



The Dynamics of the Islamic Renewal Movement in Indonesia: Before and After Independence

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Abstract

The Islamic renewal movement in Indonesia before and after independence is an important phenomenon in the socio-religious development of Indonesian Muslims. This period was marked by the emergence of various organizations and ideas that sought to reform religious practices, the education system, and the social life of Muslims amid the dynamics of colonialism, modernization, and the nation-building process. This study aims to comprehensively examine the nature of the Islamic renewal movement in Indonesia, its history, the figures and organizations that played a role, and the values of renewal that were promoted in shaping a Muslim society that was adaptive to the changing times. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method through analysis of various relevant scientific literature. The results of the study show that the pre-independence Islamic renewal movement focused on educational reform, purification of teachings, and strengthening of Islamic identity through organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which represented traditionalist and modernist styles. Meanwhile, in the post-independence period, the dynamics of renewal expanded through the entry of transnational Islamic movements such as Salafī (Wahhabi), Ikhwanul Muslimin, and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, which brought with them a discourse of purification of faith, ideological da'wah movements, and Islamic political ideas in the context of globalization. The differences in the socio-political contexts of the two periods indicate a shift in the orientation of renewal from socio-religious strengthening to ideological strengthening and Islamic transnationalism in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative analysis of Islamic renewal movements before and after independence, which not only maps the organizations and figures involved but also highlights changes in orientation, the character of the movements, and the ideological transformation of Islamic renewal in the context of Indonesia's national history.

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INTRODUCTION

The Islamic reform movement in Indonesia, both before and after independence, was an important phenomenon in the social and religious history of Indonesia (Aldzakhiroh et al., 2024). This period was marked by the emergence of various organizations and ideas aimed at reforming and modernizing religious practices, education, and the social life of Muslims amid the dynamics of colonialism

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and the struggle for independence. These motivations led to the emergence of various Islamic reform organizations around the world (Fathony, 2025).

In the period leading up to independence, organizations such as Muhammadiyah (founded in 1912) and Nahdlatul Ulama (founded in 1926) emerged as the two main pillars of the Islamic movement in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah pursued an agenda of modernizing and purifying Islam, promoting formal education, health, and social welfare while adopting a more rational approach and openness to modern science (Nisa et al., 2025). In contrast, Nahdlatul Ulama emphasized the importance of tradition and Islamic boarding school education, as well as the preservation of religious practices rooted in society. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are the largest socio-religious organizations in Indonesia (Wahyudin, 2021).

In addition to these two main organizations, there are also other movements that bring influences from the Middle East, such as the Haraki Islamiyyah movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Salafi (Wahhabi) movement that emphasizes the purification of Islamic teachings (Aritonang, 2020). After independence, the influence of various global Islamic ideologies grew stronger, including the entry of ideas from the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, which brought a more explicit and sometimes controversial discourse on Islamic politics. These transnational Islamic movements continue to exert a strong influence in Indonesia to this day. These organizations share a consistent focus on the formalization of Sharia law and the establishment of a caliphate in the Muslim world, with varying scopes of action and methods of struggle (Jasmaludin & Suyanta, 2025).

After independence, these movements continued to grow and adapt to the changing political and social context in Indonesia. They contributed to the formation of a complex national identity in which Islam constitutes an important pillar. Conflicts and collaborations among these movements have shaped the character and dynamics of religious life in Indonesia up to the present day (Munandar, 2025). These mass organizations were established voluntarily by groups of individuals who shared common interests, goals, and aspirations to contribute to the safety and prosperity of the nation. A question that then arises is: why are there so many Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia? The answer, of course, lies in the fact that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim. Essentially, the purpose of these organizations is to protect, maintain, and strengthen the foundation of national unity and integrity. This leads us to believe that a good mass organization is one that contributes to the achievement of the state's objectives. A good organization is one that fosters national unity and cohesion, not one that engages in "reckless" behavior such as anarchism that violates the laws of the state (Nopriansyah et al., 2024).

