

## DISCOURSE, POWER, AND IDENTITY: A FOUCAULDIAN READING OF MUHAMMADIYAH'S NARRATIVE AND PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to reveal how Muhammadiyah as a modern Islamic organization in Indonesia forms and maintains its religious identity through institutionally produced discourses, as well as how the power mechanism operates in the process of identity construction. This study uses the method of critical discourse analysis with the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault, especially the concept of archaeology and genealogy of discourse, to examine official documents, policy statements, and public narratives issued by Muhammadiyah for the period 2000-2020. The results of the analysis show that Muhammadiyah has succeeded in articulating a progressive religious discourse that supports democracy and civil society, thus manifesting a driving force for constructive social change. One of the most important discourses is "Progressive Islam", a narrative that allows Muhammadiyah to make adjustments to modernity while maintaining the fundamental principles of Islam. Specifically, Muhammadiyah seems to be adept at subjectivizing its members to have a critical awareness of social issues, while creating space for active participation in the public sphere through the articulation of transformative religious narratives.

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### INTRODUCTIONS

In the context of Indonesia, modern religious organizations occupy a central position in supporting and shaping the fabric of democracy and civil society. Muhammadiyah is one of the main pillars of modern Islamic organizations, which has consistently shown the significance of its role in narrating and practicing Islamic moderation, a very valuable position in order to realize and maintain the sustainability of social harmony in the midst of a multicultural Indonesia (Afwadzi, 2023). However, this significance is often only seen from the perspective of its

educational or social function, thus ignoring the dimensions of discourse and power as shaping the identity of the organization.

Modern religious organizations, including Muhammadiyah, tend to be a bridge between religious values and democratic principles, thus shaping public discourse that influences policy direction and citizen participation. They not only contribute to the development of the nation's character through educational and health institutions, but persistently articulate moderate religious views in order to stem extremist narratives that threaten national unity (Kholifah, 2020) (Pratista & Herdiansyah, 2022). The role also includes the cultivation of progressive, collegial and autonomous character among its members, although there have recently been concerns about a shift towards practical politics that has the potential to erode these values (Puspitasari et al., 2020).

These concerns are natural considering Muhammadiyah's long history in forming a civilized and knowledgeable society through education and social services, a tradition that began in the early 20th century (Aminullah Elhady, 2017). This organization, as the largest modern religious movement in the Islamic world, has fundamentally changed the landscape of Islamic da'wah in Indonesia, through the main orientation of the enlightenment of the ummah on authentic Islamic teachings (Nashir et al., 2019). Muhammadiyah's da'wah activities are not limited to the spiritual dimension alone, but include systematic efforts to advance the social, economic, and political life of the nation through modern and contextual approaches (Arifin et al., 2024) (Afwadzi, 2023).

Therefore, an in-depth study of Muhammadiyah is essential, especially in highlighting the internal and external dynamics that affect its adaptation to the changing times, as manifested in its discourse and practice of power. It is important to analyze how Muhammadiyah navigates Indonesia's political and social complexity, especially considering its tens of millions of followers, as well as its involvement in various fields such as education, social, economic, political, and cultural (Yakub & Sampurna, 2023). This involvement undoubtedly places Muhammadiyah not only as a religious actor, but also as an influential socio-political force in the formation of civil society (Wulandari, 2017) (Sukmana, 2016).

Muhammadiyah has been tested and is good at showing its adaptive capacity for modernity, even making it a source of innovation in developing religious institutions so as not to lose relevance in the midst of contemporary challenges (Haryanto, 2016). Muhammadiyah continuously integrates the ethos of progressive Islam, whose focus goes beyond social charity, extends to the determination to form a main civilization based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, through its da'wah strategy (Kahfi, 2020). This approach is based on dynamic *ijtihad*; the purification of Islamic teachings from superstition and the like; at the same time adapting modern values, such as rationality and scientific progress (Jones et al., 2016).

