Weaving Modernity in Salafism
A Comparative Study of Muhammadiyah and Izala Movements

Muhammad Muhammad Nasir

WEAVING MODERNITY IN SALAFISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MUHAMMADIYAH AND IZALA MOVEMENTS

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Abstract: This study examines the parallels between Muhammadiyah, the oldest and largest modernist Islamic movement in Indonesia, and Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa Ikamatus Sunnah, also known as Izala, the most significant Islamic reformist movement in West Africa, which originated in northern Nigeria. Concurrently, these groups share a common focus on socio-religious reform and a commitment to puritan Islam. It is undeniable that various Islamic movements/groups have existed and continue to exist outside the Arab world, but relatively few studies have focused on Islamic groups operating in West Africa or Southeast Asia, for example.

This study highlights the importance of examining Islamic movements in regions beyond the Arab world, particularly in West Africa and Southeast Asia. The large Muslim populations in Indonesia and Nigeria offer a rich context for exploring the dynamics of Islamic movements. The research reveals, despite the groups' Salafi-inspired ideologies, they mediate socio-religious reform, indicating the modernising rather than conservative aspects of Indonesian and Nigerian Islam. Within their respective contexts, these groups represent forms of reconstructed alternative modernity, or distinctly Islamic interpretations of modernity, which they define through executing their reform activities within Islamic frameworks. They navigate the complexities of modernity by balancing adherence to traditional values with adaptation to contemporary developments. Notably, the study is driven by a belief that comparative studies across different Salafi-inspired groups in distinct contexts could provide broader understanding of the evolving relationship between Salafism and modernity. The study identifies common patterns and variations in how these Salafi-oriented groups reconcile their ideological commitments with the complexities of modernity. The approach employed for this study is qualitative, involving retrospective observation of the Izala case, document analysis and interactions with some members of Muhammadiyah.

Keywords: *Indonesia, Izala, modernity, Muhammadiyah, Nigeria, Salafism, tajdid/reform*

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INTRODUCTION

Following the 9/11 tragedy, researchers from various disciplines became attracted to studying Islamic movements. Moreover, the Arab Spring further reinvigorated scholarly interests in the political transformations across the Muslim world,[1] paying more attention to Islamic groups in the Arab world. This is understandable, given that Islamism manifests more clearly in the Arab world since it hosts significant Islamic movements.[2] Yet it is undeniable that various Islamic movements/groups have existed and continue to exist outside the Arab world, and it is apparent that less attention has been paid to those Islamic groups operating in West Africa or Southeast Asia, for example. Thus, this comparative study traverses the geographical landscapes of Southeast Asia and West Africa, examining the dynamics of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia and JIBWIS (Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa Ikamatus Sunnah) or 'Izala' in Nigeria. Basically, these organisations are influential reformist Islamic groups with many followers, deriving their ideology from Salafism and even Wahhabism.[3] It is crucial to stress that thorough distinction between the Salafism and Wahhabism is not desirable since, in a broad sense, there will always be intersection.

Salafism originates from the term '*al-salaf al-salih*' (the pious forefathers), which refers to the first three generations of Muslims who witnessed the birth of Islam and are considered as examples to follow for future Muslims. Salafism urges a return to the pristine purity of Islam, putting forward renewed emphasis on the study of Islam's fundamental sources: the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. It rejects *taqlid* or "blind" following to the four canonical law schools (*madhhab*); instead, it accepts *ijtihad* (individual interpretation) within strict parameters. In Islam, the Qur'ān is considered God's direct message, while the life of Prophet Muḥammad is viewed as the ideal embodiment of the Qur'ān's teachings. Therefore, Salafism is not only scripturalist but also literalist, emphasising that Muslims should model their behaviour after the pious predecessors whose acts and thoughts have been documented in Islamic texts.[4]

Wahhabism, on the other hand, is a pre-modern movement founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). He felt that Muslims had become ignorant of their religion and were living in a condition of ignorance (*Jahiliya period*), which he considered to be the cause of Islam's spiritual and political decline since its golden period. He thought the only way to achieve salvation and restore past glory was to reaffirm total monotheism and belief in God's Oneness (*tawhid*) as the foundation of the Islamic faith (*aqida*). This required a return to the Qur'ān and *sunna*. To attain this pristine purity, he condemned rituals that involved

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[1]   Kikue Ham, "Conservative Turn? Religion, State and Conflict in Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs* 87, no. 4 (2014).

[2]   Nazih N. Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (Routledge, 1993).

[3]   I recognise the diversity of Salafi movements and refrain from making broad generalisations about their operations across different contexts. Such generalisations can be misleading and lead to unfounded claims. For instance, Wiktorowicz distinguishes between reformist and jihadi Salafis – Woodward et al., "Salafi Violence and Sufi Tolerance? Rethinking Conventional Wisdom," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 6 (2018). However, despite the various labels applied to these groups, their common thread lies in their adherence to puritan or, in most cases, fundamental Islamic principles.

[4]   Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199333431.001.0001.

intermediaries between humans and God, such as veneration of saints' graves, sacred trees, astrology and soothsayers. Like classical Salafism, he regarded these practices as associating partners with God (*shirk*) or engaging in idolatry and polytheism, akin to the form of religion that prevailed in Mecca before Muḥammad began preaching Islam (*Jahiliya period*). These practices were regarded as repugnant innovations (*bid'a*).[5]

The above implies, if Wahhabism differed from early and modern Salafism in form and degree, it contrasted with the quietist stance of Ibn Hanbal and leaned more towards the activist approach of Ibn Taymiyya. If compared to modern reformist Salafism, it also differed in content from the late 19th century Salafi reformist movement in the Arab Middle East led by thinkers such as Egyptian Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), Persian Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) and Syrian Rashid Rida (1865–1935). Nonetheless, the fundamental difference between these two movements lies in their origins: the first emerged as a response to the Western cultural, political and economic threat but regarded the West as a model for emulation, whereas Wahhabism emerged purely as a revivalist movement.[6] The debates regarding the difference between Salafism and Wahhabism remains contested among scholars. However, the viewpoint taken in this study is to use them interchangeably. Furthermore, in linking Salafism and Wahhabism, Noorhaidi Hasan maintains that Salafism can be seen as a reconstituted Wahhabism, distinguished by its preoccupation with creed and moral concerns, such as solid monotheism, Divine attributes, purifying Islam from accretions, anti-Sufism and the development of the individual's moral integrity.[7] Hence, in this study, Muhammadiyah and Izala are often referred to as "Salafi-inspired" groups, although practically their approach differs from the traditional understanding of Salafism.

The research areas were chosen since both countries are significant and strategically important because they host some of the world's largest Muslim populations.[8] Islamic groups have considerably impacted the socio-religious development of these nations. Remarkably, Muhammadiyah has expanded its operations to several countries, including Malaysia and Thailand.[9] Izala,[10] mostly translated as the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition/*sunna*, is the most significant single Islamic reform movement in West Africa with its inception roots in Nigeria. Its presence extends beyond Nigeria to the bordering nations like Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon.[11]

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[5]   Ibid.
[6]   Ibid.
[7]   Noorhaidi Hasan, "Salafism in Indonesa: Transnational Islam, Violent Activism, and Cultural Resistance," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Routledge, 2018).
[8]   According to wisevoter.com, Indonesia, with 231 million Muslims, has the world's biggest Muslim population with 86.7%, while Nigeria, with 97 million Muslims, has one of the highest Muslim populations in Africa with 49%. "Number of Muslims in the World," wisevoter, accessed June 10, 2023, https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/number-of-muslims-in-the-world/.
[9]   Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Muhammadiyah," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, 2019, http://www.oxfordislamic studies.com/article/opr/t343/e0296.
[10]   This organisation is commonly known as "Izala" in popular vernacular. Its adherents are referred to as "Yan Izala" in Hausa language, which translates as "followers of Izala."
[11]   Ramzi Ben Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Sharīʿa Re-Implementation" (PhD diss., Universität Bayreuth, 2011), 379.