Based on the literature review conducted by the researcher on previous studies, topics related to the title of this research were identified. One such study was conducted by Soegijanto Padmo on the Islamic Reform Movement in Indonesia over time (Adiwilaga et al., 2024). This research discusses the emergence of various Islamic social movements, their charitable activities, and the role of modernist groups in the social transformations that have taken place in this country. The similarity between the two studies lies in their shared focus on Islamic reform movements in Indonesia. The difference lies in their respective emphases: Soegijanto Padmo's research focuses on the role of modernist groups within several Islamic social movements, whereas this study concentrates on the ideas of several Islamic movements in Indonesia (Karim & Wajdi, 2019).

Another previous study relevant to this research is the work conducted by Rifki Abror Ananda and Ahmad Khoirul Fata entitled "The History of Islamic Reform in Indonesia," which provides a general overview of the history of Islamic reform in

Indonesia in the modern era, namely during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. During these periods, reforms occurred across various contexts and addressed different themes, led by different figures. Nevertheless, these reforms encompassed many aspects of Muslim life, ranging from social and religious spheres to political domains (Alam & Alfian, 2023).

It is hoped that this study will provide a comprehensive understanding of the various Islamic reform movements in Indonesia, both before and after independence. The author aims to offer a clear explanation of the nature of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia, their historical development, and the core values they promote.

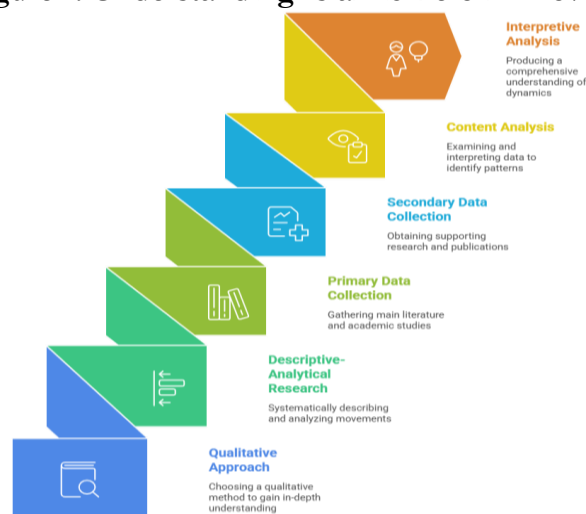
METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia through the analysis of data in the form of concepts, ideas, and thoughts contained in various written sources, rather than numerical data (Asmaniah et al., 2024). The type of research used is descriptive-analytical research, which seeks to systematically describe the development of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia before and after independence, while simultaneously analyzing the characteristics, orientations, and ideological changes that occurred within each movement (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include main literature that directly discusses Islamic reform movements in Indonesia, such as books, scholarly works, and writings of prominent figures, as well as academic studies relevant to organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Salafi, Ikhwanul Muslimin, and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from scientific journal articles, previous research findings, and other academic publications that support the research analysis.

The data analysis technique used in this study is content analysis, which involves examining, classifying, comparing, and interpreting information from various literature sources to identify patterns of development, similarities, and differences in the orientations of Islamic reform movements during the pre- and post-independence periods (Dalimunthe et al., 2025). The analysis was conducted interpretatively to produce a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Islamic reform within the socio-religious historical context of Indonesia.

Figure 1. Understanding Islamic Reform Movements



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tabel 1. Comparison of Islamic Organizations and Movements and Their Characteristics

