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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

From Consumption to Production: The Extroversion of Indonesian Islamic Education

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Abstract

Conventionally perceived as a geographical and civilisational periphery of the Muslim world, Indonesia has recently pursued an Islam-based diplomatic narrative that aims to promote itself as a model democratic Muslim-majority country, upholding religious pluralism and tolerance. This paper analyses the educational dimension of this Islamic soft power policy, which has been overlooked by the academic literature. It argues that the extroversion of Indonesian Islamic education—defined as the switch from an inward-looking perspective to a strategy of exporting this sector beyond Indonesia's borders, while upholding the narrative of its national distinctiveness—aims at fostering the authoritativeness of Indonesian Islam, enhancing the nation's standing within the Muslim world and, more broadly, bolstering the image of Indonesian Islam as inherently moderate and pluralist, which serves both domestic and foreign policy purposes. At the same time, extroversion seeks to legitimise local Islamic practices that have become increasingly challenged by external and, in particular, Wahhabi influences. By mapping out historical trajectories and current developments of the Indonesian Islamic educational sphere, we argue that future research on Indonesia's position within and relationship to the Muslim world—and particularly the country's Islamic soft power strategy—must consider Islamic educational institutes and their intellectual *milieux* as distinct actors in global religious and political competition.

Keywords: Indonesia; Islamic higher education; *pesantren*; Islamic soft power; public diplomacy

Introduction

Conventionally perceived as a geographical and civilisational periphery of the Muslim world, Indonesia has recently pursued an Islam-based public diplomacy that aims to promote its model as a democratic Muslim-majority country, upholding religious pluralism and tolerance both at home and abroad. To this end, Indonesian political and diplomatic elites have navigated between the country's "dual identity" as a Muslim-majority state based on a religiously neutral constitution (Sukma 2003) and their increasing aspiration to showcase Indonesia as a political and religious reference point within the Muslim world and beyond. From the outset, this evolution held simultaneously domestic and international dimensions: initially conducted under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Public Diplomacy, it deliberately aimed to foster the attractiveness of tolerance and pluralism against fundamentalism and religious-based violence, and to assert the legitimacy of religious conceptions compatible with the authority of the state. This approach was first implemented under former presidents Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001–2004) and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–2014) (Allès 2015). It has been pushed forward by Indonesia's current president Joko Widodo, whose administration explicitly promotes "moderation" with the aim of countering homegrown extremism and underpinning Indonesian constitutional and institutional legitimacy within the Indonesian Muslim population (Nubowo 2018). In this context, governmental and administrative authorities have increasingly converged with the mass Islamic organisations Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, who share similar narratives and conceptions regarding the role of Islam in the public sphere.

This paper analyses the educational dimension of this Islam-based public diplomacy. Education, identified as a component of soft power (Nye 2004; Ruffini 2017; Wojciuk 2018), is a crucial sector for analysis because it is the site where "knowledge, politics, and social networks interact in a complex and generative manner" (Hefner 2007: 2). In their wide-ranging study *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia,* Hefner *et al.* (2009) have explored this argument at the grassroots level, showing the intertwined nature of shifts to centre educational and religious authority, as well as the diversity of Southeast Asian governments' and religious actors' approaches to the strategic and legitimising roles of Islamic education. Recent studies have also pointed towards the increasing role of Islam as a factor within Muslim-majority countries' soft power strategies (Mandaville and Hamid 2018). At the crossroads of these observations, the promotion of a specific model of Islamic education contributes to shaping global Islamic discourses (Bano and Sakurai 2015). Global networks of Islamic education, therefore, do not simply reflect the current state of international alliances and centre-periphery distinctions in the Muslim world. They actually play a central role in their evolution, as the question of who produces and who consumes what kind of Islamic knowledge, academic epistemologies, and educational concepts shapes legitimacy, authority, and related power relationships on the world stage.

From this perspective, we show that the Indonesian government's strategy of exporting a supposedly homegrown model of Indonesian Islamic higher education links domestic constraints and international ambitions, in line with broader Islamic public diplomacy and soft power aspirations. For the national authorities, supporting this effort contributes to upholding the narrative of Indonesia's singularity as the home of an inherently moderate and pluralist "brand" of Islam. In so doing, the government converges with nation-based civil society organisations in an attempt at normalising religious legitimacy around state-compliance, embedding the definitions of "Indonesian Islam" and "moderation" within constitutional principles.[1] The international promotion of what is thus constructed as a distinctively Indonesian form of Islam is a way of reasserting the legitimacy of their teachings within their own constituencies. We therefore argue that the extroversion of Islamic education aims at enhancing the government's preferred understanding of "Indonesian Islam" as well as the nation's standing within the Muslim world. More broadly, it seeks to bolster the image of Indonesia as inherently moderate and pluralist. The notion of extroversion goes beyond a simple process of internationalisation, export, or transnational promotion: we define it as the switch from an inward-looking perspective towards a strategy of actively promoting this sector beyond Indonesia's borders, while at the same time upholding a narrative of national distinctiveness. This effort serves both domestic and foreign policy purposes, as it promotes the idea that, beyond the plural nature of "Indonesian Islam," its most representative streams share inherent characteristics that facilitate its solubility within stable national and democratic institutions. It also seeks to re-legitimise local Islamic practices that have become increasingly challenged by external, and in particular, Wahhabi influences. The extroversion of Indonesian Islamic education is thus illustrative of a functionalisation process, by which "objects from one discourse come to serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another discourse" (Starrett 1998: 9). In other words, the practice of deploying Indonesian Islamic educational institutes for domestic political aims is currently being transferred to the international level to position Indonesia as a legitimate source of Islamic authority within the Muslim world. This process goes hand in hand with a transformation of Indonesia's self-perception, from formerly having consumed foreign epistemologies to now producing a specific national approach to Islamic knowledge creation and actively promoting it abroad, thereby challenging established power relations within the Muslim world.

This evolution of Indonesia's Islamic education towards outward-looking strategies has been generally overlooked by the academic literature. This gap contrasts with the extensive attention paid to the influence of Middle East-funded or inspired higher learning institutes on Indonesian Islam (Fealy and Bubalo 2005; Jahroni 2013; Kovacs 2014; Mandaville 2009; Suharto 2018; Wahid 2014) as well as the effects of education on Indonesian students in the Middle East or South Asia (Azra 2004; Mandaville 2009). Numerous works have also pointed towards Indonesia's post-*Reformasi* strategy of incorporating civil-society actors in its foreign policy-making processes, facilitating their organisation of international

[1]The creation of this narrative of a moderate Indonesian Islam requires, of course, the discursive flattening of the actual grand variation of the Islamic community in Indonesia in the service of a packaged "Indonesian" Islam—a national project that is in itself problematic and that has been criticised by several Indonesian voices (Hoesterey 2014; Ridwan *et al.* 2019).

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inter- and intrareligious dialogue initiatives, and engaging in development counselling on how to make democracy work in Muslim societal contexts (Allès 2015; Eliraz 2018; Fealy 2014; Hoesterey 2014, 2020). These initiatives have been part of the broader attempt "to rebrand the world's largest Muslim-majority country" (Hoesterey 2020: 192) and to showcase it as a central player in global politics. Among the institutions involved in this process, we argue that the role of Indonesian state and private Islamic education institutes deserves specific attention as they are simultaneously the recipients and vectors of political agendas, as well as concrete sites where these agendas may be contested, negotiated, and amended. Their internationalisation plays a central role in the shaping and implementation of the country's Islamic public diplomacy and soft power strategy; they are full-fledged actors in the ongoing attempts at shifting power and legitimacy within the realm of Islamic references and practices.

