



**MAKING MODERN MUSLIM WOMEN:  
THE 'AISYIAH-MUHAMMADIYAH MADRASAH  
PEREMPUAN BERKEMAJUAN PROGRAM**

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines religious and social dimensions of the ‘Aisyiyah Madrasah Perempuan Berkemajuan (I. MPB – Women’s Progressive Madrasah) program. MPB is a cadre building program designed to educate members and followers about the ‘Aisyiah /Muhammadiyah’s religious and social agendas, deepen their commitment to them and strengthen collective identities based on them. It is an integral component of larger efforts to promote the recently rediscovered and redefined concept of Islam Berkemajuan (Progressive Islam) that was originally formulated in the opening decades of the twentieth century and to use it as a tool for countering efforts by conservative and extremist organizations to “infiltrate” Muhammadiyah institutions and gain adherents, especially among Muhammadiyah youth. It is also an effort to provide a wasathiyah (A. middle way) alternative to what van Bruinessen describes as “The Conservative Turn” in Indonesian Islam.*

### Key Words:

*‘Aisyiyah, Madrasah Perempuan Berkemajuan, Progressive Islam*

‘Aisyiah is among the oldest and largest Muslim women’s organizations.<sup>1</sup> While communities concerned with what are now commonly referred to as feminist issues emerged throughout the Muslim world in the early twentieth century, ‘Aisyiah was the first to become a mass movement. For more than a century it has worked to promote education and healthcare for Indonesian women within the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on research conducted in Yogyakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia between 1978 and 2020 supported by grants from the United States Institute for International Education, the Social Science Research Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University. Unless otherwise indicated information included in this paper is based on ethnographic research. A. denotes Arabic, I. Indonesian and J. Javanese.

context of Muhammadiyah's modernist, neo-Salafi religious framework.<sup>2</sup>

This paper examines religious and social dimensions of the 'Aisyiyah *Madrasah Perempuan Berkemajuan* (I. MPB – Women's Progressive Madrasah) program. MPB is a cadre building program designed to educate members and followers about the 'Aisyiyah /Muhammadiyah's religious and social agendas, deepen their commitment to them and strengthen collective identities based on them. It is an integral component of larger efforts to promote the recently rediscovered and redefined concept of Islam *Kemajuan* (Progressive Islam) that was originally formulated in the opening decades of the twentieth century and to use it as a tool for countering efforts by conservative and extremist organizations to "infiltrate" Muhammadiyah institutions and gain adherents, especially among Muhammadiyah youth. It is also an effort to provide a *wasathiyah* (A. middle way) alternative to what van Bruinessen describes as "The Conservative Turn" in Indonesian Islam.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis presented here based on content analysis of an MPB training manual published by the 'Aisyiyah Central Leadership Board, other 'Aisyiyah/Muhammadiyah textual materials, some dating to the 1920s, interviews with 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah leaders and ethnographic research conducted in Yogyakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia since the late 1970s. It demonstrates that the MPB program is a contemporary restatement and expansion of 'Aisyiyah's founding principles in an effort promotes religious tolerance and gender equity and to counter intra-Islamic exclusivist tendencies. In so doing, this

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<sup>2</sup> Badran, M. (2009) *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*. Oxford: Oneworld.

<sup>3</sup> Van Bruinessen, M. (2015) *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam. Explaining the "Conservative Turn*, Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Yusuf Ishak, Institute.

program aims foster organizational unity and ideological conformity the decline of which the 'Aisyiyah/Muhammadiyah leadership perceive to be among the major issues confronting the organization and the growth of extremism in the Indonesian Islamic community.

### **'AISYIYAH – A MODERNIST MUSLIM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION**

'Aisyiyah is the Muhammadiyah women's movement. Muhammadiyah is Indonesia's largest and most influential modernist Muslim organization. Their joint agenda combines religious "purification," with the provision of educational, healthcare and other social services.<sup>4</sup> Muhammadiyah was founded in the *kauman* (I. and J.) of the Javanese Yogyakarta Sultanate, the portion of the city populated by the Sultanate's Muslim elite, by Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (1868-1923) in 1912. 'Aisyiyah was founded in the *kauman* in 1917 by Siti Walidah (Nyai Ahmad Dahlan 1872-1946) who was one of Ahmad Dahlan's wives in partnership with her husband and other Muhammadiyah leaders. It is the oldest Indonesian women's organization.<sup>5</sup> The couple were initially conceived of and remained partners with a shared mission. Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah, a parallel organization for young women less than forty years old, was established in 1931. It mirrors Pemuda Muhammadiyah, and organization for young men founded a year later.

The *kauman* is the religious center of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, home to its religious officials (J. *Abdidalem Pamethakan*) and the site of the Great Mosque that is the location of state ceremonies celebrating

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<sup>4</sup> On Muhammadiyah see: Nakamura, M. (1983) *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town*, Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press. Noer, D. (1973) *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, Singapore: Oxford University Press and Peacock, J. (1978) *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>5</sup> Baried, B. (1977). "Un Mouvement de Femmes Musulmanes: "Aisyiyah," *Archipel*.

Muslim Holy Days.<sup>6</sup> Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah faced fierce opposition from traditionalists in their early years but grew rapidly in the 1920s after gaining recognition from Yogyakarta Sultan Hamengkubuwana VIII (reigned 1921-1939) who shared their modernist agendas if not their religious convictions.<sup>7</sup> They were among a group of Yogyakarta based modernist movements that cut across religious divisions including that between *santri* (l. orthodox Muslim) and *kejawan* (l. Javanese local Islam).<sup>8</sup>

Both are now active throughout Indonesia and in Malaysia and Singapore. There are now between ten and fifteen million formal members and a substantially larger number of informal followers and affiliates from throughout Indonesia. Membership in 'Aisyiyah includes formal affiliation with Muhammadiyah. Its organizational structure parallels that of Muhammadiyah. Like Muhammadiyah, and unlike many other Indonesian women's organizations whose membership and support are located primarily in elite social strata, it is primarily a middle-class movement.<sup>9</sup>

### **'AISYIYAH AND ISLAMIC FEMINISM**

'Aisyiyah is a Muslim women's organization, but not a Muslim feminist movement in the sense that the term is generally used. It rejects Badran's definition of Islamic feminism as "feminist discourse

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<sup>6</sup> On the Yogyakarta Kauman see: Darban, A. (2010) *Sejarah Kauman. Menguak Identitas Kampung Muhammadiyah*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah. On Yogyakarta State Ceremonies see: Woodward, M. (2011) *Java, Indonesia and Islam*. New York: Springer.