Muhammadiyah and Izala are prominent Islamic movements that have exerted significant intellectual and socio-political influence in their respective countries. They emerged with a core mission to purify Islam from what the founders perceived as syncretic practices that deviated from the core tenets of Islam.[12] This aligns with the observation made by some scholars that syncretistic religious traditions may gradually give way to more normative, text-oriented forms of religiosity and ultimately to modern reformist interpretations of Islam.[13] Reformist movements are always more likely to have actors who make that happen. They tend to see the change as unidirectional, moving toward more conformity with normative, text-oriented religious practice because syncretism is essentially the outcome of insufficient knowledge of Islam's textual tradition.[14] Relatively, these groups offer a critical perspective on the syncretic practices of some Sufi groups, promoting a more text-oriented approach to Islam.[15] To align with my discussion in this study, early proponents of Muhammadiyah and Izala believed the localisation of Islam departed from the core tenets of Islam; hence, they considered it divergence from the teachings of Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions. This act is commonly referred to as "bid'a"[16] and irrational. Consequently, these practices are unbelief that negates Islamic identity, a practice known as *takfir*.[17] This perspective has contributed to the ideological underpinnings of Salafi radicalism.[18] Here, I argue that the use of harsh *takfir* rhetoric to criticise Islamic syncretism is more prevalent among Izala adherents. In contrast, Muhammadiyah generally refrains from *takfir* discourse and embraces the values of pluralism, as evident in their school texts. Additionally, Muhammadiyah demonstrates a greater degree of acceptance towards local culture compared to many other Salafi groups. This is exemplified by their longstanding close ties with the Sufi-oriented Sultanate of Yogyakarta, despite their ideological differences.[19]

Muhammadiyah and Izala have had internal issues, resulting in some divisions. But in essence, one important relational aspect between them is that they developed through a Salafi-oriented Islam. I will not delve into details regarding their divisions since that is another story, but I will shed light on that aspect to show that these movements are not absolute phenomena and their policies constantly change. Future studies should replicate this study and discover more about the factions.

In Izala's case, following its split into two branches in Jos and Kaduna State Nigeria (Izala 1 and Izala 2 in common vernacular), each group retains the original full name and considers

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12   Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 65-74.
13   Zoltán Szombathy, "A Trust from the Ancestors: Islamic Ethics and Local Tradition in a Syncretistic Ritual in East-Central Sulawesi," *Welt Des Islams* 61, no. 4 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-61020004.
14   Ibid.
15   Woodward et al., "Salafi Violence and Sufi Tolerance?"
16   A religiously reprehensible innovation (*bid'a*). Non-Salafi Muslims distinguish between commendable and reprehensible innovation. See Woodward et al., "Salafi Violence and Sufi Tolerance?"
17   Pronouncement of someone as an unbeliever and placing them outside the community of believers.
18   Ibid.
19   Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises Over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town*, 2nd ed. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012).

itself to be the actual movement, continuing to operate as a modern society.[20] Izala's split is mainly based on differing interpretations of the Maliki school of thought to which they adhere. Nonetheless, there will be interplay between the two in my discussion in this research. On the other hand, divisions within Muhammadiyah are primarily based on solid religious inclinations among its members and differences in interpretation of the sources from which they derive their teachings and philosophies. Although Muhammadiyah has been identified as a modernist and moderate Muslim group, anthropologists and analysts have discovered that some members, such as Murni (puritan Muhammadiyah), Munu (Muhammadiyah-Nahdlatul Ulama or traditionalist Muhammadiyah), Musa (Muhammadiyah-Salafy or Salafy Muhammadiyah), and Mulib (Muhammadiyah liberal or liberal Muhammadiyah), have different religious views from what the group propagates.[21] As a result, there has been a constant tug of war between these groups, especially in recent decades, resulting in ideological swings.[22]

Following several observations and surveys of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, as well as paying careful attention to its trends, and a retrospective observation of Izala and its trends in Nigeria, I discovered several parallels between the two groups, including the fact that they both place a high focus on socio-religious reform as well as the commitment to core Islamic ideals or "puritanism."[23] The position and functions of these Islamic groups towards reforming Islam in their respective countries have played a significant role in the transformation of socio-religious structures throughout Indonesian and Nigerian history from the pre-Independence era to the present. Thus, comparative studies across different Salafi-inspired groups in distinct contexts could provide broader understanding of the evolving relationship between Salafism and modernity. The study of the two groups is crucial in providing a new perspective in the discourse of Islamic reformist movements by unveiling the parallels between the two influential reformist groups in Southeast Asia and West Africa. Furthermore, it reveals common patterns and variations in how these Salafi-oriented groups manage their commitments to their ideologies while engaging with the complexities of modernity.

In view of the aforementioned problem statement, research significance and objectives, the research question posed in the context of Muhammadiyah and Izala is: How does their mediation of social and religious reform reflect a modernising approach, despite drawing ideological inspiration from behaviourally conservative Salafism, which is known to intensely reject the Western trajectory of modernity? I argue that Muhammadiyah and Izala

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[20]   Shaykh Abdullahi Bala Lau commands the Kaduna faction with its headquarters now at the capital city of Nigeria, Abuja, while Shaykh Sani Yahya Jingir leads the Jos faction and maintains Jos as its headquarters.

[21]   Ahmad Najib Burhani, "The Ideological Shift of Muhammadiyah," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 8, no. 1 (2006).

[22]   According to scholars such as van Bruinessen, Muhammadiyah is sensitive to ideological transformations, as seen by the movements between liberal and Puritan groups during the Jakarta (2000), Malang (2005) and Makassar (2015) congresses. Each faction attempts to steer Muhammadiyah in conflicting paths that match their interests. Martin van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the "Conservative Turn"* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).

[23]   Woodward et al., "Salafi Violence and Sufi Tolerance?"

actively seek to modernise their socio-religious activities while adhering to Islamic principles, thereby challenging the prevailing perception of Salafism as inherently conservative. These movements embody a form of reconstructed Muslim modernity, or in Kane's terminology, "alternative modernity," showcasing their ability to reconcile their Salafist convictions with contemporary issues and developments. To understand how these organisations perceive modernity in their reform efforts, I use Kane's approach/ model of Islamic reform movements. This suggests that Islamic reform movements represent a unique form of modernity, distinct from Western ideas of modernity, generally regarded as normative modernity.[24]

Drawing upon my personal experience and insights into the Nigerian Izala, I have determined that a comparative study through retrospective observation is the most suitable approach for this study. This methodology entails examining past events, activities, and observed interactions. Document analysis was employed to scrutinize relevant materials, providing a deeper understanding of the groups' histories, ideologies, organizational structures, and approaches to socio-religious reform. This process also yielded valuable insights into the dynamics of their reform efforts and the rationale behind classifying them as Salafi-inspired groups. This multi-method approach enabled triangulation of findings and a more comprehensive assessment of the subject matter.

Next, I examined the literature on Muhammadiyah's and Izala's histories, considering their distinct contexts, to build background information. Then I explored comparative studies of these two organisations but discovered a dearth of such research. As a result, I present a fresh, compelling comparative approach to the subject. Second, I describe their attempts to promote "true" Islam free of syncretism and local cultural traditions and point out some of their religious texts. Third, I discuss the characteristics of their ideological frameworks and parallels. Fourth, I focus on their approaches to reform while mediating between modernity and their ideological stance, as well as how their mediation of socio-religious transformation reconstructs and symbolises the modernising, not the backward or conservative sides of Indonesian and Nigerian Islam. Also, some theoretical perspectives in that regard are highlighted. And the last section culminates with a conclusion section.