We first engage in process-tracing the political features of the Indonesian state Islamic higher education system and then illustrate our claims about its current shift from an outside-in to an inside-out perspective, by referring to several examples from the Islamic academic ecosphere. We also point at recent and individual attempts at internationalising *pesantren* (Indonesian-type Islamic boarding schools). The former is currently being exported through increasing international academic cooperation and the opening up of branch campuses (e.g. in Singapore) as well as through the creation of the Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (International Islamic University of Indonesia, UIII) in Depok, close to Jakarta. The latter corresponds to more recent and localised initiatives aimed at establishing international *pesantren*, either by attracting international high schoolers to study in high-quality Indonesian Islamic boarding schools or by opening such schools abroad. By drawing on this empirical evidence from Indonesia, we insist on the interconnectedness of domestic and international sources and audiences of public diplomacy. We finally argue that future research needs to more intensely consider educational sites and actors when analysing power and legitimacy relations within the Muslim world.

The Emergence of an "Indonesian" Model of State Islamic Higher Education

Indonesia is home to the biggest state Islamic higher education system in the Muslim world, the Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN),[2] whose developments have been closely related with attempts at nurturing and promoting homegrown approaches to Islam and its contribution to the public sphere. The PTKIN is managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and as of 2020 comprises 17 state Islamic Universities (Universitas Islam Negeri, UIN), 34 State Islamic Institutes (Institut Agama Islam Negeri, IAIN), and 7 State Islamic Colleges (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, STAIN).[3] While Islamic universities are legally bound to offer study programs in Islamic and non-religious faculties, the Islamic institutes and colleges focus on training in Islamic studies only. The Indonesian state Islamic higher education system prepares its students to specialise in a variety of fields, such as Islamic preaching, Arabic language teaching, Islamic law and banking, medicine, biology, chemistry, psychology, journalism, and social science. The PTKIN system defines Indonesian Islamic orthodoxy while its different organisational entities act as a bridge and cultural broker between the diverse streams of the Indonesian Muslim community as well as between Islamic and western scholarship (Lukens-Bull 2013: 3).

Campuses, academic staff, and graduates are supposed to engage beyond the religious and academic sphere and pragmatically contribute to contemporary solution-finding and social progress. During Indonesia's threatened transition to democracy (1998–2004), the academic milieu of the state Islamic higher education system stepped forward on its campuses as well as in the wider public sphere as an ardent defender of democratic debate. Its administration became directly involved in political activities despite the fact that political gatherings and the representation of political parties were (and still are) prohibited on Indonesian campuses. UIN Jakarta in particular enabled democratic student socialisation on campus and publicly disseminated pro-democratic societal discourse through special courses, conferences, workshops, and a high media presence. The university also engaged in research projects relevant to the democratisation process, the findings of which provided policy advice to the Indonesian

[2]Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (PTAIN) is another term used synonymously in Indonesia.

[3]The number of UINs, IAINs, and STAINs is in constant flux as under certain organisational preconditions STAINs can be converted into IAINs and IAINs into UINs. The first UIN was established in 2002 (UIN Jakarta, formerly IAIN Jakarta), the first IAIN in 1960, and the first STAIN in 1997.

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government. In its pro-democracy mission, UIN Jakarta was itself strongly supported by financial aid and expert counselling from foreign development agencies, such as The Asia Foundation, Ford Foundation, Cordaid, and Konrad Adenauer Foundation (tho Seeth 2020).

Worldliness, social integration, and participation in political affairs are distinct features that led the Indonesian state Islamic higher education sector to play a crucial role in domestic and international politics from its creation. Throughout the changing political contexts of Indonesian history, it served the consolidation of state- and nation-building and the legitimisation of political power. It did so by facilitating the unification of a national conception of Islam, defined by its compatibility with the state's approach to the relationship between politics and religion rather than on theological grounds, which remain remarkably diverse. It also fostered bilateral alliances by facilitating intellectual exchanges with like-minded Muslim-majority countries as well as other (in particular, western) partners interested in Indonesian Islam and the nation's way of regulating religion and pluralism—a function it has maintained across the changes of regimes and approaches.

In addition to this double function on the national and international levels, Indonesian state Islamic higher education is a multi-cultural hybrid that has incorporated Arab-Islamic, indigenous Indonesian, and western academic traditions. It has thus always been marked by an outward-looking, cosmopolitan profile. This world-openness was aimed to incorporate foreign influences into state Islamic higher education in order to enrich theological studies in Indonesia and advance local Indonesian society. In stark contrast to today's developments, however, exposing the world community to an Indonesian civilisational image or promoting local Islamic practices and conceptions were not originally motives for this world-openness. The system then was rather focused on absorbing—or consuming—foreign epistemologies and adapting them to the national context.

The initial creation of Indonesian state-organised Islamic higher learning was a thoroughly transnational phenomenon that laid the base for this sector's continuous functionalisation for political purposes throughout the following decades. On 8 July 1945, the Japanese occupying authority established the Sekolah Tinggi Islam (Higher Islamic School, STI) in Jakarta and modelled it after the Faculty of Theology of Cairo's al-Azhar University (Thaib and Mahfud 1984: 15).[4] Since 1942, support for an organised, politicised Islam as a force against the western powers had been at the heart of Japan's policy towards Indonesian society. Accordingly, STI was tasked with a political agenda. Within the frame of its Pan-Asian ideology, Japan envisioned an Islamic academic milieu that would represent and mobilise a non-western identity and actively participate in building up an independent Indonesian nation. For this purpose, STI was intricately linked to the politically experienced independence movement that had emerged around the nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta. The bond was achieved by the appointment of prominent figures from the independence movement to key positions within STI, while only a few positions were assigned to classical Islamic scholars or leaders. In general, the hand-picked STI staff were comprised of a group of men who had been trusted *protégés* of Japan. They had already filled leading positions within the occupation administration or been members of the Japan-created Islamic organisation Masyumi, and most of them were designated members of the Badan Penyelidik Usaha-Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan (Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence, BPUPK) that prepared for Indonesia's sovereignty under Japan's oversight.

Future Indonesian Vice President Hatta, for instance, became head of STI's planning committee. Other strategic appointments into high positions at STI included prominent nationalists, who later took up leading positions as ministers or party chairmen in independent Indonesia, such as Muhammad Natsir, Sukiman Wirjosanjojo, Muhammad Yamin, Raden Suwandi, Abikusno Tjokrosujoso, and Husein Djajadiningrat. Hasyim Asy'ari became head of NU and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo led Muhammadiyah.

[4]al-Azhar University has remained a template for the Indonesian state Islamic higher education system ever since, although indigenous Indonesian elements from the *pesantren* culture, like teacher-student hierarchies and references to local saints in the name-giving of campuses, also feature prominently (Lukens-Bull 2013: 13–14). In fact, the PTKIN system is deeply rooted within the *pesantren* milieu, not least because its institutes are the main source of state higher education for *pesantren* graduates. The conversion of a great number of IAINs into UINs in the 2000s constituted a major uplifting of the *pesantren* graduates as these were then for the first time allowed to enter state universities *en masse* and to also obtain state degrees in non-religious disciplines. Before, *pesantren* graduates' only gate to state higher education was by additionally passing through a *madrasah*, an Islamic school which since 1975 offers 70 per cent of standardised non-religious education.

