The Dimensions of Leadership in Strengthening and Institutionalising Religious Moderation in Muhammadiyah

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Article	Abstract
	This study focuses on the leadership aspect of Muhammadiyah by emphasising the thoughts and contributions of Haidar Nashir as the Central Board of Muhammadiyah. Therefore, this study relies on written sources, especially those written by Haidar Nashir. Religious moderation is a prominent theme in Indonesia at the end of the second decade of the 2000s. Not only is it the idea of a thinker or intellectual, but it has even become one of the strategic development policies in Indonesia as stated in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM) prepared by the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning/ National Development Planning Agency (PPN/Bappenas), based on Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020. The Ministry of Religion, as the technical ministry in charge of religious life, has published several documents related to religious moderation. As one of the moderate Islamic religious organisations and movements, Muhammadiyah is an interesting subject of study to examine its links and continuity with the idea of religious moderation. Rather than as a normative study in the field of law that uses legislation as primary material, this study seeks to reveal the substantive aspects of the religious moderation policy linked to Muhammadiyah's efforts to strengthen and institutionalise religious moderation in Muhammadiyah. The results of this study will later show that the appearance of Muhammadiyah as a moderate Islamic ideology, organisation, and movement cannot be separated from the figure of the Muhammadiyah leader, who has a strong, moderate character.

INTRODUCTION

Muhammadiyah is one of the examples of religious organisations and movements in Indonesia that can be used as a role model for at least three aspects. First, a critical and contextual understanding of religion. Like Islam in other regions, Islam in Indonesia also develops in a dialectic that Saeed calls unity and diversity (Saeed, 2003). As one of the countries with the largest Muslim population in an archipelago, diversity in various aspects, such as understanding, movements, and religious organisations, is inevitable. Muhammadiyah is one form of manifestation of diversity that is typical of Indonesia, and it has survived and developed for more than a century. One of the factors contributing to Muhammadiyah's survival is the continuous development of religious understanding or Islamic intellectualism (Rudin et al., 2020).

Muhammadiyah emerged as a form of response to stagnation in religion. For Muhammadiyah, Islam is a religion that contains an ethos of change, progress, and siding with the weak. Islam in Indonesia, which has a long history and is embraced by most of its population, in Muhammadiyah's view, has not been able to realise this ethos. Approaching the birth of Muhammadiyah, Muslims in Indonesia were in a state of malaise, as was the condition of Muslims globally, a worrying condition because, as described in *The Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Thought, 1989), Muslims were in a state of being defeated, massacred, double-crossed, colonised, and exploited, proselytised, forced or bribed into conversion to other faiths. Facing this condition, Muhammadiyah responded by developing religious understanding as was done by reconstructionists (Hoodbhoy, 1991), progressive *ijtihadists* (Saeed, 2006), or contextualists (Saeed, 2005, 2008), who attempted to reinterpret a religious text to suit the spirit of modern civilisation, a style of interpretation commonly used by modernist-reformists.

What is interesting about Muhammadiyah is that the understanding constructed especially by Ahmad Dahlan, which can be said to have played a role called "individuals to beget ideas", as Collins said (Collins, 2009), did not stop at discourse but continued to an effort that, if borrowing Kuntowijoyo's expression (Kuntowijoyo, 1997), is called objectification, namely the concretisation of internal religious beliefs and understandings into objective realities, or "social enterprise" (Latief & Nashir, 2020), such as educational and health institutions that can even realise public welfare (Qodir et al., 2021) because non-Muslims can also feel their benefits. As a reform phenomenon, as happened in other regions, for example, Europe, as McGrath's study (McGrath, 1988), Ahmad Dahlan's

thoughts, and thus Muhammadiyah, provided benefits to a social context in which religious understanding was developed.

The ability to objectify beliefs and understanding is the second role model of Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah's ability to establish various institutions, referred to by Muhammadiyah as a social enterprise (*Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah*), can also be a good example of managing various potentials in a modern organisation (Qodir et al., 2020). Kuntowijoyo also added that Muhammadiyah can be used as an example of the success of the Islamic movement in transforming from a communal pattern to an associational pattern (Kuntowijoyo & AE, 2008). With this pattern, Muhammadiyah, Kuntowijoyo emphasised, has expanded the reach of its movement, from what initially developed around Kauman in Yogyakarta, then developing not only on the island of Java but even throughout Indonesia.

Another characteristic of the Islamic movement that uses an associational pattern, according to Kuntowijoyo, is the change in the relationship between leaders and followers, which was originally paternalistic to a democratic relationship (Kuntowijoyo & AE, 2008). Muhammadiyah cannot be separated from and is identical to its founder, Ahmad Dahlan. Ahmad Dahlan is the epicentre of Muhammadiyah, which, with the renewal of his religious understanding, was then objectified into various institutions that benefit society. From its founding until a decade later, 1912-1923, Muhammadiyah was led by Ahmad Dahlan. Since the death of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder and leader of Muhammadiyah, from 1912 to 1923, Muhammadiyah has experienced fifteen changes in leadership. At the 48th Muktamar National Congress in Solo, Haedar Nashir was again trusted as the Central Board of Muhammadiyah for the second term, 2022-2027. The characteristics of Muhammadiyah's modernity can be seen in the regularity of leadership changes, especially at the top level in the Muhammadiyah organisational hierarchy: the Central Board of Muhammadiyah.

