

JARINGAN INTELEKTUAL MUDA MUHAMMADIYAH (JIMM) AND THE IDEOLOGY OF PROGRESSIVE ISLAM Construction, Genealogy, and Current Development

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Abstract: This article aims to investigate the ideology of progressive Islam of the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectuals Network (JIMM), a progressive wing within Muhammadiyah. This provides a systematic discussion of the construction of the JIMM's ideology, its genealogy, and its current development. This is primarily based on the qualitative data purposively collected through participatory observation and interviews, conducted mainly during the 2023 JIMM Congress in Yogyakarta. By employing a sociology of knowledge approach, this article finds that the progressive idea of JIMM is deeply rooted in and has a coherence with Muhammadiyah, particularly in Ahmad Dahlan's ideology of progressive Islam which combines religious liberalisation and social liberation as embodied in the Al-Ma'un Theology and the Alleviation of Public Misery. We argue that in its recent evolution, JIMM's ideology of progressive Islam has responded to various contemporary issues, as demonstrated by its activists who have proposed to focus more on the advocacy for human rights, gender justice, religious harmony, universal access to education, environmental stewardship, and caderisation.

Keywords: Progressive Islam, liberalisation, transformative Islam, Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM).

Introduction

It has been more than a couple of decades since its establishment in 2003, the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectuals Network (Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah/JIMM) has made a significant

contribution to the development of intellectualism within Muhammadiyah, the largest modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia.¹ It has furthered to the advancement of progressive thought in a multitude of domains, but mainly social and religious. In the religious domain, JIMM has deconstructed the religious dogmatism of Muhammadiyah, which had enhanced overly puritan and scripturalist in its approach to religious thought.² This ultimately leads to JIMM becoming stigmatised as a “rebel”, despite its critical assessment of Muhammadiyah’s role in remaining religious stagnation³ is aimed to provide an alternative.⁴

Indeed, since its inception in 1912, Muhammadiyah has promoted the credo of “returning to the Qur’an and al-sunnah” (*al-ruju’ ila al-Qur’an wa al-sunnah*) to ensure the purification of religious understanding, which is full of superstitious orientations and heresy. Muhammadiyah believes that by returning to the original source of Islamic teachings, it will lead to religious understanding as practised in the prophetic era. On the one hand, this can eliminate the opinions of Muslim scholars, a small number of whom are considered contaminated by thoughts that no longer follow the prophetic tradition. Yet, on the other hand, Muhammadiyah’s efforts at religious purification gradually perpetuate dogmatic religious textualism. The latter tends to close off the diversity of religious understandings and manifestations, ultimately leading to attitudes and behaviours that negate diversity. It is this negation that can actually lead to dehumanisation, because it allows intolerance to flourish. According to

¹ Hasnan Bachtiar, Haeri Fadly, and Moh Nurhakim, “Visi Kosmopolitanisme Islam di Lingkungan Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah,” *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, 2 (2015): 455-485.

² Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM): Pemberontakan Melawan Puritanisme dan Skripturalisme Persyarikatan,” In *Gerakan Keislaman Pasca Orde Baru: Upaya Merambah Dimensi Baru Islam* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama dan Diklat Keagamaan Departemen Agama RI, 2005).

³ Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Lakum dīnukum wa-liya dīnī: The Muhammadiyah's Stance towards Interfaith Relations,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, 3 (2011): 329-342.

⁴ Masdar Hilmy, “Quo-Vadis Islam Moderat Indonesia? Menimbang Kembali Modernisme Nahdlatul Ulama dan Muhammadiyah,” *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 36, 2 (2012); Masdar Hilmy, “Whither Indonesia’s Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, 1 (2013): 24-48; Zuly Qodir, Haedar Nashir, and Robert W. Hefner. “Muhammadiyah Making Indonesia’s Islamic Moderation Based on Maqasid Shariah,” *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 23, 1 (2023).

JIMM, religious thought that emphasises purification does not have to exclude, ignore and get rid of other different thoughts.

According to Biyanto, JIMM has been successful in integrating social context into Quranic exegesis, with particular focus on the deliverance critical commentaries over the legal-centric prohibition of social relations with non-Muslims.⁵ This has influenced the growth of attitudes and behaviour among young Muhammadiyah activists, encouraging them to become more progressive. This, in turn, has led to a greater tolerance and inclusivism in their approach to differences in terms of the context of intra- and inter-religious relations.⁶ Ali and Masduqi argue that the JIMM's contribution to the dissemination of religious progressivism is not merely the production of contextualised interpretations of the Quran since it also endeavours to spread the trend of struggling for the knowledge development movement (*gerakan ilmu*).⁷ Due to all those efforts, despite the significant resistance encountered by JIMM, it has been gradually accommodated by Muhammadiyah.⁸ Bachtiar et al. posit that such a possibility exists as JIMM has constructed a vision of cosmopolitanism in both the social and religious domains.⁹

Nevertheless, while some scholars have focused on the JIMM's progressive stance, the evolution of this discourse within this progressive wing of Muhammadiyah remains largely unexplored. The objective of this article is to address this gap by investigating the way JIMM has developed and struggled to maintain its ideology of progressive Islam. This investigation is expected to provide

⁵ Biyanto, "Tafsir Sosial Ideologi Keagamaan Kaum Muda Muhammadiyah," *Jurnal Salam* 12, 2 (2009).

⁶ Arif Nuh Safri, "Memahami Progresifitas Liberalif Penafsiran Muhammadiyah (Analisis Kritis Atas Pemikiran Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah)," *Qaf: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, 1 (2016): 45-59.