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After independence, these politicians and Islamic civil activists remained affiliated with STI and the developing Islamic academic milieu, meaning state Islamic higher education stayed tightly entangled with the new nation's political elite and governmental agendas (tho Seeth 2020).

President Sukarno (1945–1967) furthered the institutionalisation of the state Islamic academic milieu as a political legitimist. From 1960 onwards, he started to establish a nationwide system of state Islamic institutes out of the initial STI cell and some of its offshoots. From the beginning, these were instruments for social and religious engineering (Kaptein 2002: 64). To the disadvantage of the modernist Islamic civil mass organisation Muhammadiyah, Sukarno predominantly employed followers of the rivalling traditionalist NU at the IAINs. As a result, state Islamic higher education became a bastion of NU and underpinned Sukarno's power. The IAINs were understood as an "efficient instrument for revolution" (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1965: 247) tasked to spread ideas on "character and nation-building" (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1965: 249), which included socialisation into the *Pancasila* ideology and a state-compatible Islam.

Moreover, Sukarno's concept of *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* (Three Noble Aspects of Higher Education),[5] introduced in 1962, obliged IAIN campuses to directly serve the development of society and to solve pressing national questions of education, healthcare, hygiene, and welfare. Students were sent through a service program to remote villages to assist in alphabetisation and health campaigns. The same year, a health corps for the local population was set up at IAIN Jakarta which offered medical and welfare services for mothers and children, and Jakarta students raised money to build local schools (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1987: 110–111). In addition to its function of uplifting society, the student service program was intended to counter communist and Islamist opposition in the country.

Under President Suharto (1967–1998), state Islamic higher education was heavily aligned to represent and mobilise for *Pembangunan Nasional*, the New Order's national developmentalist agenda, which was oriented towards capitalist growth, modern urbanity, and western technological progress. To achieve this goal, President Suharto expanded the number and infrastructure of IAINs and weakened their liaison with NU by largely staffing the IAINs with followers of Muhammadiyah (Porter 2002: 53–55). With its urban middle-class milieu and focus on modernity, progress, and a rationalist interpretation of Islam, Muhammadiyah was considered better able to contribute to the national modernisation project and its compatibility with Islam. Suharto supported the bureaucratic careers of modernist Islamic intellectuals like Mukti Ali[6] and Harun Nasution,[7] who had pursued religious studies in the 1950s and 1960s in Montreal at the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at McGill University. Utilising their international academic insights, they shaped the curricula of the IAINs.

The regime's large-scale recruitment of Indonesian McGill graduates is an example *par excellence* of how foreign academic concepts were consciously imported and pragmatically consumed in Indonesia. IIS was created in 1952 in the context of the Cold War and financed by the Rockefeller Foundation with the general aim of "modernising" Islam and Muslim elites. Muslims from different parts of the globe were invited to study, particularly under the aegis of Prof Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1952–1963). They were tutored in a comparative study of religion that emphasised religious tolerance, pluralism, modernity, and the application of rational, western social science methods and theories to studies of religious phenomena. IIS's mission proved to be most effective in Indonesia (Webster 2009: 92–100).

[5]*Pendidikan/Pengajaran, Penelitian, Pengabdian pada Masyarakat* (Education/Teaching, Research, Service to Society). It seems likely that the third aspect, "Service to Society," was inspired by the work of John Dewey (1859–1952), an American educational reformer who popularised the ideas of universities' social responsibility and academic pragmatism.

[6]Mukti Ali (1923–2004) studied Islamic history in the early 1950s in Mecca and in Karachi, and then in 1955 entered the IIS where he earned an MA in comparative religion in 1957. In 1960, the Ministry of Religious Affairs appointed him to lead the newly established IIS-modelled study program of Comparative Religion at both IAIN Jakarta and IAIN Yogyakarta. In 1964, Ali became professor and rector assistant for public affairs at IAIN Yogyakarta. In 1967, he founded the Limited Group, a small, closed discussion circle of intellectuals who deliberated about the modernisation of Islam, which laid down the base and framework of what would later be known as Islamic Neo-Modernism. From 1971 to 1978, he served as minister of religious affairs.

[7]Harun Nasution (1919–1998) obtained his Islamic higher education in Mecca and at the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at al-Azhar University in Cairo. In 1952, he received a BA degree in social sciences from the American University in Cairo. In 1962, Nasution inscribed at IIS where he completed his MA thesis in 1965 and his PhD dissertation on modernist Islamic thought in 1968. He served as rector of IAIN Jakarta from 1973 to 1984. He was known for his appreciation of the Mu'tazila, a rationalist Islamic theological school.

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Over the course of his rule, Suharto expanded academic exchanges with Canada, the US, and Europe to further infuse state Islamic higher education with alleged western values of modernity, efficiency, and rationalism. These exchanges were also a vehicle for reinforcing Indonesia's political and business alliances with the capitalist world. Academic cooperation with the West was essential in the socialisation of a cosmopolitan cohort of Indonesian modernist Islamic intellectuals and state bureaucrats, who publicly promoted the pro-*Pembangunan* political discourse as well as intercultural and interreligious dialogue.[8] Against this backdrop, the IAINs became a strong mouthpiece for modernist Islamic intellectualism and the pluralism-friendly *Pancasila*. They provided a mantra for moderate Islam, modernity, and national development through academic and public conferences, workshops, and publications, which all upheld the regime's ideological preferences.

Other concrete examples that demonstrate the politicisation of state Islamic higher education in support of Indonesia's institutional stability and the regime's agenda include the opening of *Madrasah Pembangunan* (Developmental Islamic School)[9] at IAIN Jakarta in 1972 and the professionalisation of the student service program at the IAIN campuses through the introduction of the obligatory social service internship (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*, KKN) in 1975. The former was conceptualised as a laboratory for IAIN Jakarta students in the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* (Islamic Education). There they experimented, developing methods for conveying a state-compatible conception of Islam, in line with the *Pembangunan* and *Pancasila* ideologies, to school students and wider society (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1987: 112; Müller 1977: 191–196). The social service internship was used by the regime to obtain data on the status quo of rural society's development. Students had to fill out detailed questionnaires on the living standards they observed in the villages. They also had to participate in national educational campaigns in the villages (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia 1978).

In today's democratic era, the PTKIN system no longer functions as an instrument for nationalist indoctrination, yet many of its long-held attributes, such as its focus on modernity, progress, participation in political and social debates, and peace and dialogue work have endured and are now encouraged as part of the post-*Reformasi* administrations' efforts to foster national cohesion. Continuous emphasis is given to the combination of Indonesian, Arab (mostly Egyptian), and western scholarly traditions. In 2001, the Faculty of Islamic Studies (*Dirasat Islamiyah*) opened at the IAIN Jakarta campus, which completely follows the official al-Azhar University curriculum, employs lecturers from al-Azhar, and sends Indonesian students to Cairo for further studies at the mother institute (Kinoshita 2009: 9). On the other hand, western academia remains a strong source for Indonesian state Islamic higher education; since 2014 the Ministry of Religious Affairs has run a project entitled "5000 scholarships for PhD-studies abroad" that mainly targets PTKIN graduates and sends them to predominantly western universities under the precondition that they return for employment in the PTKIN system.[10] Interestingly, this western focus is also encouraged for PhD candidates willing to pursue degrees in Islamic theology or Arabic language studies, as the Ministry of Religious Affairs is keen to diversify the references of its graduates rather than simply encouraging religious education in Muslim-majority countries.

