enlightener). Perhaps most importantly, his words and deeds were frequently invoked at the congress, at seminars and at other gatherings. The general atmosphere of the anniversary gave the impression that Dahlan was the only leader that Muhammadiyah had produced during its hundred-year existence.

Dahlan's prominence reveals that Muhammadiyah has successfully denied the emergence of authoritative leaders who can compare to its founder. Many leaders, especially the chairpersons, enjoy popularity

and respect, but, once they leave their formal leadership positions, they are rarely referred to or exploited in Muhammadiyah discourse. The major factor impeding the emergence of authoritative leaders is collegial leadership, backed by the unique election system. The winner cannot overwhelm others with votes but can only receive slightly more votes than others. Elections in Muhammadiyah also make it difficult for leaders to promote and glorify their popularity and influence, because discourses related to elections and leadership stigmatize a person's desire to excel. Thus, elections reduce the differences and emphasize the similarities among leaders.

It is not the intention in this discussion to disregard the importance of Muhammadiyah leaders' personal excellence and merits. These qualities are key to their elections as central board members and chairpersons. This paper attempts to demonstrate that elections serve as an institutional mechanism that offsets personal influence and authority of leaders. Muhammadiyah's leadership is characterized by anonymity with individuality suppressed and subsumed under the auspices of collegiality.

Adopted accidentally, Muhammadiyah's collegial leadership and election systems have successfully maintained the organization's unity and survival. However, these systems are not solely responsible for the transformation of leadership from being based on a charismatic leader to a stable organizational structure. Therefore, further studies should explore how and why "the routinization of charisma" has become feasible and permissible. Studies on Muhammadiyah's organizational structure, bureaucracy, decision-making processes, center-branch relationships and relationships with affiliated schools and social service facilities would enrich our understanding of religious authority in Indonesian Islam in particular and enhance our knowledge of modern Islamic organizations in general.

Endnotes

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1. For Muhammadiyah's emphasis on equality and rationality, see Haedar (2010: 392–93) and Jainuri (2002: 100–5).
 2. The lack of research on Muhammadiyah's leaders has sometimes resulted in misunderstandings regarding its leadership operations. For example, Asyari (2009, 53), observing that the chairperson has the sole authority to speak for the organization, claimed that the chairperson dominated other members in the collegial leadership. Although his observation was correct, his explanation was not since such authority is given to the chairperson to maintain collegial leadership.
 3. Muhammadiyah consists of five organizational levels: headquarters, provincial, district, subdistrict and village branches. A hierarchical structure exists between headquarters and the branches and between higher and lower branches, but the actual operation of branches is largely autonomous.
 4. The term *kolegial* first appeared in the decisions (keputusan Muktamar) of the 1978 Muhammadiyah Congress and again in the 1985 decisions, but without further remarks (Muhammadiyah 2007, 278, 302). Although a lack of discussion on this concept was mentioned in the 2005 decisions (Muhammadiyah 2007, 594), no organizational attempts have been made to elaborate on it.
 5. The number of candidates voters choose in an election equals the number of central board members. Before the 1960s, the central board consisted of nine members.
 6. The identity of the eight other board members are still unknown. After examining their titles, Nakamura assumed that they were mainly from Kauman where Dahlan lived and where court religious officials like Dahlan himself resided (2012, 54–56). Apparently, seven of them were from Kauman, but one was not. Abdullah Sirat, who was listed as a board member, seems to have been a misspelling of Abdullah Siradj from Pakualaman, who recited the Quran at the foundation ceremony of Muhammadiyah (Darban 2010, 40; Surjomihardjo 2008, 140). This likelihood is strengthened by the fact that Siradj was actively involved in Budi Utomo and Sarekat Islam, with which Dahlan was also affiliated.
 7. For more about Dahlan's active involvement in and sacrifices for Muhammadiyah, see Salam (Salam 1968, 58–66).
 8. The oldest known reference to an election appeared in the organization's official bulletin, *Suara Muhammadiyah*, in 1922, but it did not include detailed information (1922b, 11–14).
 9. As a board member for Budi Utomo's Yogyakarta chapter, Dahlan maintained good relations with Budi Utomo's leaders, who allowed him to teach Islam to students in modern schools and encouraged him to establish Muhammadiyah (Nagazumi 1989, 124; Syujak 2009, 65–69).
 10. Syukriyanto (n.d.), for example, pointed out that Ibrahim was not good at public speaking—a key qualification for demonstrating the modernity that Muhammadiyah wished to assert.
 11. R. Kern, who attended the 1925 Muhammadiyah congress, noted that the ostensible leader of the gathering was Ibrahim, but the real leader was Fachruddin (Peacock 1978, 47).
 12. It was stipulated that members of the central board should reside in Yogyakarta (Djaldan 1998, 51).