⁷ Marpuji Ali and M. Ali Masduqi, "Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah: Sebuah Eksperimen Gerakan Ilmu," *Profetika* 06, 02 (2004): 189-200.

⁸ Muhammad Ainun Najib, Dudung Abdurrahman, and Ahmad Muttaqin, "From Resistance to Accommodation: The Emergence and Controversy of Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM)," *Religio: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 13, 2 (2023): 209-229.

⁹ Hasnan Bachtiar, Haeri Fadly, and Moh Nurhakim. "Visi Kosmopolitanisme Islam di Lingkungan Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, 2 (2015): 455-485.

explanation on the construction, genealogy, and current development of the JIMM's ideology of progressive Islam.

Since this article investigates the construction, genealogy, and current development of the JIMM's ideology of progressive Islam, it draws upon the qualitative data purposively collected through participatory observation and interviews, conducted primarily during the JIMM's 2023 event of the Young Activists Islamic Thought Congress (Muktamar Pemikiran Islam Kaum Muda) in Yogyakarta. It relies on the data based on the intellectual works produced by JIMM activists, in addition. Furthermore, the data is based on the involvement of some of them in the current *realpolitik* event which has elicited critical responses from right-wing groups within Muhammadiyah. This investigation employs the sociology of knowledge approach to look at the details of the intricate relationships between ideas and their socio-historical contexts of emergence.¹⁰ This approach, furthermore, tries to understand the influence of individuals and communities on their respective modes of thought. We arguably state that their thought has been influenced by their contexts of life and ideology. In this context, two forms of ideology can be identified: individual and community. These forms of ideology indicate an influence of certain social collectivism. Based on this approach, we analyse the data which emphasises 'the JIMM's idea of progressive Islam', its formation, socio-historical contexts, and expansion.

The Muhammadiyah Young Intellectuals Network (JIMM)

The Muhammadiyah Young Intellectuals Network (JIMM) is a progressive wing within the largest modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah.¹¹ JIMM was inaugurated on October 9, 2003, in Puncak, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. The genesis of this initiative can be traced back to a workshop on Muhammadiyah intellectualism held by a think tank organisation, The Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity, which has a focus on the issues of Islam, freedom, and humanism. In the workshop, some Muhammadiyah

¹⁰ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1998); Reiner Keller, "The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD)," *Human Studies* 34 (2011): 43-65; Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Knowledge: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the History of Ideas*. (London: Routledge, 2020).

¹¹ Michael R. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 204-210.

intellectuals such as Moeslim Abdurrahman, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Haedar Nashir, Zuly Qodir, and others, proposed that Muhammadiyah should establish an intellectual network among its younger activists. Their argument put forth was that this would serve to intensify the development of progressive thought within the network (Boy ZTF 2015). Young activists such as Zuly Qodir, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, Abd. Rohim Ghozali, Sukidi Mulyadi, Ahmad Najib Burhani, Pradana Boy ZTF, Andar Nubowo, Ahmad Fuad Fanani, Hilman Latief, David Krisna Alka, Piet H. Khaidir, Hilaly Basya, Ai Fatimah, Tuty Alawiyah, Budi Ashari, and others joined this network. Thus, this a select and exclusive group and not all cadres of Muhammadiyah can join JIMM.¹² Since that time, they have participated in the Congress of Islamic Thought (Tadarus Pemikiran Islam), which was held in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Malang, Surabaya, and Surakarta. The current JIMM's congress was held on 22-24 December 2023 in Yogyakarta.

Membership

Through various activities held, JIMM's membership has grown. Yet, as JIMM is not an institutional organisation, but a cultural network that provides an intellectual milieu among young activists, its members are not many, and its membership is not managed formally. They are mainly young Muhammadiyah activists who have enjoyed the development of thought in various fields such as arts, humanities, and social sciences, as well as critical discourse in religious studies. They also have involved in autonomous organisations within the circle of Muhammadiyah such as Muhammadiyah Youth Association (Pemuda Muhammadiyah), Muhammadiyah Women's Youth Association (Nasyiatul Aisyiyah), Muhammadiyah Student Association (Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah), and Muhammadiyah University Student Association (Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah). Some have completed their undergraduate studies in Indonesia, while others have master's or doctoral degrees from Western universities. They have been trained to publish their intellectual works in both the academic and the popular press. They also have a presidium consisting of some representatives from various cities in the country. From the latest

¹² Surya Sukti et al., "Political Dynamics of Islamic Law in the Reform Era: A Study of the Response of Muhammadiyah Cadres in Central Kalimantan," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6 (2022): 1022, <https://doi.org/10.22373/-sjhk.v6i2.12415>.

congress, they are Yahya Fathur Rozy, Wilda Kumala Sari, Yusuf Rohmat Yanuri, Renci, and Fariz Revaldi.¹³

Core Idea

The main progressive idea of JIMM is that religion has to be socially functional in order to solve the current social problems. Islam in this context, although it is believed to contain universal values that are important for the development of human civilisation, its interpretations and manifestations should be directed to follow the agenda of solving social problems. Accordingly, from JIMM's point of view, it can be argued that Islam can be understood as a transformative religion. This is due to its functional contribution to the transformation of society, which has the potential to move towards better situations. One of the most influential intellectual mentors of JIMM, Moeslim Abdurrahman, argues that transformative Islam (Islam transformative) is an intellectual endeavour to advocate for the marginalised from any forms of oppression that are justified by religious doctrines.¹⁴ He, furthermore, states that,

“Transformative Islam’, is basically a theological imagination, accentuating how the meaning of religion can be contested by those who are marginalised, not in a contest of authority about who can interpret and not interpret the meaning of the sacred, but how Islam can be a spirit of defence for those who are miserable when those who oppress with their power also use the same religious legitimation.”¹⁵

This transformative Islam serves as the foundational basis of JIMM's intellectualism. This has become a school of thought that significantly influences the way of thinking of the JIMM's activists, who believe that this form of Islam will bring progress to society. However, this JIMM's core idea is not merely an ideational matter. This is ideologically a foundation of struggle for social transformation. This motivates JIMM's members to engage with both intellectualism

¹³ IBTimes, "Muktamar JIMM 2023: Mendorong Pembaharuan Pemikiran, Pengetahuan, dan Gerakan Muhammadiyah," IBTimes.ID, December 31, 2023. <https://ibtimes.id/muktamar-jimm-2023-mendorong-pembaharuan-pemikiran-pengetahuan-dan-gerakan-muhammadiyah/>.