This study is based on the thesis that the survival and development of Muhammadiyah has even been able to exceed the age of one century because Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organisation and movement that has a moderate and progressive character; where this character is understood, experienced and lived by all members of the organisation and its leaders. This study then aims to reveal the moderate-progressive leadership character of Muhammadiyah as one of the factors in Muhammadiyah's survival and development for more than a century. Because of the moderate leadership, Muhammadiyah is seen as responsive to various Islamic intellectualist discourses in Indonesia, such as religious moderation.

METHOD

This study examines the strengthening and institutionalisation of religious moderation in Muhammadiyah. The interest in this theme is the policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on religious moderation launched in 2019.

After the policy was issued, religious moderation became an interesting subject of study that inspired academics to conduct further studies and resulted in several publications in various forms, such as books, articles, and posters. In 2024, a book entitled *"Jalan Baru Moderasi Beragama: Mensyukuri 66 Tahun Haedar Nashir"* (The New Way to Religious Moderation: Grateful for 66 Years of Haedar Nashir) was published. Haidar Nashir is the General Chairperson of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah. Haidar Nashir has a scientific reputation, as demonstrated by his productivity in writing, especially on topics related to Muhammadiyah, Islam, and social issues. Among Muhammadiyah, Haidar Nashir has also gained recognition as a Muhammadiyah ideologue. Therefore, this study uses Haidar Nashir's writings as the main source, in addition to several official Muhammadiyah publications, as listed in the bibliography of this article. The collected data were then analysed and presented systematically (Al-Fatih & SIboy, 2021) as follows: study of religious moderation in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah ideology, Muhammadiyah leadership, and Haidar Nashir's views on religious moderation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Text-Context Dimensions of Religious Moderation

The strengthening of the idea of religious moderation, even institutionalised in government policy (include local government), certainly has a background context, namely religious diversity and potential threats that can disrupt the harmony of religious life in Indonesia. Therefore, as shown by these studies, religious moderation is also intended to respond to religious diversity in the internal and external contexts of religious communities. Meanwhile, in the context of Indonesia, which is known for its diversity in various aspects, including religion, Indonesia is considered to have made progress in overcoming ethnic sectarianism that occurred throughout 1995-1998, which shows the progress achieved in improving and stabilising inclusive civilisation (Intan, 2006); however, in relation to religion, according to Hefner (Hefner, 2021b), it has proven to be hesitant, to the point that Indonesia may currently be at an unresolved critical point related to religion, social recognition and citizenship.

Diversity is inevitable, both because it is caused by differences in the way of reading and understanding religious texts, especially those found in the Qur'an and Hadith, and because it is influenced by the geographical and socio-cultural conditions in which Islam is present, grows and develops. Indonesia, which is known as one of the places with the largest Muslim population in the world, according to Denys Lombard's study (Lombard, 1996), is a place where four cultures meet and cross: India, the West, China, and Islam. Specifically on Islam, Lombard reviewed what he called the absorption of Islam in Javanese society based on the stages of Islamisation starting from the north coast to Islam in the countryside (Lombard, 2005). The development of this place of Islamisation, in turn, formed the diversity of Islam, which also reflected the involvement of its adherents in Islamic teachings as portrayed by, for example, Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1976), Robert

W. Hefner (Hefner, 2021a), Mark R. Woodward (Woodward, 1989), and other anthropologists.

In Islam, the idea of tolerance and freedom of religion (Abou-Bakr, 2020; Friedmann, 2003; Leaman, 2016; Masud et al., 2021) is used as a reference for responding to diversity in Islamic society. Meanwhile, in society, a culture of tolerance not only refers to the idea of tolerance but is also formed by cultural wisdom (Setyabudi, 2021). However, there is also a paradox in the religious life of society, including Muslims. In some places, conflicts occur due to various factors (Turmudi, 2021). The conflict can be caused by claims of absolute truth (Kimball, 2002), such as those of followers of Salafism (Morrissey, 2021), which emerged and developed rapidly after the end of the New Order (Hasan, 2006). This understanding and movement, according to Chaplin (Chaplin, 2021), adheres to a textual and rigid understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith. The end of the New Order, on the other hand, is the momentum for the emergence of the role of religion as a public religion, which is shown so articulately and significantly by Islamic circles (Wahid & Makruf, 2017). In this group, according to McCloud (Waines, 2014), Alvian (Alvian, 2019; Lane, 2019), Buchler (Buehler, 2016), and Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2011), there is an awareness of displaying Islamic identity in the form of the establishment of a new Islamic party and the increasing number of women wearing the hijab.

Another articulation is from the Islamist group (Tan, 2012), namely Muslims who believe and want to revive Islam not only in the personal life of believers but also in social and political life (Mura, 2016) as a consequence of a belief in Islam as a perfect religion that offers teachings and solutions to all aspects of life including politics (Burhanuddin & Jamhari, 2006). In the context of Indonesia, those who carry Islamism have beliefs and try to carry out the Islamisation of the country along with the post-New Order democratisation process (Fealy & White, 2008). The ideological orientation of the group that can be called part of this new religious movement, according to Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2014), is not to revive religiosity per se, but according to Hidayat (Hidayat, 2023), deliberately radicalise the movement intending to establish an Islamic state, or in a softer expression, carrying out structural shari'atisation (Nashir, 2007), as shown by Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Arifin, 2021).

The Islamist groups even deliberately use violence to achieve their goals instantly, as done by Jemaah Islamiyah (Azca, 2011; Pringle, 2010)—one of the Salafists in Indonesia founded by Abdullah Sungkar with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir to enforce Islamic law through jihad (Solahudin, 2013). Systematic understanding in such a way, Salafism, like other religious understandings or ideologies, always has the plan to spread to many groups through various instruments, including education, such as the Institute of Islamic Sciences and Arabic Language (LIPIA), as exemplified by Hasan (Hasan, 2020).