In the social field, Muhammadiyah plays a vital role in building the foundation of civil society through various charities, including hospitals, schools, or universities, all of which function as pillars to support social welfare and improve the quality of human resources (Lestari, 2021). The importance of these institutions is not only in relation to the services provided, but also how they become a medium for the dissemination of Muhammadiyah's inclusive and modern religious discourse (Huda et al., 2022) ("Vol 2 No 1," 2018). Thus, studying Muhammadiyah means diving into the heart of the Islamic movement in Indonesia which consistently seeks to present Islam as a progressive solution to various problems of the ummah or nationality (Qodir et al., 2020) (Lubis et al., 2015).

Although the role of Muhammadiyah in the field of education and social has been widely studied, there are still significant gaps in understanding how this organization forms and maintains its identity through the discourse and practice of power (Nuryanto & Pambuko, 2019) (Fanani et al., 2021). In fact, Foucauldian analysis is able to offer a new and in-depth perspective on the construction of knowledge, as well as social control and the process of subjectivation in the body of Muhammadiyah. This approach has the potential to reveal how the dominant narrative shapes social and individual practices in Muhammadiyah, as well as how knowledge and power are interrelated in constructing the reality of the organization (Haryanto et al., 2012).

Thus, through the Foucauldian lens, we can reveal the internal mechanisms that strengthen the position of Muhammadiyah, not only as a religious entity, but also as an agent in shaping social and political discourse (Jones et al., 2016). The analysis will explore the discourse and practice of power within Muhammadiyah in the process of shaping and directing the behavior of its members, as well as how this contributes to the reproduction of organizational values (Jones et al., 2016). This study not only highlights the socio-religious role of Muhammadiyah, but also explores

and touches on the discursive architecture that supports its sustainability and adaptability in various contexts of the times. The research seeks to fill the literary void through the adoption of a Foucauldian lens in order to dismantle the complex intertwining between discourse, power, and identity in the body of Muhammadiyah.

## METHOD

The research adopts a systematic literature review approach, but specifically emphasizes narrative synthesis as the primary method for analyzing and integrating findings from various sources. The approach was chosen to allow flexibility in the interpretation of qualitative data as well as avoid the methodological rigor often associated with quantitative synthesis. In contrast to the conventional systematic method, this study deliberately does not use PRISMA diagrams, summary tables, or thematic maps, but presents all results in the form of thematic descriptions and in-depth analysis (Simarmata et al., 2024). The goal is none other than to maintain the interpretive nuances and contextual richness that are essential in Foucauldian analysis, where narrative details and in-depth interpretations take precedence over numerical data aggregation (Wirawan, 2015).

The data search process will utilize a variety of leading scientific databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, and Neliti, as well as university repositories, to ensure comprehensive literature coverage. Meanwhile, the use of specific Boolean keyword combinations, namely, "Muhammadiyah" AND ("discourse" OR "discourse") AND ("power" OR "subjectification") AND ("democracy" OR "civil society"), will be applied consistently to each *platform* to maximize the relevance of search results, as well as identify studies that are directly related to the focus of this research. Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be carefully applied to ensure only the most relevant and high-quality literature is included in the analysis, thereby reinforcing the validity of the findings.

The inclusion criteria will include publications in scientific journals, books, book chapters, and dissertations that discuss Muhammadiyah with a focus on discourse, power, and identity, both in Indonesian and English, published in the last two decades. On the other hand, the exclusion criterion will exclude news articles, book reviews, conference abstracts without original research data, as well as studies that do not explicitly discuss these aspects in the context of Muhammadiyah (Abd.Alromima & Sutantri, 2024). This procedure is vital to ensure that the data collected is of adequate academic quality and directly relevant to the Foucauldian theoretical framework carried out in the research.

Each source that passes the inclusion criteria will be carefully read to identify the historical context, empirical claims presented, the evidence supporting the claim, and its theoretical relevance to Foucauldian concepts of discourse and power (Haryanto et al., 2012). This will include identifying how discursive practices shape subjects, construct truth, and legitimize power structures within Muhammadiyah, with special attention to internal and external organizational dynamics (Haryanto, 2016).

