

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES HEADING FOR 2024 ELECTIONS: Case Study on the PKB Party After the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara

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Abstract

This research seeks to explore how the influence of the authority of religious leaders on Indonesian society. In this case, the religious leaders have excellent and credible religious knowledge and a strong societal influence. Indonesian people used to call them Kyai. This research raises several general questions: Does the authority of religious leaders only apply to matters of religious affairs? To what extent is the influence of the authority of religious figures (kyai) in Indonesian society? Do religious leaders also have a strong influence in the political sphere? If yes, why could it happen? This research will try to see the influence of Kyai's authority within the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) party. More specifically, this research will look at the influence of the Kyai in the PKB party after the Ijtima' Ulama Nusantara meeting. This meeting is one of PKB's political strategies to win the 2024 general election. This research will look at the influence of the authority of religious leaders within the PKB party ahead of the 2024 general election. The author argues that the authority of religious leaders in Indonesia applies not only to religious issues but also to all joints of the life of Indonesian society, including politics. The author also wants to argue that the authority of the kyai is used by the party to increase the electability of the party and gain support from the community. It is proven, among other things, after the Ijtima 'Ulama Nusantara event organized by the PKB party to win the 2024 general election. This research will collect written data

from several works of literature and essential data in the form of information or news from the media. This research will use the theory of Clifford Geertz on religious experts as cultural brokers.

Keywords: Kyai Authority, PKB, Ijtima' Ulama Nusantara

Introduction

Some researchers argue that the position of the kyai as a religious figure in society has a dual role. Aside from being the leader of the pesantren, the authority of the kyai is also influential in several areas of community life: religious rituals, socioeconomics, and politics. Research conducted by Falikul Isbah, for example, Isbah said that kyai become community consultants. According to Isbah, the authority of the kyai does not only occur in spiritual, moral, and religious matters but also in politics. In this case, the kyai gains moral authority to disseminate Islamic teachings in society.¹

At least research studies that emphasize the kyai as a charismatic leader with authority beyond his role as a religious leader can be traced as follows. Initial studies were conducted on kyai by Binder, 1960;² Dhofier, 1999;³ Geertz, 1999;⁴ Horikoshi, 1976;⁵ Jay, 1969;⁶ Noer, 1973;⁷ Wahid, 1974⁸. With the authority they have until now, the kyai can carry out leadership followed by total obedience by their followers. The kyai's unique position cannot be separated from the influence

¹ Falikul Isbah, M. (2016). *Examining the Socio-Economic Role of Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) in Indonesia*. School of Humanities and Social Sciences UNSW Canberra.

² Binder, L. (1960). *Islamic Tradition and Politics : The Kijaji and the Alim*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2(2), 250-256.

³ Dhofier, Zamakhsyari. 1999. *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java*. Tempe, Arizona: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, ASU.

⁴ Geertz, C. (1960). *The Religion of Java*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

⁵ Horikoshi, Hiroko. 1976. 'A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The "Kijaji" and "Ulama" in West Java.' Ph.D Thesis, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

⁶ Jay, R. R. (1969). *Javanese Villagers: Social Relations in Rural Modjokuto*. MIT Press.

⁷ Noer, D. (1973). *The Modernists Muslim Movement in Indonesian 1900-1942*. Oxford University Press.

⁸ Wahid, A. (1974). *Pesantren Sebagai Subkultur*. In D. Raharjo (Ed.), *Pesantren dan Pembaharuan*. LP3ES.

of his life journey, which made him an educated elite; he has the expertise to transform Islamic knowledge to his followers. The kyai becomes the sole teacher, especially if they are in Islamic boarding schools. The wealth owned by the kyai also places it.⁹

Kyai has been involved in politics and statehood since long ago. The existence of the kyai does not only appear as a religious figure but also appears as forming the social order of society. It is common for kyai to enter politics directly and get positions in government. Kyai gets strong legitimacy from the community in guiding people's lives in political affairs. This situation illustrates how vital the existence and authority of the kyai are in guiding people to choose certain political aspirations. If so, the existence of the kyai is not only a religious figure but also a political elite.¹⁰

In the political context, kyai are not only involved in the boundaries of political party territory, but their existence also determines the political process, and the results of kyai not only play a role in external party problems but also influence determining the direction of party goals.¹¹ From the beginning of the election until the reform era, Kyai actively participated in politics, even in the functional area and sought support. How many kyai intervene and campaign for certain political party candidates.¹² What becomes a grey area is the position of the kyai, who are either used or based on choices to realize their constituents' aspirations. When the kyai became one of the social groups, the party machine intensified to gain support. The fall of the choice of the party machine towards the kyai is a natural thing to see that

⁹ Falikul Isbah, M. (2020). *Pesantren in The Changing Indonesian Context: History and Current Developments*. *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QIJIS)*, 8(1), 2020. <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.5629>.