Tan's study shows that formal and informal education is an effective medium for indoctrinating people into what he calls totalitarian ideology (Tan, 2012). Tan takes two educational institutions as examples. The Pondok Pesantren Islam al-Mukmin is an

example of formal education. The second example of informal education is Jemaah Islamiyah. According to his observations, in both places, there is deliberate indoctrination to strengthen totalitarian ideology. Indoctrination in Islamic boarding schools involves various elements such as clerics, teachers, curriculum, and school activities, including a hidden curriculum. However, not all students or students are ultimately indoctrinated. Meanwhile, Jemaah Islamiyah, although not a formal educational institution, can indoctrinate someone as an adherent of totalitarian ideology. Tan gives the example of Azahari Husin, a non-Islamic education graduate who met Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in an informal setting. Azahari Husin, in turn, became a combatant and a martyr. The totalistic ideology that Tan means is an extreme understanding that creates a binary-opposition relationship with other parties who disagree. In oneself, the organisation, and its leaders, totalistic ideology, according to Tan, shows an exclusive attitude and obedience, while outside the group is seen as an opponent.

In addition to conventional media, the spread of radical ideology has also undergone radical changes in line with technological developments that have reached the stage of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Schwab, 2017), which creates a reality of life called "life 3.0" by Tegmark with an icon in the form of artificial intelligence (Tegmark, 2018), creating a sensation of infallibility (Harari, 2024), including in religious life. In religious life, AI, according to Harari (Harari, 2024), can interpret a holy book text accurately. This development further impacts life, as indicated by a religious phenomenon called religion outside the God box. According to Robert and Yamane, the way of religion today is not only obtained through "God boxes" such as in churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques but is obtained from "outside the God box", especially through new media connected to the internet. This phenomenon is also called religion online, where information about religion is obtained from various online sources (Roberts & Yamane, 2015). One of the parties who easily access the sources available in the space called Tehrani with cyberspace is teenagers or young people (Tehrani, 2017). According to Sirry's study (Sirry, 2024), this group is vulnerable to being exposed to radical ideology on various social media platforms along with the expansion of the internet network in Indonesia. Based on Sirry's tracking, in 2020 alone, there were 175 million internet users and 160 million social media users. Sirry further stated that teenagers are the age group that most often accesses sites containing radical views and ideologies. Intolerant and radical actions, up to the most crucial stage, namely terrorism, also involve the young generation who are even educated, as shown by Marc Sageman's study referred to by Sirry. The young people Sirry assessed were building a vision of an ideal society are the age group that most often accesses sites containing radical ideology. The subsequent impacts need to be considered and worried about considering that intolerant and radical attitudes and actions, up to the most crucial stage, namely terrorism, also involve young people who are also educated, as in Marc Sageman's study referred to by Sirry. Therefore, actions

to stem the flow of radicalisation or what is called counter-violent extremism (CVE), which involves many parties, are considered urgent.

Moderate Leadership

Entering its second century, Muhammadiyah has recorded many achievements. Regarding social enterprise (*Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah*), Muhammadiyah, which was initially more intense in managing the fields of education, health, philanthropy, and *tabligh*, Muhammadiyah has begun to expand into the hospitality industry. After successfully building the SM Tower in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah has an SM Tower in Berau, East Kalimantan. Recently, Muhammadiyah has been interested in managing mining following the issuance of Government Regulation (PP) No. 25 of 2024, which allows religious mass organisations to manage Special Mining Business Permit Areas under business entities. With this development, Muhammadiyah can also be seen as a corporate phenomenon. In addition to this development, Muhammadiyah's social base has also developed even to the international realm following the establishment of educational institutions such as UMAM (Universiti Muhammadiyah Malaysia) and MAC (Muhammadiyah Australia College) in Melbourne, Australia. It is also important to add its position as a civil society that is still maintained so that Muhammadiyah can carry out its critical function towards the government. On the other hand, it maintains closeness to the government. Several researchers construct the Muhammadiyah-government relationship with the concept of reciprocity-critical.

Two factors that can be put forward as the causes of Muhammadiyah's survival and internal dynamics are ideological and leadership factors. Ideologically, Muhammadiyah emphasises its identity as a socio-religious organisation and movement, maintaining distance from practical political interests; therefore, Muhammadiyah has no agenda at all to change the Pancasila ideology and the state constitution of the 1945 Constitution. The top leadership of Muhammadiyah, since the era of Ahmad Dahlan to Haidar Nashir, has internalised the identity and ideological orientation, which in turn created a moment of moderate leadership in Muhammadiyah. And with that, Muhammadiyah, according to Azca (Azca et al., 2021), can give colour to the articulation of moderate Islam in Indonesia continuously and sustainably.

Leadership is one of the important factors that help determine the colour and direction of an organisation. In leadership, there is managerial authority (Coulter, 2012), which influences the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of others so that they are involved in achieving the organisation's goals (Northouse, 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2018). Muhammadiyah's achievements over more than a century, including Muhammadiyah's consistency as a moderate Islamic organisation and movement, cannot be separated from its leadership factor. There is a negative hypothesis: if Muhammadiyah is not supported by the presence of leaders with strong character, there will be a shift in the orientation of

the Muhammadiyah movement to practical politics from the beginning of its development.