<sup>7</sup> Selosoemardjan (1962) *Social Changes in Jogjakarta*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Woodward, M. (1989) *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of Indonesian women's movements see: Martyn, E. (2005) *The Women's Movement in Post-colonial Indonesia*. London: Routledge-Curzon.

and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm."<sup>10</sup> It is not greatly concerned with symbolic issues of gender equality including demands that women be accepted as ritual officiants, including leading Friday prayers in mixed congregations, that figure significantly in western Muslim feminisms.<sup>11</sup>

An editorial published in the organization's flagship publication *Suara Muhammadiyah* in 2017 drew a sharp distinction between Western feminism that "tends to destroy family institutions" and Islamic feminism that empowers them.<sup>12</sup> 'Aisyiyah is non-confrontational, and does not define its mission as a struggle against hegemonic patriarchy as some secular Indonesian women's organizations do. Rather, "it is based on the concept of "the ideal Muslim woman" and seeks to empower women by enhancing their contributions to a gender inclusive effort to purify Islam and build a more just and prosperous society."<sup>13</sup> In the twenty-first century 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah are seen as partners in their effort in the same way that Siti Walidah and Ahmad Dahlan were a century ago.

Many Indonesian women are reluctant to describe themselves as feminists because feminism is associated with secularism, and during the colonial era with foreign ideologies.<sup>14</sup> Today many 'Aisyiah activists consider themselves to be feminists subject to the proviso that that theirs is a Muslim feminism. Many point to out that 'Aisyiyah was a mass

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<sup>10</sup> Badran, M. (2002) "Islamic Feminism: Wat's in a Name? Islamic Feminism is on the Whole More Radical than Muslims' Secular Feminisms". *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*.

<sup>11</sup> This is an issue of substantial symbolic importance in Australia, Europe, North America and South Africa and among westernized Muslim women in South Asia. Muhammadiyah considers the practice to be permissible if no qualified men are available. This ruling is rarely discussed and rarely been put into practice in public settings.

<sup>12</sup> *Suara Muhammadiyah* Editorial (2007) "Mengurai Relasi Gender,"

<sup>13</sup> Ro'fah *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Syamsiatun, S. (2016) *Pergolakan Putri Islam. Perembangan Wacana Jender dalam Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah 1965-2005*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.

organization at a time when Western feminism was in its infancy. Dzuhayatin stresses the point that 'Aisyiyah-Muhammadiyah feminism is not an alien ideology, but rather what Gramsci termed a "historically organic" one. An organic ideology is a system of thought located with a particular social formation that "creates the terrain in which men (and women) move and acquire consciousness." She argues that ideas that are partially congruent with western feminisms emerged from Muhammadiyah's emphasis on passages from the *Qur'an* stressing the religious equality of women and the reformist praxis of Ahmad Dahlan and Siti Walidah.<sup>15</sup>

#### **'AISYIYAH AND MUHAMMADIYAH – HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS**

Like her husband, 'Aisyiah founder Siti Walidah was born into a prominent *ulama* (Muslim scholar) family with close ties to the Yogyakarta palace. Her father, Muhammad Fadhil Kamaludiningrat, was the *penghulu* (J. chief Muslim official) of the Sultanate. Ahmad Dahlan maintained close relationships with the palace religious establishment throughout his life. This accommodative relationship has continued until the present. This involves continuing involvement in types of ritual that other Salafi oriented movements condemn as an unacceptable innovation in religious matters (A. *bid'ah*). One of the *penghulu's* responsibilities is supervising the presentation of flowers and other offerings (J. *sajen*) at graves and other holy places scattered throughout the Sultanate. He also officiates at the Garebeg Maulud commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad that most Salafis

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<sup>15</sup> Dzuhayatin, S. (2015) *Rezim Gender Muhammadiyah. Kontestasi Gender, Identitas dan Eksistensi*, Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, Gramsci, A. (1926/2018) "On Intellectuals," in: O'Neill, D. and Wayne, M. (eds.) *Considering Class, Theory, Culture and the Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Leiden: Brill.

condemn.<sup>16</sup> Penghulu Muhammad Kamaluddingrat (served 1914-1940), who was a Muhammadiyah member, a close associate of Ahmad Dahlan and who played a critical role in gaining official recognition for Muhammadiyah, allowed these practices to continue. His support for Muhammadiyah also enabled the organization to take control of mosques owned by the Sultanate and to manage the collection and distribution of *zakat* (A. alms). This provided Muhammadiyah with the resources necessary to fund schools, orphanages and clinics.<sup>17</sup> It also provided funds for the construction of two women's *langar* (J. prayer buildings) in the *kauman* that are now administered by 'Aisyiyah.<sup>18</sup>

Subsequent Yogyakarta *penghulu* have been Muhammadiyah members, and have continued this form of cultural and religious accommodation. Contemporary Muhammadiyah leaders point out that there is an important distinction between the role of the *penghulu* as a palace official and Muhammadiyah teachings. This is one example of the ways in which Muhammadiyah locates itself within Javanese and other Indonesian cultures.<sup>19</sup> Another is that fact that Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah promote Javanese cultural performance traditions including classical dance and *wayang kulit* (J. shadow plays) rooted in pre-Islamic Hindu traditions. Conferences sponsored by the two organizations routinely open with classical music and dance performances.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Woodward, M. (2011) *Java Indonesia and Islam*, New York: Springer.