Then, the analysis will move on how these narratives form collective and individual identities among Muhammadiyah members, as well as how identities are continuously negotiated in the broader socio-political landscape (Haryanto, 2016) (Udasmoro et al., 2021) (Jones et al., 2016). The focus is also on how knowledge and power intertwine to shape social reality in the organization, thus influencing its strategic direction or adaptation to changing times.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Production of Discourse on Nationality and Public Morality

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, has consistently contributed to the formation of national discourse and public morality through various *platforms*, ranging from educational institutions to mass media (Haryanto, 2016). Muhammadiyah actively promotes moderate and inclusive Islamic values, so that it resonates with the spirit of nationalism and tolerance in Indonesia (Lubis et al., 2015) (Afwadzi, 2023). This approach shows the capacity of organizations to adapt religious doctrine to the demands of modernity and pluralism, reflecting a dynamic social construction of religious values in the public sphere (Haryanto, 2016) (Sukmana, 2016).

Through its educational and social institutions in various parts of the country, Muhammadiyah seeks to internalize the understanding of Islam that emphasizes the benefit of the ummah and social justice, so that it then forms the collective identity of its members as responsible citizens (Afwadzi, 2023). Muhammadiyah consistently

articulates a public morality discourse that emphasizes the importance of integrity, honesty, and social solidarity as the foundation for the realization of a just and prosperous society. The narrative is not only aimed at directing individual behavior, but also to strengthen the position of Muhammadiyah as a relevant moral agent in all spheres of national and state life.

In addition, Muhammadiyah also does not neglect to carry out the importance of religious moderation as an antidote to extremism and radicalization, as reflected in its da'wah efforts in the contemporary era, including through *online platforms* (Huda et al., 2022). Muhammadiyah, therefore, is able to utilize digital technology to disseminate religious messages in line with the spirit of nationalism and inclusivity, while demonstrating strategic adaptation to the ever-changing media landscape (Mashuri et al., 2023). Through continuous adaptation, Muhammadiyah seeks to maintain its relevance in public discourse while expanding the reach of its influence on the younger generation.

Muhammadiyah's activities are actually not far from the Indonesian government's program that aggressively mainstreams religious moderation as an effort to strengthen national commitment, tolerance, and accommodating attitude towards local culture (Ikhwan et al., 2023) (Hefni, 2020). Therefore, Muhammadiyah steadily positions itself as a strategic entity in maintaining social cohesion and promoting moderate Islamic values in the midst of Indonesia's multicultural society (Abdullah & Alfatra, 2019) (Pratiwi, 2024).

The discourse produced by Muhammadiyah, such as the concept of religious moderation or *wasathiyah*, emphasizes the importance of balance, justice, and tolerance as a relevant theological foundation in a pluralistic Indonesia (Rahmadani et al., 2025) (Afwadzi, 2023). This is in line with the development of contemporary Islamic thought in Indonesia, which has always struggled with the polarity between conservative and progressive currents, where Muhammadiyah has consistently fought for open Islamic ideas (Qodir, 2024). This approach clearly allows Muhammadiyah to be continuously involved in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, strengthening its position as a bridge connecting various elements of society (Afwadzi, 2023) (Choirunissa & Nurdin, 2020).

In addition, there is still a discourse on the recognition of the role of women, as illustrated by the establishment of Aisyiyah as an autonomous organization that actively contributes to the education, health, and social empowerment sectors. This initiative certainly reflects Muhammadiyah's systematic efforts to not only integrate women in the public sphere, but also to form a discourse on gender equality based on a dynamic and progressive interpretation of Islamic teachings (Rahmi, 2025). Such steps show how Muhammadiyah is always willing to adapt to modern discourse on women's rights, while firmly adhering to the Islamic ethical framework (Haryanto, 2016).

The Muhammadiyah organization has repeatedly proven its ability to integrate Islamic principles with the spirit of nationalism, thus reflecting an undeniably holistic understanding of Indonesia's socio-political context (Afwadzi, 2023) (Mibtadin et al., 2022). This ability also places Muhammadiyah as an important actor in mitigating conflicts or social polarization that has the potential to threaten national stability (Anam et al., 2023). This contribution does not fail to reflect the role of Muhammadiyah in shaping the cultural framework regarding justice and political ideals, which continues to develop over time (Sukmana, 2016).