¹⁰ Bush, R., & Fealy, G. (2014). *The political decline of traditional Ulama in Indonesia: The state, Umma and Nahdlatul Ulama*. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42(5), 536-560.

¹¹ Winarni, L. (2014). *The political identity of ulama in the 2014 Indonesian presidential election*. *Al-Jami'ah*, 52(2), 257-269. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.522.257-269>.

¹² Pepinsky, T. B., Liddle, R. W., & Mujani, S. (2012). *Testing Islam's Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia*. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 584-600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00570.x>.

the kyai is a social elite who influences directing people's views and life choices.¹³ Moreover, remember that the kyai lives and is directly present among the people who are his followers.

The community sees the kyai's authority as influential in providing direction on various community problems (Arifianto, 2017).¹⁴ Especially in rural areas, a kyai is a religious expert who is a reference for Muslims in Islamic religious beliefs and practices.¹⁵ With the emergence of kyai as patrons in society, the influence of kyai in Indonesian Islamic society is deeply rooted.

The kyai have become part of the elite in society's social, political, and economic structure. The community's dependence on the figure of the kyai is very high because the kyai have become important patrons in society (Pribadi, 2013).¹⁶ As an advocate of Islam, Kyai makes his influence go beyond the territorial boundaries where he lives, and his pesantren Kyai can make decisions that can change the course of socio-political in Indonesia. As Islamic religious advisers, Kyai can also become political advisers who can determine socio-political directions.¹⁷ Especially when added to the influence of the teacher-student psychological relationship, which is very touching and robust, the kyai's views and instructions have a comprehensive impact if we consider the number of pesantren alums spread throughout Indonesia.

This article will continue the theory of the dual authority of the kyai as understood by the researchers above. This article emphasizes that the authority of the kyai as a

¹³ Abidin, M. Z. (2017). *Ulama in Indonesian Urban Society: A View of Their Role and Position in the Change of Age*. *Jurnal THEOLOGIA*, 28(2), 235-254. <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2017.28.2.1863>.

¹⁴ Arifianto, A. R. (2017). *Practicing what it preaches? Understanding the contradictions between pluralist theology and religious intolerance within Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama*. *Al-Jami'ah*, 55(2), 241-264. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.55.2.241-264>.

¹⁵ Ismail, F. (2011). *The nahdlatul ulama: Its early history and contribution to the establishment of Indonesian State*. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 5(2), 247-282. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2011.5.2.247-282>.

¹⁶ Pribadi, Y. (2013). *Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture*. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 51(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2013.51.1.1-32>.

¹⁷ Pribadi, Y. (2018). *Islam, state and society in Indonesia : local politics in Madura*. Routledge. http://lib1.org/_ads/35D9AC4C9B463056609C3D3C24056BB3.

religious figure in Indonesia is still quite strong. Moreover, this authority is related to religious issues and other social issues, including politics. As proof of this theory, this article will present the reality within the PKB party. Precisely after the Ijtima 'Ulama Nusantara event as a meeting forum for the gathering of clerics. PKB takes this step-in preparation for the 2024 general election. In the first discussion section of this article, we will review the history of the PKB party. This section is essential to discuss to find out what the PKB party is. Furthermore, this article will discuss the dual authority of the kyai, namely as a religious figure and a political adviser. Finally, this article will look at the influence of the kyai's authority in the PKB party in facing the 2024 general election, specifically after the Ijtima 'Ulama Nusantara event.

The data analysis method that will be used in this research is descriptive-analytical. The author will thoroughly describe the data obtained to get a complete picture of the object of study. Then the writer will analyze the data. The data were obtained from written literature regarding the object of study on religious authority, the PKB party, and other related topics. These data can be in the form of written documents, images, or electronic and mass media.