THE EVOLUTION OF MUHAMMADIYAH AND IZALA

Muhammadiyah, which literally means "followers of Muhammad," is one of Indonesia's two largest local Islamic organisations. It was established in 1912 in the city of Yogyakarta and emerged in a decade that witnessed the rise of civic and political organisations in Indonesia on a national scale. Some analysts consider this decade to be the beginning of civic groups in Indonesia and the start of the nationalist struggle.[25] Muhammadiyah was founded by Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923), a religious official at the Sultan's court in the Yogyakarta

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[24]   Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*, vol. 1 of *Islam in Africa* (Brill, 2003).
[25]   Muhammad Fuad, "Civil Society in Indonesia: The Potential and Limits of Muhammadiyah," *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 17, no. 2 (2002), https://doi.org/10.1355/sj17-2a.

region.[26] According to certain accounts, Ahmad Dahlan was also a preacher (*khatib*; Friday sermon giver) at the great mosque of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta.[27] That earned him the religious honorary epithet "*kyai*."[28] Ahmad Dahlan was not only a religious scholar but also one of the frontiers of civil organisations during that time, whose ideological context in which he established the Muhammadiyah organisation was a combination of Western and Islamic reformist ideas as the basis for his activities.[29] The establishment of Muhammadiyah was primarily the result of an effort to cleanse Javanese Islam from a mixture of heterodox local customs and beliefs among other narratives that will be further explored in the subsequent discussions.[30] It started with the main aim of addressing what its proponents perceived as traditional Islam or religious syncretism with cultural practices. That is why, besides being characterised as modernist Islam, Muhammadiyah has also been described as Calvinist Islam, Protestant Islam, Puritan Islam and reformist Islam.[31]

Nonetheless, some narratives emphasise that the establishment of Muhammadiyah was in response to a complex set of challenges faced by the Muslim community in Indonesia. Various scholars, including Mukti Ali, as mentioned by Haedar Nashir,[32] have highlighted different aspects of the background that influenced the creation of Muhammadiyah. These factors include the contamination of Islamic religious beliefs and practices, as mentioned, the inefficiency of the existing religious education system, the increased activities of Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and a somewhat apathetic or even humiliating perspective from intellectuals towards Islam. Considering these circumstances, Muhammadiyah's mission and orientation were multifaceted, aiming to purify Islam in Indonesia from the influence and practices of syncretism, reformulate Islamic doctrine into a modern perspective, revise Islamic teaching and education, and defend and protect Islam from outside attacks and influences. The establishment of Muhammadiyah can be seen as a response to the challenges faced by the Muslim community, with the goal of revitalising and reforming Islamic practices and teachings in the Indonesian context at that time.

I contend that the intellectual and ideological development of many reformists Islamic groups outside of the Arab world is often influenced by external factors. In the case of Muhammadiyah, its inception bears a significant connection to the Egyptian reform movement spearheaded by Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905). During his visit to Mecca in 1890, Dahlan became influenced by modernist Islamic ideas, which led him to believe the backwardness of Javanese Muslims was due to the status of Islam in Java. He advocated for a return to the pure teachings of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, promoting independent reasoning

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[26] van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam*.
[27] Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises Over the Banyan Tree*.
[28] A titled for a learned man in Islam, *alim\ulama* often head a *pondok pesantren*, a traditional Islamic school in the Indonesian archipelago.
[29] Fuad, "Civil Society in Indonesia."
[30] Nakamura's concept of "on-going Islamization" describes a process where many Muslims find current religious conditions unsatisfactory and actively work to adhere to what they see as the orthodox teachings of Islam. This self-driven re-Islamisation emphasises ritual adherence as well as a genuine commitment to fulfilling Islamic moral and ethical principles. It is often linked to Islamic reform movements.
[31] van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam.*
[32] Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah: A Reform Movement* (Muhammadiyah University Press, 2016).

(*ijtihad*) over blind obedience (*taqlid*). He implemented reforms such as using vernacular languages in sermons and religious teachings, and establishing a modern school system for boys and girls, including religious and secular subjects.[33] Although Abduh came up with the idea, Dahlan put it into action. Rationalisation and modernisation are two important terms frequently appearing in Muhammadiyah's efforts to improve religious affairs.[34] When Ahmad Dahlan founded Muhammadiyah, he envisioned it upholding the purpose of *amr bil ma'aruf wan nahi anil munkar*[35] and ensuring that Islam (and Muhammadiyah) would bring about *rahmatan lil 'alamin*[36].[37]

Dahlan realised the consequences of strongly opposing Islamic syncretism in Java from the start, even though the newly formed organisation proclaimed that its goal was to rationalise traditional practices and modernise the social system. Logically, this signalled a reform agenda aimed at challenging syncretic practices and Javanese society's dominant feudal and aristocratic structure, with the *kraton* (royal palace) at its core. As a result, Muhammadiyah initially presented an ideal connection with Java's syncretic Islam, but subsequently modified its stance toward local culture, displaying ambiguity, disbelief and resentment. Long-term intellectual exchanges, foreign influences and internal reasons, such as the founding of Majlis Tarjih in 1927 and the Nineteenth Congress of Muhammadiyah in Bukittinggi in 1930, as well as changes in the sense of Javanese identity, contributed to the transition.[38]

By the end of the 1920s, Muhammadiyah had established branches in nearly every major city and town on Java. At the beginning of the late 1920s, the movement spread to the outlying islands of the Netherlands East Indies. Muhammadiyah rose to become one of the most prominent religious groups in the Dutch colony within a quarter-century of its founding. It grew throughout the 1950s and 1960s, surviving the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) and Independence Revolution (1945–1949).[39] At first, the organisation was intended only for people residing in Java. But, since 1921, it has expanded its operation all over the Indonesian archipelago. Moreover, the organisation has expanded to several countries, including Malaysia and Thailand, claiming over 30 million members and sympathisers.[40]

While Muhammadiyah's socioreligious dynamics have developed over time, primarily concentrated on religious and social reforms, its most conspicuous activities have been in

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33   Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises Over the Banyan Tree*.
34   Burhani, "Muhammadiyah."
35   The phrase "*amr bil ma'aruf*" refers to the act of promoting good, which can be done through various means, such as education, advocacy and social activism. The phrase "*nahi anil munkar*" refers to the act of preventing evil, which can be done through various means, such as speaking out against injustice, reporting wrongdoing, and taking legal action. It is Islamic law and ethics concept that serves as a call to action to all Muslims to work together to make the world a better place.
36   Meaning: 'global peace' as upheld by most Muhammadiyah adherents. Generally translated as "mercy for all creations."
37   Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, "Muhammadiyah, Local Politics and Local Identity in Kotagede," *Sojourn* 21, no. 2 (2006), https://doi.org/10.1355/SJ21-2F.
38   Burhani, "The Ideological Shift of Muhammadiyah."
39   Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises Over the Banyan Tree*.
40   Burhani, "Muhammadiyah."

education and social work. Muhammadiyah is not a newcomer to the educational arena. Since its inception in 1912, the organisation has prioritised education as part of its social mission and has been a leader in Islamic education reform.[41] Today it has established numerous schools, hospitals and orphanages. Muhammadiyah schools teach primarily modern subjects; religious instruction takes only a modest place and uses Indonesian textbooks, not in Arabic texts.

On another hand, Izala was established in the late 1970s in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. It was founded to address what the founders perceived as deviant practice of Islam. Like Indonesian Muhammadiyah, it emphasises reforming Islamic principles, strict adherence to the Qur'ān and *sunna*, and rejecting religious innovations (*bid'a*).[42] Its followers are referred to as 'Yan Izala' in the Hausa language. The debate over who founded the organisation, between Shaykh Ismail Idris (d. 2000) and his teacher Shaykh Abubakar Mahmood Gumi (1922–1992), remains heated even among Izala adherents; however, my examination of relevant literature and accounts[43] leads me to a clear stance.

