

REFORMATION FROM WITHIN A Contemporary Dynamics of Muhammadiyah Intellectuals in the Early 21st Century

Khoirun Niam* and **Syamsul Arifin****

*Sunan Ampel State Islamic University, Surabaya, Indonesia

**University of Muhammadiyah, Malang, Indonesia

email: khoirunniam@uinsby.ac.id

Abstract

This article seeks to trace how Muhammadiyah cultivates its Muslim intellectuals, particularly in the early 21st century, and examines how their contributions promote intellectual and charitable initiatives. Through interviews with prominent Muhammadiyah leaders and scholars, as well as documentary research, the article reveals that the emergence of Muhammadiyah intellectuals in the early twenty-first century is rooted in two types of educational institutions. The first group consists of those who completed their education at pesantren, while the second comprises individuals educated within the national school system who also graduated from higher education institutions. Social and political conditions further contributed to the formation of Muhammadiyah intellectuals. The large number of Muhammadiyah charities has led to criticism that Muhammadiyah intellectual thought is stagnant. Their focus has largely been directed toward supporting regular and tangible organizational activities, including humanitarian efforts, social initiatives, and educational programs, among others.

[Artikel ini menelusuri upaya Muhammadiyah membina intelektual Muslimnya, khususnya pada awal abad ke-21, serta mengkaji kontribusi



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

© 2025

K. Niam; S. Arifin

al-jāmi'ah
JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

ISSN: 0126-012X (p); 2338-557X (e)

Al-Jami'ah Research Centre, Yogyakarta- Indonesia

<https://aljamiah.or.id>

mereka yang mendorong inisiatif keilmuan dan filantropis. Berdasarkan wawancara dengan tokoh dan cendekiawan terkemuka Muhammadiyah serta penelitian dokumen, tulisan ini mengungkap bahwa kemunculan intelektual Muhammadiyah pada awal abad ke-21 berakar pada dua jenis lembaga pendidikan: pertama, mereka yang menempuh pendidikan di pesantren dan, kedua, mereka yang memperoleh pendidikan melalui sistem sekolah nasional dan melanjutkan ke jenjang pendidikan tinggi. Kondisi sosial dan politik juga turut memengaruhi terbentuknya para intelektual Muhammadiyah. Banyaknya amal usaha Muhammadiyah memunculkan kritik bahwa pemikiran intelektual Muhammadiyah mengalami stagnasi. Fokus para intelektual Muhammadiyah lebih diarahkan untuk mendukung aktivitas organisasi yang bersifat rutin dan nyata, seperti kegiatan kemanusiaan, inisiatif sosial, dan program-program pendidikan.]

Keywords: muslim intellectual, Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association.

A. Introduction

The notion of Muslim intellectuals has been prominent since the foundation of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia/ICMI) in 1990. The term is closely associated with Muslim technocrats who collaborated with the New Order government, both to advance developmentalism and to accommodate the aspirations of Indonesian Muslims. The notion of Muslim intellectuals may be contrasted with the concept of Muslim intelligentsia, as Yudi Latif demonstrates in his work. Influenced by a Gramscian approach, “Muslim intelligentsia” refers to Muslim scholars whose scholarship had a significant impact on society by the turn of twentieth-century Indonesia. Modernisation and secularisation characterised these Indonesian Muslim intelligentsias, but their activism focused on societal issues, justice, and democracy.¹

In this article, Muslim intellectuals simply refer to scholars whose scholarly activism impacts Indonesian Muslim communities. These intellectuals particularly flourished toward the end of the New Order government, collaborating with society to address social issues such as economic inequality, democracy, gender, and Indonesian pluralism. In so

¹ Yudi Latif, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), 11-2.

doing, this article seeks to contribute to the study of Muslim intellectual dynamics within Muhammadiyah, one of the institutional umbrellas for Muslim intellectual activism. Established in 1912, Muhammadiyah is one of the largest reformist Muslim organisations and the second-largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia. Through its institutional bodies, the organisation has consistently advocated social reform and democracy.

There have been numerous studies on the development and socio-political roles of Muhammadiyah. Al-Hamdi, for example, examines the political manoeuvres of Muhammadiyah elites between 1998 and 2010.² Meanwhile, Wardana and Hidayat focus on the multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's political engagement in the election of Indonesia's Regional Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah/DPD).³ Other scholars, such as Hilmy, compare Muhammadiyah's role with other Muslim organisations in promoting moderate Islam.⁴ Baidhaw, on the other hand, explores Muhammadiyah's role in disaster management and mitigation.⁵ Hyung-Jun Kim observes the praxis and religious authority of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah.⁶ The typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism has been a central theme in Biyanto's article, which traces the thoughts and exemplary lives of its figures.⁷ Other scholars have discussed Muhammadiyah's perspectives on pluralism, liberalism, and Islamism.⁸ Fauzi and Ayub highlight Muhammadiyah's

² Ridho Al-Hamdi, "Islam and Politics: Political Attitudes of the Elites in Muhammadiyah 1998-2010", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2013), pp. 267-90.

³ Amika Wardana and Syahrul Hidayat, "The Multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's Political Engagement in Indonesia's DPD Election", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2019), pp. 75-111.

⁴ Masdar Hilmy, "Whither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2013), pp. 24-48.

⁵ Zakiyuddin Baidhaw, "The Role of Faith-Based Organization in Coping with Disaster Management and Mitigation: Muhammadiyah's Experience", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2015), pp. 167-93.

⁶ Hyung-Jun Kim, "Praxis and Religious Authority in Islam: The Case of Ahmad Dahlan, Founder of Muhammadiyah", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2010), pp. 69-92.

⁷ Biyanto, "The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing its Figures' Thoughts and Exemplary Lives", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2017), pp. 221-49.

⁸ Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2018), pp. 443-70.

activities on social media as a new area of study.⁹ PPIM (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, Centre for the Study of Islam and Society), a research institute at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, has reported the significant roles of Indonesian Muslim civil society organisations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, in politics and governance, noting that these organisations serve as the main pillars of Indonesian democracy.¹⁰ Likewise, its published journal, *Studia Islamika*, has highlighted that, since the early twentieth century, Indonesian Muslim civil society organisations have played a crucial role in state formation. Through their educational institutions, these organisations have driven community development in areas such as education, socio-political and economic transformation, and health-care services.¹¹

This article, however, seeks to revisit Muhammadiyah's dynamics, particularly regarding the production of its Muslim intellectuals and the development of its social enterprises (*amal usaba Muhammadiyah*) in the early 21st century. A significant portion of the data discussed in this article was collected through interviews with Muhammadiyah leaders. The interviews were recorded using an open-structured model, allowing interviewers to explore information in greater depth. The transcribed data were then analysed and presented in a descriptive and systematic manner, in line with the intended article format. To enrich the data, interviews were conducted not only in the early 2000s but also in 2021 with different informants. Secondary data, including Muhammadiyah institutional documents and scientific publications, are also used in this article, covering developments up to 2025.