In the first discussion section of this article, we will review the history of the PKB party. This section is essential to discuss to find out what the PKB party is. Furthermore, this article will discuss the dual authority of the kyai, namely as a religious figure and a political adviser. Finally, this article will look at the influence of the kyai's authority on the PKB party in facing the 2024 general election, specifically after the Ijtima 'Ulama Nusantara event.

The History of the PKB Party

Judging from the history of the party's establishment, the PKB was born as a manifestation of the political will of the members of Nahdatul Ulama (NU). PKB cannot be separated from the dynamics that colored politics after Suharto's fall. As the most prominent Islamic organization, the Nahdlatul Ulama Board of Directors accepts many proposals that focus on the desire to form an Islamic-based political

party. On July 23, 1998, it was decided to establish PKB Party, which was declared at the residence of PBNU chairman K.H Abdurahman Wahid in Ciganjur, South Jakarta.¹⁸

PKB is one of the parties that, along with dozens of other new parties, was founded after the overthrow of the New Order's absolute power for more than 30 years. As is well known, the New Order's authoritarian rule has dwarfed the political potential of the people by limiting the number of political parties to three: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar), and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI). The aim is precise so that the government can select and closely monitor every political participation of the people. Ironically, this blockage in political participation grew, sowed the seeds of resistance, and exploded in mid-May 1998. Thus, when the New Order regime collapsed, the people's political potential and aspirations manifested through forming new parties from various groups.¹⁹

The beginning of the formation of PKB was on June 3, 1998; PBNU formed the Team of Five, which was tasked with fulfilling and responding to the aspirations of NU members who wanted a party to accommodate the aspirations of Nahdliyyin members. After the Team of Five and the Assistant Team held meetings and gatherings, they could finally complete their tasks and submit the results of the draft for the formation of the political party. The political party was later named the National Awakening Party, which has a picture of the universe of the Indonesian archipelago and is surrounded by a nine star as a distinctive symbol of NU.

Put in the political context; ideology is a belief system that explains and justifies an existing or aspired political order and provides a strategy in the form of procedures, designs, instructions, ideas, norms, beliefs, and beliefs that a person or a group of people who form the basis for determining attitudes towards political events and problems they face, and which determine political behavior". The principle of PKB

¹⁸ Hamad, Ibnu . 2004, *Konstruksi Realitas Politik dalam Media Massa: Sebuah Study Critical Discourse Analysis Terhadap Berita –berita Politik ; edisi 1, Jakarta: Granit, hlm 100- 101.*

¹⁹ Koirudin, *Menuju Partai Advokasi, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Tokoh Bangsa, 2005), hlm. 1.*

is Pancasila, while the principle the basis of his struggle is to uphold truth and honesty, uphold justice, maintain unity, foster brotherhood, and togetherness following the Islamic values of ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

The objectives of establishing PKB are:

1. Realizing the aspirations of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia as outlined in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution.
2. Realizing a just and prosperous society physically and spiritually, material-spiritually.
3. Realizing a national political order that is democratic, open, clean, and has good morals.

From the principles and objectives above, PKB is an open party; anyone can join this party and come from any school of thought or organization because this party is not solely the party of the NU people. However, the fact that PKB initiators often express it illustrates that PKB is the party of the NU people. There must be a distinction between PKB and NU. PKB is a political party and is only part of the activities of the NU people. At the same time, NU is a social organization whose scope of activities is more comprehensive than political parties.²⁰

As a driven party by the ulema, PKB is one of the parties that is expected to eradicate injustice and arbitrariness that state leaders have practiced. All nahdliyyin members hope PKB can bring significant changes to nahdliyyin members because this party is the brainchild of the ulemas who have clean thoughts. After all, religious and moral norms always control them. Ideally, PKB is inclusive, meaning that party membership and orientation are not only for NU members but for all Indonesian citizens. In addition, the PKB platform is structured based on harmony between regionalism and nationality. The two are considered not to contradict each other but rather complement each other.²¹

²⁰ Ali Anwar, *NU AVONTURISM: Tracing the Roots of Nahdliyyin Political Interest-Conflicts* (Bandung: Humaniora, 2004), p. 157.

²¹ Hairus Salim et al., *Seven Sound Mining Machines* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), p. 229.