Gumi, I presume, originated the notion of purifying Islam by strongly opposing the Sufi order at that time and their practices of what he viewed as syncretism in Islam, but Ismail systematised and institutionalised Izala. Idris followed Gumi's scriptural conservatism by propagating a solid literalist interpretation of *tawhid*, teaching that worship and adoration should be directed alone to God and not via any intermediary. This is similar to Salafi thought's literalist understanding of *tawhid*, as understood in Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's thoughts (780–855) and his subsequent Salafi luminaries like Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and Muhammad b. Abdul-Wahhab (1703–1792). Idris upholds the Salafi concept, which states that seeking blessings from angels, saints and righteous individuals and embarking on pilgrimage to their tombs amounts to polytheism.[44] Gumi's critical approach toward Sufism on 'Radio Kaduna' and his writings (in Hausa and Arabic) against the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya were significant in the eventual development of Izala.[45]

Gumi was a prominent author of local texts used by Idris in the early years of Izala, who went to local mosques and people's gatherings to teach what Gumi had written, particularly his severe opposition to Sufism. Idris was more expressive of Gumi's teachings than Gumi. Until today, Izala preachers have continued to use Gumi's literature in their preaching. The exegesis written by Gumi, titled *Radd al-adhhan "ila ma'ani al-Qur'an* (The Intelligent Reply Concerning the Meanings of the Qur'ān), is taught to the audience in most of the

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[41]   Yanwar Pribadi, "Sekolah Islam (Islamic Schools) as Symbols of Indonesia's Urban Muslim Identity," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 10, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2021.15.

[42]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."

[43]   For example, Roman Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria," *Choice Reviews* 35, no. 2 (1997), https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.35-1046; Muhammad S. Umar "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s-1990s," *Africa Today* 48, no. 2 (2001), https://doi.org/10.2979/AFT.2001.48.2.126; Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria*; Amara "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."

[44]   Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria*.

[45]   Ramzi Ben Amara, "Sharīʿa in Africa Today," in *Sharīʿa in Africa Today*, ed. John A. Chesworth and Franz Kogelmann, vol. 15 of *Islam in Africa* (Brill, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004262126.

Ramadan *tafsir* sessions held in Izala mosques, especially at the grand mosque of Sultan Bello in North Kaduna state, where Gumi first started his formal preaching sessions.[46]

Despite extensive research on Muhammadiyah and Izala in their respective contexts, there remains a gap in literature that delves into the potential constraints that emerge from reconciling Salafi-inspired ideologies with the pursuit of modernity within Islamic reformist organizations especially in west Africa and Southeast Asia. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining the situations in Indonesia and Nigeria, by determining the qualities of Salafi ideologies that oppose the Western trajectory of modernity. The study explores how Muhammadiyah and Izala execute their socio-religious reforms, which reflect a modernizing viewpoint while deriving their ideological stance from Salafism. The research aims to comprehend how these organizations, in their pursuit of modernity, reconstruct an alternative or Islamic modernity.

THEORETICAL TOOLS IN UNDERSTANDING MUHAMMADIYAH'S AND IZALA'S CONCEPT OF MODERNITY

In this study, two theories have been considered – Islamic modernism and social movement theory – which initially seemed to be suitable for the study's context. However, it became evident these theories were insufficient to fully capture the dynamics of Muhammadiyah and Izala. I will elaborate on the criticisms in this regard.

Social movement theory suggests that social movements emerge when individuals with common interests and grievances unite in an organised manner to drive social change.[47] In the context of reform movements in Islam, these movements often seek to return to the original teachings of Islam and reform Islamic societies, driven by a sense of urgency and desire for rapid change.[48]

Critics of social movement theory argue that it excessively emphasises material resources in explaining the birth of social movements. This approach, they contend, overlooks the role of cultural and ideological factors and their dynamics in shaping social movements.[49] In addition, some scholars criticise the theory's inability to account for why some social movements succeed while others fail, as it tends to concentrate on internal dynamics without adequately considering external factors such as political institutions, economic conditions and cultural norms. Furthermore, it has been criticised for its inability to accommodate the

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[46]   During my stay in Kaduna state, Nigeria, in 2022, I had the opportunity to attend a series of Ramadan *tafsir* sessions in Sultan Bello. These sessions were conducted by Shaykh Ahmad Mahmood Gumi, the biological son of the late Shaykh Abubakar Mahmood Gumi.

[47]   Rita Viké, "New Social Movements: Theories and Approaches," in *Rural Economic Developments and Social Movements: A New Paradigm* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

[48]   Ira M. Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Historical Paradigms," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 40, no. 4 (2009).

[49]   Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon, "Movement-Relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism," *Social Movement Studies* 4, no. 3 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1080/14742830500329838.

diversity of social movements and their objectives.[50] Social movement theory is not always embraced by the movements it aims to elucidate. The reason for this lies in the perceived lack of utility from the perspective of activists.[51]

Islamic modernism, as the second theory and closest to the context of this study, seeks to harmonise Islamic beliefs with modern values such as democracy, civil rights, rationality, equality and progress. Emerging in response to European colonialism in the mid-19th century,[52] this movement aims to bring modern values like democracy, rights, nationalism, rationality, science, equality and progress into Islamic societies while maintaining compatibility with the Islamic faith.[53] However, Islamic modernism has faced criticism for its inability to effectively address the challenges of modernity within Islamic societies. Critics argue that it falls short in providing a comprehensive framework for reconciling Islamic faith with modern values and trends. Moreover, it has been accused of leaning too heavily on Western models of modernity, which may not entirely apply to Islamic societies.[54]

Thus, in the case of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia and Izala in Nigeria, these organisations have formulated distinctive interpretations of modernity. They emphasise Islamic values and traditions while integrating aspects of modernity into their approaches. Muhammadiyah, for instance, advocates for democracy, human rights and their unique gender equality concept, which differs from Western notions. Similarly, Izala emphasises Islamic education, social welfare and good governance while promoting female participation in religious leadership and proselytisation, diverging from Western interpretations of gender equality. These organisations demonstrate the possibility of harmonising the Islamic faith with modern values and trends, albeit through unique approaches that differ from Western modernism. Nevertheless, the question that demands an answer is: How do we define modernity and what does it truly entail?

ISLAMIC MODERNITY: AN ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY?

Before delving into a comprehensive discussion of the assertion that Muhammadiyah and Izala have reconstructed their unique interpretations of modernity, which can be categorised as Islamic modernity, it is crucial to give an introductory explanation on the concept of modernity first, particularly a general understanding of Western modernity.