The most obvious characteristics of the contemporary Indonesian model of state Islamic higher education are the positive attitudes upheld by its key administrators and scholars towards the compatibility of Islam, democracy, and human rights, as well as their support of religious pluralism and non-violence. Today, the PTKIN is neither a bastion of Muhammadiyah nor NU—their respective influences vary

[8]Besides Mukti Ali and Harun Nasution, the most prominent representatives of this cohort were Munawir Sjadzali (minister of religious affairs 1983–1993), Tarmizi Taher (minister of religious affairs 1993–1998), and Nurcholish Madjid (founder of the neo-modernist Islamic Paramadina Foundation in 1986 and the private Islamic Universitas Paramadina in 1998). The contemporary generation of western-trained publicly well-known Islamic intellectuals, who participate in and shape political discourse include, for instance, Bahtiar Effendy (prof of political science at IAIN/UIN Jakarta, leading bureaucrat in Muhammadiyah, media figure, died 2019), Azyumardi Azra (prof of history, rector of IAIN/UIN Jakarta 1998–2006, media figure), and Ulil Abshar-Abdalla (founder of Jaringan Islam Liberal, the Liberal Islam Network).

[9]Again, the parallel to American educational reformer John Dewey, who invented the so-called laboratory schools, is striking.

[10]Western partners include McGill University, Leiden University, Coventry University, Institut National de Sciences Appliquées France, University of Canberra, Western Sydney University, and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The main cooperative partner in the Muslim world is Egypt (Suez Canal University, Arab League University Cairo). To a lesser extent, the scholarship-project is open to graduates from the private Islamic higher education sector (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia website. 2019. Available at: http://scholarship.kemenag.go.id/ln/ (accessed 21 August 2019)).

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between institutes—but it welcomes staff and students from diverse Islamic and social backgrounds. Through this melting-pot approach, PTKIN institutes differ from the independent, private Islamic higher education facilities that have emerged in great numbers since the country's independence. In particular, they differ from the many Islamic higher schools and Islamic universities of Muhammadiyah and NU which mainly serve their respective *milieux*. A younger innovation of the Islamic higher education market is the private Universitas Paramadina. Established during the last months of Suharto's rule by IAIN Jakarta alumnus and Islamic intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, this university targets the upper-middle class, valuing business studies and entrepreneurial spirits. It has also sought to attract more disadvantaged students by providing them with study grants that are funded by the private sector. The PTKIN system thus competes with an array of no-less-attractive private actors. Yet, its ability to merge different ideas, traditions, and *milieux* has proven to be an asset for the emergence and promotion of a distinctively "Indonesian" model of Islamic higher education.

From Selective Internationalisation to Active Extroversion

As outlined above, the initial creation and further development of the Indonesian state Islamic higher education system under the authoritarian regimes of Sukarno and Suharto were accompanied by a selective, outside-in approach to internationalisation, which incorporated components of Arab and western academic cultures specifically tailored to the Indonesian domestic context. To a large extent, the PTKIN's rise as an important player in education and politics, and its continuous growth in size, infrastructure, and competencies, was due to its international interrelations, external financial investment, and the creative integration and consumption of foreign scholarly traditions. This strategy of selective and uni-directional internationalisation also served to exert a degree of control over the many external influences and cultural flows that Indonesia was naturally subjected to in the globalised world system. Foreign influences were generally contained so that they would not harm—from the perspective of the Indonesian authorities—the consolidation of Indonesian national identity and the regime's legitimation. Moreover, the increased financial abilities of Saudi Arabia after the 1973 Oil crisis, followed by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and subsequent competition between these two poles of influence over normative hegemony in the Muslim world, resulted in a greater wealth of foreign references for Islamic higher education in Indonesia to draw upon. However, Iran's attempts of influence were less successful in Indonesia.

From the 1980s onwards, the Indonesian authorities responded to these influences with a recurring strategy of inclusion and containment or co-optation (Feillard and Madinier 2011). In doing so, they reinforced the idea of distinctively "Indonesian" and "Arab" brands of Islam, in spite of the long history of hybridisation between the two regions, their interrelated societies, and their internal diversity.[11] This tendency to reify uniform and distinctive conceptions of Islam is, interestingly, shared by critics of the "Arabisation" of Indonesian society as well as those who oppose *ghazwul fikri* or (western) intellectual invasion (van Bruinessen 2014).

A prime example of Indonesia's attempts to control and co-opt foreign Wahhabi influences was the establishment of the Saudi Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies, LIPIA) in Jakarta in 1980.[12] As LIPIA was the first officially recognised foreign-owned education institute in the archipelago it added a totally new component to the Indonesian Islamic higher education market. LIPIA is a branch campus of the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, which produces the majority of Wahhabi authorities (judges, police functionaries, religious education teachers, imams, Islamic intellectuals) for the Saudi Arabian regime. Fully funded by Saudi Arabia, LIPIA remains relatively autonomous of Indonesian state-control. LIPIA uses the curriculum and teaching material of its mother campus in Riyadh and applies rules and norms as practiced in Saudi society (strict gender

[11]von der Mehden has, however, underlined the rather uni-directional nature of these hybridisation processes since, despite the important penetration of the Indonesian publication market by Arab authors translated to Indonesian, there were virtually no Indonesian (or Malaysian) authors quoted in Arabic until the late 1980s–probably a consequence of the stereotype portraying them as being exceedingly impregnated with local pre-Islamic cultural practices (von der Mehden 1993: 81). van Bruinessen (2012) adds that in their works, Indonesian authors mostly refer to the Indonesian context and conditions that do not prevail elsewhere, making them less relevant for other nations.

[12]From 1980 to 1986, the institute's name was Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (Institute of Arabic Language Instruction).

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separation and dress-code; no music, dance, or loud laughing allowed on campus; glorification of the Saudi royal family; denunciation of *bid'a* or "innovations" to litteral Qur'anic teachings; hostility towards Shi'a, and Jews), which makes LIPIA a Saudi-Wahhabi microcosm. Teaching staff, however, are international and made up of Arabic native speakers from the Arab world. Students can obtain bachelor's degrees in Islamic law—where the Hanbali school of law is prioritised, contrasting with the predominance of the Shafi'i tradition in Indonesia—Islamic economy and Arabic literature, as well as a diploma in Arabic language which qualifies for teaching in *pesantren*.

For young Indonesians, LIPIA is an attractive prospect for higher Islamic education as the most successful students are granted generous scholarships to continue their studies in Riyadh. The campus in Jakarta has impressive buildings and is well-equipped with modern technology, teaching standards are of high quality, and Arabic language instruction is rigorous. Students receive pocket-money, valuable give-aways, and are cared for free-of-charge by an in-house doctor. Furthermore, the campus houses the largest Arabic-language library in Southeast Asia; as a whole, it provides a gateway to the wider (Arab) world and to the alleged heartland of Islam (Kovacs 2011, 2014).