Since its founding in 1912 until now, Muhammadiyah has changed leadership many times. Since 2015, Muhammadiyah's leadership has been under the control of Haidar Nashir. Of all the Central Board of Muhammadiyah and Muhammadiyah leaders in general, Haidar Nashir's leadership has an appeal as a subject of study of religious moderation with the following considerations: first, Haidar Nashir has a serious concern for ideology as one of the fundamental aspects for Muhammadiyah both as an organisation (*jam'iyah*) movement and society (*jamaah*). In Nashir's view (Nashir, 2006b), the existence of an ideology, especially for an organisation as large as Muhammadiyah, has important functions: (1) providing direction and explanation to all elements in Muhammadiyah regarding the understanding of life based on Islam; (2) strengthening collective solidarity especially when facing challenges and threats; (3) forming the character of Muhammadiyah members collectively; (4) becoming a reference for formulating strategies and steps for struggle; (5) facilitating the mobilisation of members, cadres, and leaders to become a force directed towards the goals of a movement. The achievements of Muhammadiyah in various aspects indicate that Muhammadiyah's ideology works effectively. However, the reality is still found even among Muhammadiyah leaders and cadres who do not understand the systematics, content, socio-historical context, and implementation.

Haidar Nashir realised the condition of knowledge and attitudes of Muhammadiyah members towards Muhammadiyah ideology. Haidar Nashir was involved in Muhammadiyah from the beginning and the bottom until he later occupied the top position of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah. His long involvement and struggle in Muhammadiyah not only formed knowledge about Muhammadiyah, especially in the aspect of ideology, in a more genuine, complete, and systematic way, and experienced its "spirit" or essence, even by the editor of the book *"Jalan Baru Moderasi Beragama: Mensyukuri 66 Tahun Haedar Nashir"* (A New Path to Religious Moderation: Grateful for 66 Years of Haedar Nashir) (Haq & Khorudin, 2024), Haidar Nashir was said to be the "ideologist" and "living dictionary" of Muhammadiyah. With the combination of knowledge and experience, coupled with his writing skills, Haidar Nashir succeeded in systematically reconstructing along with an explanation of the historical background of each ideological document produced in a certain time context. Haidar Nashir has produced written works including; (1) *Ideologi Gerakan Muhammadiyah* (Ideology of the Muhammadiyah Movement [2001]); (2) *Islam & Perilaku Umat di Tengah Perubahan* (Islam & the Behaviour of the People in the Midst of Change [2002]); (3) *Manifestati Gerakan Tarbiyah: Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah?* (Manifestation of the Tarbiyah Movement: How is Muhammadiyah's Attitude? [2006]); (4) Meneguhkan Ideologi Gerakan Muhammadiyah (Strengthening the Ideology of the Muhammadiyah Movement [2006]) (5) *Kristalisasi Ideologi & Komitmen Bermuhammadiyah* (Crystallization of Ideology & Commitment to

Muhammadiyah [2007]); (6)*Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (Muhammadiyah Renewal Movement [2010]); (7) *Muhammadiyah Abad Kedua* (Muhammadiyah's Second Century [2011]); (8) *Ibrah Kehidupan: Sosiologi Makna untuk Pencerahan Diri* (Ibrah of Life: Sociology of Meaning for Self-Enlightenment [2013]); (9) M*emahami Ideologi Muhammadiyah* (Understanding Muhammadiyah's Ideology [2014]) (10) *Islam Agama Pencerahan* Islam (Islam: The Religion of Enlightenment [2017]); (11) *Kuliah Kemuhammadiyahan Jilid I & II* (Muhammadiyah Lectures Volume I & II [2020]); (12) *Indonesia dan Keindonesiaan: Perspektif Sosiologis* (Indonesia and Indonesianness: A Sociological Perspective [2019]); (13) *Agama, Demokrasi dan Politik Kekerasan* Religion (Democracy and Violent Politics [2021]); (14) *Indonesia: Ideologi dan Martabat Pemimpin Bangsa* (Indonesia: Ideology and the Dignity of National Leaders [2022]).

A systematic reconstruction of Muhammadiyah ideology is outlined in the book "*Memahami Ideologi Muhammadiyah* (Understanding Muhammadiyah Ideology). Muhammadiyah leaders before Haidar Nashir also produced many works published by national publishers, such as Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif and M. Amin Rais. However, among other Muhammadiyah leaders, especially the latter, Haidar Nashir's attention and thoughts on ideological issues in Muhammadiyah appear more intellectually articulate, as can be read in at least the following five books: *"Meneguhkan Ideologi Gerakan Muhammadiyah"* (Strengthening the Ideology of the Muhammadiyah Movement); "*Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah: Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah*?" (Manifestation of the Tarbiyah Movement: What is Muhammadiyah's Attitude?); "*Kristalisasi Ideologi & Komitmen Bermuhammadiyah*" (Crystallization of Ideology & Commitment to Muhammadiyah; "*Muhammadiyah Abad Kedua*" (Muhammadiyah's Second Century); and "*Memahami Ideologi Muhammadiyah* (Understanding Muhammadiyah Ideology). The productivity of writing, especially that which intersects with Muhammadiyah ideology, is the second consideration when choosing Haidar Nashir as this section's main subject of discussion. Moreover, an anthology entitled *"Jalan Baru Moderasi Beragama: Mensyukuri 66 Tahun Haedar Nashir"* (A New Path to Religious Moderation: Grateful for 66 Years of Haedar Nashir) has just been launched.

