

The double-edged sword of Islamic reform: Muhammadiyah and the dilemma of *tajdid* within Indonesian Islam

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Abstract: This paper seeks to analyse how Muhammadiyah, a modernist Muslim organisation in Indonesia, is facing a dilemma in its vision of reform. Tajdid, Muhammadiyah's key intellectual concept of reform, implies two visions: progressivism and conservatism. On the one hand, Muhammadiyah uses tajdid as a means of modernising society by maximising the use of rationalism in order to achieve progress. The slogan, 'directly return to the Qur'an and Sunnah', can be used to criticise the stagnant condition of Muslims in the country, especially during the early stages of its development, due to their reliance on classical texts, rather than the Qur'an and Sunnah, in intellectual activities. On the other hand, this slogan risks exposure to conservatism. The purificationist vision contained in the slogan can lead to a regressive interpretation of Islam. It is Muhammadiyah's engagement with social movements and civil society that prevents it supporting the ideology of radical Islamism.

In the landscape of Indonesian Islam, Muhammadiyah represents the hallmark of Islamic reformism which accommodates modernity. With more than 25 million members and followers, Muhammadiyah has played, and still plays, an integral role in the making of moderate Indonesian Islam.¹ This organisation has introduced a new paradigm in understanding religion in a modern mode. Muhammadiyah can be justly regarded as a modernist organisation (Noer 1973:73; Alfian 1969; Jainuri 2002). In putting its reformist vision, Muhammadiyah bases its theological arguments for modernity on the Qur'an and Sunnah, the two basic sources in Islam. Unlike the traditionalist movement

represented by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) which emphasises the opinions of classical scholars (*ulama*), Muhammadiyah relies on the textual arguments spelled out in the original sources.

Muhammadiyah has translated the ideology of reform into action by establishing PKU (Penolong Kesengsaraan Ummat, literally, the helper of the community's misery). This division is responsible for building schools, orphanages and hospitals under the management of the organisation. According to Asyari (2007:21), Muhammadiyah controls 4762 private educational institutions around the country, ranging from kindergartens to universities. In addition, Muhammadiyah also controls 315 hospitals and health clinics, 240 orphanages, 1026 financial institutions including banks, insurance providers and cooperatives, as well as thousands of prayer houses such as mosques, *musholla* or *langgar* (small religious building) and the like. Those institutions undoubtedly serve as social capital in the intimate relationship between Muhammadiyah and the nation-state, with particular reference to a modern and rational mode of religiosity. This implies that being religious does not mean that one should disengage from modern values.

Founded by Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta on 18 November 1912, as Nakamura (2012:53) argues, Muhammadiyah is a modern organisation in the Weberian sense, in that it adopts modern life style and culture, as well as a rational understanding of religion. The emergence of Muhammadiyah was stimulated by the widespread backwardness of Muslims at that time, including Indonesian Muslims, due to the co-optation of non-Islamic values such as myth, innovation, and syncretism (TBC — *Takbayul*, *Bid'ah* and *Churafat*) within the body of Islam. Muslims had also been left behind because they neglected the mastery of the secular sciences which had been the key to success for the West. In this context, Muhammadiyah believes that the only way to achieve the glory of Islam is by promoting a reform movement among Muslims, that is, by returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only authentic sources in Islam.

This paper explores the extent to which Muhammadiyah is facing the dilemma of reform (*tajdid*, Ar.); this leads in two directions: progressivism and conservatism. It starts by presenting contemporary

issues within Muhammadiyah in regard to the rise of radical groups, followed by a description of how *ijtihad* (Ar., intellectual exercises) is institutionalised in Muhammadiyah and a discussion of how the bifurcation of *tajdid* leads to purification and reform. The theoretical argument developed throughout is that *tajdid* can serve as a double-edged sword in the configuration of Muhammadiyah's thought and this brings about a complex interplay between the idea of purification and the idea of progress. It is Muhammadiyah's engagement with social works and civil society that prevents it from supporting the ideology of radical Islamism.

The emergence of radical groups

As Shihab (1998) maintains, the emergence of Muhammadiyah cannot be separated from the activities of Christian missionaries. Since the beginning, this organisation has taken anti-Christian activities very seriously as one of its policies by, among other things, providing social and economic help for Muslims, as well as through anti-Christian polemics. Muhammadiyah has been, and still is, the consistent guardian of the faith of Muslim community. Muhammadiyah is also of the opinion that Christianisation is a threat to the Islamic community and, therefore, must be resisted through systematic defence. According to Steenbrink (1999:289), defence against Christian missions is a characteristic of most Islamic reformist movements, including Muhammadiyah. The uncompromising stance against the Christian missionaries is been shown, for instance, by one of its leaders, Haji Fachroeddin, who wrote a pamphlet in 1934 opposing Christian missionary activities and appealing for sympathy from the wider Muslim community (Federspiel 1996:135).