### **Discourse and Narrative of Muhammadiyah as a Progressive Islamic Movement**

The narrative of "Progressive Islam" by Muhammadiyah does not only place it as a religious reformer, but also manifests an entity that is actively involved in social and intellectual reform, in line with the demands of the times (Rahmi, 2025). The narrative is rooted in the understanding that religion should be a driving force for progress, not an obstacle to it; so as to motivate various innovations in education, health, and social services (Rahmi, 2025) (Haryanto, 2016). Muhammadiyah also understands the importance of updating *its manhaj* or methodology of understanding Islam in order to remain relevant and progressive in facing contemporary challenges, an evolution that has been proven in various historical periods (Fanani et al., 2021).

The idea of "Progressive Islam" can be seen from the thoughts of the founders of Muhammadiyah who were inspired by the global Islamic reform movement, as initiated by Muhammad Abduh, who emphasized the restoration of the principles of religious rationalism and the synthesis of Islamic ideas with the West in order to advance civilization (Haryanto, 2016). This approach seeks to balance Islamic orthodoxy with the advancement of modern science in order to pave the way for a more adaptive and inclusive interpretation of religion (Afwadzi, 2023). This is

what makes Muhammadiyah able to interact constructively with the discourse of modernity, without losing its Islamic identity roots (Haryanto, 2016).

The basic principles that drive Muhammadiyah, such as justice, trustworthiness, deliberation, equality, and plurality, strengthen its position as an organization that not only upholds the religious doctrines of the Qur'an and Hadith, but also integrates universal values (Bakry et al., 2021). This harmony allows Muhammadiyah to actively participate in civil society development efforts, promote good governance, and fight for human rights in Indonesia (Sukmana, 2016). All of them will contribute to the progress of society as a whole, confirming the relevance of Muhammadiyah as a moral and intellectual force (Haryanto, 2016).

Muhammadiyah's adaptive attitude allows it to continue to dialogue with contemporary ideas about progress and social change, in line with the belief that the future must always be better than the present (Jones et al., 2016). This progressive orientation is in line with the concept of sociological modernism which places innovation and progress as the fundamental goals of knowledge and civilization (Jones et al., 2016). This reflects Muhammadiyah's continuous efforts to not only respond, but also to form a constructive and adaptive public discourse to the various challenges of the times (Haryanto, 2016).

In connection with the Foucauldian reading, the discourse of "Progressive Islam" carried out by Muhammadiyah can be understood as a mechanism of knowledge and power production that shapes the subject and regulates social practices within the framework of modernity. According to the Foucauldian perspective, the narrative is not only an ideological representation, but a discursive formation in order to produce a modern, rational, and progressive Muslim subject, while at the same time establishing the boundaries of socially legitimized norms and values (Lubis et al., 2015). Through the formation of discourse, Muhammadiyah does not only spread religious teachings, but actively constructs a modern religious identity that is responsive to the challenges of the times, while defining what "progress" is in the context of Indonesian Islam (Huda, 2010) (Lubis et al., 2015).

### **Institutional Practice as a Power Technique**

Muhammadiyah's institutional practices, as manifested in the education system, health services, and da'wah networks, actually manifest a strategic mechanism to spread ideology, manage social behavior, and instill specific religious identities. Through its institutions, Muhammadiyah carries out what Foucault termed as *self-technologies* and *technologies of domination*, forming a submissive subject as well as an agent of social change (Lubis et al., 2015). This means that individuals in Muhammadiyah are not only governed by external power, but actively shape themselves according to the norms and values instilled by the organization.

This is evident in programs such as those carried out by Aisyiyah, a Muhammadiyah women's organization, which consistently conducts literacy jihad and women's empowerment, in order to form individuals who not only obey religious teachings, but also play a role as an active agent of social change (Arifin et al., 2022) (Handayani & Rosmilawati, 2019). Thus, the institutional practice is intended to strengthen the discursive dominance of Muhammadiyah, while fostering empowered individuals to always strive to contribute to social reform through a specific religious framework (Galal & Liebmman, 2020).