B. The Formation of Indonesian Muslim Intellectual: An Institutional Approach

The development of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals at the start of the 21st century is closely linked to the rise of modern-educated Muslims and their supporting groups, such as Muhammadiyah,

⁹ Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi and Ayub, "Fikih Informasi: Muhammadiyah's Perspective on Guidance in Using Social Media", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2019), pp. 267-93.

¹⁰ Asep Saepudin Jahar, "Focused Group Discussion (FGD) on the Role of Muslim-Based Organization (MBO) in Contemporary Indonesia", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2010), pp. 577-79.

¹¹ Jajat Burhanudin, Redefining the Roles of Islamic Organizations in the Reformasi Era, *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2010), pp. 403-6.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and student organizations like HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, Association of Indonesian Muslim Students), IMM (Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah, Muhammadiyah Student Alliance), and PMII (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, Movement of Indonesian Muslim Students). Unlike PMII and IMM, HMI is regarded as a non-affiliated organization, not formally connected to mainstream Muslim groups such as NU or Muhammadiyah. HMI had a significant impact on national politics in the 1980s through influential figures like Nurcholish Madjid. Many HMI activists, along with other Indonesian Muslim scholars, also played key roles in the establishment of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals).¹²

Sponsored by the New Order government, the establishment of ICMI was intended to unify Indonesian Muslim organizations, particularly the modernist Muhammadiyah and the traditionalist NU.¹³ However, Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU leader and a strong critic of ICMI, argued that it was an exclusive organization dominated by certain Muslim groups, while NU was marginalized. Wahid's criticism created divisions within NU, especially among leaders who believed ICMI could serve as a political vehicle for NU to gain government positions and, at the same time, reconcile NU's relationship with Muhammadiyah.¹⁴ To lessen tensions, Wahid eventually suggested that NU members could join ICMI as individuals rather than as official representatives of NU.¹⁵

Another important organization established in late 20th-century Indonesia is the Paramadina Foundation (Yayasan Paramadina). Founded in 1986 by several Muslim intellectuals,¹⁶ the foundation aimed to carry

¹² ICMI was established on 7 December 1990 in the town of Malang in East Java. As outlined in ICMI's booklet, this association at its formation included a broad crosssection of Muslims from around Indonesia. Those affiliated with this association (ICMI) were intent on casting off old ideological sectarian debates and instead putting in place a new modern Islamic contribution to Indonesia's developmental process. See: "Muslim Intellectuals Society of Indonesia", *Booklet of ICMI* p. 1.

¹³ Douglas E. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 91.

¹⁴ Andree Feillard, , *NU vis-à-vis Negara* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999); Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta, LKiS and Pustaka Pelajar, 1994), p. 404.

¹⁵ Interview with Masdar Farid Mas'udi, Jakarta, 18 July 2000.

¹⁶ The co-founders of Yayasan Paramadina are Abdul Latif, Ahmad Ganis, Ahmad Rifai, Abdillah Taha, Aniswati M. Kamaluddin, Darnis Habib, Fahmi Idris, M. Dawam Rahardja, Mustafa Anis, Moosolly Noor, Muhammad Yahya, Nurcholish *Al-Jāmi'ah*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2025 M/1447 H

out *da'wah* activities among the middle and upper-middle-class *abangan* (non-practicing Muslims) in Jakarta.¹⁷ The official guidelines of Yayasan Paramadina state:

Yayasan Paramadina is a religious institution wholly convinced that, as the manifestation of universal values, Islam aims to integrate Indonesia's local traditions, Islamness, and Indonesianness. Yayasan Paramadina is designed to be a center for Islamic religiosity that is creative, constructive, and positive, advancing society without being defensive or reactionary. Its core activities are directed toward empowering society to meet contemporary challenges and contribute to the growing intellectual tradition. This objective requires investing considerable resources in developing the quality and authority of scholarship. As a result, its main activities focus on creating and sharing a deep and wide-ranging understanding of Islam that promotes openness, justice, and democracy.¹⁸

Barton argued that Paramadina succeeded in establishing a strong following among Jakarta's elites, with hundreds of urban Muslims regularly attending its seminars and programs. One of its most important activities is the monthly *Klub Kajian Agama* (KKA, Religious Studies Club), first held in October 1986, shortly after the foundation's establishment. Initially modest, KKA sessions later adapted to urban middle-class demands by being held in luxury hotels in South Jakarta.¹⁹ According to Azra, Paramadina has been criticized for being too exclusive, focusing only on middle-class Muslims in urban Jakarta, and resembling popular *majlis ta'lim*. Azra also noted that Paramadina contributed to mainstreaming inclusive Islam (*Islam inklusif*), but argued that it has been less influential in shaping Indonesia's broader intellectual traditions.²⁰

Importantly, scholars studying Muslim intellectual dynamics in contemporary Indonesia should also consider the role of Islamic universities. Abbas highlights that contact with Western universities has significantly contributed to the development of Indonesian Muslim

Madjid, Sugiat Ahmad Sumadi, Tawang Alun, Utomo Dananjaya and Usep Fathuddin. See: *Profil 10th Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina* (Jakarta, 1996), p. 7.

¹⁷ Interview with Dawam Rahardja, Bekasi, 24 August 2000.

¹⁸ Quoted from Greg Barton, "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual Ulama: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1997), p. 334. This is a translation of a statement appearing on page 299 of Nurcholish Madjid, *Pintu-pintu Menuju Tuban* (Paramadina: Jakarta, 1995).

¹⁹ Barton, *Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid*, p. 334.

²⁰ Interview with Azyumardi Azra, Jakarta, 27 August 2000.

thought. Projects initiated by universities in Europe and North America have shaped the intellectual traditions of Indonesian Muslim scholars, mainly centered on Islamic universities in Indonesia.²¹ As Coser argues, universities are the most favorable institutional setting for intellectual traditions to develop, as they provide a milieu where scholars share a common concern with the untrammelled pursuit of knowledge, time allocation for research, and academic freedom.²² Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that by the turn of the 21st century, many Indonesian Muslim intellectuals were lecturers at universities, particularly those affiliated with Islamic institutions.²³

C. Muhammadiyah and the Production of Muslim Intellectual

Narrating the stories of Muhammadiyah's founder Ahmad Dahlan, Fadjar argues that intellectual activism is the heart and foundation of Muhammadiyah. For Fadjar, Dahlan called for Islamic reformism -practicing Islam based on reason, the Qur'an, and the prophetic sunna- and reformism through education. He adopted innovative learning methods, transforming and contextually interpreting Islamic textual doctrine. Dahlan translated doctrine into concrete community movements. For example, when teaching *sūra* al-Mā'ūn (Qur'an, 107), he not only explained its meaning but emphasized actualizing it through social action. Based on this *sūra*, Dahlan established PKU (Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum, Helpers for Public Suffering), now known as Majelis Kesejahteraan Sosial (Social Welfare and Community Development Body). He also founded educational institutions that

²¹ Megan Brankley Abbas, *Whose Islam?: The Western University and Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).

