

Muhammadiyah amid Global Ideological Currents: An Analysis of Responses to Right-Wing, Left-Wing, and Post-Truth Ideologies

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31603/tarbiyatuna.v16i2.12904>



ABSTRACT

Article Info:

Submitted:

27/12/2024

Revised:

12/10/2025

Published:

31/12/2025

The rise of global ideological polarization, marked by the strengthening of right-wing and left-wing ideologies as well as the spread of post-truth narratives, poses significant challenges to religious organizations in maintaining ideological moderation and social cohesion. This study examines Muhammadiyah's responses to these global ideological currents and analyzes its position in navigating ideological contestation in the contemporary era. Employing a qualitative approach with a literature-based and thematic analysis, this study draws on Muhammadiyah's official documents, organizational decisions, intellectual discourses, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah responds to ideological polarization through a framework of critical centrism, grounded in the principles of Islam Wasathiyah, tajdid (renewal), and the Manhaj Tarjih methodology. This approach enables Muhammadiyah to critically engage with both right-wing exclusivism and left-wing secularism while resisting the epistemic distortions characteristic of the post-truth era. Rather than adopting rigid ideological positions, Muhammadiyah promotes a balanced, rational, and ethical Islamic perspective that emphasizes social justice, democratic values, and religious moderation. The study highlights Muhammadiyah's role as a mediating force in Indonesia's religious and ideological landscape and underscores its contribution to fostering constructive public discourse amid global ideological turbulence.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah; Islam Wasathiyah; Tajdid; Global Ideologies; Post-Truth

ABSTRAK

Menguatnya polarisasi ideologi global yang ditandai oleh berkembangnya ideologi kanan, ideologi kiri, serta meluasnya fenomena post-truth menghadirkan tantangan serius bagi organisasi keagamaan dalam menjaga moderasi ideologis dan kohesi sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis respons Muhammadiyah terhadap arus ideologi global tersebut serta menelaah posisi ideologis Muhammadiyah dalam menghadapi kontestasi ideologi di era kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis kepustakaan dan tematik terhadap dokumen resmi Muhammadiyah, keputusan organisasi, wacana intelektual,

serta literatur ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa Muhammadiyah merespons polarisasi ideologi global melalui kerangka sentrisme kritis yang berlandaskan prinsip Islam Wasathiyah, tajdid (pembaruan), dan metodologi Manhaj Tarjih. Kerangka ini memungkinkan Muhammadiyah untuk bersikap kritis terhadap eksklusivisme ideologi kanan dan sekularisme ideologi kiri, sekaligus menolak distorsi epistemik yang menjadi ciri utama era post-truth. Alih-alih mengambil posisi ideologis yang kaku, Muhammadiyah menampilkan pendekatan Islam yang moderat, rasional, dan etis dengan menekankan nilai keadilan sosial, demokrasi, serta moderasi beragama. Temuan ini menegaskan peran Muhammadiyah sebagai kekuatan penengah dalam lanskap ideologis dan keagamaan Indonesia serta kontribusinya dalam membangun wacana publik yang konstruktif di tengah dinamika ideologi global.

Kata-kata Kunci: Muhammadiyah; Islam Wasathiyah; Tajdid; Ideologi Global; Post-Truth

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary political-ideological landscape worldwide, including in Indonesia, is marked by intensifying polarization between Right-wing and Left-wing currents, alongside a fundamental challenge to rationality posed by the Post-Truth phenomenon. This ideological polarization extends beyond electoral preferences to encompass social, cultural, moral, and even theological dimensions of society. In this context, ideological positioning no longer operates linearly but has become fluid and contestatory in shaping public opinion, political orientations, and state policy directions (Ostrowski, 2023). Broadly speaking, the “Left” is commonly associated with political ideologies that are liberal and progressive, emphasizing freedom, equality, and social justice. A significant body of academic debate links the Left to critical agendas that challenge power structures, including minority rights, economic redistribution, and more inclusive legal and social reforms. Over time, Left-leaning ideologies have frequently coincided with critiques of religious institutional dominance in the public sphere, often generating epistemic, moral, and political tensions with religious groups holding particular normative orientations (Adian, 2011).

Conversely, the “Right” has historically been associated with conservative political perspectives that emphasize tradition, hierarchy, order, authority, and national interests. Right-wing ideologies also tend to support economic liberalism, market mechanisms, and security-oriented approaches to social change. Ideological contestation between the Right and the Left has grown increasingly complex as both spectrums claim moral legitimacy within democratic discourse, public policy, and nationalist narratives (Ostrowski, 2023). In the Indonesian context, segments of the Muslim community perceive Right-wing ideology as a means of safeguarding religious identity amid globalization and modern secularization, which are often seen as eroding theistic values and public morality (Fuad, 2007). In certain cases, religious conservatism intersects with

Right-leaning orientations in terms of nationalism, political ethics, and social identity structures (Adrián-Ventura et al., 2025).