Theologically speaking, the founding of Muhammadiyah by Dahlan was inspired by a particular verse of the Qur'an that says: 'Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones' (Qur'an 3:104). This verse has served as one of the mottos of Muhammadiyah which sees itself as a community dedicated to calling for what is good and forbidding what is wrong (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*) (Qur'an 3:110). The verse also functions as a theological foundation for Muhammadiyah in

building the concept of a propagation (*dakwah*) movement thoroughly, and it forms the formal identity of the organisation among the configuration of Islamic organisations in Indonesia.

Entering into its second century, Muhammadiyah is facing some serious challenges as a result of its interaction with contemporary political issues on the global stage, especially in regards relations between the West and Islam in the post-September 11 era. One of its challenges can be seen in the emergence of radical Islamist ideology among Muhammadiyah members and followers. This seems to justify the claim that there is an internal tension between two streams of thought, namely radical versus moderate (not necessarily liberal), as acknowledged by the younger generation such as Pradana Boy, Zuly Qodir, Hilman Latief and others. They cannot deny that there is indeed an ideological contest within Muhammadiyah between the moderate group and a radical one, especially in response to the issue of the global war on terror launched by the United States and its allies, as well as in regard to the 2002 Bali bombing.

The position of Muhammadiyah in regard to the emergence of radical ideology cannot be disassociated from the activities of several jihadist groups with Muhammadiyah background. Even though such juxtaposition does not necessarily imply a direct link between the organisation and radical ideology, it is not easy for Muhammadiyah to neutralise the stigma of being part of radical Islamism. If one views the situation in an uncritical manner, ample ideological connection between the two seems to be an unavoidable conclusion. Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, for instance, were the members of Muhammadiyah before founding the Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI), the most targeted clandestine organisation alleged to be responsible for a series of violent acts in post-New Order Indonesia, especially the 2002 Bali bombing. Both men were indeed active in Muhammadiyah, but then dropped their membership from this organisation soon after they found out that Muhammadiyah no longer accommodated their fundamental beliefs. The perpetrators of the 2002 Bali Bombing such as Imam Samudera and the family of Lamongan bombers (Imam Mukhlas, Amrozi and Ali Imron) also had a Muhammadiyah background (ICG 2002).

The fact that they are of Muhammadiyah background is indisputable. Pointing the finger of blame to Muhammadiyah institutionally, however, as the factor behind the emergence of radical Islamist ideology in Indonesia is not only inappropriate, but also academically misleading. While it has to be admitted that such radical Islamists as Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir had once been members of Muhammadiyah, they had already given up their membership of the organisation upon becoming disillusioned with its moderate vision. The involvement of some radical Islamists with Muhammadiyah background in some violent acts, therefore, does not inevitably lead to a conclusion that this organisation serves as a hotbed for the birth and growth of radical Islamism.

Scrutinising Muhammadiyah through the lens of radical Islamist ideology can lead to an impression that there is a relationship between the two. Zuly Qodir (2010:55), for instance, has admitted that within the past decade Muhammadiyah has been infiltrated by Wahhabi, Salafi and Neo-Wahhabi ideology that has caused the moderate theology of Muhammadiyah to become more puritanical and opposed to local culture. He maintains that Muhammadiyah has served as an 'abandoned reservoir' that accommodated the clandestine Islamists who hid from political pressure during the New Order regime and then found room for expression in the post-New Order era. In Qodir's argument, such people make best use of the established structures, facilities and widespread networks of Muhammadiyah across the country to campaign for their radical ideology. As a consequence, it is not by accident that some of the Muhammadiyah members have sympathised with the Islamist ideology and have given room for the Islamists to be involved in the organisation. They share with one another some foundational values such as the doctrine of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah, the doctrine of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (Ar., calling for what is good and forbidding what is wrong), and their resistance to the emergence of liberal Islamic thought as proposed by some progressive younger Muhammadiyah activists.

Another view of the rise of the Wahhabi-like ideology within Muhammadiyah comes from Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif (2009:40), the former chairman of Muhammadiyah. He assumes that in several places

Muhammadiyah shares its theological standpoint with the Wahhabi-puritan ideology. For example, Muhammadiyah forbids its members visiting the saints' tombs. This is so that its members and followers do not fall into polytheism (*shirk*) which is forbidden (*haram*) in Islam. He admits that this strategy of purification is intended to help Muhammadiyah by safeguarding its members from polytheism, but the doctrine is disadvantageous for Muhammadiyah because it can jeopardise the preservation of historical and cultural sites that should be protected.