²² Lewis A. Coser, *Men of Ideas* (New York: London, 1965), p. 280.

²³ The following Muslim intellectuals are among those affiliated with universities: Prof. Dr. M. Amin Rais (Gajah Mada University at Yogyakarta); Prof. Dr. Syafiq A. Mughni (IAIN Surabaya, now becomes UIN, and Muhammadiyah University at Sidoarjo, East Java); Prof. Drs. Malik Fadjar, MSc. (UIN Jakarta/Malang; Muhammadiyah University at Malang); Prof. Dr. Syafii Maarif (IKIP, Teacher's Training College Yogyakarta -now becomes University); Dr. Masykuri Abdillah (UIN Jakarta); Ali Munhanif, MA (UIN Jakarta); Prof. M. Dawam Rahardjo (Unisba Bekasi); Prof. Dr. Komaruddin Hidayat (UIN Jakarta); Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra (UIN Jakarta); Dr. Bahtiar Effendi (UIN Jakarta) and Dr. Thoaha Hamim (UIN Surabaya); and Prof. Dr. M. Amin Abdullah (UIN Yogyakarta). Compare with Najib Burhani's opinion, he asserted that there are many kind of Muslim intellectual. The different scientific background of Muslim intellectuals have the influence on what kind of institution that they want to affiliate with. Interview with Ahmad Najib Burhani, by phone, 11 February 2021.

combined Western and Islamic education.²⁴

According to Abdillah, Muhammadiyah is a mass organization²⁵ that carries out *da'wa* (missionary activity) in a broad sense. Its activities include not only religious practices but also social initiatives such as education, economy, family welfare, and publication.²⁶ As a modern organisation, Muhammadiyah established its institutional bodies to address socio-religious issues, including the *Tarjih* Assembly, *Tabligh* Assembly, *Wakaf* and Wealth Body, Economic Development Body, Social Welfare and Community Development Body, Health Development Body, Education Body, Cultural Body, Research and Development, and International Relation and Cooperation Body, among others.²⁷

Due to its modernist orientation, the title *ulama* or *kiai* is uncommon within Muhammadiyah. In contrast, within NU the title *kiai* represents the highest authority. Thus, the term *intelektual Muslim* (Muslim intellectuals) is more favorable in Muhammadiyah. Fadjar notes that Muhammadiyah's reformist orientation emphasizes *tawhīd* (oneness of God), implying egalitarian, free, and democratic relations among people. Respect is based on scholarship rather than charisma, unlike NU. Consequently, Muhammadiyah rarely uses the term *kiai*. When it is used, it is usually attributed by others.²⁸ Practically, recognition is based on contributions and societal roles rather than charisma.²⁹

Syafiq A. Mughni adds that although some Muhammadiyah figures deserve the title of classical Muslim scholars (*ulama*), the egalitarian spirit within Muhammadiyah restricts the use of *kiai*. In NU, a *kiai* is praised for charisma and Islamic knowledge. In Muhammadiyah, an *ulama* is seen

²⁴ Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, 19 July 2000.

²⁵ Interview with Masykuri Abdillah, Jakarta, 20 August 2000.

²⁶ Masykuri Abdillah, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals to the Concept of Democracy* (Hamburg: Abera Network, 1997), p. 218.

²⁷ See for further detail: *Profil Muhammadiyah 2000* (Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 2000), pp. 103-27.

²⁸ Contrary to what Malik Fadjar has said, as a matter of fact, the title *kiai* was used in naming the chairman of Muhammadiyah, such as Kiai Haji Achmad Dahlan (1912-1923, the year in the parentheses indicate the period of leadership in Muhammadiyah); Kiai Haji Ibrahim (1923-1932); Kiai Haji Hisyam (1932-1936); Kiai Haji Mas Masyur (1936-1942); Kiai Haji M. Yunus Anis (1959-1962); Kiai Haji Ahmad Badawai (1962-1968); Kiai Haji Fakhri usman (1968-1971); Kiai Haji Abdur Razak Fakhruddin (1971-1990); Kiai Haji A. Azhar Basyir (1990-1995). See for detail: *Profil Muhammadiyah 2000*, pp. 9-28; Musthafa Kamal et al., *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Persatuan, 1994), pp. 41-5.

²⁹ Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, 19 July 2000.

as a fallible human subject to criticism. Thus, charismatic leadership akin to NU's *kiai* rarely emerges, even among highly knowledgeable scholars. Instead, terms like *ustādh* or *bapak* (father/elder) are commonly used.³⁰

Muhammadiyah intellectuals are educated through two main types of institutions. First, those graduating from pesantren,³¹ often active in *da'wah* or *ulama* institution, such as Majelis Tarjih. Second, those educated in Dutch schools during the colonial period, later continuing to higher education in Indonesia or abroad. Mughni notes that Muhammadiyah intellectuals integrated earlier with modern schools than NU, introducing Western thought sooner.³² Since its foundation, Muhammadiyah combined modern schooling with religious education. This alignment led the Dutch-Indies government to subsidize Muhammadiyah schools in 1915, as they met Western educational standards.³³ Numerous Muhammadiyah members have recently enrolled in various Indonesian higher education institutions, including State University, the State Institute for Islamic Studies/IAIN and others. Today, most Muhammadiyah intellectuals graduate from modern schools rather than pesantren, intensifying their

³⁰ Interview with Syafiq A.Mughni, Surabaya, July 26, 2000.

³¹ Data in 2000 show that Muhammadiyah has 55 pesantrens (another source of data: 64 Pesantrens), 1,128 SD (*Sekolah Dasar*, Elementary School); 1,179 SMP (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*, Lower Secondary School); 509 SMA (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*, Upper Secondary School); 1,768 Maddin (*Madrasah Diniyah*, Islamic Religious School) or MI (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, Islamic Elementary School); 534 MTs (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, Islamic Lower Secondary School); 171 MA (*Madrasah 'Aliyah*, Islamic Upper Secondary School) and 32 Universities. See *Profil Muhammadiyah 2000*, p. 424. For detail list of Muhammadiyah education institutions and each address, see pp. 425-532. In 2025, Muhammadiyah has 7,436 Kindergartens/Early Childhood Education; 2,343 Elementary Schools/Islamic Elementary Schools; 1,522 Junior High Schools/Islamic Junior High Schools; 668 Senior High Schools/Islamic Senior High Schools; 608 Vocational High Schools/Islamic Vocational High Schools; 37 Special Elementary Schools/Special Junior High Schools/Special Special Schools. or Islamic boarding schools (326 institutions), see: <https://dikdasmennppmuhammadiyah.or.id>; for higher education institutions (163 campuses), see: "Kampus Muhammadiyah Resmi Tambah Jumlah Universitas", *Warta PTM* (Jul 7, 2024), <https://wartaptm.id/kampus-muhammadiyah-resmi-tambah-jumlah-universitas/>, accessed 20 April 2025.