¹⁴ Moeslim Abdurrahman, "Pengantar." In *Suara Tuhan Suara Pemerdekaan* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

and activism. In this context, the Gramscian concept of intellectuals being born into specific social entity with an inherent agenda to transform their society into a more productive and better one is a useful framework for understanding the role of JIMM as “organic intellectuals”.¹⁶ Accordingly, while the specific idea of Islam and progressivism are combined, JIMM activists can be regarded as organic intellectuals who attempt to effect societal change.¹⁷

The Construction of JIMM’s Ideology of Progressive Islam

JIMM’s activists present progressive Islam as their ideology to address the current challenging realities. By espousing this ideology, it can be discerned that, their objective is to rationalise the religious belief system, justify their attitude and behaviour, and to promote their theoretical expressions.¹⁸ They hold the belief that Islam is a religion that bestows grace and benevolence upon all humanity and the environment (*rahmatan li al-‘alamin*). In accordance with their conviction, they have endeavoured to disseminate this idea in the public sphere and actualise it in a concrete way of life. In this context, this ideology emphasises two principal pathways for connecting religious virtues with societal realities. The first is the encouragement of the freedom of thought and expression, and the second is the involvement in a social emancipatory mission. For JIMM’s activists, progressive Islam represents a distinctive interpretation of Islamic doctrine that emphasises not only liberalisation but also social liberation.

In dealing with this issue, one of the JIMM’s activists, Faiz Arwi argues that,

“Liberalisation is important. The courage to think critically is part of the freedom of *ijtihad*, a specific mechanism in Islamic legal tradition which means a maximum effort to solve current problems that Muslims have faced. We have rights to think and

¹⁶ Antonio Gramsci, “Intellectuals and Hegemony,” In *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, 29 (1999); Peter McLaren, Gustavo Fischman, Silvia Serra, and Estanislao Antelo, “The Specters of Gramsci: Revolutionary Praxis and the Committed Intellectual,” *Journal of Thought* 33, 3 (1998): 9-41.

¹⁷ Ridho Al-Hamdi, “Consciousness to Liberate: In Search of the Political Paradigm of Muhammadiyah,” *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, 2 (2022): 165-197.

¹⁸ Achmad Jainuri, *Ideologi Kaum Reformis: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Muhammadiyah Periode Awal* (Surabaya: LPAM, 2002).

to express our religious understanding without having to be afraid of differing from the opinions of authoritative religious figures. In addition, we need to emphasise the essential of social liberation, primarily since humans are social creatures who should not just socialise with others, but also help vulnerable groups.”¹⁹

The JIMM’s ideology is inclusive, encompassing contemporary trends of social thought, such as civil pluralism, multiculturalism, gender equality, and human rights.²⁰ This concept is open to the idea that liberty is the ground upon which all other values are built. However, given the current social problems they have faced, which demonstrate the pervasiveness of crises of humanity and social marginalisation, this concept entails the discourse and agenda of social liberation. It is for this reason that the JIMM’s ideology is firmly rooted in the transformative thought of Islam.²¹ (Abdurrahman 1995).

In a public lecture delivered on March 13, 2010, at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Philosophy at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Moeslim Abdurrahman addressed the issue of poverty. While acknowledging the existence of differences based on religious, racial, and ethnic affiliations, he posits that poverty may be universal experience, irrespective of one’s background. He arguably expresses that “There is no Islamic starvation, or Christian, or other religions, as it is a universal problem of humanity.” His argument indicates that the advancement of liberal thought and social liberation are inextricably linked. At length, he asserts that,

“I do not mean to downplay discussions about, for example, the relationship between majority and minority groups, or the importance of building a more inclusive Islamic perspective regarding the faith of others, or how in a patriarchal (male-oriented) society it is necessary to foster gender awareness. But more significantly, I feel that we must formulate whether the articulation of ‘difference’ is more important than ‘liberation’ or

¹⁹ Interview 1. Interview with Faiz Arwi, Yogyakarta, 24 May 2024.

²⁰ Muhammad Hilaly Basya, “The Concept of Religious Pluralism in Indonesia: A Study of the MUI’s Fatwa and the Debate among Muslim Scholars,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 1, 1 (2011): 69-93; Biyanto, “Pengalaman Muhammadiyah Membumikan Nilai-Nilai Pluralisme,” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 7, 2 (2013): 318-339; Syamsul Arifin, and Nafik Muthohirin, “The Viewpoint of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals towards the Religious Minority Groups in Indonesia,” *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 9, 2 (2019): 282-305.