In response to the accusation of a relationship between Muhammadiyah and Wahhabi ideology, the periodical *Suara Muhammadiyah*, in collaboration with Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, conducted a seminar on 10 December 2011. The papers presented in the seminar were published as *Muhammadiyah dan Wahhabisme: Mengurai Titik Temu dan Titik Seteru* (Muhammadiyah and Wahhabism: Scrutinising the Meeting Points and Dissenting Points).² Jainuri (2012:5), one of its contributors of the book, admits that Muhammadiyah shares a similar theological standpoint with Wahhabism in terms of anti-superstition, anti-innovation, and anti-associationism. Muhammadiyah also shares with Wahhabism the doctrine of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This similarity, nevertheless, does not necessarily mean that both are identical. Jainuri argues instead that they are different from each another. Each has its own socio-historical context that contributes to the making of its tradition and these are different from each other.

Amin Abdullah (2012:132), in the epilogue of the book, cannot deny the fact that Muhammadiyah has some characteristics similar to those belong to Wahhabism. The purificationist vision is among the most obvious characteristic possessed by each of them. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah has its own tradition which was constructed, nurtured and developed on the basis of a different socio-political context from that of Wahhabism. Among the differences are as follows: while Muhammadiyah builds schools and universities, Wahhabism does not; while Muhammadiyah builds clinics, health centers and orphanages, Wahhabism does not; while Muhammadiyah protects and accommodates women to participate more actively in

public sphere, Wahhabism does not; while Wahhabism cohabits with the state power structure, Muhammadiyah does not.

In regards to the criticisms addressed to Muhammadiyah, Amin Abdullah (2012:134) suggests that one should look at Muhammadiyah's dynamism in terms of civil society and philanthropic activities instead of its purification. He further maintains that the purificationst vision of Muhammadiyah may be problematic when it is faced with local customs and cultures considered un-Islamic. For this reason, he disagrees with the idea of separation between purification and reform within Muhammadiyah's vision. Both are two sides of the same coin. The spirit of purification is still necessary as long as it is coupled with the social sciences to help Muhammadiyah analyse the contemporary problems faced by the Muslim community in a more academic or rational manner. In terms of moral values, for instance, the spirit of purification is still badly needed to help the nation eradicate the endemic problem of corruption.

The accusation of a relationship between Muhammadiyah and the radical Islamist ideology, therefore, is derived from the sharing of some basic fundamentals by Muhammadiyah and the radical Islamist ideology, such as the doctrine of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This intersection — what Pradana Boy (2012) called an 'elementary relationship' — arises from the fact that some Muhammadiyah followers subscribe to the same religious doctrines as the radical Islamists do. In particular, they tend to treat scripture as taken for granted in its literal sense as the normative reference in their life. In this context, Pradana Boy (2007) does not deny the fact that Muhammadiyah may contribute to the formation of radical Islamist ideology. His research project concludes that Muhammadiyah has made an indirect contribution to the emergence of radicalism in East Java, especially among the youth. Nevertheless, the level to which Muhammadiyah contributes is elementary or superficial.

Despite the fact that, at the formal level, Muhammadiyah's elites declare its moderate vision, the shared membership with radical organisations such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an (MTA) and Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII) represents an undeniable fact. As

reported by Ricklefs (2012:366), some of the Muhammadiyah members who were also active in those radical organisations were trying to influence the direction of discussion during the 2005 Muhammadiyah congress in Malang. In fact, the leadership of Muhammadiyah was taken over by members whose ideological leaning was more radical in Islamic thought. It was also reported that some Muhammadiyah leaders became aware of the loss of control over the organisation's assets such as mosques, prayer-houses, schools, universities and health institutions. Those assets were reportedly falling into the hands of activists particularly associated with PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera — Prosperity and Justice Party). In Feillard and Madinier's (2011:246) words, some Muhammadiyah cadres were even 'drifting towards PKS's more uncompromising version of Islam.'

Despite the ideological contest within Muhammadiyah as explained above, one should treat the issue of radical Islamism within Muhammadiyah with appropriate care. Again, the juxtaposition of radical Islamism and Muhammadiyah does not imply a direct relationship between the two. Not only does Muhammadiyah declare itself from the outset to be the representation of the reform movement, a radicalism that leads to the preservation of orthodoxy is an oxymoron and is conflict with the term, *tajdid*, the basic meaning of which is reform. The emergence of radical Islamist ideology in Muhammadiyah is not a matter of ideology in itself; there are factors other than ideology involved in it, such as social, political and economic factors. Besides, the radical Islamist ideology can emerge in any organisation, be it modern or traditional. The emergence of radical Islamist ideology is not exclusive to modern organisations such as Muhammadiyah; the same thing can also be found within traditional organisations such as NU, Jama'atul Khairat, Al-Washliyah and the like.