The emphasis on religious moderation, especially on the new path, reflects Haidar Nashir's broad-dimensional thinking. This recognition is evident in the contributions of authors in the anthology, many of whom are not exclusively from a Muhammadiyah background. In the broader discourse on religious moderation, Haidar Nashir's ideas influence Muhammadiyah and propose a new path to religion. According to the editor of the book *"Jalan Baru Moderasi Beragama: Mensyukuri 66 Tahun Haedar Nashir"* (A New Path to Religious Moderation: Grateful for 66 Years of Haedar Nashir), this path has distinct characteristics and differs significantly from the government's concept of religious moderation. This concept developed by Haidar Nashir is combined with the characteristics of Muhammadiyah as a reformist, modernist, and progressive movement. *"Mr. Haidar's religious moderation,"* explained Ul Haq and Khoirudin (Haq & Khorudin,

2024), *"is 'Moderate-Reformist,' 'Moderate-Modernist,' or 'Progressive Moderate' because it accepts modernity." "Moderation,"* he continued, *"is not only about religion but moderation of the institutions of life in the nation and state to become advanced."*

How did Haidar Nashir arrive at such a construction? There are at least six interrelated factors: understanding of Islam, the fact that he was involved in and struggled with Muhammadiyah from a young age until he was trusted as the General Chairperson of PP Muhammadiyah, a deep and critical understanding of the socio-religious conditions in Indonesia, scholarships obtained in the field of sociology, the religiosity of their parents that influenced him to study at madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools in addition to studying at public schools, and the fact that he has experience in journalism as a reporter and opinion writer for many leading newspapers. These six interwoven factors formed Haidar Nasir's intellectual character and significantly influenced Muhammadiyah, including what Latief called post-puritanism (Latief, 2017). The embedding of this concept is based on the dynamics of Muhammadiyah's thinking under the leadership of three Muhammadiyah figures: Muhammad Amien Rais, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Muhammad Sirajuddin Syamsuddin, and continuing Haidar Nashir, which produced dynamic and progressive thoughts, so that even though it continues to carry out the role of purification and ideological strengthening internally, when it is at the end of a century and starting to enter the second century, Muhammad is seen as dynamic and progressive in responding to changes in the times.

Muhammadiyah's ability to go beyond its puritanical attitude, unlike other Islamic movements that, because of their puritanism, actually fall into extremism that tends to be confrontational-reactionary (*lil mu'aradhah*)—a phase that Haidar Nashir often utters—and is even familiar with the use of violence. Muhammadiyah is used as a role model in a moderate and progressive Islamic movement. In this context, Haidar Nashir plays a significant role. Haidar Nashir's way of developing moderation in Muhammadiyah seems to follow the logic of social construction theory. First, Haidar Nashir poured out the results of his reading and understanding of the texts in the Qur'an and Hadith. There are many verses and hadiths that Haidar Nashir refers to as the basis and theological justification for moderation, rather than limited to religious moderation, but as Permata stated (Haq & Khorudin, 2024), it also includes moderation in the political field, including QS. al-Baqarah verses 143, 201-202; QS. Luqman verse 32; QS. al-Maidah verse 66; QS. An-Nahl verse 9; QS. at-Taubah verse 42; QS. al-Furqan verse 67; QS. al-Qashas verse 77; QS. al-Anbiya verse 107; QS. Ali Imran verse 110; QS. al-Alaq verses 1-5; QS. ar-Ra"du verse 11; and QS. al-Hasyr verse 18. Nashir states these verses provide legitimacy for constructing what he calls *wasathiyah* Islam (Nashir, 2021).

Islam *wasathiyah*, in Nashir's view, is not just a claim and rhetoric but must be internalised into an ethic and ethos that, in turn, realises progressive Islam. Therefore, the normative-theological reconstruction of moderation is not only based on the letter of al-Baqarah verse 143 but is complemented and linked to other verses that have implications

for forming an ethos and reality of progressive Islam. Haidar Nashir deliberately emphasises these ethics and ethos because moderation tends to be directed to become a single discourse of certain groups, in addition to being more emphasised on the religious aspect alone. As an ethical framework, moderation, according to Nashir (Nashir, 2021), requires the elegance of morals (noble morals), namely an open, tolerant, peaceful attitude, willing to collaborate in the field of muamalah based on the principle of *makruf*, while still adhering to the faith and worship in Islam.

This ethical behaviour, Nashir explained, must be followed up with an ethos to realise progressive Islam. Therefore, Nashir also quoted verses other than QS. al-Baqarah verse 144, such as QS. al-Hasyr verse 18, QS. ar-Ra'du verse 11, and QS. Al-Imran verse 110 to strengthen and expand the scope of moderation, as *ummatan wasathan*, which Nashir quoted from QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143. Nashir emphasised that Muslims must imagine being a superior *ummah* and realised it as the meaning contained—at least according to Nashir's understanding—in QS. Al-Imran verse 110; QS. al-Anbiya verse 107; and QS. al-Hasyr verse 18. *Ummatan wasathan*, or a middle *ummah* strengthened by progressive Islam, in Nashir's imagination culminates in realising an enlightened human life (Nashir, 2021). For Nashir, enlightened reality is not just discourse and rhetorical expressions (Nashir, 2017). Nashir, who was referred to by several contributors to the book *"Jalan Baru Moderasi Beragama: Mensyukuri 66 Tahun Haedar Nashir"* (A New Path to Religious Moderation: Grateful for 66 Years of Haedar Nashir) as the ideologue of Muhammadiyah, has faith in the realisation of an enlightened reality because it has indeed been a commitment and spirit for Muhammadiyah since its inception during the time of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah who is known as the figure of "The Enlightener."