³² Interview with Syafiq A.Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000.

³³ D. A. Rinkes, "Bescheiden betreffende de Vereeniging Sarekat Islam, Zeer Geheime Missive van den Adviseur voof Inlandsche Zaken aan den Gouverneur-General", in *The Emergence of the Indonesian Modern Elite*, ed. by Robert van Niel (The Hague and Bandung: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 166. See also HS Shafiuddin, "The 41st Congress of Muhammadiyah: A Retrospection", in *Muhammadiyah Dalam Kritik dan Komentari*, ed. by M. Rusli Karim (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), especially p. 335.

engagement with modern institutions.³⁴

Hilman Latief, a young Muhammadiyah scholar, offers categories of intellectuals within the Muhammadiyah: fined-intellectuals (*intelektual murni*) and public intellectuals (*intelektual publik*). *Intelektual murni* are mainly educated-Muhammadiyah activists who played key roles in many institutions, not limited to Muhammadiyah-affiliated organisation. They are lecturers and professors in many universities whose concerns to develop Muhammadiyah as an organisation and are motors (*penggerak*) of the organisation. *Intelektual publik* on the other hand are Muhammadiyah activists who serve as the bridge between the organisation and the government and the society in general. They are ‘moderate-orthodox’ in character as they are rooted in Muhammadiyah background, but in some cases criticise openly the organisation. These two categories contributed significantly to the contemporary development of the organisation. Latief also commented that Muhammadiyah is in principle welcoming activists of the organisation with diverse backgrounds, organisations, and cultural upbringings. Thus, it is not surprising that leaders of Muhammadiyah consist of individuals having no roots in Muhammadiyah, importantly and some are previously activists of the traditionalist NU. Reflecting his background, Latief mentions that he was raised in Persis (Persatuan Islam) milieu and an activist of HMI.³⁵

Worth noting that in addition to educational institution, student movements have been breeding ground for Muhammadiyah intellectuals and contributed significantly to the formation of Muhammadiyah intellectuals. While studying in the formal education system, many Muhammadiyah intellectuals are actively involved in student movements and organisations, such as HMI or IMM. Despite the fact that IMM is an official association for Muhammadiyah’s students, HMI is more influential in shaping Muhammadiyah intellectuals. In the case of prominent figures in Muhammadiyah, according to Syafiq, there is a sense that they may come from anywhere-from any other institutions, inside or outside Muhammadiyah. It is not relevant whether they come from IMM or HMI; the important thing is they are ready be involved in developing Muhammadiyah.³⁶ Other organizations that contributed to the emergence of Muhammadiyah intellectuals, aside from HMI, are

³⁴ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000. Najib Burhani gave same confirmation. Interview with Ahmad Najib Burhani, by phone, 11 February 2021.

³⁵ Interview with Hilman Latief, by phone, 12 February 2021.

³⁶ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000.

Persami (*Persatuan Sarjana Muslim Indonesia*, The Union of Indonesian Muslim Scholars) and LDK (*Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*, Campus Institute for Islamic Propagation).³⁷

Commenting on the roles of students associations within Muhammadiyah, the former chairman of Muhammadiyah Syafii Maarif argued that HMI and IMM have contributed significantly to the emergence of Muslim intellectuals.³⁸ For example, Dawam Rahardja (board member of the Muhammadiyah; director of Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat/LSAF, Institute for Religious and Philosophic Studies; board member of ICMI), Syafii Maarif (professor of history at Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan/IKIP, Teacher's Training College Yogyakarta; the chairman of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah), Malik Fadjar (board member of the Muhammadiyah; professor at IAIN Jakarta; Minister of Religious Affairs during Habibi's government, 1998-1999; and Minister of Education during Megawati's government) were HMI activists. Amin Rais (former Head of Muhammadiyah, 1994-1998, professor of political science at Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta) and Yahya Muhaimin (former minister of education, 1999-2001; board member of Muhammadiyah) were both activists in IMM and HMI. Nevertheless, Maarif commented that HMI has produced more intellectuals than IMM. This is particularly because IMM had to face internal frictions and lacked of unity, especially since 1975.³⁹

The internal Muhammadiyah circle acknowledges that many Muhammadiyah intellectuals are not born from the Muhammadiyah educational institutions,⁴⁰ but from state education institutions, or from other private education institutions. Students who achieved high grades in SMA (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*, Upper Secondary School) or similar institutions often prefer to enrol in state-run universities rather than Muhammadiyah universities.⁴¹ This preference is primarily due to

³⁷ Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, 19 July 2000.

³⁸ Interview with Syafii Maarif, Yogyakarta, 5 August 2000.

³⁹ Interview with Syafii Maarif, Yogyakarta, 5 July 2000.

⁴⁰ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000. See also his paper, "Muhammadiyah dan Pemikiran Keagamaan", in *Muhammadiyah Menyongsong Abad 21* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Suara Muhammadiyah, 1998), p. 19.

⁴¹ From historical background, the Muhammadiyah higher education was founded at the end of 1940s. At first, Muhammadiyah tried to build a semi higher education institution in 1949 or 1950 called MMT (*Madrasah Menengah Tinggi*, Senior high school). In 1958 or 1959 an Academy of Da'wah was founded in order to create a qualitative cadre in handling the activity oriented to the enlightenment of *da'wah* and the *Al-Jāmi'ah*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2025 M/1447 H

the superior educational facilities and lower costs associated with state universities compared to private institutions. Individuals unable to enrol at state universities due to limited capacity will be accommodated at private universities, including Muhammadiyah universities. The private or Muhammadiyah university serves as the secondary option for high school graduates. Consequently, it is reasonable that numerous Muhammadiyah intellectuals do not originate from its university. Mughni asserts that this fact poses no issues for Muhammadiyah because greater diversity among Muhammadiyah intellectuals enhances the dynamic within the organisation.⁴² Rahardja provides justification for this fact. He argued that Muhammadiyah was not an intellectual organization; however, many of its members' children became scholars and intellectuals, subsequently contributing to its development.⁴³ "In reality, many Muhammadiyah intellectuals did not originate from IMM. Azyumardi Azra stated that Syafii Maarif and Malik Fadjar have their organizational background in HMI".⁴⁴

Thus, it can be said that state universities play a more significant role in the development of Muhammadiyah intellectuals compared to Muhammadiyah universities. "But we do not know how it will be in the future", Syafiq A. Mughni said during our interview, "because in the 1990s there were many qualified Muhammadiyah universities of the same quality as the State Universities, such as Muhammadiyah University at Malang, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta".⁴⁵ Muhammadiyah seeks to foster Muslim intellectuals by initiating collaborations with various groups. Ahmad Dahlan was actively involved in Boedi Utomo (Indonesian first modern organization, that founded in 1908), also joined with *Taman Sisma* (a school that was created in 1922), *Jong Islamieten Bond* (JIB, Young Muslim Society), and after Indonesian Independence, he joined with Masyumi (the Consultative Congress of Indonesian Muslim, formed

empowerment of the *ummah*. Muhammadiyah university and Muhammadiyah Teachers Training College were founded in the 1960s in cooperation with state university. The goal of Muhammadiyah Teachers Training College was meet the increasing demand for teachers in the Muhammadiyah school system. Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, 19 July 2000.