Amid this polarization, a new epistemic crisis has emerged in the form of the Post-Truth era. This phenomenon goes beyond conventional disinformation or hoaxes; it reflects a crisis in communicative ethics in which facts and logic are displaced by narratives grounded in belief or personal emotion that are socially validated despite lacking empirical foundations (Syarif et al., 2020). Numerous studies characterize Post-Truth as an era in which empirical data no longer serve as the primary reference for public decision-making; instead, subjective preferences, emotional affect, and manipulated narratives disseminated by political actors, media, and information industries dominate (McIntyre, 2018). Post-Truth disinformation also shapes public perceptions of religion, religious organizations, and moral authority. In Indonesian politics, for example, Post-Truth frequently manifests as deliberately produced “dishonest facts” aimed at achieving specific political objectives through emotional manipulation and ideological bias (Rianto, 2020). This condition places religious organizations in an epistemic dilemma: balancing the preservation of moral authority with the need to adapt to new modes of public communication characterized by mass information mobilization.

Muhammadiyah, as the largest modern socio-religious organization in Indonesia, has made a substantial contribution to modern Islamic thought, national education, and social development. Muhammadiyah’s ideology is rooted in Islamic teachings derived from the Qur’an and the Hadith, with a focus on purifying creed (*aqidah*), advancing education, and providing social services through the principles of *tajdid* (renewal) and *amar ma’ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong) (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025). Since its establishment in 1912, Muhammadiyah has consistently promoted a vision of progressive Islam through rational, modernist, and moderate approaches, positioning itself as a key actor in balancing Islamic values with the demands of changing times (Miswanto, 2020). Among the global challenges confronting the organization is contemporary radicalism, broadly encompassing religious radicalism, economic radicalism in the form of neoliberal capitalism, and political radicalism associated with oligarchic structures that shape societal life (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Historically, Muhammadiyah has played a pivotal role in the development of Indonesia’s national education system through an extensive network of schools and universities across the country (Hamami, 2021). Contemporary scholarship also characterizes Muhammadiyah as *Wasathiyah* (moderate) Islamic movement that consistently rejects both Right-wing extremism and Left-wing radicalism (Kurniawan et al., 2023). This positioning places Muhammadiyah at a strategic crossroads in confronting three major contemporary ideological challenges: the Right, the Left, and Post-Truth. From this vantage point, Muhammadiyah is tested not only in sustaining its

ideological continuity but also in maintaining social and epistemic relevance within the architecture of modern democracy.

A growing body of literature has examined Muhammadiyah's position within national political dynamics and its role as an agent of moderation. Rohman (2025) for instance, emphasizes Muhammadiyah's contribution to moderating Islamic discourse; Widodo & Yusuf (2019) analyze how Muhammadiyah constructs the identity of progressive Islam; Ramdhany & Sunardi (2025) explore Muhammadiyah's strategies in addressing radicalism; and Nawir et al. (2024) highlight the role of Muhammadiyah's educational institutions in countering extremism. At the international level, similar discussions appear in studies on the role of Islamic organizations in democracy, religious moderation, and civic education (E. Susanti, 2024). Collectively, these studies demonstrate that religious organizations play a significant role in maintaining social stability and offering alternative narratives to ideological extremism.

Nevertheless, important gaps remain in the literature. First, existing studies tend to analyze Muhammadiyah's orientation toward Right-wing and Left-wing ideologies separately rather than integratively. Second, the Post-Truth phenomenon is rarely examined as an epistemic variable that reshapes the ideological field itself. Third, few studies systematically investigate how religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah respond simultaneously to these three ideological currents within the same contested arena. This gap is significant because the modern ideological landscape is no longer defined by simple dichotomies but by simultaneous contestations across multiple ideological spectrums and information channels. Fourth, most research remains normative, historical, or sociological in nature and has yet to develop an analytical framework explaining how Muhammadiyah strategically positions itself within global ideological currents. In other words, a theoretical and empirical void persists regarding how modern Islamic organizations manage identity negotiation, narrative construction, and epistemic authority when confronting these three contemporary ideological forces.