<sup>17</sup> Yuristiadhi, G. and Purwanto, B. (2016) "Transformation of Charities by Islamic Social Movements in Yogyakarta, 1912-1931: A History of Wealth Management," *International Journal of Islamic Business Ethics*.

<sup>18</sup> Mu'arif and Setyowati, H. (2014). *Srikandi-srikandi 'Aisyiyah*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.

<sup>19</sup> On Muhammadiyah and Javanese Culture see: Burhani, A. (2016) *Muhammadiyah Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammadiyah Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam (2017) "Batas-Batas Kesenian." <http://m.muhammadiyah.or.id/id/news-11653-detail-batasbatas-dalam-kesenian.html>



'Aisyiyah emerged from Sopo Tresno, a women's *pengajian* (i. religious lecture) group that was established in 1914. It was reorganized and renamed 'Aisyiyah in 1917. It was named after 'Aisyiyah, one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad who was also among his closest companions, plaid an important role in establishing the early Muslim community and is a universally recognized religious authority among Sunni Muslims.<sup>21</sup> From the time that it was founded accounts of 'Aisyiyah meetings and activities were included in *Soeara Moehamadijah*.<sup>22</sup> It became an autonomous unit with independent organizational structures and agendas in 1936.<sup>23</sup>

'Aisyiyah was among the first Muslim organizations to be explicitly concerned with providing religious and secular education for women and girls. The earliest Muhammadiyah schools were coeducational, probably because there were so few students. The first school exclusively for girls, *Kweekschool Muhammadiyah Perempuan* was established in 1923 in *Kauman* Yogyakarta. It was renamed *Madrasah Muallimat* in 1930.<sup>24</sup> It has operated continuously since that time. 'Aisyiyah's initial agenda also included economic empowerment for women, ending child and forced marriage and bringing women into the public sphere in ways that were unknown in Indonesia at the time. In the early twentieth century, these were radical

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<sup>21</sup> Spellberg, D. (1994) *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of A'isha bint Abi Bakar*, New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>22</sup> *Soeara Moehamadijah* is now *Suara Muhammadiyah* is Muhammadiyah's official magazine. It has been published since 1915.

<sup>23</sup> On the founding and history of 'Aisyiyah see Ro'fah (2016) *Posisi dan Jatidiri 'Aisyiyah. Perubahan dan Perkembang 1917-1998*, Yogyakarta: *Suara Muhammadiyah* and Pimpinan Pusat Aisyiyah (2007) *Sejarah Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Aisyiyah*, Yogyakarta: 'Aisyiyah. On Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah see Syamsiatun, *op. cit.* and Anis, Y. (1968) *Riwayat Hidup Nyai Ahmad Dahlan Ibu Muhammadiyah dan Aisyiyah Pelopor Pergerakan Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Yayasan Mercusuar.

<sup>24</sup> Hefner, C. (2016) "Models of Achievement: Muslim Girls and Religious Authority in a Modernist Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review*, 40:4, 564-582.

agendas because Kauman tradition prohibited formal education for girls and required women to be secluded in their houses. Prior to the establishment of Muhammadiyah girls in the Kauman were not allowed to wear shoes or even sandals so that they could not leave their parent's houses. Many were not taught to read or write in Javanese, Indonesian or Arabic for fear that they might exchange notes with boys. Muhammadiyah took the position that women have the right to work outside the home and that girls were free to ride bicycles, which was forbidden by traditionalist Muslim leaders. 'Aisyiah taught that in the rapidly developing world of the early twentieth century ignorant, uneducated women could not be proper mothers because they could not ensure that their children would be modern, well educated, pious Muslims. An article describing a sermon delivered as an 'Aisyiah meeting in 1924 stated that women who were confined in their homes remain ignorant of both religion and the world and are unable to educate their children properly.<sup>25</sup> It uses exceptionally strong language, describing such women as "goblok" (J. idiots). In this context and in this respect, 'Aisyiah was a truly radical movement.

This basic agenda has remained constant over the course of a century, but has broadened in response to continuing social change. Syamsiatun shows that since the 1930s there has been a shift in 'Aisyiah's emphasis from being a modern, but obedient wife and mother to being a modern woman actively engaged in the life of the Muslim community. She also shows that after the introduction of Muhammadiyah teachings, Kauman women were more socially and economically engaged than normative statements advocating modern domesticity suggest.<sup>26</sup> Today its agenda includes increasing the number of women parliamentarians at provincial and national levels and severely limiting,

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<sup>25</sup> Soeara Moehamadijah, 1924

<sup>26</sup> Syamsiatun *op.cit.* pp. 4-5.

if not prohibiting polygamy. These efforts place 'Aisyiyah at odds with Salafi groups who would roll back hard-won progress towards women's emancipation and those, including *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (Prosperous Justice Party/PKS) that promote polygamy and others proclaiming it to be a Muslim virtue.<sup>27</sup>

### **'AISYIYAH AND MUHAMMADIYAH – INTERNAL DIVISIONS**

'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah are far from homogeneous on a variety of theological, social and gender related issues.<sup>28</sup> In the most general sense they promote a combination of religious "purification" together with social, economic and educational modernization. The balance between purification and modernization has vacillated over time and regionally. Ahmad Dahlan was more concerned with social and educational programs and institution building and social ethics than with purification. In Sumatra Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, commonly known as Haji Rasul (1879-1945) was more concerned with purification and politics. At present, there is considerable internal variation on these issues. Similarly, in East Java Muhammadiyah is more puritanical and less tolerant local culture than it is in Yogyakarta. It became more concerned with *Shari'ah* after the establishment of Majelis Tarjih, which served as a *fatwa* committee in 1927.<sup>29</sup>

Muhammadiyah's official religious teachings stress mild forms of Islamic revivalism and an equally mild form of Salafi theology and ritual

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<sup>27</sup> On Indonesian Islamism and polygamy see: Woodward, M. and Rohmaniyah, I. (2009) "The Tawdry Tale of "Sheikh" Puji and Luftiana," *Musawa, Jurnal Gender dan Islam*.