Modernity is a complex and multifaceted concept. Attempting to present a single definition can be misleading and may oversimplify its diversity and complexities. However,

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[50]   Juan Pablo Rodríguez, "Social Movements Studies and Social Critique," in *Resisting Neoliberal Capitalism in Chile: The Possibility of Social Critique* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), XV, 214.
[51]   Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Viable Theory of Islamic Reform Is Necessary but Insufficient for Political Stability and Social Justice," *IEMed. Mediterranean Yearbook* (2017).
[52]   Mohammaed A. Bamyeh, *Lifeworlds of Islam: The Pragmatics of a Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
[53]   Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity."
[54]   Ahwan Fanani et al., "Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih: An Evolution of a Modernist Approach to Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021), https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V77I4.6942.

in a broader sense, the term "modern," derived from the Latin word "modo," often refers to what is contemporary and distinguishes it from earlier periods.[55] Nonetheless, the term "modern" as a conceptual paradigm involves more than merely what is contemporary. In contemporary Western intellectual discourse, the term "modernity" refers to a civilisation that grew over several centuries in Europe and North America, reaching its height during the 20th century. The period is defined by scientific and technical advancements, which have resulted in significant improvement in material living conditions. Equally significant are the philosophical movements that emerged during the European Enlightenment, promoting individual freedom to act and live according to one's choices, as long as they do not alienate other people's freedom and rights.[56]

This normative definition of modernity, however, tends to oversimplify its diversity and complexities. In this sense, I share the same view as Kane that "unless we see the Western trajectory to modernity, and particularly to cultural modernity as one of many, we will not make any significant headway in understanding modernity in its diversity and complexity."[57] Kane posits that Muslim reform organisations, like Izala and Muhammadiyah, not only serve as mediators of social change but also actively promote modernity. They challenge the proponents of normative modernity who assert that all aspects of modernity are part of a "single enlightenment package."[58]

To gain deeper understanding of how Muhammadiyah and Izala perceive modernity in their reform endeavours, I have adopted and modified Kane's approach of "alternative modernity" or "Islamic modernity."[59] This is deemed more appropriate for analysing both organisations. I argue that these organisations do not just promote modernity, as Kane opines, but they have reconstructed their distinctive interpretations of modernity. They emphasise Islamic values and traditions while integrating certain aspects of modernity into their approaches, albeit not in the Western trajectory. This implies the existence of a unique form of modernity, which Islamic reform movements such as Muhammadiyah and Izala reconstruct in their respective contexts. Consequently, these organisations become agents of Islamic modernity different from Western modernity, generally regarded as normative modernity.[60]

'*TAJDID*' AS DEFINED BY MUHAMMADIYAH AND IZALA

It is critical to understand what Islamic reform movements like Muhammadiyah and Izala normally stand for. Loimeier explains, when it comes to Muslim movements aiming for "reform" or *tajdid* (renewal and rejuvenation), which Muslim reformers often describe as their efforts to bring about social and religious transformation, reform should be viewed as a

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55   Lawrence Cahoone, "From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology," *Philosophy East and West* 49, no. 1 (1999), https://doi.org/10.2307/1400125.
56   Kane, *Muslim Modernity In Postcolonial Nigeria*.
57   Ibid.
58   Ibid.
59   Ibid.
60   Ibid.

purposeful effort to effect changes in various aspects of society, religion, culture, politics or the economy. Specific to a society or aspects of social life, Muslim reform initiatives are easily identified since they often centre on topics such as education, proper rituals or the role of women.[61] Muhammadiyah and Izala can be categorised as Islamic reform movements. When considering the long-term perspective of historical change, we can observe that these movements share several common features, such as the promotion of education and emergence of new educational concepts. Although there is a slight difference in how Muhammadiyah and Izala carry out their reform activities, signifying the modernising rather than conservative facets of Indonesian and Nigerian Islam, both organisations operate within Islamic frameworks.

In the case of Muhammadiyah, the concept of reform takes on a multifaceted approach, encompassing purification (specifically concerning matters related to *aqidah* and *'ibadah* in its narrower context) and development, which includes modernisation in aspects related to social and cultural life. What distinguishes Muhammadiyah from other Salafi-inspired groups are its distinctive features, which include advocating reason-based and modern science-inspired approaches to the Qur'ān and *sunna*. The movement actively promotes *ijtihad*, often carried out collectively, and at the same time they draw from classical Islamic works regardless of their school background.[62] Their emphasis on building social institutions that benefit individuals of all faiths (recently, we see the growing trend of "Kristen or Christian Muhammadiyah") and their commitment to developing local and modern arts and cultures further make their approach to reform a unique blend of tradition and modernity, making it a compelling subject for re-evaluation and prompting a reconstruction of the broader labels traditionally assigned to Salafi-inspired reformist groups.

Muhammadiyah stands out for its *tajdid* or reform efforts and is often linked to terms synonymous with the Islamic reform movement (*tajdid fi'l-Islam*). These terms include the revival of Islam (*al-shahwa al-Islamy*, *al-ba'ath al-Islamy*). Some scholars classify Muhammadiyah as a form of Islamic modernism, while others categorise it as Islamic reformism. Abubakar Atjeh refers to it as a return to the Salaf (*Muhyi Atsari al-Salaf*). Regardless of the diverse terminologies used to describe Muhammadiyah's mission, its core can be summed up as a reform movement. In essence, Muhammadiyah is fundamentally a reformist movement.[63] Ahmad Dahlan also played a pioneering role in recognising the significance of publication and disseminating knowledge by founding *Suara Muhammadiyah* magazine in 1915. He further advanced modern Islamic education by integrating Islamic studies with general knowledge using classical Western teaching methods.[64]

On the other hand, the Izala movement defines reform or *tajdid* as the revival and restoration of the original and pure Islam practiced by Prophet Muḥammad and his

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[61]   Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 3 (2003).
[62]   Nashir, *Muhammadiyah*.
[63]   Ibid.
[64]   Ibid.

Companions. They assert that the purity of Islam has been compromised and altered by innovations and deviations introduced by subsequent generations of Muslims, particularly the Sufis. Izala adherents claim to follow the Qur'ān and *sunna* as their sole sources of guidance, rejecting any other authority or interpretation that deviates from these foundational sources.[65]

For Izala, *tajdid* also signifies renewal and the term "*mujaddid*" refers to a renewer. These terms hold significant relevance among Nigerian Muslims. When they are mentioned, they often evoke the prominent figure of Mujaddid Usman dan Fodiyo (1754–1817) in the minds of ordinary Nigerian Muslims. Scholars like Sounaye and Amara, who conducted their fieldwork in regions predominantly influenced by Izala, have pointed out the intricate connection between the concept of *tajdid* as understood by Izala and the reform efforts of Usman dan Fodiyo during the Sokoto Jihad.[66] Interestingly, Izala and Sufis trace their source of *tajdid* back to the Sokoto caliphate and its central figure, Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio. He is acknowledged as the initial *mujaddid* of Islam in modern day Nigeria. However, many Izala followers consider Shaykh Abubakar Gumi as the most influential figure of *tajdid* in the post-colonial era. Their belief that a reformer emerges every century is substantiated by a Prophetic saying mentioned by Abu Dawood (d. 888):

> At the beginning of every century, God will send to this community someone who will renew, revive, or restore religion.[67]

Nevertheless, this belief is not unanimously agreed, even among Izala scholars. But one thing remains clear: a significant number of Izala adherents and scholars firmly hold the belief that *tajdid* involves reforming Islamic principles towards a more puritanical approach, which they argue was practiced by the pious predecessors (Salaf as Salih). They believe that Usman dan Fodiyo was the first *mujaddid* of Islam in the Sokoto Caliphate,[68] which encompassed some parts of modern-day Nigeria before the formation of nation state. In precolonial Nigeria, Shaykh Abubakar Gumi is regarded as the most influential figure of *tajdid* who paved the way for the existence of Izala.

PARALLEL LINE: THE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

Muhammadiyah and Izala focus on socio-religious Islamic reform and commitment to core Islamic ideals or "puritan Islam."[69] The position and functions of these Islamic groups towards reforming Islam in their respective countries have played a significant role in the transformation of socio-religious structures throughout Indonesian and Nigerian history from the pre-Independence era to the present. The ideological framework of Izala and Muhammadiyah are comparable in certain aspects. Both groups emphasise the need for

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[65]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."
[66]   Abdoulaye Sounaye, "Heirs of the Sheikh Izala and its Appropriation of Usman Dan Fodio in Niger," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 52, no. 2–3 (2012), https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesafricaines.17066.
[67]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."
[68]   For more on the Sokoto Caliphate and Usman dan Fodiyo, see Ibrahim Haruna Hassan al-Wasewi, *Introductory Notes on the Writings of the Fodiawa*, 2nd ed. (Jos Nigeria: al-Wasewi schools, 2022).
[69]   Woodward et al., "Salafi Violence and Sufi Tolerance?"

religious reform and purification of Islamic traditions. They engage in restoration of Islam's fundamental beliefs while resisting syncretism and departures from orthodoxy. While their contexts may differ, their underlying beliefs are similar in their desire for Islamic revival and social reform.