Since the fall of Suharto, LIPIA has recurrently been suspected of promoting Islamism and religious intolerance in Indonesia. This accusation is based on the fact that many leading Indonesian Islamists are former LIPIA students.[13] Despite a certain distrust towards the institute, Indonesian governments continue to enforce cooperation with LIPIA as Saudi Arabia is a too powerful bilateral partner to be ignored. A friendly relation is crucial for the smooth handling of the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca—visa quotas are partially determined by the quality of the bilateral relationship—and Saudi money has subsidised several Indonesian infrastructure projects.[14] In return, Arabic instructors from LIPIA and some LIPIA graduates proceed to teach and study at UIN Jakarta. Whether this academic mobility results in infiltration of the PTKIN system with Wahhabi ideology remains to be seen. In another context, its sphere of influence is indeed expanding as additional LIPIA campuses opened in Banda Aceh in 2007, in Surabaya and Medan in 2017, and are planned to be constructed in Padang and Makassar.

In contrast to the Saudis' strategic establishment of Islamic higher education institutes, Iranian-Shi'a academic influence is a minor phenomenon in Indonesia. It was closely monitored by the authorities, who were cautious that the post-1979 spirit did not penetrate Indonesian society and reach young intellectuals attracted to the revolutionary example (van Bruinessen 2002). The most official and visible Shi'a institute of higher learning was The Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS), which operated in Jakarta from 2002 for about ten years. The college's sources of funding remain unclear. As a branch of the London-based institute founded in 1999, its expansion was fuelled by the Iranian Supreme Leader's office. Yet, it was also reported to have received funds from leading foreign "quietists," such as Ayatollah Sistani of Najaf (Marcinkowski 2008). Focused on Islamic philosophy and mysticism, the institute succeeded in establishing close ties with Universitas Paramadina in Jakarta, the Centre for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) of Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta, UIN Jakarta, and the Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara (the Driyarkara Higher School of Philosophy related with the Archdiocese of Jakarta). Prominent Indonesian figures, like the Shi'ite Jalaluddin Rakhmat and UIN Jakarta intellectual and former campus rector, Komaruddin Hidayat, taught at ICAS (Kovacs 2011: 45–46). However, the primary implantation of Saudi-based higher education combined with the increasing visibility of anti-Shi'a discourse and mobilisation (Formichi 2014) have reduced the ability of Shi'a actors to penetrate the ecosphere of Indonesian Islamic higher education.

Until very recently, Indonesia's role in the global market of Islamic higher education was mainly confined to this selective consumption, co-optation, and containment of external academic and religious influences. Currently, a shift is taking place in which the country actively promotes its own model of state Islamic higher education in the international sphere. This new effort at promoting the national Islamic academic model is embedded in Indonesia's broader ambition to manoeuvre out of its peripheral

[13]Prominent examples include Muhammad Rizieq Shihab (founder of Front Pembela Islam), Jafar Umar Thalib (founder of Laskar Jihad), Zainal Muttaquin, Nurcholis Ridwan, Hepi Andi (editors of magazine *Sabili*), Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, and Aunur Rafiq Ghufron (Wahhabi *pesantren* movement), as well as several members of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera. On the other hand, the founder of the liberal movement Jaringan Islam Liberal, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, studied at–but did not graduate from–LIPIA.

[14]The kingdom partially sponsored the construction of the Language Centre (Pusat Bahasa) at UIN Jakarta.

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position and gain recognition, both as a more significant player within the Muslim world and as a stabiliser and role-model on the world political stage, where religious concerns have reached an increasingly prominent status on the agenda (Allès 2021). We refer to this process as a form of "extroversion," as it goes beyond the conventional definition of "internationalisation"; not only does it aim to publicise and promote the Indonesian model across borders, but it also seeks to influence global Islamic practices while upholding a narrative of distinctive Indonesian-ness. The first time the PTKIN model officially transgressed the Indonesian border was in 2013 when a memorandum of understanding was signed between UIN Medan (North Sumatra) and the Singaporean Islamic organisation Jamiyah. The memorandum stipulated that at Jamiyah's education centre, UIN Medan would offer a bachelor's degree for Singaporean students in Islamic family law. This cooperation was renewed in 2016. Curriculum and lecturers are exported from Medan to Singapore and, moreover, students are introduced to several distinct elements of Indonesian academic and political culture. For instance, the first-semester curriculum includes instruction on the Indonesian state ideology *Pancasila* as well as on the three noble aspects of Indonesian higher education (*Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi*). Additional knowledge on Indonesian state functioning is transmitted through the teaching of basic Indonesian laws, legal processes, and regulations of the Indonesian banking system (Jamiyah Organisation 2013).

Initially, UIN Jakarta attempted to establish its first branch campus outside of Indonesia in a country with which it shares a long history of intense intellectual borrowing—Canada. This back-to-the-roots-project was so hindered by bureaucratic hurdles that in the end the Jamiyah Organisation in Singapore was once more targeted for cooperation. Since 2017, UIN Jakarta has sent lecturers to Jamiyah. Presently, concrete plans for the establishment of a UIN Jakarta branch campus in Singapore with two faculties (Theology and Islamic Law) are underway (Berita UIN 2018; Zada 2018). These two faculties would constitute the first Indonesian campus abroad, strategically situated within a global educational hub.

Indonesia's ambition to position itself more visibly in the international Islamic education market is multi-dimensional, as it also includes the attraction of foreign Muslim students to Indonesia. In 2016, President Joko Widodo decreed that the Indonesian model of state Islamic higher education would be globally diffused through the establishment of the country's first international Islamic university (Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, UIII), located in the greater Jakarta region in the city of Depok.[15] The university is currently in the process of being constructed under the financial and promotional responsibility of four ministries (religious affairs, education, foreign affairs, finance) and plans to open its doors in 2021. It aims to host 50 per cent Indonesian and 50 per cent foreign students, the latter of which will be endowed with scholarships. Staff is being recruited from Indonesia, western countries, and the Arabic-speaking world, particularly from Egypt's al-Azhar University. Komaruddin Hidayat, an IAIN Jakarta graduate who was trained in Islamic and European philosophy in Turkey, and served as former rector of UIN Jakarta from 2006 to 2015, was appointed by Widodo as UIII's rector. He is a dedicated defender of a moderate, Sufi-touch interpretation of Islam within the Indonesian public sphere. Based on the decades-long Indonesian tradition of promoting dialogue and integrating Islamic and non-religious, western-derived methodological and theoretical approaches, the campus will offer MA and PhD studies across seven faculties: Islamic Studies, Education, Social Sciences, Economics and Finance, Science and Technology, Humanities, Applied and Fine Arts.[16]

UIII is unmistakably geared towards the promotion of Indonesia as a new player within the Islamic international arena and thus forms part of the country's current Islamic soft power agenda. The president's UIII decree stated that Indonesian Islam shall become "an inspiration for the creation of a new world order of peaceful, friendly, democratic, and just character" (Presiden Republik Indonesia 2016). It further declared that "Indonesia must become one of the centres of Islamic civilisation" (Presiden Republik Indonesia 2016). Accordingly, the university's official vision is "Promoting Indonesian Islamic cultures as part of world civilisation."[17] UIII's website repeatedly stresses Indonesia's status as the most populous Muslim-majority country, its competence in aligning Islam and democracy to practice

[15]Depok is also home to the nation's most prestigious university, the non-religious Universitas Indonesia (UI).
[16]UIII website. 2020. Available at: https://www.uiii.ac.id/ (accessed 06 June 2020).
[17]UIII website. 2020. Available at: https://www.uiii.ac.id/ (accessed 06 June 2020).