***Tajdid*: the institution of *ijtihad* in Muhammadiyah**

In its organisational sense, as Djamil (1995:63–70) argues, Muhammadiyah does not acknowledge individual *ijtihad*. Rather, it adopts collective *ijtihad* by means of a special division called Majelis Tarjih (Committee for weighing up opinions) whose main function is to undertake intellectual effort at answering religious issues and

problems faced by the Muslim community, especially the Muhammadiyah community. This division was established during the seventeenth congress in 1928 with KH Mas Mansur as its first chairman. Viewed in a literal sense, it seems that this division was designed to deal with disputes over religious issues or theological disputes (*kebilafiyah*, Ar.), which were then at a peak level. The major task of this division is still to provide the members of Muhammadiyah with practical guidelines for solving disputes about ritual. Each fortnight, the division issues fatwas through its mouthpiece, *Suara Muhammadiyah*, covering various problems and issues. In addition, this body also issues Islamic legal decisions representing the formal position of Muhammadiyah and considered religiously and morally binding by its members (Anwar 2005:28).

As indicated by its name, *Majlis Tarjih*, the committee's main method for dealing with those disputes is by advancing the arguments behind any particular issue and picking up one of them which is considered the best and most robust one (Abdurrahman 2002:3-4). As it has developed, however, the issues taken up by this division are not exclusively religious or ritual issues; its coverage expands into issues outside ritual practices into social, economic, political and medical issues. This division has been relied upon by Muhammadiyah members as the institution of *ijtihad*, where religious problems are discussed and solved on the basis of the two essential sources in Islam: the Qur'an and Sunnah. Both are agreed by Muhammadiyah, as well as the majority of Muslims, to be the main sources in the process of *ijtihad*. While the Qur'an serves as 'the source of all law sources' (*sumber dari segala sumber hukum*), Hadith functions as the explanation of the Qur'an. When one cannot find the source of the law in the Qur'an, one must find it in the Hadith.

In cases where a decision cannot be drawn from these two sources, Muhammadiyah uses other mechanisms such as *maslahah* (Ar., public interest), especially to deal with social transactions (*mu'amalah*, Ar.), as long as the *maslahah* does not contradict the general injunctions of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The main tool used in the law-making process of *maslahah* is reason. In cases where the *maslahah* goes against the Qur'an and Sunnah, however, some Muhammadiyah scholars

prefer to rely on the literal formulation of the text (*nass*, Ar.), rather than the reason (Djamil 1995:77). This means that reason will be put aside if it contradicts the literal formulation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In this case, there are verses of the Qur'an with clear indication (*qat'i al-dilalah*, Ar.) that do not need any further interpretation. Likewise, there are Hadith sayings which are accountable in transmission (*mutawatir*, Ar.) and of high quality in soundness (*sahih*, Ar.) that do not need reasoning. These are among the criteria to evaluate the level of soundness of Hadith sayings. In this context, the use of *maslahah* applies only to something which is not explicitly spelt out in both sources. Or, it can apply to both verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith sayings with no clear indication (*dhanni al-dilalah*, Ar.).

Viewed from the above description, Muhammadiyah arrives at the position that revelation must be superior to reason. This is in line with Ibn Taymiyyah's argument that reason cannot replace the position of revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah). In other words, reason cannot achieve the truth unless it is accompanied and supported explicitly by revelation. In response to the position of reason and revelation, Muhammadiyah follows the track of such pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-salih*, Ar.) as Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the eminent purificationists in Islam, through Rasyid Ridha, and not to Ibn Rushd through Muhammad Abduh. In the context of the use of reason in interpreting religion, Abduh can be considered more progressive and rational, as Ibn Rushd was. On the other side, Rashid Ridha is more conservative and literal as Ibn Taymiyyah was. This means that Muhammadiyah is not as liberal as Muhammad Abduh in terms of the use of reason in interpreting religion, as Djamil (1995:61) argues. This serves as one of the explanations why religious orthodoxy seems to be appreciated more than rationalism within the Muhammadiyah community. There are of course exceptions in Muhammadiyah in which reason is treated as superior to the sacred texts, but these are beyond the scope of this paper.

Supporting the position of religious orthodoxy, Mukti Ali, the then Minister of Religious Affairs, as cited by Moh. Nurhakim (2005:97), argued that there are three basic principles on which the *tajdid* mechanism must be based: the principle of delusion of reason;

the principle of non-affiliation to Islamic schools of thought; and the principle of openness and tolerance. For Mukti Ali, Muhammadiyah gives much emphasis to the texts instead of reason in law-making process or *ijtihad* because reason is delusive in nature. It is not reason that is able to grasp the truth but revelation through the scriptures. The second principle does not acknowledge blind imitation to existing Islamic schools of thought (*madhhab*, Ar.). Religious understanding and practice, therefore, must be directly referred to the Qur'an and Sunnah. For those who are laymen (*awam*) in religious knowledge, Muhammadiyah allows them to do *ittiba'* (Ar., rational imitation). The two principles above are finally couched in openness and tolerance in order to avoid schisms, tensions, let alone conflicts among Muslims. This principle implies an ethical code of conduct in creating harmony and respect to different opinions among Muslims in general and the Muhammadiyah community in particular.