As a reform movement with significant emphasis on advancing modernity in Indonesia while preserving puritan Islam, the link of Muhammadiyah's ideological frameworks may be considered to have closeness to Salafism.[70] Even though Muhammadiyah's religious orientation is often described as modernist rather than Salafist, this is due to their emphasis on the principles of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and encouraging critical thinking, independent reasoning and contextual adaptation in interpreting Islamic teachings. This approach differentiates Muhammadiyah from literalist Salafi-Wahhabi views.

However, based on the many points of view presented above, Muhammadiyah may be characterised as a Salafi movement from a broader perspective. Moreover, the manifestation of Muhammadiyah as a Salafi-Wahhabi-oriented group is for the simple reason that some factions of Muhammadiyah (e.g. Musa, Murni, as mentioned) have the inclination or draw inspiration from the works of influential Salafi scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim or even Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, particularly those dealing with *tawhid* or the oneness of God. However, this may not necessarily fully reflect the organisation's broader point of view because the association of such a group like the Muhammadiyah with Wahhabism or Salafism would remain highly contested. In fact, it has been challenged by insiders and outsiders.

On the other hand, Izala is a largely Nigerian-based Islamic organisation that takes its ideological cues from Wahhabism and other conservative Salafi movements.[71] Izala ideology is frequently linked to rejection of syncretism in Islam and Western modernism. The statement: "*al-aqida al-Salafiyya khayr mina al-Shahada al-ilmiyya*" (in Arabic), translated as the Salafism path is better than any academic certificate, appears on the opening page of the journal *al-Burhan* (the Proof), produced by the Izala headquarters in the Jos faction. Izala maintains its original name and neither accepts nor denies other connotations like "Salafiyya" (Salafism) or "*Wahhabiyya*" (Wahhabism).[72] Izala also emphasises the reformation of Islamic

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[70]   Ali Muhtarom, "The Study of Indonesian Moslem Responses on Salafy-Shia Transnational Islamic Education Institution," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 17, no. 1 (2017): 73, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v17i1.1645.

[71]   Even though Izala espouses a Salafi conception of Islam, comparable to many Islamic modernists like Muhammad Abduh's reform, the Wahabism that Izala openly upholds is doctrinally identical to Salafism. Musa Kabir Umar, Muhammad Ainuddin Iskandar Lee bin Abdul and Kamarul Zaman Bn Hajj Yusouf, "Towards Addressing the Challenges Bedeviling the Strategies of Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-Sunnah in the Democratization Process of Katsina State-Nigeria," *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (2019), https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2019/v8i330100

[72]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."

principles, strict adherence to the Qur'ān and *sunna*, and rejection of religious innovations (*bid'a*).[73]

The organisation essentially promotes Islam based on the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet, reminds Muslims of their obligations to Allah, rejects any revelation made after the death of the Prophet, and disapproves of any viewpoint contrary to that. They state that the Prophet left nothing undiscovered. The society's teaching maintains that the Qur'ān fulfils the Prophet's mission and rejects the notion that anyone can communicate with the Prophet or that the Prophet physically visited them. It also opposes any expansion of the five fundamental tenets of Islam, fosters better relations and mutual understanding among Muslims, and declares it is "determined to guard these principles at all costs without any options for compromise."[74]

In addition to the Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition, which together form the foundation of its doctrine, Izala draws on significant additional sources. Izala cites Muhammed b. Abd al-Wahhab's (1703–1792) Treatise on the Oneness of God, known in Arabic as *Kitab al-Tawhid*, is a significant source of its theology. However, Ibn Abd al- Wahhab's writings are not the only ones from which the Izala doctrine derives. It also refers to other works by Sunni scholars, including Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Ab Zayd al-Qayrawan. Notably, Izala adheres to the teachings of the Maliki school of law.[75]

Izala's strong rejection of syncretism Islam and the Sufi way of worshipping God is mainly derived from Abubakar Mahmood Gumi's teaching. However, there are also some external texts from which Izala now and then derives its proselytisation activities. These sources are often used in the study of subjects like theology (*tawhid*), tradition (*ḥadīth*) and Prophet (*sirah*) biographies. As such, the *Commentary on the Kitab al-Tawhid* by Muhammad b. Abd al-Rahman b. Hasan al-Shaykh and *Taysir al-Aziz al-Hamid fi Sharh Kitab al-Tawhid* (Facilitation of the Mighty and Praiseworthy in the Commentary of *Kitab al-Tawhid*) by Suleyman b. 'Abd Allah. Other treatises are prepared expressly for youngsters, such as the *Muqarrarat al-Tawhid wa al-Fiqh* (Fundamentals of Theology and Jurisprudence), consisting of three booklets based on the *Kitab al-Tawhid*.[76]

Here, I have interpreted the link between Izala and Salafi-Wahhabism. Salafism, which opposes Sufism, dates to the early generations of Islam, with the Hanbal school of law being especially strongly vocal in its opposition to Sufi ways of practising Islam. Izala shares this rejection of Sufism and its beliefs, such as visiting tombs for blessings and intercession. Although historian Yandaki sees Wahhabism as an outside influence on Izala's emergence, with its origins in the Saudi-dominated Muslim World League. Like other West African nations, Wahhabism's rise in Nigeria may be linked to pilgrimage, trade, nationalism and the

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[73]   Muhammad Muhammad Nasir, "Establishing Female Religious Authority; Zainab Ja'afar Bringing Women to The Fore in Northern Nigeria" (paper presented at the Graduate Forum 2023 at KMP Universitas Islam Negeri Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, October 30, 2023).
[74]   Amara, "Sharīʿa in Africa Today."
[75]   Ibid.
[76]   Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria*.

influence of students and professors from Egypt, Sudan and Saudi Arabia. In this vein, Shaykh Gumi is highlighted as an influential figure.[77]

According to this analysis, Izala is distinguished by its strong commitment to Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings, particularly on *tawhid* concerns.[78] Other researchers have also pointed out that Izala shares some characteristics with Salafism, particularly Wahhabi thoughts.[79]

Muhammadiyah shares Izala's commitment to the purification of Islam; they also hold the belief that Islam has been contaminated by superstitions, *bid'a*, and *khurafat* or deviations in faith.[80] Primarily, this resistance is most visible in their rejection of Sufism and its related traditions, such as visiting graves for blessings and intercession. Again, Muhammadiyah's practical connection to Salafi-Wahhabi groups remains blurry. When it comes to comprehending Islamic doctrines, Muhammadiyah prioritises the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* principles, but also supports *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), contextual adaptation and critical thinking.[81]

Muhammadiyah's initial foundations can be traced to the thoughts of Kyai Dahlan. Institutionally, the official doctrines of *Persyarikatan* (The Association) are disseminated through various channels, including Majlis Tarjih, the Muhammadiyah Congress and other platforms. The teachings of Kyai Dahlan find expression in works like "Seven Philosophies of K. H. Ahmad Dahlan's Teachings" and "Seventeen Groups of Qur'anic Verses," authored by K. H. R. Hadjid. These writings shed light on the ideas associated with the establishment of Muhammadiyah.[82]