This article proposes the concept of critical centrism as an analytical lens for understanding Muhammadiyah's responses to Right-wing, Left-wing, and Post-Truth ideologies. Critical centrism refers to an organization's capacity to maintain ideological moderation while actively engaging in discursive contestation, critiquing extremism at both ends of the spectrum, and safeguarding epistemic integrity against Post-Truth disinformation. The concept underscores that moderation is not merely a neutral or compromise-based stance, but rather an epistemic and practical strategy for preserving moral authority and social relevance amid ideological pressures.

In line with the identified gaps, this article aims to: (1) analyze the narratives and ideological terrains of the Right, the Left, and Post-Truth that shape the contemporary context; (2) examine Muhammadiyah's responses to these three currents; and (3) conceptualize Muhammadiyah's positioning through the framework of critical centrism.

Accordingly, this study contributes to the theoretical elaboration of the role of Islamic organizations in ideological contestation while enriching the literature in the sociology of religion, politics, and public epistemology.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature-based research design, or integrative literature review (Snyder, 2019) to analyze the dynamics of Right-wing ideology, Left-wing ideology, and the Post-Truth phenomenon within the intellectual framework of Muhammadiyah. This approach is selected because the object of analysis is conceptual and ideological in nature and concerns the construction of discourse within a religious organization in a contemporary socio-political context. As such, it cannot be adequately examined through experimental methods or quantitative surveys.

Research data were obtained from secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, organizational reports, official Muhammadiyah documents, digital archives, and scholarly publications issued between 2010 and 2025. The selection of this time frame is intended to capture Muhammadiyah's responses to contemporary conditions characterized by ideological polarization and media transformation. The criteria for literature selection include: (1) relevance to the concepts of Right-wing ideology, Left-wing ideology, Post-Truth, and Islamic moderation; (2) linkage to the context of religious organizations; and (3) contribution to the enrichment of the theoretical framework. Journalistic writings or opinion pieces are included in a limited manner as supporting data to identify constructions of public discourse.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques and systematic academic searches using databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, DOAJ, and national journal portals, complemented by internal documents retrieved from Muhammadiyah's official website. The search strategy employed keywords including "Right-Wing Ideology," "Left-Wing Ideology," "Post-Truth," "Moderate Islam," and "Muhammadiyah." Documentation techniques are commonly used in literature-based research as they enable in-depth evaluation of both the content and contextual dimensions of discourse.

The unit of analysis in this study comprises ideological narratives found in scholarly literature and organizational documents, with particular attention to discursive constructions concerning Muhammadiyah's positioning amid Right-Left ideological contestation and the Post-Truth environment. This focus allows for comparative analysis between epistemic frameworks developed within the organization and those circulating in academic discourse.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis through categorization (coding) techniques, as recommended in qualitative research

methodologies. The analytical stages include: (1) comprehensive reading of the literature; (2) identification and coding of thematic categories; (3) clustering of themes; and (4) interpretation of findings within the socio-political context. Emergent themes include “Progressive Islam,” “Moderation,” “Critical Engagement with Extremism,” and “Post-Truth.” The analysis is contextual in nature, examining how these ideologies operate in the public sphere and how Muhammadiyah responds through education, social services, and religious outreach (*da‘wah*).

The analytical framework of this study incorporates critical discourse analysis to connect ideological narratives with their socio-political contexts. This approach enables the identification of how ideological discourses are constructed, negotiated, and positioned in the public arena, as well as how Muhammadiyah articulates moderate centrism as an ideological strategy. Within this study, critical centrism functions as a working concept to explain the organization’s responses to Right-wing, Left-wing, and Post-Truth ideologies.

Research validity is ensured through source triangulation by comparing data derived from academic literature, organizational documents, and media reports. Triangulation is recognized as an effective method for strengthening validity in qualitative research. Interpretive reliability is further reinforced through referential checks against established theories and conceptual frameworks, as well as through thematic consistency throughout the analytical process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Contemporary Ideological Realities

To understand Muhammadiyah’s responses, it is necessary first to clarify the concept of ideology and then to map the principal characteristics of the contemporary ideological currents it confronts. The Right–Left spectrum provides an analytical lens for examining both contradictions and convergences within Muhammadiyah’s movement, while an assessment of the negative impacts of the Post-Truth phenomenon elucidates its effects on social, political, and religious life.