The use of the Majelis Tarjih, however, has undergone significant development with regards to change in orientation and vision. When the Majelis Tarjih was led by Amin Abdullah, the former Rector of the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, the name of the Majelis Tarjih was changed and its function was expanded into the Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam (MTPPI — Committee for weighing up opinions and the development of Islamic thought). This alteration was motivated by the fact that, with the traditional method, the Majelis Tarjih was considered unable to cope with the rapid development of social changes and demands. With this change, the body was mandated to address wider issues, and not only religious issues but also other contemporary ones. In addition, the body was accused of having made Muhammadiyah unable to maintain its reforming character. In Amin Abdullah's view, the tendency to the sacralisation of thoughts by certain Muhammadiyah members led, ironically, to stagnation. The alteration was intended to restore the reforming character of Muhammadiyah.

The addition of the words 'Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam' (development of Islamic thought) to the name of the Majelis Tarjih was not without intention and further expectation. It was meant to give this division a wider mandate in exercising its intellectual enterprises,

covering not only religious or ritual matters but also other worldly ones. In Amin Abdullah's argument, the dynamism of Islamic thought in Muhammadiyah can cover two things simultaneously; reconstruction and reinterpretation. Reconstruction is considered necessary because the construction of Islamic thought is predominantly based on a long-outdated mode of thinking which needs further examination. For this purpose, Abdullah (2000:13) argues that the Majelis Tarjih is also expected to borrow the thinking of modern social sciences, when necessary, in order to better analyse contemporary issues. On the other hand, reinterpretation is meant to arm the Majelis Tarjih with the capacity to reinterpret the products of Islamic thought that are irrelevant to the demands of the modern age. By this alteration, Abdullah (2000:14) believes that the puritan and radical tendency within Muhammadiyah which arises as the by-product of its purificationist vision can be accommodated.

It is not an exaggeration to say that there is a tendency to routinisation or institutionalisation within any organisation in order to form and preserve its core identity. Muhammadiyah is not an exception to such a tendency. The products of reform undertaken by Muhammadiyah tend to be routinised or sacralised by some of its members, a process that can risk the continuity of Muhammadiyah's reform character. As a result, there is an impression that Muhammadiyah can no longer undertake the reform process since some of its products have been well institutionalised and established in daily life. Many of the products have even been passed on and accepted as normal among the Muslim community. Put differently, some of the Muhammadiyah's reform products have been already treated as normal culture and practice in the society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of Muslims can no longer recognise the contribution of Muhammadiyah in implanting modernity into Indonesian Islam.

In the landscape of Indonesian Islam, many common features in Muslims' religious practices can be attributed to the role of Muhammadiyah's reform vision. One of the best known products of Muhammadiyah's reform is the change of language during the sermon during Friday prayers from Arabic to a local language or Indonesian (Anshoriy Ch. 2010:35). This reform was strongly resisted by the

traditional Muslim community, particularly the community of *pesantren* and NU, since the use of Arabic for the Friday sermon was considered a standard practice which was not subject to reform. Thanks to Muhammadiyah's reform, the use of other languages for the Friday sermons has now become normal practice in the heart of Indonesian Islam. In addition, the juxtaposition of some ritual practices for social purposes such as daily prayers, fasting during the Ramadhan month, almsgiving, and the pilgrimage (*hajj*, Ar.), have come to be regarded by the Muslim majority as standard piety. This series of reforms was launched by the Muhammadiyah in its early phase under KH Ahmad Dahlan's leadership. Now this practice has been widely accepted as something normal among Indonesian Muslims.

Another example of Muhammadiyah's reform movement is the adoption of a modern system of education and dress-code (Majlis Diklitbang dan LPI PP Muhammadiyah 2010: 96–7). For the majority of Muslims dominated by the traditional view, such an adaptation to Western life style can be categorised as imitation (*tashabbuh*, Ar.) to unbelievers' values which was considered *haram* in Islam.³ Muhammadiyah reform is undeniably an incredible leap in the landscape of Indonesian Islam which was much resisted by the traditional Muslims, particularly by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) followers. This reform was inspired by Ahmad Dahlan's idea of '*Islam berkemadjoean*' (Islam with progress). For Dahlan, adopting modern values does not necessarily mean the same thing as giving up one's faith. If, however, Muslims wish to share the benefits of Western advancement, they have to adopt the means of achieving modernity.