⁴² Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000.

⁴³ Interview with Dawam Rahardjo, Bekasi, 24 August 2000.

⁴⁴ Interview with Azyumardi Azra, Jakarta, 27 August 2000.

⁴⁵ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, 26 July 2000.

in 1943 by Japanese and was banned by Soekarno in 1960).⁴⁶ Recently Muhammadiyah leaders have consistently sought to encourage members to address contemporary challenges through the enhancement of their intellectual pursuits. Muhammadiyah intellectuals demonstrate a greater motivation to advance both social and educational activities compared to other non-Muslim organisations.⁴⁷ Consequently, numerous Muhammadiyah members pursue postgraduate studies at universities both in Indonesia and abroad.

D. Criticism from within: Between *Amal Usaba* and the Production of *Intelektual Muslim*

The 47th Muhammadiyah Congress (*Muktamar*) held in Makassar, South Sulawesi (3–7 August 2015), adopted the theme “The Enlightenment Movement Toward a Progressive Indonesia.”⁴⁸ Central to this framing was the concept of *Islam Berkemajuan*,⁴⁹ articulated by Din Syamsuddin as a mode of Islamic thought and practice that is moderate, progressive, enlightened, democratic, and just, and intended to operate at local, national, and global levels. The development and deployment of this concept invite closer examination, particularly regarding its genealogy, contemporary relevance, and relation to broader Muhammadiyah identity discourse.

The concern about Muhammadiyah’s intellectual stagnation is not new. As early as 1985, Ahmad Syafii Maarif critiqued the movement for lacking dynamism in Islamic thought, arguing that Muhammadiyah intellectual energy had been largely absorbed by routine organizational and practical activities, humanitarian, social, and educational, rather than by the production of innovative Islamic scholarship.⁵⁰ The emergence of *Islam Berkemajuan* may therefore be read, at least in part, as a response to this earlier critique. Yet it is also rooted in the long-standing Muhammadiyah institutional ecosystem (*amal usaba*), schools,

⁴⁶ Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta, 19 July 2000. See also Harry Bhaskara, “Muhammadiyah at 73, Confronts the Challenges of Today, in *Muhammadiyah Dalam Kritik dan Komentar*, ed. by M. Rusli Karim (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), p. 84.

⁴⁷ Interview with Syafii Maarif, Yogyakarta, 5 August 2000.

⁴⁸ Muhamad Ali, “The Muhammadiyah’s 47th Congress and ‘Islam Berkemajuan’”, *Studia Islamika*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2015), pp. 377-86.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Syafii Maarif confirmed this critic during my interview in Yogyakarta, August 5, 2000. In 2021, Amin Abdullah also gives confirmation of Syafii Maarif statement. Interview with Amin Abdullah, by phone, February 9, 2021.

universities, health services, micro-finance units, and mosques,⁵¹ which has grown impressively. This raises an ongoing question: how does Muhammadiyah balance institutional expansion with the cultivation of intellectual production?

Two modes of Muhammadiyah intellectual activity can be identified. The first comprises institutional thought produced formally through bodies such as the Tarjih and Islamic Thought Development Assembly. According to Syafiq A. Mughni, this mode tends to focus on religious questions and rarely generates forward-looking or transformative discourse.⁵² The second mode consists of the work of individual Muhammadiyah intellectuals (researchers and lecturers) whose scholarship ranges beyond purely religious themes and into social, political, economic, scientific, and technological domains.⁵³ Latief notes that such scholars, though relatively few, tend to be moderate, autonomous, open-minded, and critically engaged.⁵⁴

Despite Muhammadiyah's institutional expansion, internal critiques have emerged concerning the stagnation of its intellectual development. One of the most prominent critiques was articulated by Syafi Maarif in 1985, who argued that Muhammadiyah's intellectual energy had

⁵¹ By the end of 2014, Muhammadiyah's institutional development had expanded significantly, comprising 176 universities, 14,346 kindergartens, 2,604 elementary schools, 1,772 secondary schools, 1,143 high schools, 102 pesantrens, and 15 schools for students with special needs (*sekolah luar biasa*). In the health and social welfare sectors, it operated 457 hospitals and clinics, 421 orphanages, and 54 nursing homes. In the field of *tabligh*, Muhammadiyah maintained 6,270 mosques and 5,689 prayer houses. Its economic institutions included 437 Islamic microfinance banks (BMT, *Baitul Māl wa Tamwīl*), 762 Islamic credit unions (BPRS, *Bank Perkreditan Rakyat Syariah*), and 25 publishing houses. See Ali, "The Muhammadiyah's 47th Congress", p. 380.

⁵² Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, July 26, 2000. Compare with the content of the *Himpunan Putusan Majelis Tarjih* (The Collection of the Decision of Majelis Tarjih). This book consist of 14 important themes, namely *Kitab Iman*; *Kitab Tabarab*; *Kitab Salah*; *Kitab Jama'ah and Jum'ah*; *Kitab Zakat*; *Kitab Siyam*; *Kitab Hajji*; *Kitab Janazah*; *Kitab Waqaf*; *Kitab Masalah Lima* (Five problems: Religion, The world, the ritual, *Sabilillah*, and *Qiyas*); *Kitab Beberapa Masalah* (Different Problems: Picture, Women, Lottery and Bank in Islamic Law, among others); *Keputusan Tarjih Sidoarjo* (The Decission of Tarjih in Sidoarjo: About Bank, Family Planning and so on); *Kitab shalat-shalat Tatawru'*; *Kitab Keputusan Tarjih Wiradesa* (The question of Insurance and Astronomy among others). Najib Burhani also confirm this kind of Muhammadiyah intellectual, in his word they are tend to be more exclusive in nature. Interview with Ahmad Najib Burhani, by phone, February 11, 2021.

⁵³ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, July 26, 2000.