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pluralism, tolerance, openness, and modernity, and its ability to mediate in peace and conflict resolution abroad. It highlights these qualities in Indonesian, Arabic, and English. In line with the evolution of the official foreign-policy doctrine, which has sought to promote Indonesia as a moderate, democratic, and pluralist Muslim-majority nation since the early 2000s, Indonesia is thus presented as a concrete role model; other nations can look to Indonesia to learn how Islam can go together with modernity and progress and how Islam can play a significant role in positive and transformative developments of society. UIII's core values include a "moderate Islam" and "respect for diversity."[18] In an interview, Komaruddin Hidayat stated that UIII shall be an academic hub of international standards and world-class quality. He critically questioned the institutionalised practice of sending Indonesian students and academics to study in Asian and African countries that are—according to him—not financially better off than Indonesia. Hence, it is now Indonesia's time to break the Arab monopoly over Islamic knowledge production and to provide academic infrastructure and scholarships for an international audience (interview with Komaruddin Hidayat, 23 September 2020).

The promotion of the hybrid Indonesian state Islamic academic culture fits perfectly within the overall Indonesian foreign policy agenda. UIII applies the PTKIN approach of heavily drawing on methods and theories developed in western social science to study Islam.[19] It thus intends to introduce foreign students to the distinct Indonesian multi-angled academic perspective on Islam and Muslim societies. Although the language of instruction will be English, it will be required that foreign students learn Indonesian so that upon return to their home countries they will be "ambassadors of Indonesian culture" (Soraya 2019). In addition, it plans to offer an in-depth course in "Indonesian Islamic Studies" to international attendees (Ahmad 2019).

Intertwined with this international role, UIII clearly serves domestic legitimation purposes. In 2018, the creation of the university was included as a goal of President Widodo's *Percepatan Pelaksanaan Proyek Strategis Nasional* (Acceleration of the Implementation of the National Strategic Project), a major national infrastructure project that foresees the construction of highways, rail tracks, airports, harbours, and flats (Presiden Republik Indonesia 2018). Furthermore, one of UIII's objectives is to produce "strategic policies to empower the national identity,"[20] which is underpinned by the establishment of a Centre for Islamic and Strategic Studies[21] on campus which will deal with contemporary issues of Muslim society. The strengthening of "Indonesian-ness" and "Indonesian Islam" is a key task that the campus also aims to achieve through its Centre for Indonesian Islamic Culture and the creation of a new museum—both are expected to collect, preserve, study, and promote local Islamic heritage. The UIII website laments that the rich cultural and intellectual history of Islam in Indonesia is not adequately documented and that Islamic manuscripts and artefacts are scattered around the archipelago.[22] As such, the centre and museum will undertake an instrumental role in ordering and representing the officially sanctioned brand(s) of "Indonesian" Islam(s).

Another important base for the international branding and marketing of Indonesia as a moderate Islamic country is UIN Jakarta, which opened its Islam Nusantara Centre (Centre of the Archipelago's Islam) in 2017. Through public talks, conferences, and publications, the centre nurtures discourse on a locally inspired "Archipelagic Islam" and legitimises its international dissemination as a concept and model (Rochmat 2017). Referencing the particularities of "Archipelagic Islam" is a burgeoning practice within the PTKIN system—as showcased by the launch of the "International Journal of Nusantara Islam" by UIN Bandung in collaboration with the Malaysian University of Malaya in 2014—however, other voices have directed sharp criticism towards the concept (Ridwan *et al.* 2019).

[18]UIII website. 2020. Available at: https://www.uiii.ac.id/ (accessed 06 June 2020).

[19]This is indicated at UIII's website: "UIII examines Islam and society through various disciplines which already have established theories and methodologies" (UIII website. 2020. Available at: https://www.uiii.ac.id/ (accessed 06 June 2020)).

[20]UIII website. 2020. Available at: https://www.uiii.ac.id/ (accessed 06 June 2020).

[21]The centre's name approximates the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), established by Suharto in 1971.

[22]The preservation of Southeast Asian Islamic manuscripts through digitisation is a currently ongoing occupation of a project called Digital Repository of Endangered and Affected Manuscripts in Southeast Asia (DREAMSEA) which UIN Jakarta's Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (Centre for the Study of Islam and Society, PPIM) and the German University of Hamburg are collaborating on.

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Indonesian State Islamic Higher Education as a Contributor to Religious Public Diplomacy

The transformation of Indonesian state Islamic higher education to an outward-looking, producing sector occurred in the context of a broader adaptation of the country's international outlook (Allès 2015; 2021). While religious concerns and influences have always been present on the global stage, the perception of "religion" as a primary factor in world politics and as a concern to be addressed through specific policy initiatives has gradually intensified in the aftermaths of the Iranian revolution, the turn of the Cold War, and—more significantly—the 9/11 attacks. It is in this context that the image of Indonesia gradually moved from that of the "largest country in Southeast Asia," to "largest Muslim country" in the world—an evolution which was intensified by the politicisation of the presence of the then-Indonesian president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, in Washington DC, a couple of days after the 9/11 bombings. As the first leader of a Muslim-majority country to visit the grieving US capital city, her presence was showcased as an illustration of the fact that the upcoming "war on terrorism" was not going to be a war on "Muslims". Initially reluctant to showcase Indonesia as "the largest Muslim country in the world," the country's foreign elite has since progressively embraced this projected narrative in order to take advantage of it.

This political line proved to be both an opportunity and a major constraint on Indonesia's diplomatic positioning. Indonesia's international reputation was that of the home of an intrinsically "moderate" or "pluralist" brand of Islam and, at the same time, a country threatened by increasing radicalism and religious-based violence. These characteristics established Indonesia as a sought-after international partner whose authorities were to be supported in their political endeavours, provided they were ready to demonstrate their willingness to favour religious "moderation." This window of opportunity aligned with presidential interests. Having tacitly endorsed the subsequent US invasion of Afghanistan, Megawati faced a strong opposition at home, where military intervention infuriated large crowds of opponents, encouraged by both radicals and mainstream leaders. In the midst of intensifying conflicts with religious dimensions in the regions of Aceh and the Moluccas, the risk of further fragmentation of civil society was too great, and Megawati was politically destabilised by Vice President Hamzah Haz's expressions of support to the demonstrators.

It is in this context that the government developed an Islam-based public-diplomacy strategy under the leadership of Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, with the aim of "beating the radicals on their own field" (interviews with a senior diplomat, Kemlu, 2008)—in other words, rather than forbid opposition, they sought to make "moderation" (defined as the adhesion to the state-defined conception of the role of religion in the public sphere) more attractive. The policy has led to the implementation and subsidisation of countless interfaith dialogue and mediation initiatives, which were showcased to promote Indonesia's active engagement for global political stability and the potential for "Indonesian Islam" to set an example for the rest of the world. Among the most publicised large-scale initiatives were the biennial international conference of Islamic scholars (organised by traditionalist organisation NU, and showcasing the motto *Islam rahmatan lil-alamin*—Islam as a blessing for all humanity) and World Peace Forum (an interfaith meeting revolving around the theme of global peace) (Allès 2015). Both forums were held for the first time in 2006, with logistical help from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They granted a large platform to Islamic scholars affiliated with the Muhammadiyah and NU, the PTKIN system and members of the government.