Furthermore, the formal doctrines within Muhammadiyah that pertain to Islamic teachings are often derived from various decisions made by Majlis Tarjih, particularly during the Tarjih National Congress. Legitimised documents, such as "Twelve Steps of Muhammadiyah" by K. H. Mas Mansur, "The Book of the Five Affairs" (al-Masail al-Khamsah) from 1954–55, the "Tafsir of Muhammadiyah Statutes" resulting from the Tanwir of 1951 in Yogyakarta, "Faith Pledges and Aspirations of Muhammadiyah Life" following the Tanwir in Ponorogo in 1969, and "Guidelines for an Islamic Life for Muhammadiyah Members" established during the 44th Muhammadiyah Congress in 2000 in Jakarta, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the Islamic perspective within Muhammadiyah. These views on Islam are

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[77]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."
[78]   Ibid.
[79]   Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu, "JIBWIS Refutes Report Linking Its Members with Extremism, Vows Legal Redress," *Premium Times Nigeria*, May 5, 2022.
[80]   Nashir, *Muhammadiyah*.
[81]   Romi Maimori, Susi Herawati and Indra Efendi, "Muhammadiyah's Contribution in the Renewal of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia," *Darussalam: Journal of Psychology and Educational* 1, no. 2 (2022); Abdullah M. Al-Ansi et al., "Rational Choice of Following Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama and Their Social and Political Role in Indonesian Society," *Open Access Library Journal* 6, no. 11 (2019), https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105829; Gustav Brown, "Civic Islam: Muhammadiyah, NU and the Organisational Logic of Consensus-Making in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2019.1626802.
[82]   Nashir, *Muhammadiyah*.

systematically organised within the framework of Manhaj Tarjih, rather than being confined to individual interpretations.[83]

This approach distinguishes Muhammadiyah from the stricter and more literalist interpretations associated with Salafism and Wahhabism, even though its connection with the former cannot be accurately rejected. Irrespective of context and concern, Muhammadiyah and Izala share a common ideology for Islamic revival and social reform. Both organisations emphasise the importance of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* as the basis of their teachings, strive to restore Islam's fundamental principles in accordance with the Salafism interpretations, and reject departures from orthodoxy while trying to cleanse Islam of syncretism and *bid'a*.

MUHAMMADIYAH'S AND IZALA'S APPROACHES TO REFORMS

The efforts of Muhammadiyah to advance modernisation in Indonesian society while upholding its Salafi-inspired worldview have been a subject of study by many researchers.[84] Muhammadiyah's contextual adaptation has also received attention since it shows the organisation's capacity to respect its conservative roots while navigating regional cultural norms. This adaption makes it unclear to what extent Muhammadiyah's ideological foundation limits its modernisation initiatives.[85] Nonetheless, Muhammadiyah has been credited with playing an important role in advancing modernity in Indonesian society. The organisation's initiatives in interfaith dialogue, social welfare, women's empowerment and education are examples of its modernising approach.[86] To increase access to education and meet societal demands, Muhammadiyah established schools and other educational institutions, particularly in rural areas.[87] This aligns with the fundamental humanitarian ideals of Muhammadiyah, based on the concept of '*rahmatan lil alamin*' (mercy for all creations). To improve quality of life for all individuals, the Muhammadiyah community was established to strongly focus on promoting literacy in remote and urban areas across Indonesia.[88] Also, Muhammadiyah's social welfare programs, including assistance for orphanages and healthcare services, have helped raise people's quality of life in urban and rural Indonesia.

Scholars also acknowledge the dedication of Muhammadiyah to social transformation. In line with its openness, responsibility and social fairness goals, the organisation has actively fought corruption and advanced good governance.[89] Moreover, Muhammadiyah plays a crucial role, particularly on a moral level, in supporting and motivating KPK[90] members as

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[83]   Ibid.
[84]   Maimori, Herawati and Efendi, "Muhammadiyah's Contribution."
[85]   Hasnan Bachtiar, "Dār al-'Ahd wa al-Shahādah: Muhammadiyah's Position and Thoughts on Negara Pancasila," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 3 (2020).
[86]   Ibid.
[87]   Maimori, Herawati and Efendi, "Muhammadiyah's Contribution."
[88]   Samrin et al., "Pengaruh Kondisi Sosial Ekonomi terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa" [The Effect of Socio-Economic Conditions on Student Motivation], *Shautut Tarbiyah* 26, no. 2 (2020).
[89]   Pramono Ubaid Tanthowi, "Islam, Civil Society and Democratization: A Case of Muhammadiyya and Nahdlatul Ulama in Post-Suharto Indonesia" (Master's diss., University of Hawaii, 2007.
[90]   KPK stands for "Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi" in Bahasa Indonesia, which translates to the Corruption Eradication Commission. It is an independent government agency in Indonesia that was established in

they carry out their responsibility of combating corruption. Muhammadiyah's work is guided by al-Ma'un theology and principles of universal humanism, mutual recognition and understanding, mutual assistance and the fulfilment of the rights of those affected by corruption.[91]

Muhammadiyah's reform strategy is multifaceted, including its engagement in interfaith discussion and emphasis on religious tolerance and understanding. Positive views on Muhammadiyah's role in promoting social harmony and pluralism in Indonesian culture have been commended.[92] Muhammadiyah has been recognised for its efforts to engage in interfaith dialogue and resolve tensions between Muslims and Christians during the 44th national conference in Jakarta in 2000.[93] One significant aspect of Muhammadiyah's approach to reform is its respect for diversity and its teachings on religious pluralism. The organisation promotes religious pluralism, which adds to its role in encouraging peaceful coexistence among different religious communities.[94] Although there are differing views on Muhammadiyah's approach to interfaith relations and its promotion of religious pluralism. Muhammadiyah's approach to interfaith dialogue and religious plurality has been praised and criticised. Some commend it, while others are concerned that it may weaken the organisation's fundamental principles and undermine the practice of *amar bil ma'ruf wan nahi anil munkar* (enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is bad).[95]

Again, the women's wings of Muhammadiyah, particularly Aisyiyah and Nasyiatul Aisyiyah,[96] demonstrate the organisation's dedication to women's empowerment and equal opportunity. These groups advocate for women's education, healthcare and social welfare, exemplifying Muhammadiyah's modernising stance within Indonesian Islam. Muhammadiyah represents a progressive concept of gender within the social and religious development framework by offering spaces for women to achieve their potential and challenge established gender stereotypes.

Balancing diversity and pluralism with sustaining fundamental conservative Salafi-Wahhabi beliefs is undoubtedly a problem for Muhammadiyah, requiring further exploration and dialogue to harmonise its reform approach with its fundamental principles.

2003 to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. The KPK has a strong reputation for its effectiveness and has been credited with significantly reducing corruption in Indonesia.

[91]   Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, "The Role of Faith-Based Organization in Coping with Disaster Management and Mitigation: Muhammadiyah's Experience," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 9, no. 2 (2015).

[92]   Ismail Suardi Wekke, "Muhammadiyah and its Movement Through Interfaith Education on Minority Muslim Society of Indonesia" (Paper presented at the EuroSEAS conference, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, September 10-13, 2019).

[93]   Muhamad Ali, "Between Faith and Social Relations: The Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama's Fatwas and Ideas on Non-Muslims and Interreligious Relations," *Muslim World* 110, no. 4 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12363.

[94]   Biyanto Biyanto, "Promoting and Practicing Religious Pluralism: Muhammadiyah Experience," *Journal of Social Studies* 16, no. 2 (2020).

[95]   Ibid.

[96]   Siti Syamsiyatun, "A Daughter in the Indonesian Muhammadiyah: Nasyiatul Aisyiyah Negotiates a New Status and Image," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 1 (2007), https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etl044.