<sup>28</sup> Burhani, N. (2013). "Liberal and Conservative Discourses in the Muhammadiyah: The Struggle for the Face of Reformist Islam in Indonesia." In van Bruinessen, M. (Ed.), *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the "Conservative Turn"* (pp. 105–144). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

<sup>29</sup> Burhani, N. (2006) "The Ideological Shift of Muhammadiyah from Culture into Puritanical Tendency in the 1930s," *Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya*.

practice. Revivalist tendencies are apparent in its emphasis the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* (A. practice of the Prophet Muhammad) as the sole sources of religious authority and its emphasis on countering what are defined as *tahayul* (superstition), *bid'ah* (innovation, especially in ritual matters) and *khurafat* (I. superstition bordering on *shirk* (A. and I.) or unbelief are evidence of the influence of Salafism on Muhammadiyah's religious positions. It is generally accepted that early Muhammadiyah thinkers were influenced by Egyptian modernist Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and the modernist Salafism of the Syrian reformer Rashid Rida (1865-1935), though many contemporary Muhammadiyah intellectuals doubt that they read his works, but rather adopted key elements of his reform agenda, especially combatting rituals and customs they see as superstition or innovation.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1920s Muhammadiyah thinkers exchanged fierce polemics their traditionalist rivals, many of whom were among the founders Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim organization. Both bordered on and sometimes slipped into *takfir* (A.) — declaring professed Muslims with different theological orientations and modes of ritual practice to be *kafir* (A. and I. unbelievers).

These sometimes combined Muhammadiyah's religious and socio-economic agendas. In 1927 a correspondent from Pekalongan in north central Java wrote that Javanese are poor because they are stupid and because they have forgotten the *Qur'an*. Another described traditional *ulama* (*kyai*) in extremely pejorative terms. He wrote that they could read, but not understand Arabic, that they did not have the spirit of Islam in their hearts, that they exploit the people economically and have many concubines (*J. selir*), that they accuse Muhammadiyah Muslims of being *kafir* and state that when they die, they will morph

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<sup>30</sup> Nashir, *op. cit.*

into wild boars He concludes that all of this began to change when Muhammadiyah brought its schools to the area.<sup>31</sup>

Traditionalist Muslim scholars were equally vituperative. Kyai Muhammad Maskumambang wrote an extremely polemical book condemning the “stupidity and evils” of Wahhabism in 1922. He does not mention Muhammadiyah, which at the time was still in its infancy, but is sharply critical of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.<sup>32</sup> Kyai Ahmad Dahlan was often accused of innovation and even apostasy for changing the *kiblat* (A. and I. direction of prayer) in the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta from West to Northwest more accurately indicating the direction of Mecca but which could not be determined precisely prior to the advent of modern technology. NU founder Hasyim Asyari described Muslim modernists, presumably including Muhammadiyah as follows: “They wander the face of the earth spreading enmity and hatred. They tell lies about Allah even though they know the truth.”<sup>33</sup>

Animosity between modernists and traditionalists continued at least through the late 1970s. At that time intermarriage was rare. Muhammadiyah and NU Muslims would not pray together. NU was rarely mentioned in Muhammadiyah *pengajian* I attended in the 1970s, but traditionalist ritual practices, especially pilgrimage to holy graves (A. and I. *ziyarah*) that are basic elements of traditional Muslim piety, were often described as *shirk*. This is a much stronger criticism than

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<sup>31</sup> The claim that Javanese *kyai* were not well acquainted with classical legal and theological learning was simply false. If anything, they were and are better versed in these traditions than most Muhammadiyah scholars. Regrettably, western scholars including Geertz, C. (1960) *The Religion of Java* Glencoe: Free Press and Peacock, J. (1978) *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, have confused early Muhammadiyah polemics and objective evaluation. The same can be said of their uncritical acceptance of Muhammadiyah’s claim that theirs in the “pure” Islam.

<sup>32</sup> Maskumambang, M. (1922/2016) *Menolak Wahabi. Membongkar Penyimpangan Sekte Wahabi; Dari Ibnu Taimiyah Hingga Abdul Qadir at-Tilimsani*. Depok: Sahifa.

<sup>33</sup> Mahmud, S. (2008). *Kyai Hasyim Asy’ari* (pp. 4). Bekasi: Sebulus Salam Indonesia.

calling them *curofat* because heresy is a sin that can be forgiven. Allah does not forgive *shirk*. This hostility has given way to cooperation and redefinition of the Muhammadiyah/NU relationship as “competition in goodness” (A. *Fastabiqul Khoirot*).<sup>34</sup> In Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah and NU and now share mosques and perform the Ramadan evening *tarawih* (A.) prayers together in *kampung* (I. and J. neighborhood) mosques where membership in the Muslim community (*umat*) is defined by residence rather than sectarian affiliation. Inter-marriage is far more common than it once was, especially among the educated middle classes.

Analytically Muhammadiyah can be characterized as a mild form of Salafism because it is rooted in Ibn Taimiya’s reform agenda but does not engage in *takfir* or deny the Islamic authenticity of local Muslim cultures. It rejects cultural Arabization advocated by more conservative Indonesian Salafis. Together ‘Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah are examples of what I have described elsewhere as “Domesticated Salafism.”<sup>35</sup> The Yogyakarta based leadership firmly rejects calls for the formalization of *Shari’ah* and the sectarian *Aksi Bela Islam* (Action to Support Islam) movement that called for it and played a major role in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2019 presidential election.<sup>36</sup> There are, however, more conservative voices, especially in the Jakarta based *Majelis Tabligh* (I. Counsel for the Propagation of Islam) that support both.