⁵⁴ Interview with Hilman Latief by phone February 12, 2021.

become predominantly absorbed by routine organizational work, such as humanitarian, social, and educational activities, leaving limited room for sustained scholarly innovation. Those who acknowledge the decline in intellectual productivity tend to receive Maarif's critique constructively, whereas others dismiss it, arguing that the organization already bears an excessive workload and requires no additional intellectual agenda.⁵⁵ For Maarif, Muhammadiyah ought to function as a *scientific movement*, whereas many activists continued to envision it primarily as a movement of *da'wa* and *'amal* (social action).⁵⁶

In response to such concerns, *Majelis Tarjih*, the body established in 1927 to issue rulings on ethical, moral, and religious questions—underwent substantial reform in 1995. During the 43rd Muhammadiyah National Congress in Banda Aceh, its mandate was expanded, and the phrase *dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam* (“and Islamic Thought Development”) was added to its name. The institution has since been formally known as Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam (Tarjih and Islamic Thought Development Assembly). Its revised function includes not only issuing religious decisions, but also engaging in the development of Islamic thought that responds to contemporary social, cultural, technological, and scientific challenges. The reform was grounded in the conviction that Muhammadiyah, as a reformist Islamic movement, must cultivate original and forward-looking Islamic scholarship. According to Syafiq A. Mughni,⁵⁷ the former structure, concerned primarily with issuing religious rulings, was insufficient to sustain an intellectually dynamic movement. He argued that key questions concerning Muhammadiyah's intellectual future, how to address emerging societal issues and how to cultivate a strong scholarly tradition, could not be answered under the institution's earlier scope. Syafiq Maarif likewise asserted that the stagnation of Muhammadiyah's intellectual culture was a central motivation for expanding Majelis Tarjih's mandate and identity.⁵⁸

Following the reform, *Majelis Tarjih* underwent significant organizational restructuring and expanded into several specialized divisions: the Division of Fatwā and Tarjih⁵⁹ Development; the Division

⁵⁵ Interview with Syafiq Maarif, Yogyakarta, August 5, 2000.

⁵⁶ Interview with Syafiq Maarif, Yogyakarta, August 5, 2000. Amin Abdullah confirm this condition as stated during my interview. Interview with Amin Abdullah, by phone, February 9, 2021.

⁵⁷ Interview with Syafiq A. Mughni, Surabaya, July 26, 2000.

⁵⁸ Interview with Syafiq Maarif, Yogyakarta, August 5, 2000.

⁵⁹ Selecting the most valid opinions on religious matters.

of *Hisāb*⁶⁰ and Qur'anic Exegesis; the Division of Women and Family; the Division of Islamic Thought, Social and Cultural Development; the Division of Islamic Thought, Science and Technology; the Division of Cadres and Organizational Development; and the Division of Journals and Publications.⁶¹ Prior to this restructuring, the institution had maintained a far simpler framework, consisting only of divisions responsible for Islamic thought, *tarjih* decisions, cadre formation, and *hisāb*. The expansion marked a deliberate effort to professionalize and diversify Muhammadiyah's intellectual output and to institutionalize scholarly work beyond legal reasoning.⁶²

One early outcome of this reform was the publication, in 2000, of a thematic Qur'anic exegesis addressing interreligious social relations.⁶³ The work comprises four chapters: the first outlines principles governing relations among religious communities, emphasizing Qur'anic recognition of pluralism, peaceful coexistence, justice, and equality. The second discusses strategies for cooperation and constructive engagement across religious boundaries. The third examines the status of *abl al-kitāb* (Jews and Christians), and the final chapter addresses the question of interfaith marriage in light of Qur'anic guidance. In addition to this publication, Majelis Tarjih launched an academic journal, *Tarjih*, whose second issue featured the theme "Cloning from an Islamic Perspective".⁶⁴

Beyond institutional reform, it is also necessary to observe the growing role of young Muhammadiyah intellectuals. As noted by Haedar Nashir, this younger cohort has gained increasing influence and contributed to significant internal change,⁶⁵ though not without generating tensions between younger figures and senior leadership. Azyumardi Azra, however, offered a critical assessment, arguing that many young Muhammadiyah intellectuals became absorbed into the organization's expanding institutional network, educational, health, and economic,

⁶⁰ Calculation of the appearance of the moon to mark the beginning and end of fasting.

⁶¹ For details, see unpublished report of *Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam*, 1996, pp. 3-7.

⁶² See unpublished manual: *Buku Panduan Munas Tarjih ke-XXIII*, Banda Aceh, 4-5 July 1995, pp. 16-17.

⁶³ See Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam, *Tafsir Tematik al-Quran tentang Hubungan Sosial antarumat Beragama* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Suara Muhammadiyah, 2000).

⁶⁴ See "Tarjih" *Jurnal Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1997).

⁶⁵ Interview with Haedar Nashir, March 18, 2021.

resulting in an orientation he described as “quick gelding,” prioritizing institutional placement and economic security over scholarly contribution. According to Azra, this condition contributed to the continued stagnation of Muhammadiyah’s intellectual productivity.⁶⁶ His critique appears particularly relevant when examining the intellectual activity of younger Muhammadiyah scholars during the period 2002–2006, as Syamsul Arifin’s analysis demonstrates:

“Young Muhammadiyah people who were guided by Kang Moeslim around 2002s to 2006s are now going out from the “hard orientation”, they have graduated from a variety of prestigious universities abroad and will always give benefits especially for the internal organization, and the state in general. It seems that the progressivity of their thoughts and movements clearly fills in strategic position in The Central Leader of Muhammadiyah like Hilman Latief (Director of *Amil Zakat, Infaq dan Shadaqah* Muhammadiyah Institution/*Lazismu*); Andar Nubowo (Fund Rising and *Lazismu* Cooperation; Ahmad Najib Burhani (Vice-Chair of References and Information); Fajar Riza Ul Haq (Secretary of Law and Public Policy Institute; Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy and Izza Rahman (*Lazismu* Sharia Board); in the government there are some names namely Pradana Boy ZTF (Assistant for the President’s Special Staff of the President of the Republic of Indonesia in the International Religion Field); Zuly Qodir (Expert in Pancasila Ideology Guidance Agency/BPIP); Rita Pranawati (Indonesian Children Protection Commissioner/KPAD); Alpha Amirrachman (Director SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre of the Ministry of Education and Culture/SEAMOLEC Kemendikbud); and in political parties, there is Raja Juli Antoni (Secretary-General of *Partai Solidaritas Indonesia*/PSI (Indonesian Solidarity Party))”.⁶⁷

Facing such critique, the young Muhammadiyah intellectuals try to give an answer by joining the newly established institution that called *Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah* (JIMM, Young Muhammadiyah Intellectual Network). In September 2003, JIMM was established in Bogor, Indonesia under the sponsor of Ma’arif Institute for Culture and

⁶⁶ Interview with Azyumardi Azra, Jakarta, August 27, 2000. To compare the dynamic of young Muhammadiyah intellectuals and young NU intellectuals, see Khoirun Niam, “Nahdlatul Ulama and The Production of Muslim Intellectuals in The Beginning of 21st Century Indonesia”, *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2017), pp. 351-88.

⁶⁷ Syamsul Arifin and Nafik Muthohirin, “The Viewpoint of the Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals towards the Religious Minority Groups in Indonesia”, *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2019), p 295-96.