²¹ Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Transformatif* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995).

the meaning of 'liberation'. When things like the massive number of people affected by hunger pangs, the number of people who have lost their jobs, which adds to social alienation, are increasing every day, and it is impossible to understand these things in terms of inter-religious relations, or in terms of the natural perspective of cross-cultural discourse (just the fact of diversity and the need for political recognition of the diversity of cultures), of course the recognition of diversity must first be placed on top of the struggle for social justice."²²

Nevertheless, any agenda of social liberation inspired by certain theological meanings of religion may inadvertently encourage religious conservatism and even radicalism if it undermines the virtues of liberty.²³ Regarding this part, another intellectual mentor of JIMM, Ahmad Syafii Maarif posits that the social emancipatory mission and the spirit of freedom must be undertaken in tandem if the ideal of progressive Islam espoused by JIMM – to guarantee that the social transformation occurs, and the development of Muslim civil society takes place – is to be achieved.²⁴ He argues that “we must return to the Qur’an and the Prophetic tradition (Sunnah), that is to say, to the ethical values of Islam that emphasise justice, freedom, equality, and humanity, as well as all the values of great character (*akhlak al-karimah*).”²⁵ This perspective enables JIMM to persistently maintain its critical stance regarding any ideas within the spectrum of right-wing ideological inclinations in understanding religion in which some of them are de-humanistic. JIMM unequivocally rejects any form of religious intolerance, discrimination, and extremism.

²² Moeslim Abdurrahman, Lecture, “Menggugat Modernitas Muhammadiyah,” delivered at Pusat Studi Islam dan Filsafat (PSIF), March 13, 2010, at UMM, Malang.

²³ Bachtiar Dwi Kurniawan, David Efendi, Alam Mahadika, Moch Edward Trias Pahlevi, and Azka Abdi Amrullohi. “Muhammadiyah and Religious Moderation: Response to Actions of Muhammadiyah to Prevent Modern Radicalism (Case Study of Leadership Period 2015 – 2021),” *Sociologia Y Technociencia* 13, 1 (2023): 102-126.

²⁴ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Keniscayaan Kebebasan Berfikir dalam Muhammadiyah,” In *Menggugat Modernitas Muhammadiyah: Refleksi Satu Abad Perjalanan Muhammadiyah*, edited by Ajang Budiman and Pradana Boy ZTF, 132. (Jakarta: Best Media dan PSIF UMM Malang, 2010).

²⁵ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Lecture, “Gagasan Islah dan Tajdid Muhammadiyah,” delivered at Islamic Renaissance Front (IRF) Malaysia, Graha Pemuda Sri Hartamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 21, 2014.

Furthermore, Arwi argues that “faith in religion has as its goal the creation of peace in life”²⁶ and if it creates otherwise, as Muslim states, “it means disturbing socio-religious harmony.”²⁷ Susanto adds that JIMM’s understanding of religious teachings tends to emphasise wisdom and down-to-earthiness, in the sense that it is easily understood by those at the grassroots level.²⁸ This encourages a peaceful way of thinking and a gentle attitude. He argues, “Dogmatic, rigid and strict religious thinking, meanwhile, often encourages intolerant, discriminatory, and even extreme behaviour. This has the potential to create protracted conflicts that are harmful and dangerous.”²⁹

However, due to its similarity in terminology – by using the term ‘network’ (*jaringan*) – with the Liberal Islam Network (Jaringan Islam Liberal/JIL), a liberal wing within the largest traditionalist Muslim organisation in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama, some have claimed that JIMM is merely liberal, leading to accusations of its activists engaging in infidelity.³⁰ Although JIL does not address the issue of social liberation, both JIL and JIMM have agreed with liberal religious thought, which affirms the importance of tolerance and pluralism. Some claimed that JIMM espouses the view that “all religions are equally valid” and that the doctrine of Islamic salvation is relative.³¹ This resulted in JIMM’s stance as being in opposition to the Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) which issued a fatwa declaring that secularism, pluralism, and liberalism to be forbidden (*haram*) in accordance with their interpretation of sharia law.³²

²⁶ Interview 1. Interview with Faiz Arwi, Yogyakarta, 24 May 2024.

²⁷ Interview 2. Interview with Bukhari Muslim, Jakarta, 24 May 2024.

²⁸ Interview 3. Interview with Ari Susanto, Jakarta, 24 May 2024.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Herdi Sahrasad, “Youth Movement and Islamic Liberalism in Indonesia,” *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 15, 1 (2020): 145-175.

³¹ Suaidi Asyari, “A Real Threat from Within: Muhammadiyah’s Identity Metamorphosis and the Dilemma of Democracy,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 1, 1 (2007): 18-41.

³² Piers Gillespie, “Current Issues in Indonesian Islam: Analysing the 2005 Council of Indonesian Ulama Fatwa No. 7 Opposing Pluralism, Liberalism and Secularism,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, 2 (2007): 202-240.

The Genealogy of JIMM's Ideology

The JIMM's ideology is not without historical roots, genealogically links to its primary social circle, Muhammadiyah. This is the largest modernist Muslim organisation in Indonesia that was established on November 18, 1912, in Yogyakarta by KH Ahmad Dahlan. We argue that this modernist Muslim movement contributes to the constructive development of JIMM's school of thought on progressive Islam, which encompasses both liberal and liberative ideas based on creative and critical interpretations of Islamic teachings. By advocating the Al-Ma'un Theology and the Alleviation of Public Miseries (Penolong Kesengsaraan Oemoem/PKO), Muhammadiyah underscores the significance of freedom and social transformation. This also renders Muhammadiyah a socio-religious movement that poses Islam as a religion of faith and action.³³

The founding father of Muhammadiyah, KH Ahmad Dahlan, initiated Al-Ma'un Theology which draws upon the Qur'an Surah Al-Ma'un to emphasise the importance for Muslims to strive for something that is beneficial to others.³⁴ Dahlan employed the critical hermeneutics to interpret the Surah Al-Ma'un to instigate reform within the Muslim community.³⁵ This surah mentions that,

“Seest thou one who denies the Judgment (to come)? Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness) and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. So, woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, those who (want but) to be seen (of men), but refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs.”³⁶

Based on this Quranic interpretation, Dahlan established a novel synthesis of modern and traditional Islamic educational institution,

³³ Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah: A Reform Movement* (Yogyakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015); Zakiyuddin Baidhaw, and Azaki Khoiruddin, “The Core Ethos and the Progressive Spirit of Muhammadiyah Socio-Religious Movement,” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 13, 2 (2018): 27-41.