Understandings of what constitutes women’s emancipation have evolved over time. Polygamy provides a clear example. Many of

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<sup>34</sup> Van Doorn-Harder, P. (2006) *Women Shaping Islam: Indonesian Women Reading the Qur’an*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>35</sup> Woodward, M. and Rohmaniyah, I. (2012) “Wahhabism, Identity and Secular Ritual: Graduation at an Indonesian High School,” *Al-Jamiyah*.

<sup>36</sup> Woodward, M. (2018) “Sectarianism, Culture and Politics,” *Inside Indonesia*. <http://www.insideindonesia.org/sectarianism-culture-and-politics>

the early Muhammadiyah leaders, including Ahmad Dahlan, had multiple wives. The practice is now strongly discouraged to the extent that there is an unwritten tradition that people in plural marriages may not hold leadership positions in either 'Aisyiyah or Muhammadiyah. The MPB training manual states explicitly that monogamy is an 'Aisyiyah principle.

### **'AISYIYAH, MUHAMMADIYAH AND ISLAM KEMAJUAN**

*Islam Kemajuan* (I.) or Progressive Islam is a basic principle of Muhammadiyah/ 'Aisyiyah ideology, social and religious thought and what Fisher-Onar and her colleagues refer to as “symbolology.” By this they mean the ensembles of meanings, often enacted through ritual, that foster social solidarity.<sup>37</sup> *Kemajuan* is often used in conjunction with or translated as “modern,” “moderate” “emancipatory” in English and *wasathiyah* (the middle path) in Arabic. Since the 2105 *Muktamar* (general convention) at which Muhammadiyah described itself as a *Gerakan Pencerahan Menuju Indonesia Berkemajuan* (The Enlightened Movement for Indonesian Progress) it has been a very nearly official symbol and ideology. *Kehidupan Prempuan Kemajuan* (Progressive Womens' Life) was also designated as one of 'Aisyiyah's guiding principles at the 2015 *Muktamar* celebrating its centenary.

The term *kemajuan* has been used in many ways in Muhammadiyah/ 'Aisyiyah discourse about religious and social reform. It is what Victor Turner refers to as a “multi-vocal” symbol.<sup>38</sup> More than that, it is evocative in the sense of Dan Sperber's theory of symbolization according to which symbolic thought engenders the

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<sup>37</sup> Fisher-Onar, N., Liu, J. and Woodward, M. (2014) “Symbolologies, technologies, and identities: Critical Junctures Theory and the Multi-layered Nation-state.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

<sup>38</sup> Turner, V. (1967) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

evocation or creation of meaning and emotion.<sup>39</sup> Its meanings are never entirely precise and is subject to multiple interpretations and contestation. Taken together texts, *pengajian* (religious talks) and speeches explicating *Islam Kemajuan* define what Foucault calls a “*mathesis*” or epistemological structure defining the limits of discourse on a particular topic, in this case the inter-relation of religious thought and socio-political praxis. This *mathesis* in turn defines an epistemological community seeking to influence national and to a lesser extent international discourse about state/society/religion relations.

*Kemajuan* has deep roots in Muhammadiyah/ ‘Aisyiyah discourse history. In the early twentieth century, it was used most commonly in references to modern education, science, technology and women’s emancipation. Today the term is used more broadly encompassing good governance, fighting corruption and opposing violent extremism. By renewing emphasis on *Islam Kemajuan* Muhammadiyah and ‘Aisyiyah see themselves as returning to their origins in the teachings and action program of their founders. This is in keeping with its long-established theological position that religious renewal (l. *pembaruan/A. tajdid*) is a dynamic, ongoing process and defines the early days of Muhammadiyah and what has come to be known as “Dahlanism” as a reference point for subsequent renewal activities.<sup>40</sup>

What is described as “*Teologi al-Ma ‘un*” (Ma’*un* Theology) underlies much of the *Islam Kemajuan* ideology. Ahmad Dahlan is often said to have been not especially concerned with theological issues (A. *kalam*) and is often described as having been a “man of action” rather

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<sup>39</sup> Sperber, D. (1975) *Rethinking Symbolism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>40</sup> Hilmy, Masdar (2014). “The Double-edged Sword of Islamic reform: Muhammadiyah and the Dilemma of 'Tajdid' within Indonesian Islam,” *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*.



than a theologian.<sup>41</sup> While he did not write extensively, this evaluation is not entirely correct. He was a praxis theologian and based much of his action-oriented reform program on the interpretation of *Surah al-Ma'un* (Acts of Kindness) of the *Qur'an*.

*Do you know people who deny religion?  
That is the person who rebukes orphans,  
Who does not advocate feeding the poor?  
Woe to those who pray  
And people who neglect their prayers  
People who want to be noticed for their piety  
And are reluctant to give aid effectively and efficiently.*

Ahmad Dahlan not only reminded his students of the importance of this *surah*, but also demanded that they put it into practice.<sup>42</sup> It underlies his emphasis on health care and education. Contemporary Muhammadiyah interpretations mention “feeding, healing and teaching” as the three pillars of *Surah Ma'un*.<sup>43</sup> The notion that Islam includes two sets of duties: one to Allah and another to humanity has been a common theme in Muhammadiyah *pengajian* since at least the 1970s. Duties to Allah are the five pillars of the faith: The Confession of Faith (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet), the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, alms giving, and pilgrimage to Mecca for those with sufficient means. Duties to humanity include,

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<sup>41</sup> Mulkhan, M. (2010) *Pesan dan Kisah Kiai Ahmad Dahlan dalam Hikmah Muhammadiyah*, Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.

<sup>42</sup> Marjohan, H. (2013) “Spirit Surat Al Ma’un dan Sejarah Muhammadiyah,” *Sang Pencerah The Muhammadiyah Post*. <http://sangpencerah.id/2013/08/spirit-surat-al-maun-dan-sejara/>

<sup>43</sup> Burhani, N. (2013) “Makna Teologi al-Ma ‘un di Dua Generasi Muhammadiyah,” *Suara Muhammadiyah*, Sudja, H. (2003) *Ceritra Tentang Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan*, Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah.

helping the poor, widows and orphans for individuals and providing health care and education for the Muslim community as a whole.