Meanwhile, the autonomous organization of Muhammadiyah Youth shows how power operates not only through subtle disciplinary mechanisms, but also through the cultivation of a sense of collective responsibility and mobilization of human resources for greater goals (Haryanto et al., 2012). The goals are, among others, responding to natural disasters, maintaining social order, and advocating for national values (Hidayati & Badruzaman, 2022). Such practices reflect Foucault-style techniques of *surveillance* or *normalization*, in which individuals are not only supervised from the outside, but are also encouraged to internalize organizational norms and supervise themselves according to certain standards (Vinding, 2013).

Meanwhile, Hizbul Wathan, as an autonomous scouting movement of Muhammadiyah, affirms another dimension of Foucault's power technique, namely the formation of an obedient and trained body through physical and moral discipline (Jones et al., 2016). Through scouting programs, individuals are taught the values of independence, responsibility, and obedience, all of which are important to form citizens as well as ideal members of organizations. In addition to forming individual character, coaching will also create agents that are deeply internalized with organizational ethos and national values (Haryanto, 2016).

The Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) and the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM), two autonomous organizations of Muhammadiyah that focus on the intellectual and spiritual development of youth, also adopted the power mechanism that shaped the subject through critical education, discourse discussions, and social activism. Through these various activities, power is not only repressive, but also productive, forming the identity and capacity of the subject so that they are able to participate in the collectivity of Muhammadiyah (Haryanto et al., 2012). Through productivity, power enables the development of individuals' intellectual and moral capacities, while guiding them to become agents of change according to the ideals of the organization.

In addition, there are also other practices, such as by LAZISMU as a vital instrument in collecting and distributing zakat, infaq, and alms, marking the organization's efforts to institutionalize social solidarity based on Islamic principles (Suyadi et al., 2025). This is a concrete manifestation of disciplinary power, where the management of economic resources is regulated in order to form generosity and social responsibility as an integral part of religious identity (Olii et al., 2021). Management is certainly not a mere philanthropic activity, but a mechanism to strengthen social cohesion among members and the wider community, which indirectly affirms the moral authority of Muhammadiyah in the public sphere.

### **Subjectivation and Collective Identity: The Process of Forming Members-Citizens**

The formation of a collective identity in Muhammadiyah involves the internalization of norms and values, making each individual a subject who actively adopts the identity of the organization through various religious or social practices (Jones et al., 2016). This process includes the formation of self-morality (*practices of the self*) that are not solely autonomous, but are also shaped by cultural and social models offered, even imposed by organizations (Hocke, 2014). In the Foucauldian framework, the meaning is that the subject is formed through a discourse that governs what can be said and done, thus creating an 'independent' individual within predetermined boundaries (Jones et al., 2016).

Self-identification as part of Muhammadiyah, thus, is the result of a complex dialectic between individual agency and organizational disciplinary structure, resulting in a type of subject that is fully internalized to the ethos of the movement (Hocke, 2014) (Lindop, 2018). This process often involves the absorption of identity through internalized social norms, where motivated individuals act in harmony with organizational values due to internal beliefs, rather than solely due to external sanctions (Haryanto, 2016). It is evident how the mechanism of power works beyond direct coercion, entering the realm of the formation of consciousness and personal will, so that individuals voluntarily adopt a collective identity (Haryanto, 2016).

A collective identity is not just a label, but a frame of reference that guides the actions, thoughts, and social affiliations of its members, thus profoundly shaping their worldview. This is why collective identity is prevalent as the basis for social and political mobilization, creating a common consciousness that transcends individual interests for greater collective goals (Sukmana, 2016). Collective identity encompasses individual commitment, collective solidarity, as well as broader macrosocial structures that shape political and cultural contexts, as explained through the analysis of general collective identities (Sukmana, 2016).

Furthermore, the collective identity of Muhammadiyah represents a synergistic interaction between individuals and their environment in the process of forming identity, as well as showing that identity and culture are inseparable entities (Haryanto et al., 2012). This confirms that the process of identity formation is the result of dynamic interactions between individual agencies and structural influences that shape organizational norms and values (Jones et al., 2016). Through this mechanism, the collective identity of Muhammadiyah becomes a dynamic entity, constantly reproduced and negotiated through the daily practices of its members, thereby strengthening the internal cohesion or social legitimacy of the organization (Chevallier, 1994).