³⁴ Haedar Nashir, *Understanding the Ideology of Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015).

³⁵ Syamsul Arifin, Syafiq A. Mughni, and Moh Nurhakim, “The Idea of Progress: Meaning and Implications of Islam, Berkemajuan in Muhammadiyah,” *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, 2 (2022): 547-584.

³⁶ See Surah Al-Ma'un in Abdullah Yusuf Ali, translator. *The Holy Qur'an*. Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2000.

titled *Kweekschool Het de Koran* (Madrasah Mu'alimin Muhammadiyah).³⁷ This institution is an Islamic primary school (madrasah) that integrates the concepts of a modern Dutch school and traditional Pesantren. This institution aims to produce better militant Muslim cadres who have received both modernist and religious education of the highest quality. They would be the primary driving force behind the growth and evolution of Muslim civil society, a force that is prepared to engage in the struggle for the independence of the nation.

This was inspired from the founder's experience teaching religion at the *Kweekschool Het de Bible*, a primary school based on the principles of the Bible, which was owned by the Dutch colonial government.³⁸ His progressive outlook on the positive values of "Western" modernity was shaped by his involvement with the modernist political movements, Budi Oetomo and Sarekat Islam. In elaborating the concept of the "Western perspective with Islamic teachings" Dahlan was significantly influenced by progressive Muslim intellectuals from the Middle East, including Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Ridha.³⁹ All of the mentioned influencers have demonstrated ideological proclivities consistent with anti-oppression, anti-dehumanisation, and anti-colonialism of the West.

In addition to the establishment of a modernist Muslim educational institution, inspired by Al-Ma'un Theology, Dahlan initiated the wider programmes of the Alleviation of Public Miseries (PKO).⁴⁰ In the view of Dahlan, the Muhammadiyah movement

³⁷ Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Revealing the Neglected Missions: Some Comments on the Javanese Elements of Muhammadiyah Reformism," *Studia Islamika* 12, 1 (2005); Nadzrah Ahmad, "Indonesian Islam during the Reign of Colonialism (1600-1942): An Historical Account of Challenges and Responses towards the Dutch Policies (Islam Indonesia di Zaman Penjajahan (1600-1942): Cabaran dan Tindak Balas terhadap Dasar Belanda)," *Journal of Islam in Asia* 16, 1 (2019): 237-257.

³⁸ Alfian, Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University, 1989).

³⁹ Mohammad Hasan and Muhammad Taufiq, "Ahmad Dahlan and the Moderate, Humanist, and Non-Sectarian Islam," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 24 (2023): 100-107.

⁴⁰ Ghifari Yuristiadi, "Aktivisme Hoofdbestuur Muhammadiyah Bagian PKO di Yogyakarta Sebagai Representasi Gerakan Pelayanan Sosial Masyarakat Sipil (1920-1931)," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, 2 (2015): 195-219; Amelia Fauzia, "Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum: The Charitable Activism of

extends assistance to those in unfortunate circumstances, including the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised, irrespective of their social, cultural, and religious background. Accordingly, Muhammadiyah established the orphanage houses, health clinics, and philanthropic institutions.⁴¹

In this context, Dahlan employed the Quranic hermeneutics with a profound appreciation for the values of freedom and liberation. This kind of Islam (or Islamic thought), according to Dahlan is *Islam Berkemajuan* (progressive Islam).⁴² The practice of reflective and critical thought in the interpretation of Islamic scripture was alien to the mainstream tradition of religious exegesis within Muslim society at that time. His interpretation led to the initiation of societal reform in the fields of education, health, and philanthropy. His adherence to the faith (the Al-Maun) was manifested in his actions, which are aimed at social emancipation and the transformation of society to enhance the quality of life of all members of society around Yogyakarta.

Dahlan's innovative actions inspired by a progressive interpretation of the faith tend to not only challenge the religious tradition but also to erode its foundations. He was compelled to exact retribution for his efforts in the realm of socio-religious reform and transformation. Some local charismatic Muslim scholars had labelled Dahlan as an infidel due to his 'erroneous' application of Quranic hermeneutics, which could potentially destruct the purity of Muslim faith. Dahlan was designated as the "white Christian" (*Kristen Putih*) for his willingness to assist not only Muslim individuals in need, but also those of other faiths.⁴³

Muhammadiyah during the Colonial Period," *South East Asia Research* 25, 4 (2017): 379-394.

⁴¹ Hilman Latief, "Health Provision for the Poor: Islamic Aid and the Rise of Charitable Clinics in Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 18, 3 (2010): 503-553.

⁴² Muhamad Ali, "The Muhammadiyah's 47th Congress and 'Islam Berkemajuan'," *Studia Islamika* 22, 2 (2015): 377-386; Syamsul Arifin, Syafig A. Mughni, and Moh Nurhakim, "The Idea of Progress: Meaning and Implications of Islam Arifin, Berkemajuan in Muhammadiyah," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, 2 (2022): 547-584.

⁴³ Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Lakum dīnukum wa-liya dīnī: The Muhammadiyah's Stance towards Interfaith Relations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, 3 (2011): 329-342.