The openness of PKB's struggle can be seen in the description of PKB's struggle that has been initiated: 1. In the Political Sector, PKB holds the Pancasila is the final form for the Indonesian nation. PKB firmly rejects and opposes all efforts to divide the unity and brotherhood of the Indonesian nation. To improve the quality of people's lives, PKB strives for every arrangement of social and state life to reflect the independence of the people in the truest sense. 2. In the Economic Sector, PKB realizes there is not purely capitalist or socialist economic system. Nevertheless, one thing is for sure: an economic system based on the market can no longer be dammed. So that PKB struggles to help realize welfare, prosperity, and social justice through a market economic system that provides space for broad community involvement and is based on individual abilities and cooperation among community members to maximize their respective roles. The party guarantees the maintenance of property ownership by individuals (*hifzu al-mal*). It encourages the state to guarantee equal business opportunities for all economic actors without discrimination, but with particular attention to efforts to empower actors in small and home businesses and industries. Stairs, especially in rural areas. 3. In law, PKB strives to establish a state based on the law (*resistant*), not a state based on power. The party encourages the state to guarantee the upholding of the rule of law to create justice and legal certainty. The party fights for the rule of law that works professionally.

The Dual Authority of the Kyai (as a Religious Figure and a Political Adviser)

The existence of various forms of power cannot be separated from the influence of the existence of tradition in shaping culture. Borrowing the conclusion of Clifford Geertz, religious experts are cultural brokers. Such a phenomenon occurs because religious experts from the beginning have had quite a strong influence on cultural movements that have made it possible for them to engage in political practice. This position states that the actions of religious figures who only provide prayers and directions are directly involved in political negotiations.²² Borrowing the opinion

²² Geertz, C. (1960). *The Religion of Java*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

of Peter L. Berger, he said that religion is a sacred sky that can be used to strengthen the political action of all human actions.²³ In addition, for Geertz, the kyai are not only the owners of authority in exercising power in pesantren. He also has power within the structure of society, where that power becomes valuable. This opinion is in line with what Gaventa explained: this religious figure's behaviour is in the power level dimension. A kyai is not only a respected figure in his pesantren but also respected by people who live around his pesantren through his role as an informal community leader.

The kyai's position in society has a strong position, which is influenced by two factors. First, the kyai is a local figure with the knowledge above the average community regarding religious knowledge and from which the villagers learn. Second, most of the kyai come from families with an affluent economic status, and only some kyai can teach Islam from the start.²⁴

The word kyai in Javanese society can be interpreted as something with sacred value or extraordinary good luck. People were called kyai in the beginning because of the knowledge and dedication they gave to society. His devotion is sincere and selfless. Regardless of where the word kyai comes from and where the term kyai appears, the term kyai does not only deal with religion like ustadz or sheikhs; social religion is also very much attached to kyai. Kyai is always used as a reference for the community because whatever is said is a fatwa followed by their santri.

The relationship between the kyai and his community is based on mutual expectations. Community members usually expect the kyai to provide them with spiritual, moral, and religious guidance and exercise leadership that is protective of authority. Consequently, society respects the kyai so that the kyai gains moral authority to spread Islamic teachings in society. In addition, the kyai also liaise with outside agents on behalf of their community and mobilize the community to support

²³ Peter L. Berger. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. (George Simpson, *American Sociological Review*).

²⁴ Turmudi, E. (2008). *Religion and Politics: A Study on Political Attitudes of Devout Muslims and the Role of the Kyai in Contemporary Java*. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 23(2), 18-41. <https://doi.org/10.1163/030382495x00105>.

the advocate kyai's struggles.²⁵ Thus, apart from his position as the leader of a pesantren, a kyai can also play several roles in society in one (or more) of these areas: ritual Islam, Islamic da'wah, politics and economics. Etymologically, scholars are then referred to as experts who have a high understanding of religious sciences ('ulum al diniyah) and have special rights (privileges) in the eyes of society. The ulema is privileged because it has the task of executing fiqh law for society while still teaching the religious sciences and preserving the religious orthodoxy practices of its adherents. It then gives rise to a culture of community tackled towards the ulama because they judge what the ulama conveys as the truth so that the dimension of patrimonial power owned by the ulama arises. The duality played by the ulema, which moves in the prophetic and profane dimensions, makes the ulema himself a social prophet.²⁶