Organization/ Movement	Founder	Year & Place of Establishment	Main Ideas/ Characteristics	Main Focus of Activities
Nahdlatul Ulama	Hasyim Asy'ari	1926, Surabaya	Upholds the tradition of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, preserves pesantren traditions, follows classical Islamic scholarship (Ash'ari–Maturidi theology, four madhhabs of fiqh, and Sufism).	Religious education, Islamic boarding school development, social service, community guidance, and limited political participation.
Muhammadiyah	Ahmad Dahlan	1912, Yogyakarta	Islamic reform movement emphasizing purification of Islamic teachings and return to the Qur'an and Sunnah, rejecting superstition and blind imitation (taqlid), and promoting modern thinking.	Modern education, social welfare, health services, humanitarian programs, and Islamic preaching (da'wah).
Salafi	movement Not founded by a single figure; inspired by early Muslim generations	Developed mainly in the Arabian Peninsula	Calls for returning to the understanding of Islam practiced by the Prophet, companions, and early generations; emphasizes purification of creed and rejection of innovations (bid'ah).	Religious education, doctrinal purification (tasfiyah), spiritual reform (tazkiyah), and preaching based on the Qur'an and Hadith.
Muslim Brotherhood	Hasan al-Banna	1928, Egyptian	Islamic movement integrating religion with social and political life; seeks to implement Islamic values in governance and society.	Da'wah, social reform, political activism, education, and community organization.
Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia	Inspired by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani	Global movement founded 1953; spread to Indonesia in the 1980s	Advocates the re-establishment of a global Islamic caliphate and rejects democracy as a political system.	Ideological dissemination, cadre training, educational activities, and political discourse regarding Islamic

Nahdlatul Ulama

Nahdlatul Ulama was founded on January 31, 1926, in Surabaya. It was established to accommodate the religious ideas of traditional ulama in response to the ideological achievements of the Islamic modernist movement, which promoted the idea of purification. The formation of Nahdlatul Ulama was an effort to organize the roles of ulama and existing pesantren in order to enhance, develop, and expand the scope of religious activities. Nahdlatul Ulama maintains that not all traditions are bad, outdated, or irrelevant to contemporary modernity. On the contrary, tradition has inspired the emergence of Islamic modernization. This emphasis on the “heritage” of the past is reflected in the doctrinal position that characterizes Nahdlatul Ulama in interpreting the meanings of the Qur'an and Hadith (Daulay & Dalimunthe, 2021). The background of Nahdlatul Ulama's establishment is closely related to the development of religious and political thought in the Muslim world at that time. In 1924, a reform movement took place in Saudi Arabia. Abdul Aziz bin Saud, the Wahhabi King of Hijaz (Mecca), who adhered to Sunni Islam, conquered the region. In the same year, in Indonesia, K.H. Wahab Hasbullah began conveying his ideas to K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari about the need to establish Nahdlatul Ulama. Two years later, in 1926, he gathered ulama to formally found the organization (Fuad, 2020).

One of the most important factors behind the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama was the issue of representation in advocating for the interests of traditional Muslims who felt threatened by the rise of the Wahhabi movement, as well as their desire to participate in addressing the various challenges consistently faced by Muslims (Hidayat et al., 2025). The threat of Wahhabism, both in Mecca and beyond, which led to the destruction of many traditions, became a direct reason for the formation of Nahdlatul Ulama. For traditional Muslims, there was an urgent need to forge unity and strengthen solidarity among themselves. As an organization, Nahdlatul Ulama has a symbol with distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other organizations. The emblem depicts the globe encircled by 99 strands of rope. Above the globe are five stars, with one central star larger than the other four. At the lower part of the globe, there are four additional stars. In the emblem, the Arabic phrase for “Nahdlatul Ulama” is written at the center (Zulfirman et al., 2024). The idea behind the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama was an effort to safeguard the understanding of Sunni Islam, which has existed since the time of the Prophet, from the subversion of Wahhabi reformist groups. In implementing the organization's fundamental principles, K.H. Hasyim drafted the “Basic Statutes of Nahdlatul Ulama” and the “Treatise of the Ahlus Sunnah Community.” From these two works, the Nahdlatul Ulama Program was formulated, serving as a guideline for members of Nahdlatul Ulama in thinking and acting in social, religious, and political spheres (Hidayat et al., 2025).

Based on the formulated understanding of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah, Ahlus Sunnah is regarded as a moderate doctrine among the various schools of thought existing at that time. The characteristics of this doctrine are as follows:

Table 2. Ahlus Sunnah is regarded as a moderate.