Muhammadiyah's commitment to realising an enlightened reality, according to Nashir (Nashir, 2011), has been proven by carrying out the following movements: (1) renewing religious understanding; (2) reforming the Islamic education system; (3) developing social service institutions and community empowerment based on the General Misery Relief; (4) advancing the role of Muslim women (Aisyiyah) in the public sphere; (5) organising zakat and hajj; (6) pioneering library parks and publications; and (7) intelligent tabligh. By emphasising enlightenment, Nashir wants to affirm Muhammadiyah's mission, which, like the mission of the prophets, Muhammadiyah also has a prophetic mission, namely to bring humanity out of all forms of darkness (ignorance) towards the guidance (path and teachings) of Allah, brightly shining as stated in QS. al-Baqarah verse 257 (Nashir, 2017).

The firmness of the principles in the fundamental aspects, being demanded to be open, is also reflected in Nashir's critical attitude and vigilance towards religious movements and ideologies, including radical Islam and carrying practical agendas, especially those indicated to penetrate and infiltrate Muhammadiyah, such as Muhammadiyah's experience in facing the Tarbiyah movement (Nashir, 2006a). This phenomenon for some elites and Muhammadiyah members is reminiscent of the

emergence of *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah's Personality), the result of the 35th Muktamar National Congress in 1962, known as the Half Century Muktamar National Congress during the leadership of Yunus Anis (1952-1962). Regarding the year of its birth means two years after the dissolution of Masyumi by Sukarno. Masyumi needs to be used as one of the important variables in understanding *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah's Personality) because, according to Nashir (Nashir, 2006b), the background of its birth—*asbab ad-dhuhur*, a phrase used by Nashir—was the large number of Muhammadiyah members in Masyumi who were too deep which resulted in the neglect of Muhammadiyah's da'wah work including its social enterprise.

For certain circles in Muhammadiyah, involvement in Masyumi proved to have a negative effect, so in the Tanwir National Meeting in Kaliurang in 1956, the idea arose to withdraw and leave Masyumi, but it did not happen. After the dissolution of Masyumi, concerns arose about the influence of the nature and practical political methods being carried over into Muhammadiyah, which was not a practical political entity. So, as a mitigation, the Muhammadiyah Personality was issued. According to Permata, the Tarbiyah movement, the parent of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), was an incident for Muhammadiyah (Permata, 2004). If it had not reached that stage, the Central Board of Muhammadiyah Decree Number 149 of 2007 would not have appeared. According to Permata, Haidar Nashir had a key role in the emergence of this decree. It is said that the infiltration of the Tarbiyah Movement and other radical religious groups has had a significant impact on Muhammadiyah, creating shockwaves and "casualties" among its progressive figures who have been dedicated to Muhammadiyah and have strong roots in certain segments. For example, Permata highlights the following case: during the 45th Muhammadiyah Congress in Malang, progressive leaders like M. Amin Abdullah and Abdul Munir Mulkhan were sidelined in the leadership election. Meanwhile, conservative figures with limited roots in Muhammadiyah, such as Adian Husaini, Hidayat Nur Wahid, and Bachtiar Nasir, secured positions in the central leadership. According to Burhani (Assyaukanie, 2013), the National Muktamar Meeting marked a conservative shift in Muhammadiyah, driven by the growing influence of conservative or purist Islamic groups within the organisation (Permata, 2004).

The second example from Permata is the resignation of a number of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah (NA) leaders in Bantul after being infiltrated by the Tarbiyah movement and becoming members, activists and cadres of PKS (Permata, 2004). The next (third) example is the transfer of management and ownership of the al-Muttaqun Mosque, which was originally managed by family members affiliated with Muhammadiyah, including the parents of Hidayat Nur Wahid, a PKS figure and member of the Dakwah Council. However, after the earthquake in Yogyakarta, it was completely transferred to the al-Muttaqun Foundation and chaired by Hidayat Nur Wahid. According to Permata (Permata, 2004), this transfer resulted in Muhammadiyah losing not only the mosque and its associated kindergarten but also its influence and mass base. The decree mentioned

above, in which Haidar Nashir played an important role, aimed to stop the infiltration and penetration of the Tarbiyah Movement based on the consideration that Muhammadiyah would not be contaminated by practical political methods as one of the considerations for the issuance of the *Kepribadian Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah Personality), in addition to the intention to ensure the loyalty and commitment of cadres to Muhammadiyah. After the issuance of the Muhammadiyah decision, known as the Organisational Consolidation Decree, four months later, a Tanwir National Meeting was held in Yogyakarta on 26-29 April 2007 with the theme *"Strengthening and Enlightening the Movement for National Progress"* (Haq & Khorudin, 2024).

With a long history, Muhammadiyah has many social enterprises as a means to realise its ideals. However, as is the general phenomenon of an organisation that Kasali calls an organism or living creature (Kasali, 2007), challenges and threats of decline always exist, leading to paralysis or even death; therefore, according to Kasali (Kasali, 2006), change is a must to ensure that the organisation continues to develop. However, Muhammadiyah cannot avoid this natural evolutionary phenomenon. As a person who has been involved for so long and is rooted in Muhammadiyah, Nashir has captured phenomena within Muhammadiyah that have the potential to threaten the sustainability of Muhammadiyah, such as the weakening of spirit, commitment, and call to action, weakening of collective consciousness; and the interest, especially among young Muhammadiyah people, in new religious beliefs that encourage them to "hijrah" (migrate) (Nashir, 2001). Facing these problems and challenges, Muhammadiyah responded by re-injecting enthusiasm through revitalising ideology, affirming, and actualising the ethos that has been proven to guarantee the sustainability of Muhammadiyah.