The term *kemajuan* appears hundreds, if not thousands, of times in colonial era issues of *Suara Muhammadiyah*. Usage of and discourse about *kemajuan* peaked in the 1920s and declined significantly in the late 1930s as Muhammadiyah became more established and turned increasingly away from modernization in the direction of religious purification. It was used to describe the goal of modernizing Indonesian Islam through education reform, including providing education for women and girls, and to point by contrast to the “backwardness” of the Indonesian Muslim community as it was in the early twentieth century. At that time it was a theologically neutral term, but one with religious implications. It was often used to refer to Western modernities and science in favorable ways. An article that appeared in 1926 strongly criticizes traditionalist Muslims for rejecting modern knowledge as *najis* (defilement.)<sup>44</sup> Progress and the quest for the types of knowledge that were needed to establish Islam as a progressive religion were described as religious obligations (*A. wajib*) for both women and men. This applied equally to the types of religious knowledge required for salvation and those necessary for ensuring and enhancing the quality of life in the world.<sup>45</sup> The 1924 Aisyiyah sermon mentioned previously also states that to unite the Muslim community and build Islam *Kemajuan*, women must also be “*kemajuan*.”

There are a large and growing discussions of what *Islam Kemajuan* means and implies for Muhammadiyah in the twenty-first century. The epistemological community within which this discourse is located includes the central Muhammadiyah and ‘Aisyiyah leadership, *ulama*, academics and activists. It has acquired new, expanded

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<sup>44</sup> Soeara Moehamadijah 1926 7, pg. 27

<sup>45</sup> Soeara Moehamadijah 1925 pg. 88

meanings in the twenty-first century and evokes additional ones as it gains acceptance and popularity.

At the time of the 2015 *Muktamar*, Muhammadiyah Chairman Din Syamsuddin explained that the purpose of reintroducing it was to “revitalize Muhammadiyah’s religious vision” and return it to the spirit (*semangat*) of Ahmad Dahlan.”<sup>46</sup> He also linked *Islam Kemajuan* to Indonesian nationalism and the 1945 Constitution stating that it implicitly aims to establish the nation as “progressive, just and prosperous.” Many understood this as a shift away from what they viewed as excessive emphasis on religious purification bordering on fundamentalist textual literalism that has become increasingly common in recent decades. It was a public statement of perspectives that emerged from a 2007 leadership meeting that considered strategies for responding to the growth of Islamist organizations and movements including *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (Prosperous Justice Party) and *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (Indonesian Liberation Party) and their efforts to “infiltrate” Muhammadiyah’s educational and health care systems and the organization more generally.<sup>47</sup> The theme of this meeting was *Peneguhan dan Pencerahan Gerakan untuk Kemajuan Bangsa* (I. Revitalizing and Enlightening the Movement for National Progress). It reaffirmed statements in a 2006 declaration requiring affiliates to end infiltration, demonstrate loyalty and enhance cadre training. The emphasis on mono-loyalty is also a return the teachings of

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<sup>46</sup> “Muktamar Muhammadiyah Dorong Islam Berkemajuan,” *Republika*, July 27, 2015. <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/koran/khazanah-koran/15/07/27/ns52c5-muktamar-muhammadiyah-dorong-islam-berkemajuan>

<sup>47</sup> On *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* see: Woodward, M., Amin, A., Rohmaniyah, I. and Lundry, C. (2013) “Indonesia’s Prosperity and Justice Party and the Question of Culture,” *Contemporary Islam*.

On *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* see: Ahnaf, M. (2009) “Between Revolution and Reform: The Future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

Ahmad Dahlan who discouraged Muhammadiyah members from joining other organizations.<sup>48</sup>

Current Muhammadiyah Chairman Haedar Nashir also links *Islam Kemajuan* with nationalism by stating that these values are congruent with those of *Pancasila* (I. five principles), Indonesia's national ideology. The *Pancasila* principles are:

1. *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (I. Devotion to the all-powerful God);
2. *Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab* (I. Just and ethical humanism);
3. *Persatuan Indonesia* (I. Indonesian unity);
4. *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan/perwakilan* (I. Populism/democracy with wise leadership assisted by consultation [with the people]);
5. *Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia* (I. Social justice for all of the Indonesian people).

As Madjid observes, all but the third are deconfessionalized versions of Quranic principles including the unity of God (A. *tawhid*) and justice (A. *adl*).<sup>49</sup> The wording of the first principle has been controversial since the time that *Pancasila* was adopted as the ideological basis of the new nation in 1945. It originally included what has come to be known as the Jakarta Charter that stated: what has come to be known as the Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) that states: “with the obligation for Muslims to abide by the *Shari'ah*.” This would have established Indonesia as a quasi-Islamic state. It was deleted to

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<sup>48</sup> Mulkhan *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> Madjid, N. (1996) *The Search of the Islamic Roots for Modern Pluralism: The Indonesian Experiences*, Tempe: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University.

secure the agreement of Christian minorities without which the establishment of Indonesia as an independent nation would have been unlikely.<sup>50</sup>

Islamist movements and political parties have attempted to reinstate the Jakarta Charter for decades, especially since the 1998 democratic transition. Muhammadiyah has always been explicitly non-political and does not these move to establish Shari'ah. There is also little support for these efforts among Muhammadiyah leaders who are free to participate in politics in their private capacities.<sup>51</sup> The MPM training manual echoes this position describing Indonesia as an Islamic nation because *Pancasila* principles are Islamic principles. It also describes 'Aisyiyah as not political and also not "anti-party." It also encourages political parties to work diligently to carry out their missions. It describes 'Aisyiyah as being "not anti-government" and at the same time being willing to be critical when the government acts inappropriately. These statements clearly locate 'Aisyiyah within the mainstream of Indonesian politics and distance it from what van Bruinessen and others have described as the "conservative turn."<sup>52</sup>

Nashir has also developed a nuanced interpretation of *Islam Kemajuan* rooted in the *Qur'an* and Muhammadiyah's history as a renewal (l. *pembaruan/A. tajdid*) movement.<sup>53</sup> He describes Muhammadiyah's mission as being to bring not just the Muslim community but also the nation out of ignorance and move them in progressive directions. In his discussion of *Islam Kemajuan*, he mentions that Allah has made humans guardians of the earth, to build and not to

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<sup>50</sup> Elson, R. (2009) "Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945," *Indonesia*.