Field	Main Figures/References	Description
Theology (Aqidah)	Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (873–935 M)	Follows the theological school of Ash'arism
	Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (944 M)	Follows the theological school of Maturidism

Fiqh (Islamic Law)	Imam Abu Hanifa (700–767 M) Imam Malik (713–795 M) Imam al-Shafi‘i (767–820 M) Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855 M)	One of the four schools of jurisprudence adhered to One of the four schools of jurisprudence adhered to The most widely followed school in practice One of the four schools of jurisprudence adhered to
Sufism (Tasawwuf)	Junayd al-Baghdadi Imam al-Ghazali	Follows the classical Sufi teachings Follows an integrative Sufi approach combining Sharia and spiritual essence

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as a social and religious organization, has been active in the field of education since its establishment in 1926. The organization places strong emphasis on education, particularly on the existence of Islamic educational institutions. Nahdlatul Ulama’s understanding of education is a manifestation of the religious, social, and cultural life of the nahdliyin (NU community). Thus, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), Nahdlatul Ulama, and the nahdliyin community as its core have consistently participated in shaping society. Cohesion serves as an important institution in the development of Muslim society, and the quality of human resources must be enhanced through educational institutions. First, Islamic education influences social culture by providing philosophical insights and orientations that guide behavioral motivations and direct change toward forming new social realities. Second, Islamic education is influenced by social changes and the socio-cultural environment in determining the educational system (Abdullah et al., 2025).

The characteristics of Ahlus Sunnah wa al-Jama‘ah teachings, which constitute the methodological foundation and struggle of Nahdlatul Ulama, are based on the Qur’an, Sunnah, consensus (ijma’), and analogy (qiyas)—that is, issues not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’an and Hadith are analogized to matters that have textual bases due to similarities in legal reasoning. In this context, K.H. Mustafa Bisri stated that there are three elements of its teachings: First, in the field of Islamic jurisprudence, adherence to one of the four madhhabs (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi‘i, and Hanbali), though in practice he strongly follows the Shafi‘i school. Second, concerning matters of tawhid (theology) (Maulidya & Sofa, 2025).

In carrying out its political role, Nahdlatul Ulama has continuously participated in Indonesian politics since its establishment in 1926, both actively and as a supporter of political movements. Nahdlatul Ulama functioned as a political party beginning in 1952, later fully assuming an Islamic political role similar to that of the United Development Party (PPP) in 1973. This reflects the long trajectory of Indonesia’s political history. However, in 1984, Nahdlatul Ulama decided to withdraw from PPP and return to its original identity as a religious organization focused on public service, social, political, and democratic activities. During the Reformasi era, Nahdlatul Ulama emerged in association with the National Awakening Party (PKB), chaired by Abdurrahman Wahid (Syahroni & Rofiq, 2025).

Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah was founded on November 18, 1912, in Yogyakarta with the aim of supporting the purification of Islamic teachings, which at that time were considered to be heavily influenced by Sufism. Initially, Muhammadiyah was only present in several residencies such as Yogyakarta, Solo, and Pekalongan. However, it has since spread widely across various regions of Indonesia. Muhammadiyah was

established by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Muhammadiyah represents a movement within Islam that calls people to worship the One Almighty God, guided by Islamic principles based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is not confined to specific theological doctrines, schools of Islamic jurisprudence (madhhabs), or Sufi orders (Lorinda, 2022). Muhammadiyah returns to the Qur'an and Sunnah as an independent step to purify believers from primitive understandings and blind imitation (taqlid), which had long hindered creativity in ijtihad (independent reasoning). The characteristics of Muhammadiyah include being innovative, tolerant, open-minded, and not aligned with any particular madhhab. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah does not reject the views of existing madhhabs, as long as they are measured according to the standards established by Muhammadiyah (Fadli, 2020).