The Coherence of Muhammadiyah and JIMM's Ideology

The JIMM's mode of thinking is analogous to that of Muhammadiyah, indicating that both tend to strongly grasp the ideology of progressive Islam as the ideational combination of liberalisation and social liberation informed by the theological spirit of Islam. Both parties have consented to embrace the spirit of freedom and to advocate on behalf of the disadvantaged and marginalised. Nevertheless, JIMM attempts to provide a new perspective on the interpretation of existing concepts in order to make them more compatible with the current context of life. JIMM tries to reformulate the critical-transformative thought of Muhammadiyah by identifying new hermeneutical keys that are pertinent to the contemporary challenges they have confronted.⁴⁴ Thus, we arguably state that JIMM's ideology is rooted in the Muhammadiyah's ideological assertions.

JIMM reframes the concept of "Islam Berkemajuan" to become "Islam Progresif", which is a direct translation of the term "progressive Islam" in English. In addition, it transforms the "Al-Ma'un Theology" into the Muhammadiyah's theology of liberation. The sociological terms such as "the poor and the marginalised" which is understood as the *mustadhafin* in Arabic, are reformulated to become the neo-*mustadhafin*. These transformations are not a priori meaningless, primarily since the JIMM's activists attempt to intellectually contextualise the dated Muhammadiyah concepts to guarantee their relevance. Their discovery of hermeneutical keys represents the culmination of the efforts of Muhammadiyah young intellectuals in the contemporary context of life. These efforts have been guided by the ethical values of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as has been emphasised since the founding of Muhammadiyah. Consequently, the actual school of socio-religious thought of JIMM and Muhammadiyah is to affirm the ethical contextualisation of Islam, which is in accordance with the structure and system of social, economic, political, cultural, social psychology, and so on.

The JIMM's contextualisation is consistent with Tariq Ramadan's proposal to address the complexities of the temporal and special distinctions between the circumstances of the prophetic era of

⁴⁴ Moeslim Abdurrahman, "Munculnya Kesadaran Kritis Ber-Muhammadiyah: Sebuah Pengantar." In *Kembali ke al-Qur'an Menafsir Makna Zaman: Suara-suara Kaum Muda Muhammadiyah*, edited by Pradana Boy ZTF and M. Hilmi Faiq (Malang: UMM Press, 2004), p. ix.

Muhammad and the contemporary context.⁴⁵ The distinctions are based on the meanings, interpretations, languages, traditions, customs, cultures, societies, politics, and history. The Islamic revelation was revealed in a specific context. It was intended to solve the problems of the time and was conveyed through the intermediary of the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad. In a segment of a series of episodes of Islamic revelation, there is a dialectical relationship between the text (the Qur'an and Sunnah) and the context of human social life at that time. The dialectic between text and context is always informed by the divine purposes so-called *maqasid*. Each purpose (*maqsud*) is underpinned by moral values, teachings, and wisdom that address the challenges of life. According to Tariq, this is the essence of the global message of Islam.⁴⁶

It is challenging for any Muslim to grasp the global message of Islam without examining the intricate interplay between text and context in each instance of Islamic revelation. Consequently, an understanding of early Islamic history is of paramount importance. In addition, it is essential to have a comprehensive grasp of the intricacies of the various distances mentioned previously, to fully comprehend the content of the pages of early Islamic history. Tariq argues that this complexity must be addressed, as it will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the text, rather than relying on linguistic philosophy alone to interpret its meaning.⁴⁷ Forcing oneself to use linguistic skills alone leads to a yawning pit of scripturalism-textualism. The fruit that grows from the tree of intellectual repression is ignorance, incomprehension, superficiality, and stagnation, as well as a tendency to blindly follow for no apparent reason.

It does not end with the endeavour to find global values, goals, and messages, because it is suggested that Muslim intellectuals must understand the current social humanitarian situation which is no less complex. At the very least, the socio-political and cultural dimensions need to be better understood to implement the values, goals and global messages that have been achieved. Without the slightest diminution - especially the corruption of meaning - of dimension of the ethical values of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the process of contextualization is

⁴⁵ Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslim and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 23-24, 55-61.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

carried out in the right way and does not produce certain effects that are destructive. Thus, there are three important steps in contextualising ethico-moral Islam as the spirit of Muhammadiyah, namely: dialectics of text and historical context, discovery of global messages, and implementation or contextualisation.

To address this issue, JIMM proposes a strategy of contextualisation by emphasising three pillars, including hermeneutics, critical social theory, and new social movement (Abdurrahman 2004: xi). First, through hermeneutics as a tool of analysis, it is hoped that there will be a reproduction of the meaning of divine revelation manifested in the Qur'an, so that the meanings of the new era can then be critically considered with Qur'anic reflections. Second, by critical social theory as a tool for analysing social phenomena, it is hoped that it will be able to diagnose the existence of oppressive power that spreads to various fields and build counter-hegemonic force, which emphasises the consciousness of the oppressed and the importance of building a liberation theological perspective. Third, the new social movement is a manifestation of a different way of performing theology than the formal theological model. Theology in this context is a movement, so that, theology is a pedagogical work of humanity that can have a liberating character. In addition, this theology also requires to be supported by four important things that can change the level of intellectual consciousness, namely capital on the move, media on the move, people on the move, and revolutionary ideas to challenge the context of today's social life.

The Current Development of JIMM's Ideology

Despite its persistence espousal of the progressive Islam as the JIMM's ideology, this intellectuals' network has thus far responded to current issues in the domains of social, political, scientific and technological matters, based on its current congress. It has been argued that the JIMM's basis of thought is predominantly influenced by the tenets of liberalisation and social liberation in which manifested in the advanced notions of human rights, gender equality, religious harmony, universal access to education, environment stewardship, and caderisation.