Three documents are also an important part of the systematic ideology of Muhammadiyah as a form of response to the problems and obstacles faced by Muhammadiyah: *"Pernyataan Pikiran Muhammadiyah Jelang Satu Abad"* (Statement of Muhammadiyah Thoughts Approaching One Century), the result of the 45th Muktamar National Congress in Malang, and *"Revitalisasi Ideologi Muhammadiyah: Konsolidasi Bidang Keyakinan dan Cita-cita Hidup"* (Revitalisation of Muhammadiyah Ideology: Consolidation of Beliefs and Life Aspirations), the decision at the 2007 Tanwir National Meeting in Yogyakarta; and RIB or *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (A Treatise on Progressive Islam), the result of the 48th Muktamar National Congress in Surakarta. In the first two documents, there is a connection between internal and external conditions and challenges that require Muhammadiyah to revitalise its ideology, thereby allowing Muhammadiyah members to keep maintaining the vital elan in advancing Muhammadiyah. The same spirit is also found in RIB. Summarising Haidar Nashir's thoughts spread across several documents, including Understanding Muhammadiyah Ideology, Insight, and Movement Agenda, which were delivered in the Ideopolitor Dialogue (Ideology, Politics, and Organization) of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership at Ahmad Dahlan University on May 6-7, 2023, it can be concluded as follows (Nashir, 2023): (1) The substance of RIB thought is rooted

in and is a continuation of the spirit, values, and thoughts of Ahmad Dahlan; (2) Progressive Islam, both as mentioned in the *Pernyataan Pikiran Muhammadiyah Jelang Satu Abad* (Muhammadiyah Statement of Thoughts Approaching One Century), and as contained in the RIB, is a reaffirmation and reactualisation of the 1912 Muhammadiyah Statute which contains the word "advancing"; (3) Progressive Islam is a reaffirmation of Muhammadiyah's religious view that Islam is a *deen al-hadharah*—a religion that contains progressive values to realise an increasingly enlightened human life; (4) Progressive Islam is a reaffirmation of the spirit of Muhammadiyah's *tajdid* which contains the meaning, besides purification, and the development or dynamism of life in various aspects to demonstrate: *al-Islam at-Taqaddumi*; *al-Islam al-Hadhari*, and Islamic Progressivism.

In the three documents, Muhammadiyah's view on moderation is also mentioned. Even in RIB, in the section on Progressive Islamic Characteristics, there is a formulation called the Five Characteristics (*al-Khasha'ishu al-Khamsu*), including: (1) Based on Tawhid (*al-Mabni 'ala al-Tauhid*); (2) Based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah (*al-Ruju' ila al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*); (3) Bringing *Ijtihad* and *Tajdid* to Life (*Ihya' al-Ijtihad wa al-Tajdid*); (4) Developing *Wasathiyah* (*Tanmiyat al-Wasathiyah*); and (5) Realising Blessings for All Nature (*Tahqiq al-Rahmah lil-'Alamin*). Specifically, point four, which is related to moderation or *wasathiyah*, contains the following statement:

> *The Qur'an states that Muslims are ummatan wasathan (middle people), which means superior and upright. Islam itself is a wasathiyah (middle) religion, which rejects extremism in religion and social attitudes, both in the form of excessive attitudes (ghuluww) and attitudes of neglect (tafrith). Wasathiyah also means a middle position between two poles: ultra-conservatism and ultra-liberalism in religion. In line with that, wasathiyah demands a balanced attitude (tawazun) between individual and social life, physical and spiritual, and worldly and hereafter. Wasathiyah does not lead to tolerance of political secularism and moral permissiveness. Because Islam is a wasathiyah religion, it must be a prominent characteristic in the thinking and behaviour of Muslims. Wasathiyah is manifested in social attitudes: (1) firm in stance, broad in insight, and flexible in attitude; (2) respecting differences in views or opinions; (3) rejecting blasphemy against fellow Muslims; (4) advancing and encouraging society; (5) understanding reality and priorities; (6) avoiding excessive fanaticism towards certain religious groups or beliefs; and (7) facilitating the implementation of religious teachings* (Muhammadiyah, 2022).

For those with experience in Muhammadiyah studies and involvement in Muhammadiyah, the content of the Five Characteristics is nothing new. The narrative in the Five Characteristics and other parts of the RIB, such as Manhaj of Progressive Islam, Progressive Islamic Movement, and Progressive Islamic Cultivation, can be traced in terms of connection and continuity with the thoughts and official documents that Muhammadiyah has produced in previous periods. For example, the view on moderation, in the section Developing *Wasathiyah*, Muhammadiyah reaffirms its identity and attitude towards moderation or *wasathiyah*. As a continuation of Muhammadiyah's religious view that Islam and Muslims are a middle religion and ummatan wasathan, Muhammadiyah

declares its rejection of excessive religious attitudes (*ghuluw*) that have the potential to lead to extreme attitudes and actions. The same attitude is also directed towards tafrith religiosity, which tends to simplify religious matters and can lead someone to ultra-liberalism. The official thinking of Muhammadiyah, as stated in RIB, is also reflected in the thinking of Haidar Nashir. In *Indonesia dan Keindonesiaan: Perspektif Sosiologis* (Indonesia and Indonesianness: Sociological Perspective) (Nashir, 2019). Nashir explains the attitude of moderates that must be shown, namely, "avoiding all forms of radicalism that lead to absolute understanding and contain extremism, intolerance, and violence regarding all matters concerning human life and nationality."