<sup>51</sup> Al Hamdi, R. (2016) "The Jakarta Charter in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Political Thoughts of the Elites in Muhammadiyah," *Masyarakat Indonesia*.

<sup>52</sup> Van Bruinessen *op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> *Surah al Alaq*: 1-5, *ar-Ra'du*: 11, *Al-Hasyr*: 18, *al-Baqarah*: 143, *Ali Imran*: 110 and *al-Anbiya*: 107 are among the references to the *Qur'an* he mentions.

destroy. He describes building a moral society that upholds the dignity of women as being a basic element of the Prophet Muhammad's mission and consequently of Muhammadiyah's. Building *Islam Kemajuan* includes solving problems of ignorance, corruption, spiritual drought, violence, terrorism, conflict, ecological destruction and valuing the dignity of human beings, both men and women, without discrimination. He stresses the point these have been among Muhammadiyah's guiding principles since the time of Ahmad Dahlan. He positions *Islam Kemajuan* between liberalism that is critical of and seeks to "deconstruct" basic Islamic texts and teachings and "radical-conservative or radical-fundamentalist" trans-national movements including Salafism, Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot Hizbut Tahrir, Indonesian radical and conservative groups including Jemaah Islamiyah, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia and An-Sharut Tauhid. He continues that emphasis on *Islam Kemajuan* distinguishes Muhammadiyah from traditional Indonesian Islam and from the Shia.<sup>54</sup>

*Islam Kemajuan* is now used as a cover term or umbrella for nearly everything that Muhammadiyah stands for: religious purification, education and healthcare and other social programs. Promoting it is also a strategy for combatting religious extremism. A 2016 issue of *Suara Muhammadiyah* described it as a "new hope" on the front cover.<sup>55</sup> MPB is an example of the cadre training called for in the 2006 declaration. It is among the clearest statements of Muhammadiyah's

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<sup>54</sup> Nashir, H. (2014) *Memahami Ideologi Muhammadiyah*, Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah. On the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah see Barton, G. (2004) *Indonesia's Struggle: Jemaah Islamiyah and the Soul of Islam*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press. On Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia see Anaf, I. (2021) "Why do Islamist Movements Die? Majles Mujahidin and its Decline, in: Sebastian, L., Hasyim, S. and Arifianto, A. *Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia*, London: Routledge. On An-Sharut Tauhid see: International Crisis Group (2010) *Indonesia: The Dark Side of Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)*.

<sup>55</sup> *Suara Muhammadiyah*, November 15, 2016.

positions on a wide variety of religious, social and political issues. It focuses largely, but not exclusively, on issues of special concern to women.

### **MADRASAH PEREMPUAN BERKEMAJUAN**

MPB is not a *madrasah* in the normal sense of the term. It is not a school, but rather a series of nine lecture/discussion sessions focusing on Muhammadiyah religious teachings and social programs, *dakwah* (propagation of Islam) and issues of particular concern to women. It also includes self-evaluation exercises designed to reveal how closely participants' views on religious, social and gender issues corresponding with positions taken by the organization's central leadership. A "training for trainers" program includes two components: methods for understanding texts and women and Islam Kemajuan.<sup>56</sup>

#### **1. Sessions**

Each session is ninety minutes. They begin with a brief (five minutes) introduction discussing the topic to be examined and the materials to be used. The training manual also includes PowerPoint slides, workshop exercises for participants to complete and something resembling a final examination assessing the success of the program.

The topics are:

1. *Manhaj Muhammadiyah* -- The Muhammadiyah Method.
2. *Prempuan Islam Kemajuan* – Progressive Muslim Women.
3. *Gender dalam Islam* – Gender and Islam.
4. *Kosep Gender Muhammadiyah* – The Muhammadiyah Concept of Gender.

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<sup>56</sup> PP 'Aisyiyah (2015) "LPPA Adakan TOT Madrasah Sekolah Perempuan Berkemajuan" <http://www.aisyiyah.or.id/id/berita/lppa-adakan-tot-madrasah-sekolah-perempuan-berkemajuan.html>

5. *'Aisyiyah dalam Kontestasi Gerakan Perempuan Islam -- 'Aisyiyah and Contesting Islamic Women's movements.*
6. *Fikh al-Ma'un dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan – Fikh al-Ma'un and Women's Empowerment.*
7. *SGDs dan Program 'Aisyiyah -- Sustainable Development Goals and 'Aisyiyah's Program.*
8. *Dakwah Advokasi dan Pengorganisasian – Dakwah, Advocacy and Organizing*
9. *Teknik Fasilitasi -- Facilitation Techniques*

In the remainder of this paper I focus on the content of sessions most clearly concerned with the 'Aisyiyah- Muhammadiyah ideology and conceptions of gender. These are numbers one and two and four through six. Sessions four through six are grouped together under the rubric of the *keluarga sakinah* (harmonious family) a term that occurs frequently in the training manual and which captures the 'Aisyiyah-Muhammadiyah concepts of gender and familial relationships.