Humanity.⁶⁸ JIMM is a forum for the young generation of Muhammadiyah who see that the intellectual thinking of Muhammadiyah is in a stagnant condition. The establishment of JIMM is as a concrete respond in dynamizing Islamic thought within Muhammadiyah, although they realize that the feedback of Muhammadiyah members to this institution are varied. As a community whose main concern is in dynamizing Islamic thought, JIMM has no strict membership system for recruiting its group members.⁶⁹ As institutional instrument, JIMM create a presidium which is responsible for conducting institutional activities. Piet H Khaidir, Zakiyuddin Baidhawi, Zuly Qodir, Pradana Boy ZTF, and A'i Fatimah Nur Fuad are the presidium of JIMM at its first period.⁷⁰ Since the beginning of its establishment, JIMM has had a negative response from the puritan wing of Muhammadiyah members. Nevertheless, positive respond come from the senior members of Muhammadiyah, such as Syafii Maarif, Muslim Abdurrahman and Dawam Rahardjo who see that it is important to give the space for the growth of the younger generation of Muhammadiyah. When Syafii Maarif became head of Muhammadiyah, he gave the chance and support for JIMM's creativity. What is bad to note is that many Muhammadiyah board members are reluctant to place JIMM structurally in Muhammadiyah.⁷¹

Many JIMM's intellectual activities orient their discourses on three important themes: namely contemporary Islamic thought, critical social science and new social movement. These discourses are placed as fundamental thinking in creating further contemporary Islamic thoughts that relay on the following themes: Quranic hermeneutics, social hermeneutics, sharia' and democracy, liberation theology, pluralism and multiculturalism.⁷²

Within the younger generation of Muhammadiyah, there has been the birth of Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah/JIMM (Network

⁶⁸ The Maarif Institute was established with the support of Syafii Ma'arif on 28 February 2003 in Jakarta. See Budhy Munawar-Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam Sekularisme, Liberalisme dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: LSAF and Paramadina, 2010), p. 111.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Syamsul Arifin, *Implementasi Studi Agama Berbasis Multikultural Dalam Pendidikan*, unpublished document.

⁷¹ Munawar-Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam*, p. 116.

⁷² Ahmad Fuad Fanani, "Jihad Membumikan Pluralisme, Bersatu Menghadang Fundamentalisme", *workshop paper* (Puncak: Universitas Paramadina, 2007), as quoted by Munawar-Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam*, p. 117.

of Young Muhammadiyah intellectuals), which reserves as the pillar [of the organisation] and signifies a new wave to stimulates a bridge the organisation generations and advancements in its second centennial. This wave indicates a new reform within the organisation that has experienced its revival in the second century since the establishment of the Muslim modernist and reformist organisation by Ahmad Dahlan in 1912. It is a chain of movement that lies on the same principle of “Islam yang berkemajuan”, or “progressive Islam”. It is true that there had been a historical episode of Muhammadiyah intellectuals which emphasised on the idea of religious purification through the jargonical “anti-Takhayul, Bid’ah and Churafat/anti-TBC” and called for literal understanding of the doctrine “amar makruf nahi munkar/ enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong doings” which defied understandings of the founding fathers of Muhammadiyah like Kyai Dahlan. As consequence of this puritanical view, Muhammadiyah seemed to be religiously conservative. But, since 2000, there has been a demand to review this puritanical view and calls for the enlightening and advancing interpretation and movement.

Subsequently, the emergence of JIMM raised suspicions among some members of Muhammadiyah, who viewed JIMM as community that diverged from the “formal voice” of Muhammadiyah. The Muhammadiyah organization regarded this group as “*anak haram*” (unwanted child) and should expel them. They argued that, from theological perspective, JIMM’s views on secularism, liberalism, and pluralism have strayed from the foundational principles of Islam. Dawam Rahardjo suggested that, in response to the negative perception of some Muhammadiyah members towards JIMM, it would be more effective for JIMM to consider an alternative approach by utilizing a non-government organization (NGO) as its operational platform. He stated that, in an organizational sense, aligning with Muhammadiyah would result in financial dependency.⁷³ According to Dawam Rahardjo, a more pronounced conflict between certain members of Muhammadiyah board and JIMM was observed during the 45th Muhammadiyah congress in Malang. Many regional board members of Muhammadiyah expressed their hesitation regarding the structural affiliation of JIMM with Muhammadiyah.⁷⁴

This fact indicates a relationship between Syafii Maarif’s critique of the stagnant condition of Muhammadiyah intellectual activism and the emergence of a new generation of Muhammadiyah intellectuals.

⁷³ Munawar-Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam*, p. 118.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Muhammadiyah intellectuals significantly contribute to the dynamic of organizational roles and development. Muhammadiyah intellectuals have effectively eliminated feudal mentality and fostered a democratic attitude, emphasising that all individuals possess equal potential and should rely on themselves rather than depend on elite organization.

Two decades after the establishment of the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectual Network (*Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah*, JIMM) in 2003, a marked shift has taken place in the roles and trajectories of its key figures. Many of those who initially represented the intellectual vanguard of Muhammadiyah have since transitioned into governmental or bureaucratic positions, including ministerial appointments, high-level posts within ministries, or service as expert advisors to state officials. Notable examples include Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, Biyanto, Hilman Latief, Raja Juli Antoni, and Fajar Riza Ul Haq.

This development raises questions regarding intellectual continuity—particularly whether these individuals can maintain a critical stance toward state policy when they are now situated within the very structures they once scrutinized. This transformation constitutes an emerging area of inquiry for future research. Nonetheless, some figures continue to operate as independent public intellectuals. One such example is Sukidi, who completed his doctoral studies at Harvard University with a dissertation titled *The Gradual Qur'an: Views of Early Muslim Commentators*. Since returning to Indonesia, he has remained consistently engaged in public discourse through critical commentary published in major media outlets such as *Tempo* and *Kompas*. In this respect, Sukidi represents an intellectual continuation of earlier Muhammadiyah thinkers including Moeslim Abdurrahman, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, and Azyumardi Azra.

A more recent development within Muhammadiyah is the organizational leadership's ambition to position the movement as a transnational Islamic actor, driven by the internationalization of its networks and diaspora. Two factors contribute significantly to this trajectory: first, the growing number of Muhammadiyah students pursuing education abroad and formally organizing under the *Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah* (PCIM); and second, the migration of Muhammadiyah-affiliated professionals to various global contexts.⁷⁵ These dynamics have facilitated notable forms of upward social and

⁷⁵ Ridho Al-Hamdi, et.al (eds). *Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah: Sejarah dan Dinamika Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah Luar Negeri 2002-2022* (Yogyakarta: Samudera Biru, 2022).

intellectual mobility. One example is Muhammad Ali, now a faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Riverside, who recently authored *Non-Muslim Bisa Masuk Surga: Islam, Keselamatan, dan Etika Antariman* (Non-Muslims Can Enter Heaven: Islam, Salvation, and Interfaith Ethics), published in March 2025.

E. Concluding Remarks

The formation of Muhammadiyah intellectuals at the beginning of the twenty-first century can be attributed to two types of educational institutions. The first group comprises individuals who graduated from *pesantren*. The second consists of those educated within the national school system and higher education institutions. Social and political conditions also contributed to the development of Muhammadiyah intellectuals.