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan emphasized the renewal (reform) of the Muslim community. The implementation of this reformist idea involved purifying Islamic teachings from superstition and myths, as well as freeing people from dependence on shamans in influencing society. It can be concluded that Muhammadiyah's reform movement includes the following: 1) Understanding Islamic teachings directly from their primary sources, the Qur'an and Sunnah, 2) Facilitating the community's understanding of Islam by translating the Qur'an and Sunnah into the Malay language, 3) Establishing modern schools and encouraging youth to pursue education in them, 4) Managing legitimate social institutions (such as zakat institutions and sacrificial animal management) with modern administration, 5) Assisting the poor and needy as part of implementing Qur'anic and Sunnah teachings. 6) Supporting the underprivileged by building quality and affordable facilities such as hospitals, orphanages, and nursing homes, 7) Developing humanitarian cooperation through modern organizations, 8) Mobilizing Muslims to enhance awareness and mutual assistance through the management of zakat, waqf (endowments), emancipation initiatives, and almsgiving (Zarro et al., 2020).

Muhammadiyah itself emerged from the thought of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, who sought to make Islam firm, strong, and empowered so that it could contribute to saving humanity by consistently defending those facing hardship and difficulties. The organizational system refers to the word of Allah SWT: "And let there be among you a group that calls to goodness, enjoins what is right, and forbids what is wrong. They are the successful ones." (Qur'an, Surah Ali 'Imran: 104). This verse calls upon people to do good in the world by increasing righteous deeds and avoiding wrongdoing. Activists within Muhammadiyah often refer to this verse as the "Muhammadiyah verse," as it served as the foundational inspiration for the kyai (religious scholars) in establishing the Muhammadiyah movement (Sitepu et al., 2025).

Haidar Nashir, in his work *Khotbah Muhammadiyah*, outlines the principal programs that serve as guidelines for all Muhammadiyah members, which include: 1) Muhammadiyah is a movement of Islamic da'wah (propagation) that promotes amar ma'ruf (enjoining good) and rejects reprehensible wrongdoing. It is a social da'wah movement, not a practical political or power-oriented political movement, 2) Muhammadiyah lives and operates within the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and is based on its laws, namely Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, 3) Muhammadiyah's struggle is guided by its organizational identity and principles. In the early 20th century, three main schools developed in Indonesia: doctrine (theology), sharia (Islamic law), and Sufism. In theology, the Ash'ari and Maturidi traditions were dominant; in sharia, jurisprudential doctrines prevailed; and in Sufism, both jurisprudential Sufism emphasizing ethics and more mystical Sufism developed. Amid these intellectual developments, they did not significantly influence K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thought. Instead, after returning from the pilgrimage (hajj), his ideas were more strongly influenced by reformist thinkers from Egypt, such as

Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida. This influence can be seen in the character of Muhammadiyah's movement, which resembled Jamaluddin's approach in politics and Muhammad Abduh's and Rashid Rida's approaches in education and social reform (Yusuf & Widodo, 2019).

The Muhammadiyah Association resolved to undertake reforms in education by supporting the establishment of modern schools, universities, hospitals, and various other social institutions, emphasizing the importance of education, health, and social welfare. This reform encompassed two aspects: ideals and techniques. Muhammadiyah's movement has gone through several phases: A religious-cultural orientation (1912–1937), A structural political orientation (1937–1971), A socio-cultural orientation (1971–1995), A political-cultural orientation (1995–1998). Muhammadiyah's political role was particularly visible during the second and fourth phases (Hasnahwati et al., 2022).

Salafi (Wahhabi)

The word "*salaf*" originates from Arabic and means "righteous predecessors." In the Qur'an, the term refers to earlier generations distinguished by knowledge, faith, virtue, and piety. Thus, *salaf* signifies an effort to follow the path of the early generations in Islam namely the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his Companions, the followers of the Companions (*tabi'in*), and the generation after them (*tabi' al-tabi'in*) all of whom understood Islam based on the Qur'an and Hadith according to their original comprehension (Jakfar et al., 2023).

The aim of Salafism is to revive the life and religious practice of the Prophet as it existed during his time, as a response to what is perceived as Islam having been contaminated by Western cultural and intellectual influences that led to deviations from pure Islamic teachings. The Salafi movement traces its origins back to the time of the Prophet ﷺ and later developed particularly in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Saudi Arabia. In the late eighteenth century CE, a number of scholars identified as Salafi began to emerge. They sought to preserve Islamic teachings through the comprehensive implementation of Islamic law (*sharia*), after observing that Islam had been heavily influenced by local traditions, theological interpretations, and Western cultural and intellectual currents. Every generation after the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions has included a *salaf* generation: the Companions who lived during the Prophet's lifetime and died as Muslims; the *tabi'in* who lived during the time of the Companions; and the *tabi' al-tabi'in* who lived during the time of the *tabi'in* and likewise died as Muslims (Topan, 2024).