Complex and in-depth academic attention and thoughts related to moderation were conveyed by Haidar Nashir in his inaugural speech as a professor of sociology of religion at the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) on December 12, 2019, entitled *Moderasi Indonesia dan Keindonesiaan: Perspektif Sosiologi* (Indonesian Moderation and Indonesianness: Sociological Perspective) (Nashir, 2019). There are two important points that Haidar Nashir aims to reconstruct in this section of his speech: the background underlying the choice of the topic of moderation and the offer of moderation in the context of Indonesia. Haidar Nashir's ideas on these two points are linked in terms of time to religious moderation from the government. 2019 is a "year of moderation," both in the national and international contexts. At the international level, 2019 is referred to as the International Year of Moderation (IYM 2019) based on the resolution produced at the UN General Assembly session (Bagir & Sormin, 2022). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Religion published the book Religious Moderation and other supporting books related to religious moderation in the same year.

According to the government, anti-violence is one of the four indicators of religious moderation. The social context underlying this indicator is the understanding and movement of religious radicalism, one of the religious trends that emerged in Indonesia after the New Order. In *Moderasi Beragama* (Religious Moderation), it is stated that the core of radicalism is the attitude and actions of a person or a certain group that uses violent methods to carry out the desired change (Ri, 2019). At the beginning of the manuscript, delivered at the inauguration ceremony as a professor in the field of sociology of religion, there is a typical statement as a sociologist, "Religious radicalism, including in a small group of Muslims, is certainly a real social fact" (Suharto, 2019). By saying it as a social fact that reminds us of Emile Durkheim as the originator of the concept of social facts, radicalism is an undeniable fact or reality. Several studies, such as those conducted by Solahuddin (Solahuddin & McRae, 2013), Barton, Vergani, and Wahid (Wildan, 2022), Azca (Azca, 2011), Arifin (Arifin, 2021), including those conducted by Nashir (Nashir, 2007), reveal the emergence of understanding and movements of radicalism after the New Order. In addition to emphasising that radicalism is a social fact, Nashir emphasised the universality of the phenomenon of radicalism, which can also be found in all religions (Suharto, 2019), as also emphasised by Shepard (Shepard, 2014), that radicalism, including

that which leads to violence and terrorism, is not only limited to Muslims but is also carried out by other groups such as the Tamil Tigers. One concern with radicalism is the use of violence to achieve its goals. Because the impact of the use of violence, such as acts of terror, is so terrible, Haidar Nashir even calls it an act categorised as *fasad fil ardi* or causing earth damage, as revealed in several verses of the Qur'an.

To stem radicalism, Haidar Nashir has the same view as the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In his view, religious moderation is a constructive step as a mainstream in national life and building Indonesia. What is more interesting about Haidar Nashir is his inclusive view that moderation, including religious life, cannot be claimed to be the concern of a particular religion, including Islam, which already has the concept of *ummatan wasathan*. In Haidar Nashir's view, moderation is a universal idea found in other religions and traditions (Juergensmeyer, 2023). For Haidar Nashir, moderation in a broader context, not only religion, is a mere continuation of the moderate character of Indonesian society, which is reflected and crystallised in Pancasila. Therefore, Pancasila is seen by Haidar Nashir as a common denominator or meeting point for various currents of Indonesianness (Juergensmeyer, 2023). Pancasila for Haedar Nashir can thus be developed as a philosophical-ethical basis for developing what he calls "Indonesian moderation."

> *The right to life, the right to not to be tortured, the right to freedom of the individual, to freedom of thought and conscience, the right not to be enslaved, the right to be acknowledged as an individual before the law, and the right not to be prosecuted retroactively under the law are human rights that cannot be diminished under any circumstances whatsoever.*

CONCLUSION

This article has presented data that shows Muhammadiyah's commitment to strengthening the understanding and action of moderation in Indonesia. Based on the history and leadership of Muhammadiyah, it is undeniable that Muhammadiyah is a role model for moderate Islamic organisations and movements *par excellence* in Indonesia. Moderatism in Muhammadiyah is an important factor that has made Muhammadiyah continue to grow beyond its age of more than a century. Muhammadiyah's consistency in taking a moderate path throughout its history cannot be separated from its main leadership factor at the top leadership level, called the Central Board of Muhammadiyah. Since its inception, Muhammadiyah has experienced fifteen changes in top leadership. Currently (2022-2027), Muhammadiyah is led by Haidar Nashir. Among the previous Muhammadiyah leaders (Ahmad Dahlan-Muhammad Sirajuddin Syamsuddin), Haidar Nashir has a uniqueness. In addition to being an activist, a true cadre, and an academic with a talent for writing, as well as a productive writer, internal Muhammadiyah circles even dubbed Haidar Nashir as the "ideologist" of Muhammadiyah because of his ability to systematically reconstruct and strengthen and develop Muhammadiyah ideology in a moderate direction. The strengthening of Muhammadiyah's moderation can be seen in the oration of the professor in the field of sociology of religion. In the Haidar Nashir era,

the internationalisation of Muhammadiyah began to be realised through education, as shown by the establishment of the Universiti Muhammadiyah Malaysia (UMAM), in Perlis, Malaysia and Muhammadiyah Australia College (MAC), in Melbourne, Australia. These two educational institutions are agents for the dissemination or export of moderate Islam ala Muhammadiyah, in addition to other institutions or charitable efforts owned by Muhammadiyah that have acted as agents of moderate Islam.

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