The bifurcation of *tajdid*: between purification and reformism

In its later stage of development, one can see how Muhammadiyah has been struggling with the internal tension and dispute over the definition of *tajdid* and its function in keeping pace with modernity. For those whose ideological leaning in understanding the sacred texts is literal, *tajdid* can mean purification. They tend not to take biases in terms of culture and language, as well as the contemporary context of those texts, into serious consideration. For those whose ideological framework is moderate, however, *tajdid* means reform. They tend to

avoid literal statement in order to seek the substantive and contextual meaning of particular statements in those texts. Both tendencies, in turn, form a series of internal tensions within the circle of Muhammadiyah in perceiving modernity. It is individual tendency and intellectual framework in reading the sacred texts that makes the bifurcation of *tajdid* possible, even though some other possible factors might worth mentioning such as socio-political factors and the like.

Viewed from an historical perspective, a reformulation of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah was undertaken at its twenty-second Mukhtamar Tarjih (Tarjih Conference) in 1989 in Malang, East Java (Jainuri 2000:25). In that reformulation, it was said that *tajdid* comprises both purification and modernisation or reform at the same time. *Tajdid* in the sense of purification was intended to safeguard Islam from the contamination of any external heretic elements. *Tajdid* in the sense of reform was understood as the interpretation, experience, and internalisation of Islamic values in social life. By such a reformulation, Muhammadiyah maintains that *tajdid* covers the following three things; first, the purification of Islamic faith and worship as well as the institutionalisation of moral values; second, the formation of an attitude to life which is more dynamic, creative, progressive and future focussed; and third, developing an ethos of leadership, organisation and work among its members.

From the description above, it can be argued that the spirit of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah was launched in tandem with purificationist movement in eradicating TBC. Again, this was done to maintain the purity of Islamic faith (*akidah*) that was widely regarded as contaminated by non-Islamic elements at the time of its early generation. The spirit of *tajdid* in Muhammadiyah, above all, is primarily based on the principle of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This means that it is considered necessary to reshape religious understandings of the Muslim community to be in line with original purity as spelled out in both sacred texts. The slogan is reiterated by Muhammadiyah leaders time and again. Thus, it can be said that there is no reform in religious matters that is inseparable from the sacred texts. All products of *tajdid* must be based on normative injunctions as contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Even though the movement of *tajdid* was driven primarily to deal with ritual disputes, it does not mean that such a spirit has not been expanded to address such non-ritual things as social, political economic and cultural issues. Each time *tajdid* is carried out to answer problems, Muhammadiyah members will have to refer to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Unlike the NU followers who always consult with the opinions of classical Muslim clerics (*ulama*) when discussing any contemporary issues, Muhammadiyah members have little appreciation of the rich intellectual tradition of classical Islam as written in *kitab kuning* (literally, yellow books, but meaning the classical legal texts). All answers to contemporary problems are accordingly assumed to lie in the two sacred texts, without necessary reference to the bedrock of classical Islamic schools of thought (*madhbab*, Ar.).

Nevertheless, the movement of *tajdid* leads to two separate threads within Muhammadiyah circles. There is one thread that seems to be overwhelmed with the idea of purity, while the other one is continually obsessed with the idea of engaging with modernity. Both basically depart from the same fundamental concept: the idea of achieving glory and advancement. The difference is that the first thread tends to treat religion as a source of authenticity and, thus, is considered as the only key to the glory of Islam. The other thread wishes to achieve glory through an intimate engagement with modernity. Ideologically speaking, whereas the first thread seems to replicate Rashid Ridha's method of achieving glory, the second one seems to be motivated by Abduh's rational and 'progressive' method of obtaining glory. Both of them can be found within the body of Muhammadiyah and they form complex configurations among the members of the organisation which are never black-and-white, clear-cut and monolithic. This complexity, in turn, creates an internal dynamic within Muhammadiyah circles which allows debate and self-criticism from some members, especially from its younger generation.

The use of *tajdid* within Muhammadiyah, not surprisingly, is not without internal criticisms. Baidhaw (2004:3–25), for instance, argues that Muhammadiyah is 'too old to be reformist'. It is seen as unable to make best use of *tajdid* in dealing with contemporary issues on the grounds that there has been no effort to reconsider and

revitalise former products of *tajdid* which, whatever their past value, might be irrelevant for today. It is a matter of fact that the products of *tajdid* have already been established as a part of normal practice among the Muhammadiyah members in particular and the Indonesian Muslim community in general. It is just this success which can be seen as responsible for the stagnation of Muhammadiyah's current thought. The early generations of Muhammadiyah, in Baidhaw's argument, utilised the mechanism of *tajdid* to maximum effect in solving religious problems but, while Muhammadiyah deserves to be thought of as a reform movement in the past, that reform is perhaps locked in the past.