Imam Suprayogo, in his research on the involvement of the kyai and politics, divides the kyai into four types: the spiritual type of kyai, the advocative type of kyai, the adaptive political type of kyai, and the critical partner type of kyai.²⁷ Abdurrahman Wahid emphasized that the state political actions of the NU kyai were based on views formed by theology. Carried out by kyai-intellect in building civilization.²⁸ Unlike other Islamic groups, NU kyai develop their religious traditions fully. Its completeness comes from the traditions of monotheism, fiqh, and tasawuf.²⁹ These three traditions are the three main things in considering the future of human relations with each other and politics. In political Islam, the kyai is

²⁵ Horikoshi, Hiroko. 1976. 'A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The "Kijaji" and "Ulama" in West Java.' Ph.D Thesis, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

²⁶ Hiroko Horikoshi, "A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The 'Kijaji' and 'Ulama' in West Java (Ph.D Thesis, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign., 1976).

²⁷ Suprayogo, Imam. 2007. *Kyai dan Politik (Membaca Citra Politik Kyai)* Malang: UIN-Malang Press.

²⁸ Maula, M. J. (2014). *Kembali ke Khittah 1945: Negara Republik Indonesia adalah 'Negara Islamnya umat Islam Indonesia Menurut NU*. In M. B. A. Hatani (Ed.)'.

²⁹ Barton, G. (2014). *The Gülen Movement, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama: Progressive Islamic Thought, Religious Philanthropy and Civil Society in Turkey and Indonesia*. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 25(3), 287-301.

responsible to God (tawhid) in carrying out the mandate to manage (fiqh) the world for the common good in a wise way (tasawuf).³⁰

From these three traditions, teachings are derived that give meaning to each one who practices them. In carrying out Islamic politics, the kyai adhere to this tradition, which aims to lead to *maslahah* (the common good), which is the core of every law and policy determination in politics. This goal is better known as the *maslahah mursalah*, which is once again the core of all *qoidah fiqh* (rules in establishing laws) (Maula, 2014).³¹ The considerations in determining *maslahah* are based on Islamic sharia *maqasid*, known as the concept of *kulliyatul khoms*, in the form of *hifdz al dîn* (right to religion), *hifdz al nafs* (right to life), *hifdz al áql* (right to thoughts), *Hifdz al nasl* (right to inherit), and *Hifdz al mâ l* (wealth processing rights).³² From there, Kiai Mahfud Siddiq's idea of *khoiru ummah* (starting toward the best ummah) developed in the late 1930s. This concept concerns the problem of the socio-economic improvement of the people. Continued to be reaffirmed by the kyai at the 26th Muktamar in 1979 with the concept of *syuun ijtimaiyah* (social care).³³

Ulama, as social prophets themselves, is interpreted as a filter against invasions of foreign influences that enter society as a form of safeguarding religious morals and ethics. Etymologically, the *ulema* is then interpreted as an expert who has a high understanding of the religious sciences (*'ulum al diniyah*) and who has special rights (privileges) in the eyes of society. The *ulema* is privileged because it has the task of executing *fiqh* law for society while still teaching the religious sciences and preserving the religious orthodoxy practices of its adherents. It then gives rise to a culture of community *taklid* towards the *ulama* because they judge what the *ulama* conveys as the truth so that the dimension of patrimonial power owned by the *ulama* arises. The duality played by the *ulema*, which moves in the prophetic and profane

³⁰ Bush, R., & Fealy, G. (2014). *The political decline of traditional Ulama in Indonesia: The state, Umma and Nahdlatul Ulama*. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42(5), 536-560.

³¹ Maula, M. J. (2014). *Kembali ke Khittah 1945: Negara Republik Indonesia adalah 'Negara Islamnya umat Islam Indonesia Menurut NU*. In M. B. A. Hatani (Ed.).

³² Kosim. (2019). *Law politics in sharia perspective*. *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(4), 297-302.

³³ Bustami, A. L. (2015). *Resolusi Jihad: Perjuangan Ulama dari Menegakkan Agama Hingga Negara*. *Pustaka Tebuireng*.

dimensions, makes the ulema himself a social prophet (Horikoshi, 1976).³⁴ Ulama, as social prophets themselves, is interpreted as a filter against invasions of foreign influences that enter society as a form of safeguarding religious morals and ethics.