Conceptually, ideology refers to a system of ideas, worldviews, or values that serves as a foundation for individuals, groups, or societies in understanding and organizing life. In terminological terms, scholars have formulated the concept of ideology from diverse perspectives, including sociological, political, and philosophical approaches (Pranomo, 2018). Clifford Geertz, for instance, defines ideology as a culturally developed system of meaning used to explain and justify particular conditions within society (Miftakhur Ridlo, 2021). By contrast, Antonio Gramsci adopts a more critical stance, viewing ideology as an instrument of hegemony employed by dominant groups to maintain power not merely through coercion, but also through consensus and cultural

influence (Kalt, 2024; Siswati, 2018). In a more affirmative vein, Indonesian social thinkers have articulated ideology in positive terms. Soerjanto Poespowardojo, for example, defines ideology as an integrated system of values that enables a social group to understand, organize, and sustain a particular way of life (Poespowardojo & Seran, 2021). In the contemporary era, ideological forms have become increasingly diverse, ranging from Right-wing and Left-wing ideologies to the Post-Truth phenomenon.

1) Characteristics of Contemporary Right-Wing Ideology: Conservatism and Authority

Right-wing ideology tends to preserve tradition, authority, and conservative values. Its defining features include social conservatism, economic liberalism, nationalism, and anti-immigration stances (Lietz & Mayer, 2026). In the domain of social conservatism, this ideology emphasizes adherence to traditional social and moral values, alongside support for established social institutions such as the family and religion. In terms of economic liberalism, it strongly endorses free markets, privatization, and minimal state intervention, based on the belief that individual initiative drives prosperity. Within the framework of nationalism, Right-wing ideology prioritizes national identity and sovereignty, with particular emphasis on maintaining security and territorial integrity. The threat of radicalism within the contemporary Right-wing spectrum often manifests in the form of economic radicalism (extreme capitalism) and political radicalism (oligarchic authority), both of which undermine social cohesion and exacerbate social inequality (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Academic research identifies several Right-wing ideological currents that have gained prominence in recent decades, including Traditional Conservatism (Ismail, 2011), Populist Nationalism (Putra, 2017), Religious Extremism (Jalil, 2021), Neoconservatism (Maharani et al., 2017), Alt-Right/Alternative Right (Lovett, 2021), Right-Wing Libertarianism (L. E. Susanti, 2018), Eco-fascism, (Jegalus, 2021), and Modern Monarchism (Suyana et al., 2022). Although these ideologies share common emphases on tradition, identity, and stability, each pursues distinct approaches and agendas. This diversity illustrates that Right-wing ideology continues to adapt to contemporary dynamics, both as a response to Left-wing ideologies and to broader global challenges.

2) Characteristics of Contemporary Left-Wing Ideology : Progressivism and Social Justice

Left-wing ideology is generally progressive in orientation and places strong emphasis on social equality and freedom. Its defining characteristics include social progressivism, social justice, solidarity, and internationalism (Dobkiewicz et al., 2023; Klebanov, 2017). First, in the domain of social progressivism, this ideology seeks to transform and rectify social inequalities by advocating for individual rights, including minority rights and gender-related issues. Second, with respect to social justice, Left-

wing ideology strongly supports policies of wealth redistribution and state intervention in the economy as mechanisms to reduce structural inequality. Third, in terms of solidarity and internationalism, this ideological current emphasizes cross-border cooperation and global solidarity, standing in contrast to the Right-wing focus on narrow nationalism.

Contemporary Left-wing ideology encompasses a wide range of currents that continue to adapt to emerging global challenges, including environmental crises, global inequality, and identity-based conflicts. Academic research identifies diverse strands of Left-wing thought currently in circulation, such as Democratic Socialism (Sukri, 2021), Marxism and Neo-Marxism (Clammer, 2017), Contemporary Communism (Azizah et al., 2020), Anarchism (Septiyan, 2024), Left Feminism (Mudzakkir, 2022), Eco-socialism, Progressivism, Left Postcolonialism, Left Populism, and Post-Marxism. Although these strands differ in their approaches and strategies, they share a common commitment to social justice, equality, and emancipation from various forms of oppression. Amid ongoing global transformations, Left-wing ideology thus remains relevant as a force driving change toward more inclusive and sustainable societies.

3) Characteristics of Post-Truth Ideology: Emotion and Disinformation

Post-Truth ideology is commonly defined as a condition in which objective facts and logical evidence exert less influence on the formation of public opinion than emotions and personal beliefs. In the Post-Truth era, truth is frequently subordinated to narratives that are more appealing, manipulative, or supportive of particular agendas (Sharine & Sitorus, 2022). This concept has attracted significant scholarly attention in the contexts of politics, media, and culture, particularly following major global and regional events such as the Brexit referendum and the Indonesian presidential elections of 2019 and 2024.