Collective identity is relevant to members because it frames shared behaviors, values, and goals, while creating a foundation for active participation in organizational activities and public advocacy (Torre et al., 2021). This self-collectivity encourages individuals to orient their actions to the interests and goals of the group, not just personal goals (Wirawan, 2015). In the context of Indonesia, the collective identity of Muhammadiyah plays an important role in shaping national discourse and encouraging citizen participation in social development (Sukmana, 2016). In addition, through its collective identity, Muhammadiyah has succeeded in articulating religious values as a moral

foundation for nation-building, thus placing its members as subjects who are doubly committed to Islamic teachings and national ideals (Lubis et al., 2015) (Haryanto, 2016).

The solidity of the collective identity also allows Muhammadiyah to play a significant role in mobilizing transnational solidarity, especially related to issues affecting global Muslims, as seen in the response to the suffering of Muslims in Palestine or the Rohingya (Haryanto, 2016). The phenomenon highlights how religious identities can transcend national boundaries, form a broad network of solidarity and have an impact on a global scale, as expressed by Johnston and Klandermans, in relation to collective identity (Sukmana, 2016).

### **Public Space, Political Legitimacy, and Limits of Power**

The public discourse constructed by Muhammadiyah not only forms an internal identity, but also actively negotiates with external forces in order to fight for political meaning and legitimacy in the wider realm. Muhammadiyah uses the public space as a discursive arena to articulate its religious views, as well as advocate for policies in line with its progressive Islamic vision. This includes advocacy for education, health, and social justice that reflects the organization's efforts to make a substantive contribution to the civil society order (Yani et al., 2022).

Through the articulation of religious discourse, Muhammadiyah not only forms an internal identity, but also actively participates in fighting for political meaning and legitimacy in the public sphere, often clashing or negotiating with the discourse of the state or other religious groups (Yani et al., 2022) (Lubis et al., 2015) (Shadiqi et al., 2018). This is crucial in understanding the dynamics of power and resistance in the socio-political context of Indonesia, when civil society organizations such as Muhammadiyah function as a counterweight to the dominant forces (Lubis et al., 2015). Muhammadiyah tirelessly emphasizes the relevance of civil society to limit the potential for authoritarianism through active participation in the public space (Sukmana, 2016).

Muhammadiyah's ability to voice its perspective in the public sphere shows its role as a civic actor of power, as well as highlighting the complexity of the interaction between religious, state, and societal discourses in relation to policy formation and public opinion in Indonesia (Lubis et al., 2015) (Kurniawan et al., 2021). In this case, Muhammadiyah has consistently carried a narrative that integrates progressive Islamic values with the national development agenda, thus creating a transformative form of religious activism (Latief, 2016).

Regarding the limits of power, Muhammadiyah as a modern religious organization explicitly sets ethical and legal boundaries in the practice of its power, ensuring that its activities remain within the corridor of democracy and human rights. The restrictions were carried out to maintain the integrity of the organization, as well as a manifestation of the commitment to the principles of justice and social welfare which are the foundation of the Muhammadiyah movement. This approach is in line with his efforts to keep his distance from practical politics, so that he chooses to actively influence policy through moral movements or advocacy, rather than direct institutional involvement (Setiawan, 1970).

Therefore, it is not surprising that Muhammadiyah has succeeded in becoming an independent moral force, capable of providing constructive criticism of state policies without being bound by short-term political interests. In many cases, Muhammadiyah has proven to be at the forefront of voicing the interests of the people and criticizing government policies that are considered not pro-people (Suyadi et al., 2025). These efforts convince the general public that strengthening civil society is a prerequisite for a healthy democracy, being able to criticize power so as not to be trapped in *statolatry* or state domination (Sukmana, 2016).

### **Theoretical and Empirical Implications**

The research theoretically enriches the understanding of the dialectic between religious discourse and the formation of collective identities, especially in the context of modern religious organizations operating within the framework of democracy (Pahlevy et al., 2023). Empirically, the study reveals the specific mechanism by which Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, uses discourse to build consensus, mobilize members, and influence public policy, thus challenging the reductive view of the role of religion (Lubis et al., 2015). It offers a new perspective on the adaptation and resistance of religious organizations when facing the challenges of modernity.