It is in the context of this evolution that the legitimacy of Indonesian Islam was reassessed. The government and the leaders of the main Islamic organisations came to believe in the necessity of preserving it from external influences and the potential for it to send a message for the rest of the Muslim world. From the perspective of the authorities, the Islamic higher education system played a central role in this new outlook, which provided them with new opportunities in return. First, strengthening national Islamic higher education institutes was essential in order to increase their attractiveness to Indonesian and foreign students alike. Second, actively engaging in the extroversion of a distinctively Indonesian Islamic higher education system was instrumental to reinforcing the position of its actors and reassessing the particularity and legitimacy of "Indonesian Islam" in a broader competition for legitimacy. It is from this perspective that, in the government's narrative, UIII has been portrayed as a necessary institution to counter global Islamic extremism, simultaneously fight global Islamophobia, and draw more attention to Indonesia as a new centre of Islamic civilisation.

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Indonesia's decision to extrovert state Islamic higher education should also be contextualised within a global setting where Islamic soft power strategies are on the rise; higher education has played a central role in this process, acting as an extension of the state. Hegemonic competition between different actors from the Muslim world has long been played out through the Islamic education sector. Traditional big players in the international Islamic educational sphere like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt (Bano and Sakurai 2015) have been joined by new actors, who intensify and diversify the rivalry over dominance in Islamic and political discourses: Morocco has embarked on a strategy of legitimising its king and furthering a moderate, pluralism-friendly Islam through the education of ulama in West Africa and the Sahel region since the 9/11 terrorist attacks; Turkey under Erdoğan exerts global influence through Turkish-funded mosques from Somalia to Cuba (Mandaville and Hamid 2018). Most obviously in the region, Indonesia stands in direct competition to neighbouring Malaysia's International Islamic University Malaysia (Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia, IIUM), founded in Gombak (Selangor) in 1983 under the auspices of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Against the backdrop of this already deeply institutionalised global Islamic academic environment, the extroversion of Indonesian state Islamic higher education is a rather belated phenomenon. It is also highly distinctive in its narrative and outlook. Modelling itself as outward-looking while resolutely upholding the narrative of a singularly Indonesian approach to Islam and Islamic education, UIII's concept contrasts with its Malaysian neighbour's, which was conversely established as a global centre for the promotion of Islamic universalism but serves Malaysian students as a large majority. In many respects, this evolution can be considered the work of President Widodo (first inaugurated in October 2014). However, as demonstrated by the cooperation between UIN Medan and Jamiyah Singapore since 2013, the initial outward-looking strategies of Indonesian state Islamic academia preceded his administration's rationalisation, dissemination, and expansion of such initiatives. The Widodo-led discourse on the necessity of an international Islamic university is representative of the perception that it is finally time for the world to acknowledge the assets of Indonesian Islamic particularities, and for Indonesia to acknowledge its singularities and distinguish itself from "the rest" of the Muslim world (Kuwado 2018) through an effort to promote locally grown—yet de facto hybrid—Islamic academic knowledge, epistemic concepts, and norms.

A Multi-level Process

The extroversion of Indonesian Islamic education should not solely be addressed through the most visible government-led impulses and efforts at rationalising a homogeneous strategy. In the case of Indonesia, the extroversion of national distinctiveness has also been actively promoted by civil society actors. The most significant are the nation-based Islamic organisations—traditionalist NU and modernist Muhammadiyah—as well as private, junior-level educational institutes related to these organisations, whose convergence with the government's narrative has given more substance to this process. "*Transnasionalisasi*" and "*Arabisasi*" were very reluctantly addressed by these two organisations during the 2000s, as these two terms, and the processes they refer to, were equated with external and radical influences against which the national organisations should protect their distinctive models and attractiveness. The increasing penetration of the two organisations' local branches and youth movements by external transnational organisations, in particular Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, prompted their respective leaders to stress the necessity of upholding the model of national organisations, whose members and financiers must be KTP (identity-cards) holders. This concern was emphasised by NU's then-chairman, K.H. Hasyim Muzadi (in office from 1999–2010), during the organisation's 32nd quinquennial meeting in Makassar in 2010. Transgressions were also repeatedly exposed by Muhammadiyah cadres, most notably former chairman Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif (in office from 1998–2005), who repeatedly raised warnings about the risks of transnational destabilisation of Indonesia's national Islamic organisations, pluralist sociopolitical system, and national identity.

These expressions of concern were in line with the simplified representation, promoted by national authorities, which accords "radicalism" as imported and alien to an inherently "moderate," homogeneous, and "national" brand of Islam. A few years after he had stepped down from NU's chairmanship, Hasyim Muzadi further clarified his opinion in front of an assembly of 2000 students, senior staff, and administrators at the private Universitas Islam Makassar (UIM). Warning them about the struggle

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between "Iranian" and "Saudi Arabian" transnational Islamic ideologies, he insisted that in addition to being detrimental for the *umma*, their competition to gain more supporters was also harming the ideology and national integrity of Indonesia. Speaking for both NU and Muhammadiyah, he further emphasised the necessity of countering these harmful forms of transnationalism, and upholding a form of Islam that converges with national resilience. UIM's chancellor, in response, stressed the educational institute's role in spreading such values and conceptions (Idris 2016). Such declarations are in line with the shift, officialised around 2014, that saw the two organisations move from their inward-looking and mainly defensive take on transnationalism, towards outward-looking promotion strategies.

For Muhammadiyah, its new mottos are the Qur'an-based *Islam Wasattiyah* (Islam of the middle path) and *Islam Berkemajuan* (progressive Islam), while NU favours *Islam Nusantara* (Archipelagic Islam). These conceptions are inherently distinct, as they reflect the original cleavage between the modernist Muhammadiyah, which has always sought to adhere to a more literalist[23] interpretation of Islam and aimed to strip its followers' practices from local innovations (*bid'a*), and traditionalist NU, which defends a conception of Islam that is based on historical written records of authoritative Indonesian Islamic figures and is profoundly intertwined with local cultures and practices. It is quite interesting that the distinctions between these concepts, as well as the two organisations' core disagreements, have become increasingly blurry. Both NU and Muhammadiyah tend to be interchangeably invoked as upholding "national" or even "nationalist" conceptions of Islam. *Islam Berkemajuan* and *Islam Nusantara* are often referred to together as inherently representative of an Indonesian approach that should be conveyed to the rest of the world (Arifianto 2017), to the extent that a synthesis has been envisioned through the notion of *Islam Nusantara Berkemajuan* (progressive Islam of the archipelago) (Sasongko 2015).

In addition to increasing their efforts to publish their official documents in foreign languages—mainly Arabic and English—despite the fact that membership in Muhammadiyah and NU remains limited to Indonesian nationals, the two organisations have extended their networks of foreign branches (*cabang istimewa*). Most significantly for the purpose of this paper, they have also intensified the internationalisation of their own Islamic higher education institutes. At the 23 NU universities, courses in *Islam Nusantara* studies have been offered since 2018. In the same year, the Jakarta-based Nahdlatul Ulama University began publishing the English-language *Indonesian Journal of Muslim Societies*, which seeks "to provide readers with a better understanding of life experiences and dynamics of Muslim societies in Southeast Asia and the Islamic world." The 30 Muhammadiyah universities, which have been traditionally more outward-looking than their NU counterparts, have also sought to increase their international academic exchanges, whether by providing their own students with study-abroad scholarships, welcoming overseas lecturers, or increasing their English-language publication strategy.