Scholars identify several key characteristics of Post-Truth ideology. First is the dominance of emotion, whereby feelings and affective responses become the primary basis for determining what is perceived as “truth,” rather than empirical facts or evidence. As a result, truth becomes highly subjective, allowing individuals to construct their own versions of reality. Second is the use of biased information, in which data and narratives are selectively framed to support specific viewpoints, often involving the dissemination of hoaxes or deliberate disinformation. Third is distrust toward institutions, marked by declining public confidence in traditional authorities such as the media, scientists, and government institutions, which is replaced by reliance on alternative, frequently unverified sources of information. Fourth is the role of technology, particularly social media, which facilitates the rapid and large-scale spread of false or biased information (Gunawan & Ratmono, 2021).

The global rise of Post-Truth ideology has had far-reaching consequences for social life, including heightened social polarization, erosion of public trust, and the

proliferation of disinformation (Mofferz, 2020). In terms of social polarization, Post-Truth dynamics intensify societal divisions as individuals increasingly cluster within groups that share similar views while disregarding objective facts. With respect to public trust, Post-Truth ideology contributes to declining confidence in traditional information sources, such as news media and academic institutions. A further consequence is the widespread circulation of disinformation or hoaxes, which are often readily believed because they align with particular narratives or emotional predispositions. Consequently, fact-based policymaking is frequently marginalized in favor of populist or manipulative rhetoric. Illustrative examples include the spread of conspiracy theories that contradict scientific evidence, such as anti-vaccination claims or unfounded allegations related to electoral processes (Faedlulloh & Duadji, 2019).

In the Post-Truth era, where factual accuracy is frequently displaced by emotion-driven narratives and information manipulation, civil society organizations face substantial challenges in sustaining their role as guardians of truth. Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, bears significant responsibility in guiding the public toward a religious understanding that is rational, moderate, and grounded in factual truth. This role positions Muhammadiyah as a crucial moral and epistemic actor in responding to the pressures of Post-Truth discourse within contemporary society.

b. Muhammadiyah's Ideology: Responses to Left-Wing, Right-Wing, and Post-Truth Ideologies

1) Foundations and Principles of Muhammadiyah's Ideology

Muhammadiyah's ideological response to contemporary challenges is firmly rooted in an institutionalized religious methodology that ensures adaptability through *tajdid* (renewal), rationality through *manhaj tarjih* (methodology of legal reasoning), and moderation through the framework of Islam *wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation). These three pillars collectively shape Muhammadiyah's capacity to engage critically with Left-wing, Right-wing, and Post-Truth ideologies without losing its normative Islamic orientation. First, the dynamization of the movement and its progressive manifestation through the principle of *tajdid*. *Tajdid* (renewal) constitutes a defining characteristic of Muhammadiyah's intellectual tradition and has, since its inception, positioned the movement as part of Islamic modernism (Anwar, 2018). This principle functions as an antithesis to dogmatic conservatism that resists modernization and contextual adaptation. The scope of *tajdid* is broad, extending beyond ritual matters to encompass all dimensions of life, including ideology, *khittah* (organizational orientation), and strategic pathways of struggle.⁸ The progressive manifestation of *tajdid* is evident in Muhammadiyah's responses to global issues. For instance, the agenda of internationalization has emerged as a response to globalization, reflecting Muhammadiyah's commitment to aligning its

da'wah movement with contemporary conditions. This includes engagement with global social concerns such as labor rights, gender inequality, nuclear issues, and environmental sustainability. This internationalization strategy operates across ideational, institutional, and movement-based dimensions, aiming to position Muhammadiyah as a model of Islamic praxis that can be globally adopted in promoting peace and humanitarian values (Thahir, 2024).

Second, religious rationality and mechanisms of adaptation through *manhaj tarjih*. Muhammadiyah's methodological foundation lies in *manhaj tarjih*, which refers to the structured methodology of *istinbath al-hukm* (derivation of legal rulings) employed by the *Majelis Tarjih* (Council for Legal Reasoning) (SA & Afriansyah, 2023). This methodology emphasizes the primacy of the Qur'an and Sunnah while systematically employing human reason (*'aql*) in accordance with the spirit of Islamic teachings (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025). Two key perspectives characterize *manhaj tarjih*. The first is openness and non-affiliation with any single *madhhab* (school of law). *Manhaj tarjih* does not bind itself to a particular legal school and remains open to drawing upon opinions from various juristic traditions, including classical *madhhab* authorities, selecting those deemed to have the strongest evidentiary and rational foundations (Anwar, 2018). This stance serves as an institutional strategy to prevent religious stagnation and to avoid exclusive conservatism (Anwar, 2018). The second is the principle of *al-maṣlaḥah* (public interest). For contemporary issues lacking explicit textual injunctions (*nash*), the *Majelis Tarjih* adopts an *al-maṣlaḥah*-based approach in formulating legal responses, such as the determination of the legal validity of divorce pronounced before a court (Abidin et al., 2024). The use of *al-maṣlaḥah* demonstrates a high degree of legal flexibility and social adaptability (Wijaya, 2019). The strong emphasis on rational reasoning in legal derivation (*istinbath*) (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025) and the integration of scientific knowledge into fatwas (Fathorrahman et al., 2024) indicate that rationality within Muhammadiyah is not merely a moral preference but an institutionalized methodological obligation. This commitment to methodological authority and rationality inherently positions Muhammadiyah as resistant to ideologies that negate facts or logic, including Post-Truth discourse.