The actions taken by religious leaders show a role in determining the sources of power for political parties in winning the candidates that are carried out in the post-conflict local election. It is all related to the benefits obtained and the position held as a form of power between political actors and voters.³⁵

Most of the powers of religious leaders show that the behaviour is very political. As explained by Gramsci about hegemony during the Bolshevik Revolution, the heart of the political struggle must play a significant role in carrying out acts of control over power that is built up to the creation of classes.³⁶ The actions of these religious figures can be seen in pre-election to post-election activities. Setting the agenda by religious leaders by making religious studies facilitates the passage of the space of power explained by Gaventa. The public can readily accept the politicization of the lectures' values because they are considered easy to digest. In Gramsci's view of hegemony, religious experts are seen as intellectuals who have a significant role in producing power.

Seeing religion and politics as two values that have the impression of being contradictory, but both have a social role as a means of exchange in society. Religion is morality for people to live a life where rules, values and norms underlie it. Meanwhile, politics is always synonymous with power and policies that are made. For example, what happened in a Muslim country? Religious leaders/ulama have an essential role in observing the political dynamics. However, the role of religious figures was different at that time from Islamic rule several centuries ago. However, one role must be supported, namely that religious leaders are the moral

³⁴ Horikoshi, Hiroko. 1976. 'A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The "Kijaji" and "Ulama" in West Java.' Ph.D Thesis, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

³⁵ Gaventa, John, "Finding The Spaces For Changes; A Power Analysis", *Ids (Institute Of Development Studies) Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 6 (November 2006).

³⁶ Roger Simon, *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982) hal 21.

stronghold in society. Because of this, the position of this religious figure has enormous political potential. His position is likely to provide legitimacy to the policies made by the government.

Religious figures or scholars in the existing order in society have great influence.³⁷ In the existing order, religious leaders are different from teachers formally or informally because some have Islamic boarding schools. In the area of practice, the influence of this religious figure is considered when the post-conflict local election takes place. The ability of religious leaders to have potential as regional leaders have been seen not only this time. So that in post-conflict local elections, this religious figure or kyai becomes a reference for the public/students to make choices. Besides that, political parties are also facilitated by a dominant source of personal power. It has been frequently encountered in elections or post-conflict local elections; political elites often visit the power of religious leaders/kyai to ask about the direction of their support. It is what happens as a form of power of religious leaders in politics. There are two reasons for choosing a religious figure in politics. First, religious leaders have personalities that the community respects so that their positions become strong. Second, religious figures are usually born and live in a high social structure or wealthy circles³⁸

Moreover, religious leaders are not uncommon to jointly defend government stability, delegitimize the government and lead revolutions.³⁹ Another opinion states that the Kyai, as the society's patron, largely determines the direction of support for general elections and his position as the local elite and leads the pesantren. Kyais are also religious figures and agents of political socialization, so they cannot be separated from political interests as it is known that political

³⁷ Salehudin, A. (2016). *Konstruksi Jaringan Sosial Pesantren: Strategi Eksis Di Tengah Perubahan. Religi Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 10(2), 204.

³⁸ Turmudi, E. (2008). *Religion and Politics: A Study on Political Attitudes of Devout Muslims and the Role of the Kyai in Contemporary Java. Asian Journal of Social Science*, 23(2), 18-41. <https://doi.org/10.1163/030382495x00105>.

³⁹ Aswar, H. (n.d.). *Pengaruh Ulama Dalam Politik Di Negara Muslim: JURNAL ILMU SOSIAL INDONESIA, VOL.2,NO.1,Maret 2015 hal 85-102.*

socialization is a process of socialization from an early age involving families, schools, and religious leaders.

The Influence of the Kyai's Authority in the PKB Party after the Ijtima 'Ulama Nusantara Event

By looking at the extent of their network, the kyai contributes if they can play their role in the political context. PKB sees this not only from the perspective of political pragmatism but also from a socio-historical, including ideological, background. The kyai of the pesantren has a role not only as the leader of the pesantren but also as a campaigner and political outreach agent for the PKB.⁴⁰ The role of the kyai in politics within NU is also not only in the context of his being a cultural broker or broker. In politics, kyai also act as political brokers. He became an agent in carrying out political activities. Even in PKB, there are not a few kyai who are also political actors.⁴¹

Ijtima Ulama Nusantara has agreed on several points. One of them is giving a mandate to the General Chair of PKB, Muhaimin Iskandar, to become the national leader in 2024. This mandate is stated in point three of the recommendations of the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara. The Ijtima Ulama Nusantara was previously held as PKB on 13-14 January 2023 at the Millenium Hotel, Jakarta.