The intellectual contributions of Muhammadiyah scholars manifest in both institutional and individual responses to religious issues. However, identifying a radical and constructive perspective from an institutional standpoint proves challenging. The intellectual discourse presented by Muhammadiyah scholars, whether as researchers or educators in higher education, demonstrates a greater degree of dynamism. Their thought encompasses not only religious themes but also social, political, economic, scientific, and technological aspects. The extensive network of Muhammadiyah charities has led to criticisms that the Islamic thought espoused by Muhammadiyah intellectuals is stagnant. Their focus tends to be directed toward supporting routine and concrete organizational activities, such as humanitarian, social, and educational initiatives. Syafii Maarif's counsel emphasizes the necessity for Muhammadiyah to function as a scientific movement. However, other Muhammadiyah activists argue that it suffices to function as a *da'wa* and *amal* (social) movement. It is therefore essential for Muhammadiyah to reformulate its organizational orientation to achieve a balance between charitable activities and intellectual endeavors.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on the formation and development of Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia. The findings indicate that Islamic organizations, including Muhammadiyah, have played a crucial role in fostering Muslim intellectuals in the nation. Muhammadiyah can thus be considered both a religious and an intellectual movement within the Indonesian context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbas, Megan Brankley, *Whose Islam?: The Western University and Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.
- Abdillah, Masykuri, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals to the Concept of Democracy*, Hamburg: Abera Network, 1997.
- Al-Hamdi, Ridho, "Islam and Politics: Political attitudes of the Elites in Muhammadiyah 1998-2010", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2013, pp. 267-90, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v3i2.267-290>.
- Al-Hamdi, Ridho et al. (eds). *Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah: Sejarah dan Dinamika Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah Luar Negeri 2002-2022*, Yogyakarta: Samudera Biru, 2022.
- Ali, Muhamad, "The Muhammadiyah's 47th Congress and 'Islam Berkemajuan'", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2015, pp. 377-86, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v22i2.1978>.
- Arifin, Syamsul, and Nafik Muthohirin, "The Viewpoint of the Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals towards the Religious Minority Groups in Indonesia", *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2019, pp. 282-305, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2019.9.2.282-305>.
- Arifin, Syamsul, *Implementasi Studi Agama Berbasis Multikultural dalam Pendidikan*, unpublished document.
- Baidhawiy, Zakiyuddin, "The Role of Faith-Based Organization in Coping with Disaster Management and Mitigation Muhammadiyah's Experience", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2015, pp. 167-93, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2015.9.2.167-194>.
- Biyanto, "The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing Its Figures' Thoughts and Exemplary Lives", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2017, pp. 221-49, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v7i2.221-249>.
- "Buku Panduan Munas Tarjih ke XXIII", *unpublished manual*, Banda Aceh: 1995.
- Burhani, Ahmad Najib, "Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2018, pp. 443-70, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i3.7765>.

- Burhanudin, Jajat, "Redefining the Roles of Islamic Organizations in the Reformasi Era", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2010, pp. 403-6, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v17i2.466>.
- Coser, A. Lewis, *Men of Ideas*, New York: London, 1965.
- Fanani, Ahmad Fuad, "Jihad Membumikan Pluralisme, Bersatu Menghadang Fundamentalisme", *workshop paper*, Puncak: Universitas Paramadina, 2007.
- Fauzi, Niki Alma Febriana and Ayub, "Fikih informasi: Muhammadiyah's Perspective on Guidance in Using Social Media", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2019, pp. 267-93, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i2.267-293>.
- Feillard, Andree, *NU vis-à-vis Negara*, Yogyakarta: LkiS, 1999.
- Harry Bhaskara, "Muhammadiyah at 73, Confronts the Challenges of Today, The Jakarta Post, 6 December 1985", in *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentar*, ed. by M. Rusli Karim, Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986.
- Hilmy, Masdar, "Whither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2013, pp. 24-48, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.24-48>.
- HS, Shafiuddin, "The 41st Congress of Muhammadiyah: A Retrospection", in *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentar*, ed. by M. Rusli Karim, Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986.
- Jahar, Asep Saepudin, "Focused Group Discussion (FGD) on the Role of Muslim-Based Organization (MBO) in Contemporary Indonesia", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2010, pp. 577-9, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v17i3.459>.
- Kamal, Musthafa, et al., *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit Persatuan, 1994.
- "Kampus Muhammadiyah Resmi Tambah Jumlah Universitas" *Warta PTM* (Jul 7, 2024), <https://wartaptm.id/kampus-muhammadiyah-resmi-tambah-jumlah-universitas/>, accessed April 20, 2025.
- Kim, Hyung-Jun, "Praxis and Religious Authority in Islam: The Case of Ahmad Dahlan, Founder of Muhammadiyah", *Studia Islamika*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-92, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v17i1.468>.
- Latif, Yudi, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2008.

Khoirun Niam and Syamsul Arifin

- Madjid, Nurcholish, *Pintu-pintu Menuju Tuhan*, Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995.
- Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam, *Tafsir Tematik al-Quran tentang Hubungan Sosial antarumat Beragama*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Suara Muhammadiyah, 2000.
- “Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam”, *unpublished report*, 1996.
- Mughni, Syafiq A., *Muhammadiyah dan Pemikiran Keagamaan*, in *Muhammadiyah Menyongsong Abad 21*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Suara Muhammadiyah, 1998.
- Munawar-Rachman, Budhy, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam Sekularisme, Liberalisme dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia*, Jakarta: LSAF and Paramadina, 2010.
- “Muslim Intellectuals Society of Indonesia”, *Booklet of ICM*.
- Niam, Khoirun, “Nahdlatul Ulama and The Production of Muslim Intellectuals in The Beginning of 21st Century Indonesia”, *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2017, pp. 351-88. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2017.11.2.351-388>.
- Profil 10th Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina*, Jakarta: 1996.
- Profil Muhammadiyah 2000*, Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 2000.
- Ramage, Douglas E., *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, London: Routledge, 1995.
- Rinkes, D. A., “Bescheiden betreffende de Vereeniging Sarekat Islam, Zeer Geheime Missive van den Adviseur voof Inlandsche Zaken aan den Gouverneur-General”, in *The Emergence of the Indonesian Modern Elite*, ed. by Robert van Niel, The Hague and Bandung: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960.
- “Tarjih” *Jurnal Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 2, no.2, 1997.
- van Bruinessen, Martin, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru*, Yogyakarta: LKIS and Pustaka Pelajar, 1994.
- Wahid, Abdurrahman, “Intelektual di Tengah Eksklusivisme”, *Prisma*, no. 3, 1991.
- Wardana, Amika and Syahrul Hidayat, “The Multiplicity of Muhammadiyah’s Political Engagement in Indonesia’s DPD Election”, *Studia Islamika*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2019, pp. 75-111, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v26i1.6422>.