In this context, one of reasons behind the stagnation of *tajdid* within Muhammadiyah, in the eyes of some Muhammadiyah youth, stems from its purification ideology which is not undertaken in tandem with its reform vision. The institution of *tajdid* has served as an arena of institutionalisation and promoted the establishment of normative doctrines of pure Islam (*Islam murni*) in a Muhammadiyah version that address only such theological issues as allowable versus unacceptable (*halal* versus *haram*), or justifiable versus unjustifiable — all, of course, according to the normative standard of a 'pure Islam'. In reality, as believed by some younger generations in Muhammadiyah, this reformist movement seems unable to play a role in dynamising Indonesian Islam through purification, at the same time as being unable to link the reformist vision produced by an earlier generation and the current complex reality.

In the view of such internal critics, Muhammadiyah tends to be an organisation of *muqallidin* (Ar., imitators), almost wholly lacking the character of reform, particularly in regard to contemporary Islamic thought and social praxis. Furthermore, what is perceived as today's social praxis, such as education, health, and social philanthropy, is no more than a continuation of the social activism of the early generations of Muhammadiyah. When viewed more critically, even what the early generations of Muhammadiyah did is no more than an imitation of a similar activism of the Christian mission organisations, that is 'feeding' (philanthropy), schooling and healing. Up until today, it is hard to find any significant breakthrough within the philanthropic activities of Muhammadiyah. Such stagnation is due to the lack of

continuous reform. As a result, Muhammadiyah's thinking and activities are merely repeating whatever has been produced in the past. In addition, contemporary reading of the sacred texts has faced a wall of orthodoxy. Muhammadiyah risks falling into what Baidhawiy (2004:16) calls 'Dahlanism' if it persists in maintaining this position.

'Dahlanism' signifies a tendency to sacralise whatever was produced and institutionalised by the early generations of Muhammadiyah, especially during the Dahlan's era. Within the inner circle of the Muhammadiyah community, the term provokes further controversy and debate. In a similar tone, Munawir Sjadzali (2000:5), the then-minister of religious affairs during the New Order regime best known as a 'proto' Muslim intellectual-cum-reformer, cast doubt over whether it is still relevant for Muhammadiyah to be called a reformist movement. He believes that what Muhammadiyah has claimed as reform is no more than purification, that is the attempt to remove external contamination from Muhammadiyah's pure Islamic faith. Nevertheless, he neutralises his criticism by labelling Muhammadiyah a 'fundamentalist' movement, in a positive sense, by reason of its stress on going back to origins, that is into the most authentic sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah.

Another consistent critic from the inner circle of Muhammadiyah has been Kuntowijoyo, one of its elite thinkers. In one of his books, as cited by Nur Syam (2005:86), he argues that 'Muhammadiyah needs to decorate itself with civilisation (*kebudayaan*) in the sense of preservation and heritage, not only with advancement and creativity. There is no benefit in dropping cultural heritage which has been laboriously constructed for centuries.' In Kuntowijoyo's argument, Muhammadiyah has been spiritually dull due to its excessively purificationist character. In such circumstances, Muhammadiyah becomes insensible to culture and art, which are supposed to be accommodated and appreciated as a part of Muslims' life. Put differently, Muhammadiyah's purificationist ideology should have been achieved in tandem with the appreciation of culture, art and civilisation.

With greater empathy, Nur Syam observes that Muhammadiyah has an unbearable burden in balancing the claims of purificationist

ideology and a sensibility towards cultures and civilisations. In his view, Muhammadiyah should have not abandoned culture as a medium for delivering the message of Islamic teachings. It is undeniable that Islam was revealed within and through the particular cultural setting of Arabia. Likewise, Islam has become the major religion in Indonesia due to its acculturation with local culture and the use of local means to propagate its teachings. In this context, Nur Syam further argues that Muhammadiyah does not have an adequate appreciation of culture, art and civilisation and this can lead to resistance to the organisation on the part of Muslims. In response, it is imperative that Muhammadiyah should put aside the exoteric elements of its theological system and accommodate more esoteric, aesthetic and spiritual elements of the local cultures and civilisations.

Ideological leaning within any organisation is always a complex issue and is not easy to deal with. It has to be admitted that the majority of Muhammadiyah's elites claim, time and again, to have represented the moderate mode of Islam in the country (See, among others, Syamsuddin 2005; Nashir 2007). Nobody can deny its moderation in terms of its engagement with modernity and its peaceful approach to the socio-economic transformation of society. Nevertheless, as Ricklefs (2012:341–2), Erich Kolig (2005:57) and Greg Fealy (2004:105) — as well as myself (Hilmy 2010: 100–1) — have suggested, there is no a clear-cut fault-line dividing the moderates from the radicals. Any social association will always consist of members with very diverse ideological inclinations. Suffice it to say that, like other Muslim organisation found anywhere else in the world, Muhammadiyah encompasses a vast array of ideological positions and membership, ranging from the most liberal, moderate and progressive to the most radical, stringent and thuggish modes of religiosity.