The most recent JIMM's congress, which focused on Islamic thought and was titled "Muktamar Pemikiran Kaum Muda Muhammadiyah" was held on 22-24 December 2023 at the postgra-

duate building of the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta. The congress had two main objectives: to celebrate two decades of JIMM's journey and to formulate JIMM's future strategy. This congress, which was attended by a significant number of participants from the Millennial and Gen-Z generation, the majority of whom had graduated from undergraduate studies or were pursuing a master's degree, resulted in the formulation of strategic approaches to reinforce JIMM's position on the national and international stage. One of the congress participants, Rahmat expressed his profound admiration for the event and suggested that similar programmes be organised on a regular basis, ideally on an annual basis.⁴⁸ He posits that, "the more rapidly technology develops, the more rapidly JIMM must respond to emerging issues. Failure to do so could result in the questioning of JIMM's very existence and role in society."⁴⁹

Prior to participation in the JIMM's programme, participants were required to submit a brief essay on a topic of their choosing. These topics were selected by the organising committee and included the renewal of Indonesian Islamic thought, criticism of culture and Muslim societies, social and cultural issues, economics and welfare, knowledge and education, technology and innovation, the environment and ecology, and politics and geopolitics. They had presented and discussed their essays in front of JIMM selected panellists. Some prominent intellectual figures such as Muhadjir Effendy, Gunawan Budiyanto, Zuly Qodir, Jumaldi Alfi, M. Tafsir, Adib Sofia, Riki Dhamparan Putra, Makhfud Ikhwan, Ai Fatimah, Anisia Kumala, Riki Dhamparan Putra, Andar Nubowo, Rahmawati Husein, Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, Neni Nur Hayati, Hilman Latief, Hamzah Fansuri, Fajar Riza Ul Haq, Mohammad Rokib, Fauziah Mona Atalina, Tuti Alawiyah, Faris Al Fadhat, Satiti Shakuntala, Pradana Boy, Erik Taufani, Ilham Akhsanu Ridli, Deni W. Kurniawan, and Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Omar had also attended this programme.

At the conclusion of the JIMM's congress, JIMM activists reached a consensus on five key points related to significant issues and post-event follow-up plans. These included advocacy of human rights, gender equality, religious harmony, education for all, environmental

⁴⁸ Interview 4. Interview with Rahmat, Yogyakarta, 24 May 2024.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

stewardship, and capacity-building for JIMM's activists. These actions represent a collective commitment to address these matters.

The first issue concerns the strengthening of human rights protection and gender justice. This issue has two core points, along with detailed action plans for the first point. The first point is to intensify the role of female ulama in Muhammadiyah. This will be realised by producing female ulama figures in society and female academics who have an expertise in the Qur'anic science (*al-Qur'an wa 'ulumuhu*). The second point is to encourage progressive legal products to uphold human rights.

The second is an issue pertaining to the interrelationship between religion, identity, and human rights in contemporary discourse. This issue has four core follow-up plan points, namely (1) Mainstreaming the spirit of religious moderation through interfaith dialogue. (2) The recognition that all human entities have the right to live and recognise all other identities without exception. (3) Demonstrating self-confidence and self-responsibility as a Muhammadiyah cadre, and the courage to engage in public academic discourse. (4) Committing to decisions and being responsive to human rights and identity politics issues. This commitment can be implemented by understanding the text and the contextual side of the text.

The third is an issue related to the educational and cultural revolution. This issue is comprised of two points, accompanied by two detailed follow-up plans for each point. The first point is to make serious investments in Muhammadiyah's educational progress through the formulation of regulations and the establishment of institutions serving as pilot projects. This objective will be achieved by formulating adaptive learning materials based on local wisdom and the dynamics of the times, as well as encouraging the appropriateness of salaries for Muhammadiyah teachers up to the equivalent of the local minimum wage. Furthermore, the concept of progressive education will be encouraged, which extends beyond the formal education level. This objective will be achieved by establishing a secure environment for children, encompassing their mental, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional well-being, while also providing alternative educational opportunities in areas where equal access to education is challenging to attain.

Fourth is an issue related to economic transformation towards equality and environmental sustainability. This issue comprises four follow-up plan points, namely: (1) Encouraging young cadres, members, and Muhammadiyah sympathisers to be actively involved in Muhammadiyah activities; (2) Rescuing the climate crisis and digitising the Muhammadiyah Climate Center Information; and (3) Encouraging equalisation of the economic system in Muhammadiyah, digitalisation of the economy, and improving Muhammadiyah's economic laboratories/incubators to achieve equality and sustainability. (3) The encouragement of the equalisation of the economic system within the Muhammadiyah, the digitalisation of the economy, and the improvement of the economic laboratories/incubators of the Muhammadiyah in order to achieve equality and sustainability. (4) The encouragement of the reinterpretation of the meaning of Islamic economics towards social welfare.

Fifth is an issue related to the caderisation of JIMM. This issue has two important points to follow up on. Firstly, it is necessary to demand that early generation JIMM always provide maximum and quality mentorship to the new generation of JIMM. Secondly, it is important to maintain good communication between JIMM activists.