Third, the principle of moderation (*Islam wasathiyah*) as an ideological buffer. The promotion of religious moderation constitutes a core Muhammadiyah program aimed at preventing the spread of modern radicalism (Kurniawan et al., 2023). In this context, radicalism is understood broadly to include not only religious extremism but also radical forms of liberalism, capitalism, totalitarianism, and fascism.⁷ The concept of moderation operates on two interrelated dimensions: discursive and practical. At the discursive level, moderation is understood as fostering social harmony in multicultural societies, countering religious exclusivism that often becomes an ideological barrier to resolving pluralism-related challenges. (Kurniawan et al., 2023). At the practical level, moderation

requires the rejection of religious practices that claim exclusive ownership of truth and salvation, as such absolutism frequently serves as a catalyst for radical attitudes (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Taken together, these methodological foundations situate Muhammadiyah's ideological stance within the category of Critical Centrism. This centrism is neither passive nor neutral; rather, it represents an independent posture that actively exercises structural critique. Muhammadiyah's long-standing commitment to non-partisanship, as articulated in its *Khittah* (Suyaman et al., 2020), provides strategic ideological flexibility (Raharjo et al., 2024). The organization is thus able to articulate strong critiques of structural injustice, aligning with certain Left-wing concerns, without adopting anti-religious narratives associated with extreme Left positions. Simultaneously, it upholds Islamic moral values, resonating with certain Right-wing agendas, without becoming entangled in oligarchic political interests characteristic of extreme Right ideologies (Kurniawan et al., 2023). This dual function underscores Muhammadiyah's moral and political independence. In practice, Muhammadiyah employs ideology as a dual lens: *tajdid* as a mechanism for adaptation and progressivism, and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) as a framework for structural critique and the enforcement of justice.

2) Analysis of Muhammadiyah's Responses within Ideological Contestation

Ideologically, Muhammadiyah operates from a centrist position imbued with a strong critical orientation. An analysis of Muhammadiyah's ideological vectors indicates that the organization does not confine itself to a single ideological category; rather, it adopts differentiated functional stances depending on the issue at hand. First, vertically, in the normative domain of religious morality, Muhammadiyah demonstrates a tendency commonly associated with the Right, insofar as it firmly adheres to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025). This orientation enables Muhammadiyah to contribute to the transformation of Islamic law into national law, for example through legislation on marriage and religious courts, such as the Marriage Law and the Religious Courts Law (Tridiatno, 2021), agendas often perceived as conservative or right-leaning. Second, horizontally, in the domains of socio-economic justice and structural critique, Muhammadiyah exhibits affinities with the Left. Its rejection of economic and political radicalism (Kurniawan et al., 2023) reflects a strong critique of structural deviations frequently attributed to capitalist oligarchies. This positioning allows Muhammadiyah to maximize its function as a movement of *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* across the ideological spectrum.

a) Muhammadiyah's Responsive Analysis in Addressing Contemporary Right-Wing Ideologies

Muhammadiyah's response to the Right-wing spectrum is characterized by differentiation: it accepts moral values and functional order while rejecting economic and political radicalization. First, responding to dogmatic religious conservatism, the principle of *tajdid* constitutes a fundamental resistance to religious conservatism that rejects modernization or contextual adaptation. The non-madhab approach adopted within *manhaj tarjih* (Anwar, 2018), functions as an institutional strategy to prevent religious stagnation, a hallmark of dogmatic conservatism. Furthermore, the Islam *wasathiyah* program explicitly rejects religious practices grounded in exclusive claims of truth and salvation (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Such exclusivism is often found within extreme religious Right groups and tends to foster fanaticism and violent religious radicalism. By promoting moderation, Muhammadiyah acts as a buffer against radicalism rooted in religious exclusivity (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

Second, critiquing economic radicalism (oligarchic capitalism), Muhammadiyah explicitly categorizes modern radicalism as encompassing liberalism and capitalism that generate social and environmental inequality (Kurniawan et al., 2023). This critique targets deviations within the economic Right spectrum. The Muhammadiyah network of *Amal Usaha* (educational, health, and social institutions) represents an institutionalized manifestation of collectivist struggle oriented toward the public good (*maṣlaḥah*) (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025). This network functions as a counterforce to extreme individualism and unregulated free-market ideologies often promoted by the economic Right. In this sense, Muhammadiyah operates simultaneously as a religious, ideological, social, and economic movement (Abdullah et al., 2023). In the sphere of legal-political engagement, Muhammadiyah also plays an active role in promoting good governance, particularly in combating corruption,¹⁶ thereby articulating a structural critique of Right-wing political practices that undermine state integrity.