Despite the statements of its elites, it is not easy to measure the level of Muhammadiyah's moderation in its Islamic thought. Not only is the term 'moderate' somewhat vague, but Muhammadiyah seems to adopt a very general and abstract policy, especially with regard to its moderate theology. The stated vision of Muhammadiyah says that its emergence is intended to create 'super civilisation' (*peradaban unggul*), 'excellent religious community' (*ummat utama*), or 'truly Islamic

society' (*masyarakat Islam sebenar-benarnya*). Those terms remain vague, not to say problematic, especially if they are consulted with Muhammadiyah policy in supporting democracy and pluralism rooted in Pancasila. They still need to be explained in more detail and made operational and practical at the grass-roots level.

Concluding remarks

Muhammadiyah, as this paper has demonstrated, has undergone a dynamic phase in which ideological contest between the radical Islamists and progressive-moderate proponents has been taking place. This dynamic should have contributed to the maturity of this organisation as it moves past its centenary. Like other reformist movement such as Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) and Al-Irsyad, Muhammadiyah espouses several foundational — not to say radical — characteristics which are deployed as an instrument of social transformation. The most important of these are: the doctrine of the return to the Qur'an and Sunnah; the doctrine of purification to safeguard the 'pure Islam' from the contamination of non-Islamic beliefs and practices such as TBC; and the doctrine of calling for what is good and forbidding what is wrong (*amar ma'ruf nabi munkar*). The three are wrapped together as an integrated package.

Despite these characteristics, Muhammadiyah continues to enjoy the reputation of a reform movement due to its engagement with modernity. The organisation's reputation cannot be disassociated from the historical facts of its reforming accomplishments in the landscape of Indonesian Islam. This transforming vision, in turn, contributes to the making of moderate Islam in Indonesia. It is exactly on this point that the radical Islamist ideology takes its departure. Those members who are disappointed with the moderate vision of Muhammadiyah tend to give up their membership and choose their own way to subscribe to a more radical Islamist ideology. This explains the involvement of radical Islamists with a Muhammadiyah background in a series of violent acts in Indonesia. All the Bali bombing perpetrators and JI ideologues had a Muhammadiyah background, but they dropped their affiliation to Muhammadiyah and instead sought JI as their final refuge.

Ideologically speaking, the rise and emergence of radical Islamism in Muhammadiyah can be explained from the perspective of dual religiosity within this organisation. On paper, Muhammadiyah advocates the 'pure' version of Islam through purification. The slogan, 'returning back directly to the Qur'an and Sunnah', can lead to a literal understanding of those texts, but such a literal understanding produces uncreative and imitative thoughts. At practical level, however, Muhammadiyah's reform vision is closely associated with the idea of progress and philanthropic activism that prevents it from supporting the ideology of radical Islamism. It is the latter tendency that helps Muhammadiyah keep distance from the ideology of radical Islamism and makes it one of the moderate Muslim organisations in Indonesia.

Taking some lessons from the juxtaposition of Muhammadiyah and the radical Islamist ideology, linking individuals with an organisation of which they are members must be scrutinised very carefully. Individuals may well have a different opinion from the formal opinions of Muhammadiyah. There are at least two possible outcomes this situation. First, individuals may play dual roles and hide their true opinions from the public for pragmatic reasons. Those who can live with this tension may eventually be able to reconcile their views with the different views of the organisation. In the second case, they cannot reconcile their standpoint with the formal policies of the organisation and any supposed reconciliation would involve a kind of hypocrisy. Many people cannot live with hypocrisy and end up leaving to choose whatever they believe as truth. The dynamic history of Muhammadiyah suggests how complex the organisation is. There is no single monolithic perspective that will display the complex reality of Muhammadiyah completely.

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Notes

1. No precise number of the organisation's members and followers can be found; this number is just a very rough estimate. At the Malang conference in 2005, serious questions were asked about how many members Muhammadiyah has. A serious investigation by Suaidi Asyari reveals that the number of Muhammadiyah followers does not exceed 19,170,000 (Asyari 2009:52).
2. Among the Muhammadiyah activists and scholars who gave presentations were Achmad Jainuri, Amin Abdullah, Ayat Dimiyati, Haedar Nashir, Tafsir, Thohir Luth, Yunahar Ilyas and Mu'arif.
3. The way the Muhammadiyah introduced the Western dress code was resisted severely by some leaders of NU. According to them, the clothes of Muhammadiyah members could be seen as imitating the Dutch dress code in a way which is forbidden in Islam (Thomafi 2007:199).

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