Although the Salafi movement has taken different forms over time, the essence of its teachings remains the same: to reform and renew Islamic understanding that has declined due to foreign influences outside Islam. Therefore, Salafism is not a specific social organization or a single group, but rather a religious methodology (*manhaj*) that can be applied within various Islamic movements, whether peaceful or extreme. It is considered flexible because it can integrate into diverse Islamic movements while maintaining adherence to the Qur'an and Hadith as primary sources. The Salafi movement does not establish a distinct organizational structure, as this is feared to create loyalty to a group rather than to the teachings of the Prophet. This approach seeks to avoid conflicts of interest between loyalty to the Prophet's teachings and loyalty to an organization. The Salafi method of understanding Islam as comprehended by the early generations is known as *manhaj salafi* or *manhaj ahl al-hadith*. This methodology aims to address the decline of the Muslim community caused by interpretations influenced by external elements (Fathony, 2025).

The Salafi movement emphasizes *da'wah* through education, spiritual purification

(*tazkiyah*), and doctrinal purification (*tasfiyah*). In other words, they strive to educate society about Islamic values and teachings as practiced during the Prophet's time, particularly among Muslims who are considered to have been influenced by foreign ideas and to have deviated from authentic Islamic teachings. The primary objective of this movement is to unite Muslims and return them to the teachings of the Prophet and his Companions, which are perceived to have been neglected in contemporary society. This *da'wah* is carried out through education and dissemination of teachings, funded by donations from members and sympathizers, provided that there is no coercion or personal interest influencing the movement (Nisa et al., 2025).

Among the key ideas promoted by the Salafi movement are: returning the Muslim community's understanding to the Qur'an and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Companions; rejecting practices considered *shirk* (associating partners with God); re-implementing Islamic law (*sharia*); and reviving sound *ijtihad* to eliminate blind fanaticism toward particular legal schools (*madhhabs*). The movement also stresses the importance of applying Islamic teachings in social life without political labels. Nevertheless, because Salafism is not a closed organization, political elements may influence its adherents, especially when they join other Islamic movements that advocate governmental involvement (Wahyudin, 2021).

Salafis who later engage in political Islamic movements do so due to differing interpretations of surrounding socio-political conditions. These interpretations shape their attitudes and actions toward conditions perceived as contradictory to Islamic teachings. Responses vary, ranging from intensified peaceful and diplomatic *da'wah* efforts to reactions that generate fear within society. For this reason, Salafis are often classified into three types: Puritan (*tazkiyah/tasfiyah*) – focusing on peaceful preaching through education and the purification of Islamic values among contemporary Muslims, political seeking to implement Salafi doctrine within governmental structures, based on the belief that ultimate sovereignty belongs solely to God, jihadist – viewing issues such as injustice and poverty as problems that must be resolved through revolution or armed struggle (Aritonang, 2020).

Conflicts with governments arise from Salafi involvement in Islamic movements that seek to establish an Islamic state. However, such conflicts occur not in the name of Salafism itself, but under the banner of the broader Islamic movements to which they belong. Meanwhile, tensions with society often stem from misunderstandings regarding Salafi teachings, which are not always accepted by certain segments of the community. Consequently, Salafis are frequently labeled as extreme in matters of creed, particularly because they are often associated with Wahhabism.

Many members of society misunderstand Salafism without realizing that it essentially promotes moral reform by calling for a return to a life grounded in pure Islamic values, free from local cultural additions or foreign influences. Unlike other Islamic movements that may perceive Salafism as a threat, Salafi involvement in education has contributed to the establishment of various new Islamic schools and boarding institutions, sometimes leading to friction with organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Differences in religious practices such as the number of *rak'ahs* in *tarawih* prayer, the ruling on *qunut* in *witr* prayer, or other ritual procedures often become sources of tension. Each side may accuse the other of promoting misguided teachings. In reality, however, if both parties recognize that they share the same ultimate goal preserving Islamic teachings, albeit through different approaches conflict need not occur (Jasmaludin & Suyanta, 2025).

Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin)

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in March 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, who was born in 1906 into a religious family in al-Mahmudiyyah, west of the Nile River in Egypt. Hasan al-Banna gained experience and insight in public speaking, debate, and

discussion through his involvement in several religious organizations during his secondary and university education, including al-Jam'iyah al-Akhlaqiyyah al-'Ibadiyyah, al-Jam'iyah al-Shar'iyah, and al-Jam'iyah al-Khairiyyah. He was among the earliest members of these organizations (Shohib et al., 2024).

Together with six colleagues Hafizh Abdul Hamid, Ahmad al-Qushairi, Fuad Ibrahim, Abdurrahman Hasballah, Ismail 'Izz, and Zaki al-Maghribi Hasan al-Banna initiated a da'wah movement calling for a return to authentic Islam. After completing his studies at Dar al-'Ulum University in Egypt in 1927, he became a teacher during the British colonial period and began organizing resistance to Westernization, which later became known as the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement grew into one of the largest Islamic movements advocating a return to the Qur'an and Hadith, influencing numerous Islamic movements worldwide that reject the separation of religion and politics (Masripah et al., 2025).

The Muslim Brotherhood calls society to return to true Islam, similar to the Salafi movement, but with a more active engagement in social life. They are directly involved in addressing societal issues, seeking solutions through da'wah and education, and shaping public opinion regarding the state. The movement is not exclusive, as it seeks to embrace the broader community. The Brotherhood opposes all forms of colonialism and domination of values and ideas considered incompatible with Islam, not only in Egypt but also in other countries experiencing division due to teachings viewed as deviating from Islam. Its objective is to unify the Muslim community under Islam as the sole creed, offering solutions to all aspects of life based on Islamic principles of justice including for minorities and non-Muslims as taught by God through His revelations and prophets. Contemporary Islamic movements are often categorized into two types: (1) moderate Islamic movements emphasizing education and comprehensive understanding of Islam, and (2) jihad-oriented movements emphasizing practical implementation of Islam in society, even through forceful means if deemed necessary (Nilawatia et al., 2024).

The effort to invite people back to Islamic values is conducted through trained and nurtured preachers of the Muslim Brotherhood, equipped with knowledge in creed, ethics, social affairs, and politics. Da'wah begins with oneself and one's family before expanding to society at large, carried out sincerely and patiently. The ultimate aim is to establish a unified community whose social system can achieve prosperity only when grounded in Islamic teachings. Indonesia, as a nation founded upon ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, upholds Pancasila as its state ideology. Therefore, if the Muslim Brotherhood were to expand significantly in Indonesia, it could potentially be perceived as a challenge to the unity of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly due to its aspiration to establish an Islamic state. Should such a movement gain control of government institutions and alter the state system, minority religious groups and ideological movements such as secularism and liberalism might also mobilize, potentially threatening national stability and inviting foreign intervention, as occurred in Egypt during the Arab Spring, which was sparked by the Tunisian revolution (Shohib et al., 2024).

However, to date, the Muslim Brotherhood in Indonesia has operated peacefully through da'wah and ideological dissemination, adhering to Hasan al-Banna's principle that any revolution must be preceded by thorough consideration of its consequences. Thus, it cannot be conclusively described as a direct threat to Indonesia's unity, as no evidence of rebellion, violent action, or terrorism has been found. Concerns are often shaped by political dynamics, including developments in Egypt, where external political interests contributed to tensions involving the Brotherhood. The limited success of the Brotherhood-inspired movement in Indonesia is also linked to factors

such as the performance of its affiliated political party, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which differs from Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party that once gained governmental authority. Additional challenges include Indonesia's pluralistic society and internal party controversies. Moreover, many Indonesian Muslims maintain strong local cultural traditions, making it difficult to replicate the Egyptian experience of implementing a state based on Brotherhood ideology (Maulana et al., 2025).

Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia

Hizbut Tahrir is a movement founded in 1953 by Taqiyuddin al-Nabhani, an activist, judge, and teacher from Jerusalem, Palestine. He sought to restore Islamic society to its pure teachings and liberate it from imperialist influence. Born into a family of scholars, he was the son of Yusuf al-Nabhani, an Islamic jurist, and the grandson of Abu al-Mahasin, an influential Middle Eastern figure who shaped his intellectual outlook. He completed his studies at al-Azhar University and Dar al-'Ulum University in Cairo in 1932. During his academic years, he engaged in debates and discussions with Islamic thinkers, including Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood. These experiences deepened his awareness of the negative impact of Westernization on Muslims, particularly Palestinians under British colonial rule (Setia, 2021).

Hizbut Tahrir later developed into an international movement with networks across Arab countries, Europe, and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. The idea of establishing a caliphate based on Islamic law in Indonesia was introduced in the 1980s by figures such as Abdullah bin Nuh and Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi. Although referred to as a "party," Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) chose not to participate in elections or join political parties. This decision is rooted in its ideological view that modern democracy contradicts Islamic law, as democracy places sovereignty in the hands of the people rather than God and promotes nation-state divisions that fragment the Muslim community. In contrast, the caliphate system they propose is viewed as a means of uniting Muslims globally under a single leadership implementing comprehensive Islamic law. During Indonesia's New Order era, HTI avoided overt political activities due to state restrictions on organizations and media, focusing instead on education and da'wah. They promote Islam as a comprehensive solution superior to capitalism, socialism, or communism, emphasizing historical lessons and advocating the re-establishment of governance based on divine revelation (Wijaya et al., 2023).

Educational institutions, mosques, and university-based Islamic organizations became key avenues for recruitment and influence. Through systematic cadre development, they aimed to cultivate uniform Islamic understanding and shape public opinion regarding the implementation of Islamic law. However, Indonesia's foundation upon Pancasila differs fundamentally from Hizbut Tahrir's ideological vision. HTI maintains that state foundations must derive from divine revelation, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. This ideological divergence led to tensions with the government, particularly during President Joko Widodo's administration. The government viewed HTI as promoting objectives incompatible with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Consequently, HTI was officially dissolved, although the decision generated debate regarding freedom of association. Despite political conflict, there has been no substantiated evidence linking HTI members or sympathizers in Indonesia to acts of terrorism. Their activities have largely remained within the sphere of non-violent da'wah, even after organizational dissolution (Fathony, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia demonstrate that reform has not occurred in a singular or uniform manner; rather, it has evolved through diverse responses to social, political, and cultural changes in each historical period. During the pre-independence era, Islamic reform was primarily oriented toward strengthening education, purifying religious teachings, and constructing an Islamic

identity capable of responding to the challenges of colonialism and modernity. In the post-independence period, however, the direction of reform underwent a transformation with the emergence of movements influenced by global Islamic ideologies, thereby expanding the discourse of reform into the domains of ideological da'wah and religious politics. The findings of this study indicate that the differing characteristics of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia do not merely reflect ideological conflicts, but rather represent forms of adaptation by Muslims to the continually changing contexts of their time. The diversity of reformist expressions, in fact, illustrates the flexibility of Islam in Indonesia in negotiating the relationship between tradition, modernity, and the demands of national life. Thus, Islamic reform in Indonesia can be understood as a dynamic historical process one that not only seeks to preserve the purity of religious teachings, but also strives to maintain social relevance within a pluralistic society and a modern nation-state.

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Statement

Authors' Contributions

Amrina Rosyada and Hermiwati: Original manuscript writing and compilation, conceptualization, data accuracy; Sri Ulandari & Afrisa Zayyana: Visualization, methodology; Alya Rahma Falasifah: Language enhancement, investigation.

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Ethical Approval

The place or location studied has agreed to conduct the research and is willing to have the results of this research published.

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