Even more significantly, the effort to extrovert Indonesian Islam has also been echoed in the junior-level Islamic education ecosystem. Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) existed in the archipelago long before the emergence of an Indonesian national identity—Clifford Geertz goes as far as to establish continuities between the Islamic boarding school system and pre-Islamic educational institutions (Geertz 1960). In comparison with the PTKIN system, *pesantren* have been more diverse in their teachings of and relationships with external influences. It is thus all the more significant that some *pesantren* have only recently engaged in extroversion strategies that echo government-led initiatives. Showcased as a central component of the distinctively Indonesian Islamic ecosystem and as models of a tolerant Islam-based education, they have occasionally received enthusiastic encouragements from the authorities (Heryanto 2012).

The extroversion initiatives of *pesantren* are more difficult to address systematically as they do not result from the same coordinated and institutionalised impulse that governs state Islamic higher education. However, in recent years an intensification of the efforts to establish *pesantren* abroad has been visible. Most notably, Muhammadiyah-affiliated Imam Shamsi Ali's 2017 project to open an Indonesian-styled Islamic boarding school, Nur Inka Nusantara Madani, in the small village of Moodus, Connecticut, in the United States. The project attracted media coverage and the support of

[23]Accepting only the Qur'an and the *sunnah* (sayings of the Prophet) as the sole references for *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and interpreting them in favour of applicability to contemporary circumstances.

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Indonesian government officials given that Ali's expressed message was fully in line with the promotion of Indonesia as a model of a tolerant Islam and interfaith dialogue. Its funding sources, however, remain of a private nature and are run by the affiliated Nusantara Foundation. The first international *pesantren* in Indonesia opened in 2016: the Muhammadiyah-affiliated Pesantren Dea Malela, based in Sumbawa and initiated by the organisation's former leader, Din Syamsuddin, alongside the country's then-minister of Culture and Education (and former Universitas Paramadina rector), Anies Baswedan. It is financially supported by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (Kementerian Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat). The school's promotional material is published in English and, according to its founder, it welcomes students of all nationalities and insists on the quality and distinctiveness of the Indonesian *pesantren* system. These examples illustrate that even the Islamic boarding school system has—at least partially—evolved towards an increasingly extroverted perspective as a result of international influences. It illustrates both the multi-level dimension of the extroversion of Indonesian Islamic education and the penetration of the perceived relationship between legitimation and internationalisation.

Conclusion

Having moved from an essentially outside-in perspective, the Indonesian Islamic education system is, as of recently, being promoted beyond the archipelago as part of a new public diplomacy narrative aimed at showcasing the government's vision of Indonesian Islam, rather than being considered a passive recipient of external influences that should be cautiously filtered and monitored. This evolution has converged with a broader confessionalisation of Indonesia's public diplomacy, which aims to promote "Indonesian Islam" as a source of stability in the contemporary world order for both domestic and international purposes of stabilisation, legitimation, and promotion. Originally, the state Islamic higher education system fulfilled domestic needs of identity formation and political legitimation through the elaboration of Islamic knowledge and practices associated with a distinctively Indonesian character, and socialisation into Indonesian citizenship and nationalism. In this process, the state Islamic higher education system was infused with foreign influences and international connections, but in a rather unidirectional manner. In the current process of the functionalisation of Islamic education to further Indonesia's international status, some state Islamic higher education institutes have shifted from the consumption of external academic influences to strategically producing a distinctively unique national model and promoting it on the international education market. This evolution has been the result of the convergence between a changing global environment and an evolving domestic socio-political context of rising Islamic extremism. These circumstances prompted Indonesian leaders to adopt a public diplomacy strategy aimed at consolidating a homegrown version of Islam compatible with the stability of the political institutions, while at the same time advocating it in the international sphere where the promotion of "moderate" forms of Islam, defined by their compatibility with the constitution and primacy of the state, was increasingly welcomed.

While the evolution we addressed was originally a state-initiated transformation of the international outlook of the PTKIN system, the fact that civil society organisations and private boarding schools have embarked on a similar strategy of extroversion demonstrates that Islamic educational institutes of all types have indeed adapted to increasingly globalised frameworks of references and aim to play a role in a global struggle for legitimacy. By promoting what it showcases as its very own local sources and methods used for Islamic knowledge creation, Indonesia challenges established patterns of global mobility-flows of Muslims seeking religious knowledge and introduces the worldwide Muslim community to new educational approaches. In this regard, a manifold of lacunas remain surrounding the actual curriculum contents and atmosphere in classes. For instance, it is still unclear what exactly is planned to be taught as "Indonesian Islamic Studies" to foreign students at UIII in Depok. The success of the extroversion strategy lies in the clarification of this issue, as well as the legitimacy of these international institutes within Indonesian society—which extroversion also aims to nurture. The contents of curricula and teaching materials, campus rules and related issues of on-site conflicts and negotiations, and how these local practices affect Indonesia's relations to other nations may thus warrant further academic endeavour.

Future research on topics such as "Indonesian Islam," "religious-based public diplomacy" and "soft power in the Muslim world" cannot further neglect the new border-crossing dynamics of Indonesian

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Islamic education. The increasing overlap of diplomatic and academic sectors in international relations has been recently singled out as a component of "science diplomacy" which constitutes a crucial dimension of soft power (Ruffini 2017). In his seminal book on soft power, Joseph Nye repeatedly referred to the central role played by universities in the construction of a country's international attractiveness and official soft power policy (Nye 2004). Against this backdrop, there is solid potential for a future research agenda systematically addressing the rationales, narratives, and practices of the extroversion of Indonesian Islamic education. The actors involved in these processes, in particular, deserve further study. Such a research agenda would provide informative insights on how individual Islamic academics from PTKIN have an additional function as informal diplomats, ambassadors, and brokers on the sides of the more documented international political scene. Besides that, the persisting lacuna on the participation of private actors and civil society organisations, as well as the educational institutes they manage, needs to be filled with a more thorough account of the role of private Islamic universities and *pesantren* in contemporary externalisation patterns. There exists a need for a comprehensive conceptualisation of individual Islamic educational institutes as distinct religio-political actors, as well as an in-depth reflection on the possible advantages and limitations of understanding religious actors such as Indonesian Islamic academics and intellectuals as an epistemic community nurturing a countermovement against global Islamism (Haas 1992; Sandal 2010).

Finally, the Indonesian case may provide fruitful empirical material for network and circulation analysis, especially regarding the potential evolution of new transnational Islamic educational networks and connectivity. For transregional studies that observe the reconfiguration of physical and emotional space through mobilities, the point of departure may be to ask what effects extroverted schools and campuses have for the repositioning of Indonesia within the alleged centre-periphery division within the Muslim world, and also whether, through increased exchange, established Indonesian educational institutions become subject to processes of cultural, linguistic, and religious hybridisation. This links up to the question of how Indonesian extroversion efforts are perceived by foreign counterparts, and in what ways non-Indonesian students, academic staff, and cooperative partners shape the Indonesian-created educational sites and connectivity of the underlying formal international relations. These concerns are of interest because, in Indonesia, the country's Islamic soft power approach has begun to arouse criticism (Khairul Umam 2020).

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Interviews

Komaruddin Hidayat, interviewed 23 September 2020, via email.

Anonymous interviews with a senior diplomat, Jakarta, repeated between April and August 2008, Jakarta, Indonesia.

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