The response of JIMM activists, encapsulated in a five-point declaration and its subsequent post-conference commentary, can be regarded as an exemplar of the prospective style of Muhammadiyah intellectualism. The future of Muhammadiyah, particularly in the domain of intellectualism, hinges on the contributions of young Muhammadiyah individuals, particularly those who have joined JIMM.⁵⁰ The Three Pillars of JIMM, namely hermeneutics, critical social science, and new social movement, are in alignment with the spirit of the Muhammadiyah movement, which emphasises the vision of Islamic progressiveness, social liberation, and activism.⁵¹

The points of the JIMM declaration above seek to address the challenges currently facing Muhammadiyah, as well as those that may arise in the future. These challenges relate to social and community issues, including education, culture, gender equality, economics, religion, and human rights. The declaration reflects JIMM's mode of thought, which has been a fundamental aspect of the JIMM movement

⁵⁰ Hasnan Bachtiar, Haeri Fadly, and Moh Nurhakim. "Visi Kosmopolitanisme Islam di Lingkungan Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah."

⁵¹ Ibid.

since its inception. This mode of thought is based on the mission of social liberation. This social liberation is interpreted as an effort to build an intellectual civilisation that favours social justice and humanity, especially for the most disadvantaged. According to the JIMM thinking paradigm, Islam not only provides space for freedom of thought, but also acts liberatively in the face of shackled human social life.

However, beyond the ideas, commitments and intellectual engagements resulted from the 2023 JIMM's Congress, the most current crucial issue of electoral politics implicating internal political dynamics of Muhammadiyah, we claim, has never been analysed. The involvement of some senior members of the JIMM in the 2024 Presidential Election⁵² provoked critical responses from conservative groups within this largest Muslim modernist organisation. Conservative activists, especially those supporting Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, considered those JIMM's members – who ride in the same political carriage as the candidate supported by Jokowi's pluralist-technocrat political force (Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming) – to be their political and ideological adversaries. Their consideration is based on their belief that both Jokowi and Prabowo (who joined the cabinet as Jokowi's Defence Minister) were enemies of their 'imagined' ummah. At facing their criticisms, JIMM activists tend to refrain from responding and even ignore such comments, as they perceive these individuals to be a politically insignificant force. One of the JIMM's senior members, Andar Nubowo (2024) states that

“The involvement of Muhammadiyah cadres in practical politics represents a progressive phenomenon, as they apply the diaspora of da'wa, previously focused on the pulpit of the mosque, to the domain of electoral politics. Those who are not pro-pluralism (and anti-JIMM) are to be regarded as normal, given the diversity of thought within Muhammadiyah. As long as there are still dynamics of thought, they do not represent a threat.”⁵³

⁵² Two members of the JIMM, Raja Juli Antoni and Fajar Riza Ul Haq, along with Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin and Pradana Boy Zulian, participated in a recent event pertaining to the 2019 and 2024 Elections.

⁵³ Interview 5. Interview with Andar Nubowo, Jakarta, 27 November 2024.

Accordingly, the analysis of the data reveals that the ideological conflicts (progressive versus conservative) within Muhammadiyah⁵⁴ intertwined with the context of *realpolitik* contestation are still ongoing. The implication that can be drawn from this analysis is that these conservative groups are highly likely no longer perceived as a threat to national pluralism in general, or to JIMM's emancipatory progressivism, nevertheless. It is because Prabowo-Gibran have won the contestation, and some JIMM activists have gained strategic positions in national elite formations. However, the extent to which the fluctuation in the threat levels of Islamist conservatism within Muhammadiyah remains to be observed.

Conclusion

There are no recent studies on JIMM, other than to highlight it as the 'liberal' wing of Muhammadiyah, which promotes socially progressive ideas such as pluralism and liberal thinking in Islamic theology that discusses the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Looking at JIMM's recent agenda, especially in relation to the Congress on Islamic Thought held in Yogyakarta a year ago, we have indeed observed an important development in JIMM's ideology, progressive Islam. JIMM, which has always been known as a movement of liberal intellectualism, turns out, on closer examination, to combine liberalism with its ideological inclination towards emancipatory social ideas. Thus, we find that while JIMM insistently stands on the ideological foundation of progressive Islam, it is underpinned by the very important idea of transformative Islam as forged by its intellectual mentor, Moeslim Abdurrahman.

We argue that JIMM's progressive Islamic ideology combines liberalisation in religious thought (including theology and Qur'anic interpretation) and social liberation to ensure that the spirit of freedom championed by JIMM activists contributes to social transformation agendas that benefit the poor and marginalised. The construction of JIMM's ideological thought is shaped by the surrounding intellectual community. In addition, the social history and intellectualism of Muhammadiyah - the organisation survives into its second century - is also a significant factor in colouring JIMM's ideological tendencies. Put

⁵⁴ Ridho Al-Hamdi, "Political Consciousness of Muhammadiyah: Historical Trajectories and Future," *Studia Islamika* 29, 3 (2022): 451-484.

differently, there is consistency between the progressive Islamic ideology of JIMM and Muhammadiyah.

The various evolutions in JIMM's ideological thinking, especially the consensus among its activists - who declare that they will continue to work for human rights, gender justice, religious harmony, universal access to education, protection of the environment and preparation of a better future generation - show that JIMM is responding to the changing context of life, including the various challenges it poses.

Hence, if we understand that "It may be stated that the peculiar nature of political knowledge, as contrasted with the 'exact' sciences, arises out of the inseparability...of knowledge from interest and motivation,"⁵⁵ JIMM's ideology of progressive Islam is its utopian interest and motivation, which respect both freedom of thought and involvement in the agenda of social liberation. Accordingly, as a progressive wing of the intellectual movement within Muhammadiyah, it is an exaggerated response to label JIMM, which is on the side of the poor, destitute, wretched and marginalised, as a rebel gang. It is worth noting that, perhaps, another crucial challenge JIMM needs to pay attention to is the critical aspirations, albeit insignificant, reflected by conservative right-wing groups within Muhammadiyah, especially when ideological tensions arise in the context of electoral politics. []

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⁵⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1998), p. 170.

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