Third, the dilemma of engagement in state politics reflects Muhammadiyah's nuanced positioning. Although Muhammadiyah is a non-partisan *da'wah* movement in accordance with its *khittah* and does not transform into a political party, its activists are not prohibited from participating in practical politics (Suyaman et al., 2020). The organization utilizes its influence to oversee legislative processes and to encourage the enactment of laws that integrate Islamic legal principles into national legislation, such as the Marriage Law and the Religious Courts Law (Tridiatno, 2021). At the same time, Muhammadiyah strongly rejects political radicalism manifested in oligarchic political authority that formulates policies for the benefit of narrow elites. Muhammadiyah's Chairman, Haedar Nashir, has explicitly criticized the strengthening of political oligarchy and emphasized the importance of public vigilance in resisting forms of oligarchy detrimental to the nation (Kurniawan et al., 2023). This stance demonstrates that

Muhammadiyah supports functional conservatism, namely the preservation of moral and legal order grounded in religion, while fundamentally rejecting political conservatism expressed through power oligarchies that erode justice.

b) Muhammadiyah's Responsive Analysis in Addressing Contemporary Left-Wing Ideologies

Muhammadiyah's response to the Left-wing spectrum is characterized by convergence in structural critique and socio-humanitarian action, while maintaining clear ideological boundaries grounded in Islamic law. First, convergence in structural critique and social justice is evident in Muhammadiyah's expansive definition of modern radicalism, which includes liberalism and capitalism that produce inequality (Kurniawan et al., 2023). This definition closely intersects with the Left's agenda of structural critique. Muhammadiyah's role as an independent civil society organization equips it with productive networks capable of exercising checks and balances on the state (Setiadi, 2021). The utilization of these critical networks to articulate dissatisfaction with government policies indicative of oligarchic tendencies (Kurniawan et al., 2023) represents a political manifestation of structural consciousness commonly associated with Leftist discourse.

Second, progressive social and humanitarian movements are reflected in Muhammadiyah's *tajdid*-driven engagement with global humanitarian issues, including gender equality, labor rights, and environmental sustainability. The internationalization of the movement through humanitarian missions, peacebuilding initiatives, and the establishment of charitable institutions abroad (Thahir, 2024) aligns with the spirit of internationalism and global solidarity that characterizes Leftist thought.² Domestically, Muhammadiyah also adopts progressive Left methodologies through digital activism. The use of social media platforms such as X/Twitter to advocate for environmental awareness under themes like "Ethical Endeavors to Protect the Universe" (*Ikhtiar Menyelamatkan Semesta*) demonstrates convergence in both issues and methods with progressive movements (Hasna, 2025).

Third, ideological boundaries *vis-à-vis* the secular Left remain firmly maintained. Despite its progressive orientation in social action, Muhammadiyah upholds clear ideological limits against secular or extreme Left positions. Its ideological foundation in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Merlinda & Nurhakim, 2025), ensures that all progressive agendas are pursued within the framework of Islamic law. Muhammadiyah remains aware of intellectual challenges, including exclusivist modes of thought and debates surrounding concepts derived from Western intellectual traditions (Setiadi, 2021), often associated with the intellectual Left. In this context, Islam wasathiyah functions to prevent the radicalization of Leftist interpretations that tend toward atheism or complete secularism.⁷ *Tajdid* enables Muhammadiyah to remain progressive in methodology and

action while remaining firmly anchored in the shari‘a, thereby producing a distinctive model of faith-based progressivism.

c) Muhammadiyah’s Responsive Analysis in Addressing Post-Truth (Epistemic Challenges)

The Post-Truth challenge constitutes a fundamental test of rationality and epistemic ethics within social movements. Muhammadiyah responds to this challenge through the strength of *manhaj tarjih* and the cultivation of ethical communication practices. Post-Truth represents an ethical crisis in which highly ideological actors construct narratives aligned with personal beliefs, relegating factual truth to a secondary position. This phenomenon frequently manifests in contemporary political spaces, for instance through Post-Truth narratives involving primordial issues such as Islamophobia, which exacerbate political contestation (Syarif et al., 2020). At its core, Post-Truth entails a shift of authority from logical facts to unchallengeable personal beliefs (Rahman et al., 2022).