Furthermore, this study underlines how organizations such as Muhammadiyah develop discursive strategies to navigate the complexities of identity politics and globalization, ensuring that their relevance is maintained in the midst of rapid social change (Judijanto et al., 2024). The analysis also highlights the adaptive capacity of Muhammadiyah in responding to contemporary issues, such as gender equality issues or minority protection, thus showing a shift in the interpretation of religious teachings to be more inclusive and contextual (Udasmoro et al., 2021) (Rahmi, 2025).

Religious organizations have proven to be agents of progressive change, even under pressure to maintain orthodoxy. This development undoubtedly strengthens the argument that religion is not always the antithesis of modernity, but can be a catalyst for positive social transformation (Haryanto, 2016). Thus, at the same time it challenges conventional views that often separate religion from progress, because it shows its capacity as a dynamic force to shape the future of a just and equal society (Udasmoro et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The research confirms how Muhammadiyah has succeeded in articulating progressive religious discourse that supports democracy and civil society, thus highlighting how religious organizations can be a driving force for constructive social change. These findings refute the narrative that often corners religion as an obstacle to progress, but affirms its potential as a driving force for social justice and inclusivity. Specifically, the study shows that Muhammadiyah's proficiency in subjectivizing its members to have a critical awareness of social issues, while creating space for active participation in the public sphere through the articulation of transformative religious narratives (Haryanto, 2016).

The Foucauldian reading strengthens the assumption that Muhammadiyah not only forms an internal collective identity, but also strategically produces and disseminates discourses that strengthen its position as a significant actor in Indonesia's socio-political landscape (Afwadzi, 2023). One of the most important discourses is "Progressive Islam", a narrative that allows Muhammadiyah to adapt to modernity while still maintaining fundamental Islamic principles (Arifin et al., 2024). The analysis also reveals how Muhammadiyah effectively integrates modernity into the Islamic framework, thus demonstrating the organization's flexibility to respond to contemporary challenges without sacrificing its basic principles (Arifin et al., 2024). Further studies identify ways in which Muhammadiyah has managed to maintain its relevance by developing adaptive strategies that allow the interpretation of religious teachings to be in harmony with the demands of the times (Syarif & Hannan, 2022).

This research makes a significant contribution to the literature on the Sociology of Religion and the study of social movements by offering an in-depth analysis of the discourse strategy and power of Muhammadiyah, filling the gap in understanding of how modern religious organizations navigate the complexities of public space.

Theoretically, this study expands on Foucault's framework by showing its application to analyze discursive formations in the uniqueness of religious contexts, which are often overlooked in postmodernist studies. Empirically, the research presents concrete evidence on how a religious organization is able to become an agent of social change through the construction and dissemination of discourse, especially in the Indonesian context. Furthermore, this research contributes to the understanding of how religious organizations are able to adapt to modernity without losing their religious identity, even becoming a catalyst for social progress (Nashir et al., 2019) (Aminullah Elhady, 2017).

However, this study has a number of limitations, especially because of its macro focus in analyzing discourse and power, so it may not capture the microdynamics in the Muhammadiyah community. In-depth studies related to the micro-physics of power within the internal scope of Muhammadiyah, such as at the branch or branch level, are believed to provide a richer perspective on the implementation and resistance to the dominant discourse (Burke, 2011).

In addition, limited access to internal documents or personal archives limits the ability of research to delve deeper into historical shifts in Muhammadiyah's discursive strategy, which has the potential to reveal nuances and contradictions that are often undetected through public analysis. (Rahmi, 2025) Future studies should consider ethnomethodological approaches or conversational analysis to capture how individuals at the local level interpret and negotiate larger discourses (Jones et al., 2016) (Yusuf, 2014).

The use of Foucauldian discourse analysis is also limited to the interpretation of official texts, thus lacking capture the nondiscursive aspects of the practice of power and resistance that may operate in implicit or symbolic

forms. Future research could expand the scope by integrating comparative case studies from similar religious organizations in the Southeast Asian region, thus enriching understanding of the regional dynamics between religion and modernity. This certainly provides comparative insight into adaptation strategies and articulation of discourse when facing the challenges of globalization and contemporary pluralism.

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