## **2. Manhaj Muhammadiyah**

*Manhaj* is an Arabic term meaning "method". It is a relatively recent addition to language of Indonesian Islam. Muhammadiyah defines it as a system of thought and a tool for discovering truth. It can include theology (*Aqidah*), ethics (*Ahklaq*), law (*Fiqh*) and ideology. Manhaj Muhammadiyah is similar to "Kemuhammadiyah" (Muhammadiyahness) which a required topic in Muhammadiyah schools though discussions of this concept are considerably more theologically complex. A 2017 editorial in *Suara Muhammadiyah* describes it as an ideology that should be internalized by leaders and



cadre to distinguish Muhammadiyah for Liberalism and Extremism.<sup>57</sup> Analytically Manjah Muhammadiyah is the “*mathesis*” that defines the content and limits of Kemuhammadiyah.

This session focuses on Islam Kemajuan, Manjah Muhammadiyah and the modes of textual exegesis common in the Indonesia and globally. The discussion is framed by a tri-partate classification system:

1. Textual Literalism – Religious understanding that what is written in the text should be taken literally.
2. Moderate-Progressive – Considering the current situation without departing from the text.
3. Contextual-Liberal – Religious understanding that considers elements outside the text.

The system is inclusivist because it does not resort to *takfir* and describes all three hermeneutic strategies as being based on the *Qur’an* and *Hadith*.

Textual Literalism is described as based solely on the *Qur’an* and *Hadith*. It is described as being highly normative, ignoring the views of *ulama*, drawing sharp distinctions between Islam and other religions. It is rigid, dogmatic, valuing symbols over substance, opposed to distinguishing between principle, social and historical context and in other similar ways.

Moderate-Progressive exegesis is describe as being context sensitive, being based on *ijtihad* (Independent Quranic exegesis), post-dogmatic, not rigid and is inclusive. It does not focus on criticism of religions other than Islam. Symbols are used for identity purposes and

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<sup>57</sup> *Suara Muhammadiyah* (June, 2017) “Editorial, Manjah Muhammadiyah”  
<http://www.suaramuhammadiyah.id/2017/07/06/manhaj-muhammadiyah/>

are less important than substance. It does not prohibit, but points to that which is better or more important.

Contextual-Liberal exegesis is open to discussion and review of existing interpretations and does not draw clear distinctions between Islam and other religions. It does not emphasize symbols and is more concerned with substance. It stresses reason.

The subsequent discussion of Manhaj Muhammadiyah places it in the Moderate-Progressive group. It is described as including a comprehensive, inclusive and independent approach to interpreting the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, that is not dependent on particular theological, legal or legal school or Sufi *tariqah*. Rather it asserts that Muhammadiyah exegesis is based on *bayani* (textual authority) *burhani* (logic) and *irfani* (spiritual intuition). Muhammadiyah identity is Moderate-Kemajuan. It is similar to Ibn Taimiya's approach that stresses purifying theology and ritual from *shirk*, *khurafat* and *bid'ah* and at the same time retains the traditional Muslim emphasis on spirituality. It defines Muhammadiyah occupying a *wasathiyah* (A. middle) position between liberalism and secularism on the left and radical fundamentalism on the right.<sup>58</sup> The MPM training manual uses a gender related example to stress this point. It calls for adhering to Prophetic ethics contextually and states that women are not obligated to wear Chador and that men are not required to grow beards. Both practices are common among Indonesian Salafis who regard Saudi Arab customs as being exemplary Muslim practice. 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah regarded them as examples of unnecessary Arabization of Indonesian cultures.

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<sup>58</sup> Nashir, H. (2015) *Muhammadiyah: A Reform Movement*, Yogyakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press.

### 3. Women's Empowerment and the Harmonious Family

MPB stresses empowerment for women within the context of the *keluarga sakinah* (harmonious family). It defines a harmonious family as one that fosters compassion and leads to peace and happiness in this world and the hereafter. This captures the more general Muhammadiyah agenda of religious purity and social-economic progress. It restates Muhammadiyah's position that women and men in the sight of Allah It also stresses that marriages must be conducted in accordance with the will of God and be registered with the religious affairs office. This is an important statement for two reasons. First it rejects the notion of secular marriage. The second is that it denies the legitimacy of *nikah siri* (unregistered marriages). These are marriages that are religiously allowable but not in accordance with Indonesian civil law. They are used by some socially conservative Muslims to justify child marriage which MPB also strongly condemns.<sup>59</sup>

It also states that women have the right to pursue careers so long as this does not compromise the ability to fulfill domestic responsibilities and reaffirms opposition to polygamy. It also defines providing financial support is one of the husband's religious obligation and managing these funds as one of the wife's duties. Both are obligated to engage in "democratic decision making."

As a whole, this discussion is a strong but unstated effort by Indonesian Salafis to impose severe forms of patriarchy including polygamy and restricting women's activities to the domestic sphere.

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<sup>59</sup> Woodward, M. and Rohmaniyah, I. (2014) "The Tawdry Tale of "Syech" Puji and Luftiana: Child Marriage and Polygamy on the Boundary of the Pesantren World." in: Smith, B. and Woodward, M. *Gender and Power in Indonesian Islam: Leaders, Feminists, Sufis and Pesantren Selves*. London: Routledge.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Madrasah Prempuan Berkemajuan* is a contemporary form of 'Aisyiyah/Muhammadiyah *dakwah* (A. and I. propagation of the faith). The style is similar to that of a university class or seminar including multiple choice pretests and posttests. It also presents objective discussions of varieties of Islam thought ranging from literalist, which is synonymous with Salafism and Progressive-Liberal which resembles, but does not mention Indonesian movements such as Jaringan Islam Liberal, locating 'Aisyiyah/Muhammadiyah between the two and defining them as Moderate-Progressive. The values it seeks to convey are updated versions 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah values it seeks to inculcate on healthcare, education, social service and religious purification are updated variants of those taught by Ahmad Dahlan and Siti Walidah more than a century ago. While extremist groups are rarely mentioning the counter-extremist message is clear readers familiar with the contemporary varieties of Indonesian Islam.

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