Muhammadiyah's adherence to Salafi-inspired ideologies may constrain the scope of its modernisation efforts. This viewpoint is shared by Biyanto, Woodward and other scholars.[97]

The Izala reform approach can be characterised by emphasis on puritanical values and a strong opposition to *bid'a* or deviations from authentic Islamic teachings. Izala endeavours to purify and revitalise Islamic practices by repudiating syncretic elements and adhering to fundamental Salafi principles. This approach aims to align the society with what it perceives as a more authentic form of Islam. Although the specific forms of modernisation may vary, Izala's focus on preserving traditional Islamic values and resisting Western cultural influences characterises its approach to reform in the context of modernisation.

However, there is a shift in Izala attitudes toward accepting diversity, which does not fit within literalist Salafism. Some scholars have highlighted how the organisation accommodates local cultural traditions and adapts to the situation, which may be considered an example of engaging with modernity. Recognising the diversity of Muslim communities across the globe is one way that Izala accommodates local cultural customs.[98] In numerous nations, each with its distinct cultural practices and customs, Izala has branches and adherents. It accepts and respects various regional cultural traditions and incorporates them into its activities and services rather than enforcing rigid uniformity.[99] This strategy aids the organisation in establishing a sense of familiarity and significance with neighbourhood residents.

The fundamental principles of Salafism, such as an emphasis on the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and a desire to imitate the customs of the early Muslim community, are still upheld by Izala.[100] Their Salafi approach serves as a framework for accommodation and adaptation, guaranteeing that any modifications are in keeping with Islamic standards.[101] The organisation's efforts to handle the intricacies of societal change while adhering to its fundamentalist Salafi-inspired worldview are reflected in this adaption.[102] Thus, had Islamism in Africa been given due consideration, the widespread misconception that it is solely rooted in radical Salafism could have been avoided.

Moreover, the modernisation elements of Izala are noted in instances where modernisation efforts are visible.[103] From its inception, it has taken an active role in promoting Islamic education and moral standards through preaching (*da'wah*) and social welfare activities. The Izala educational program emphasises women's education to the extent that they even pushed

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[97]   Biyanto Biyanto, "The Typology of Muhammadiyah Sufism: Tracing its Figures' Thoughts and Exemplary Lives," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 7, no. 2 (2017), https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims. v7i2.221-249.

[98]   Maishanu, "JIBWIS Refutes Report."

[99]   Ibid.

[100] Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."

[101] Nura Aliyu, "Agents of Social and Intellectual Change in Contemporary Northern Nigeria: The Case of the Jama'atu Izalatil Bidi'a Wa Iqamat as-Sunnah (JIBWIS aka the Izala Movement)," *Lapai Journal of Humanities* 11, no. 4 (2020).

[102] Muhammad S. Umar, "Review of Izala and Muslim Modernity by Ousmane Kane," *Sudainic Africa* 14 (2003).

[103] Ibid.

traditional Sufis to send their wives to schools.[104] Izala invites members to allow their wives to enrol in education. Izala's initiative in giving Muslim women access to advanced Islamic learning is the first in Northern Nigeria.[105] This emphasis on education can be considered a step toward modernisation because it fits the overarching objective of expanding access to education and equipping people with information and skills.[106]

Izala has also taken part in social welfare initiatives targeting problems like poverty, healthcare and community development. It exhibits awareness of societal concerns and a willingness to enhance community wellbeing by actively participating in social welfare activities. This might be seen as a modernisation strategy in response to the modern world's societal problems.[107] Izala's most recent development is the formation of the Nisa'u Sunnah Women's Department, similar to Muhammadiyah's women's wing Aisyiyah and Nasyiatul Aisyiyah. This deserves praise for its innovative approach to encouraging women's presence in public religious spaces, empowering women and supporting a modern perspective within the Islamic framework. Izala is making remarkable attempts to establish an empowering place for women inside the organisation through its inclusive programs and emphasis on women's rights and education.

The Muhammadiyah and Izala movements demonstrate distinct approaches to reform and modernisation within the context of their fundamental Salafi ideologies. Muhammadiyah endorses modernism and participates in different projects to promote social welfare, education and interfaith dialogue. The organisation's willingness to adapt to local cultural norms while maintaining its Salafi-inspired ideology shows its adherence to balancing modernity with its fundamental beliefs. Muhammadiyah's reform efforts have helped to advance modernism in Indonesian society by tackling issues like corruption, encouraging interfaith harmony and empowering marginalised populations. Izala, on the other hand, promotes puritanical principles and rejects syncretism to maintain what it regards as true Islam. While cautious of Western modernisation, the value of education, especially for women, is recognised and actively engages in welfare initiatives. Its approach to reform in the context of modernity is shaped by its emphasis on preserving traditional Islamic values while opposing Western influences.

As mentioned above, the mediation of the social and religious transformation of Muhammadiyah and Izala symbolises the modernising, not the backward or conservative sides of Indonesian and Nigerian Islam despite their fundamental Salafi ideologies. However, their exhibition of modernity is distinct from the general conception of modernity in the Western sense. Despite their differences, Muhammadiyah and Izala represent agents of Muslim modernity. They execute their reform activities in accordance with Islamic frameworks while drawing inspiration from orthodox Salafi ideologies. Their modernisation

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[104]   Amara, "The Izala Movement in Nigeria."
[105]   Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends."
[106]   Ken Chitwood, "Book Review: Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of Tradition. By Ousmane Kane," *Islam in Africa* 42 (2015).
[107]   Ibid.

strategies strike a balance between upholding traditional values and coping with contemporary developments.

CONCLUSION

The ideological frameworks of Muhammadiyah and Izala show their commitment to socio-religious reform and adherence to Islamic traditions. Certain aspects of Muhammadiyah are undeniably inspired by Salafi orthodoxy, despite the organisation's ideological orientation being frequently defined as modernist, focusing on contextual adaptability, independent reasoning and critical thinking. On the other hand, Izala rejects syncretism and Western modernism and publicly promotes a Salafi interpretation of Islam based on Wahhabi teachings. Although Muhammadiyah shares Izala's (and Salafism in general) rejection of Sufism and its practices, such as visiting tombs for blessings and intercession, practically, Muhammadiyah's connection to Salafi-Wahhabi remains ambiguous and blurry even though all these may not necessarily fully reflect the organisation's broader point of view, especially when one pays attention to their changing trends and activities.

The study unveils that Muhammadiyah and Izala actively participate in reform initiatives that embody a progressive outlook within their respective countries. Their willingness to address the contemporary challenges faced by their communities while upholding their Salafi-inspired principles demonstrate their adaptability and relevance in the modern era. They strive for socio-religious advancement that aligns with Islamic core tenets by harmonising traditional values with the evolving needs of contemporary society. Through their reform activities, both groups demonstrate profound understanding of reconstructed alternative modernity, a uniquely Islamic interpretation of modernity that deviates from the Western trajectory commonly regarded as the normative. They define modernity through their reform endeavours, which are grounded within Islamic frameworks. Therefore, the practical implementation of socio-religious reform by Muhammadiyah and Izala serves as a counterweight to conservative tendencies, highlighting their importance as catalysts of modernisation in Indonesian and Nigerian Islam.

While Muhammadiyah's connection to Salafi-Wahhabi influences remains ambiguous and subject to interpretation, both groups have made significant contributions to the transformation of Islamic thought and practice in their respective countries. Their efforts to mediate between modernity and ideological stances reflect their dynamic nature and ability to adapt to changing contexts while remaining true to their core values.

Now the question needing an answer is whether the symbolisation of modernisation in Indonesian and Nigerian Islam by Muhammadiyah and Izala can be viewed as shunning the conservatism and a new evolution of Salafism that negotiates with modernity? This is intriguing and warrants further research. Replicating this study and delving deeper into the paradigmatic shifts within Salafi-inspired organisations can provide valuable insights into the motivations and dynamics behind their engagement with modernity.

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