13. Organizational unity is a theme that has been constantly emphasized in Muhammadiyah discourse. In the early period following its foundation, Muhammadiyah was severely criticized by the established *kiai* to the extent that Dahlan was labelled *kiai palsu* (false *kiai*) and Muhammadiyah, a *perkumpulan yang teresat* (a heretical organization) (Mul Khan 1990, 71; *Suara Muhammadiyah* 1922b, 11). To defend itself from these attacks, Muhammadiyah stressed unity among its members who avoided questioning official decisions and provoking controversies. Mawardi (Mawardi 2010, 38) summed up this strategy as “distancing ourselves from any dispute over basic principles that may cause disagreement”.
14. Since the speech by Sutan Mansur, several articles supporting his view have been published in *Suara Muhammadiyah*, usually highlighting the problems of one-person leadership and the need for institutional and collective control over individuals (Djazman 2010, 44–48, 51; Mawardi 2010, 40).
15. The rapid increase in members participating in the election was the major reason for these modifications. The number of the total voters for the three 1950s elections is not available, but a dramatic increase was recorded in the number of votes the winner received in each election: 6,765 votes in 1950, 10,945 votes in 1953 and 29,005 votes in 1956 (Muhammadiyah 1950, 4, 1953, 49). This increase made the process of manual counting extremely difficult and time-consuming; for example, if the total number of voters was 30,000, the election committee had to count the votes approximately 270,000 times.
16. The branch (*daerah*) representatives participating in the congress are chosen by the members of each branch.
17. For a description of how the election was conducted in the congress, see Dewi (2008, 172–74).
18. Advice delivered by Dahlan has been employed to emphasize the sincerity of leaders, such as, “Do not earn your living in Muhammadiyah, but make Muhammadiyah live!” (Muhammadiyah 1927b, 45).
19. Except for the 1920s, election reports in *Suara Muhammadiyah* are very concise and, in many cases, do not include the number of votes each candidate received. The minimal coverage seems to reflect the trend among members of suppressing their interest in elections.
20. In the late 1930s, Hadikusumo rejected the request of Mas Mansur who, resigning as the chairperson, proposed that Hadikusumo replace him. Anies, who was ranked first in the 1950 and 1953 elections, conceded the chairperson position to others (Muhammadiyah 1950, 4, 1953, 49).

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Guidelines

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

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10.000-15.000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should

be translated into English. *Studia Islamika* accepts only electronic submissions. All manuscripts should be sent in Ms. Word to: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>.

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1. Hefner, Robert. 2009a. "Introduction: The Political Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," in *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Hefner, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
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4. Wahid, Din. 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang. 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: ' b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḡ, ' gh, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y. Short vowels: a, i, u. long vowels: ā, ī, ū. Diphthongs: aw, ay. *Tā marbūṭā*: t. Article: al-. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

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ISLAM, MODERN TURKEY, AND A JAVANESE INTELLECTUAL: THE SUTOMO'S VISIT TO TURKEY IN 1937

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