Muhammadiyah counters attacks on factual truth through methodological authority. *Manhaj tarjih* functions as a supreme bastion of religious rationality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Majelis Tarjih* demonstrated this commitment by integrating scientific knowledge, particularly medical discourse, into religious fatwas concerning health protocols, disaster jurisprudence (*fiqh al-kawāriṭh*), and vaccination (Fathorrahman et al., 2024; Suyadi et al., 2020). This religious institution recognized the necessity of inclusive and adaptive religious narratives capable of positioning religious discourse and scientific knowledge proportionally. Such efforts ensured that fatwas were grounded in evidence and rationality rather than emotion or subjective claims. In this way, religious authority was mobilized to promote public health and social cohesion (Fathorrahman et al., 2024; Rachmawati et al., 2022), thereby rejecting the Post-Truth logic that dismisses science. A commitment to open, inclusive, and rational methodology thus constitutes Muhammadiyah’s most effective means of containing ideologically driven Post-Truth narratives (Rahman et al., 2022).

Beyond methodological authority, Muhammadiyah identifies communication ethics as a long-term solution to Post-Truth challenges (Rianto, 2020). Research indicates that Post-Truth thrives due to low ethical standards among social media users in producing, consuming, and disseminating content (Rianto, 2020). Muhammadiyah’s counter-narrative and digital ethics strategies encompass multicultural education and digital citizenship. First, strengthening multicultural education enhances societal wisdom in responding to diversity and prevents provocation by primordial Post-Truth narratives (Syarif et al., 2020). Second, digital citizenship involves Muhammadiyah cadres actively engaging in digital activism to construct counter-narratives. Examples include efforts to counter Islamophobia across various media platforms (Syarif et al., 2020) and initiatives by Muhammadiyah cadres in China to de-escalate domestic tensions surrounding the

Uyghur issue, aiming to foster a more conducive climate and prevent the spread of informational provocation (Fadillah & Jandevi, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah's ideological response to the currents of right-wing, left-wing, and post-truth ideologies demonstrates that the movement adopts a position of critical centrism, grounded in the principles of *tajdid* (renewal) and Islam *Wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation). Through this framework, Muhammadiyah is able to navigate the contemporary ideological spectrum while maintaining a balance between Islamic moral values and the demands of social justice. This orientation enables the organization to reject forms of radicalism originating both from religious exclusivism and from progressive secularism, while at the same time preserving its integrity as a politically independent religious movement. These findings are consistent with the objectives of this study, which sought to examine how Muhammadiyah responds to global ideological contestation and positions itself within the contemporary ideological landscape. The discussion affirms that Muhammadiyah's ideological role operates through three strategic orientations. First, Muhammadiyah functions as a pioneer of rationality through its institutionalized *Manhaj Tarjih* and the integration of scientific knowledge into religious discourse, which serves as an epistemic defense against post-truth phenomena. Second, Muhammadiyah emerges as a structural critic of economic and political radicalism, thereby creating space for social justice agendas without becoming entangled in left-wing secularism. Third, Muhammadiyah acts as a global humanitarian actor that projects the values of progressive Islam through international activism, education, and social movements. This study offers a theoretical contribution to the field of religious ideology by demonstrating that critical centrism constitutes a relevant epistemic and practical model for understanding modern religious organizations in contexts of global polarization. Its practical contribution lies in providing a framework for strengthening value-based civil society, particularly in relation to ideological education, religious moderation, and epistemic literacy in addressing disinformation in the digital era. The implications of this research further suggest that national ideological resilience does not rely solely on state policies, but also on the capacity of civil society organizations to promote knowledge governance, public rationality, and ethical communication. Nevertheless, this study is subject to certain limitations, as it relies primarily on literature-based analysis and does not fully capture organizational dynamics through ethnographic approaches or field research. Consequently, dimensions related to cadre experiences, processes of value institutionalization, and internal discursive conflicts are not examined in depth. Future research may therefore be directed toward implementation-oriented analyses through multi-site studies within Muhammadiyah, comparative studies with other religious organizations, or quantitative research examining the influence of

Wasathiyah and *tajdid* values on the political orientations of cadres and members. Longitudinal approaches are also needed to assess the extent to which critical centrism can be sustained as an ideological strategy amid ongoing polarization and the increasing fragmentation of information. Such efforts are expected to enrich theoretical discourse on the relationship between religion, ideology, and civil society within an increasingly complex global context.

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