In addition to giving this mandate, the Ijtima also gave Muhaimin Iskandar (Cak Imin) the right to make decisions regarding PKB.

The following is a complete agreement which is the recommendation of the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara:

1. Making the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara a friendly forum for scholars, both kyai and nyai, who are concerned about national politics.
2. The Ijtima Ulama Nusantara requests the PKB DPP to call on all

⁴⁰ Dhakiri, Muhammad Hanif dan kawan-kawan. *PKB Masa Depan*. Jakarta: DPP Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, 2006.

⁴¹ Dirdjosanjoto, Pradjarta, *Memelihara Umat: Kiai Pesantren-Kiai Langgar di Jawa*. Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2013.

tanfidziah management from the centre to the regions to carry out intensive communication with the syuro council, including facilitating the syuro council to carry out activities like this Ijtima Ulama Nusantara so that all policies and products of struggle come from PKB can socialize well in the community.

3. Ijtima Ulama Nusantara gave a full mandate to the General Chairperson of the PKB DPP to continue fighting for Gus Muhaimin as the national leader for the 2024 period. Also, it gave Gus Muhaimin the right to make strategic decisions for the greatness of PKB.
4. Ijtima Ulama Nusantara also asked all PKB management and cadres to continue to strengthen national commitments by installing the Garuda Pancasila symbol in the homes of PKB cadres and sympathizers.
5. Encouraging the government to realize equitable management of state resources in various ways, including:
 - a. transparency of state financial management.
 - b. preventing the emergence of new oligarchs.
 - c. formulates policies related to saving and preventing wasteful use of state funds.
 - d. anticipating an economic crisis in the coming years.
6. Encouraging the government to realize honest and fair elections, the independence of the election management body, and preventing money politics.
7. Encouraging clerics, kyai, and pesantren leaders, especially from the NU circle, to eradicate sexual violence in educational institutions, especially religious ones, and strive to provide the best possible justice for victims of violence by facilitating assistance and means of victim recovery.
8. The Ijtima Ulama Nusantara encourages an increase in women's role in various economic and social fields, including in the political field. The

kyai and nyai mothers involved in the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara will become mouthpieces in overseeing issues of gender equality and alleviating cases of violence against women and children.

9. Ijtima Ulama Nusantara made all the Ulama, both kyai and bu nyai, become national campaigners for PKB and Muhaimin. Apart from that, they also conduct friendly visits and intensive communication with all groups, NU officials, Jamiyyah Thoriqoh, traditional leaders and other plural and diverse community leaders.

It is known that PKB is holding an Ijtima Ulama on January 13-14, 2023. This event is being held to ensure the party's program and discuss leadership issues facing the 2024 elections.

Ijtima Ulama is like a reunion of PKB figures as a party born from Nahdlatul Ulama's womb. Throughout its journey, PKB has produced many figures who have made major contributions to The Ijtima Ulama Nusantara was also held to ensure that the performance and programs of the PKB were always under the supervision and direction of the Ulama, as well as strengthening the link between the service of the Ulama and national life and social issues. In addition, the Ijtima Ulama Nusantara is expected to equate the vision of the PKB's political struggle as a *wasilah* for realizing the noble ideals of the Nahdlatul Ulama *mu'assis*. It is strengthening the solidity and togetherness of the Ulama with the PKB's mission of struggle and political agenda.



Figure 1 Group photo of kyai and PKB party elites after the meeting

Conclusion

The influence of Kyai's authority as a religious figure in Indonesia does not only occur on topics related to religion. In addition, the kyai also significantly influences the life of the surrounding community. Be it economic, social, cultural, or political issues. It is the unique side of Indonesian society where the authority of religious leaders is influential around religion and other than religious topics. Furthermore, this phenomenon has been going on for a long time and is understood by researchers as the dual authority of the kyai in Indonesia. This research reconfirms that this phenomenon is still ongoing today. The reality in society continues to see the authority of the kyai as something important to consider in the world of politics. The PKB party is one of the parties that is aware of this. As a party that has quite strong historical ties with kyai, PKB held an important meeting with kyai (*ijtima' ulama Nusantara*) in preparation for winning the general election in 2024.

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