

Nurcholish Madjid's Thoughts on Islamic Educational Renewal: An Analysis of Modernization and Its Relevance to Contemporary Education in Indonesia

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Abstract :

This article aims to analyze the concept of Islamic renewal in Nurcholish Madjid's thought and the relevance of his ideas in the modern era. This study is motivated by the emergence of various challenges of modernity that have led some people to believe that Islam is no longer capable of providing answers to increasingly complex life issues. Therefore, a renewal of Islamic thought is necessary so that Islamic teachings remain relevant and able to adapt to the times without abandoning the fundamental values of Islam itself. The method used in this article is a literature review with a descriptive qualitative approach, involving the analysis of various journals, books, and scholarly works that discuss Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on Islam, modernity, and the renewal of Islam. The research findings indicate that: (1) the concept of Islamic renewal according to Nurcholish Madjid emphasizes the importance of rationalization, *ijtihad*, openness to science and technology, as well as the rejection of blind imitation and rigid thinking that hinder the development of the Muslim community; (2) Nurcholish Madjid views Islam as a universal religion possessing modern, democratic, tolerant, and capable of adapting to social changes in modern society without being influenced by Westernization; and (3) the relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's thought in the modern era is evident through his ideas regarding the relationship between Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity, which can serve as a foundation for building a pluralistic, inclusive, moderate society that upholds humanistic values. The discussion in this article focuses on the concept of Islamic renewal in Nurcholish Madjid's thought, which emphasizes the importance of liberating Muslims from rigid traditional mindsets toward a more rational, open, and progressive way of thinking. Nurcholish Madjid asserts that Islam must be able to serve as a source of moral and ethical values in modern life so that Islamic teachings can still be applied contextually in accordance with the times. The novelty of this article lies in its analysis of the relationship between Islamic renewal, modernity, and Indonesian values as an effort to build an Islamic society that is adaptive, tolerant, and oriented toward the advancement of civilization amidst the ever-evolving challenges of modernization.

Keywords: Islamic Renewal, Modernity, Nurcholish Madjid, Rationalization, Islam.

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Introduction

The progress of modernization in the era of globalization has had a significant impact on community life, including in the aspects of religion and Islamic thought. Innovations in science, technology, and the rapidly developing flow of information challenge Muslims to face various new and increasingly complex problems. These issues are not only related to social and cultural problems but also touch upon how Muslims interpret religious teachings amidst changing times. Some Muslims still prioritize a conservative mindset and tend to reject various innovations because they are perceived as threatening the purity of Islamic teachings. This attitude fosters intellectual stagnation, excessive fanaticism, and a lack of openness to the advancements of modern science. Consequently, Islam is often perceived as a religion that is backward and fails to provide solutions to the problems of modern society. Yet, according to Nurcholish Madjid, Islam is a universal religion with adaptive teachings that can evolve with the times without abandoning its core values (Madjid, 1992).

Another issue arising in the modern era is the rise of intolerance, religious exclusivism, and social conflicts stemming from differing religious interpretations. In Indonesia's diverse society, differences in ethnicity, culture, and religion often trigger conflicts if not addressed with a tolerant and open-minded attitude. According to Akmalia, Nurkhalis, and Wildan (2021), some Muslims still view modernity and pluralism as threats to religion, leading them to reject various innovative ideas emerging in society. This situation results in an anti-critical mindset and the inability of some Muslims to adapt to the changing times. Furthermore, advancements in information technology have also raised new issues, such as the spread of radical ideologies, religious misinformation, and the public's limited critical thinking skills in understanding Islamic teachings. Therefore, Muslims urgently need a renewal of thought that can respond to the challenges of modernity in a rational and open manner while remaining grounded in Islamic values. According to Siti Makhmudah (2015), the Muslim community in the era of modernization requires a way of thinking that can harmonize religious values with social developments to create a tolerant and democratic civil society. Islamic thought is, in essence, the result of human *ijtihad* in understanding Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Hadith in accordance with evolving social contexts. Islamic thought emerged as an effort to address the various issues of human life that continue to change from one era to the next. Throughout Islamic history, the development of Islamic thought has always undergone dynamics in response to the challenges of the times faced by Muslim societies. According to Zarkasyi (2013), *tajdid*, or innovation in Islamic thought, is a process of renewal aimed at reviving the spirit of Islamic teachings to ensure they remain relevant to the times. This renewal is carried out through rationalization, reinterpretation of religious teachings, and the development of *ijtihad* regarding contemporary issues. Islamic thought is not limited to the aspect of worship but also encompasses the social, political, educational, economic, and cultural aspects of society. Therefore, renewal in Islamic thought is crucial so that Muslims can overcome modern challenges without sacrificing their Islamic

identity.

Throughout the history of Islam's development, various schools of thought have emerged within society. Generally, Islamic thought is divided into traditionalist, modernist, and neo-modernist groups. Traditionalists tend to uphold traditions passed down by earlier scholars and are less open to the changes of the times. On the other hand, the modernist group seeks to innovate Islamic thought so that it aligns with scientific progress and modernity. Meanwhile, the neo-modernist group seeks to integrate traditional Islamic values with modern thought in a balanced manner. Nurcholish Madjid is one of the leading figures of Islamic neo-modernism in Indonesia who emphasizes the importance of rationalization, open-mindedness, and *ijtihad* in understanding religion (Muhsin, 2016). According to Yusnaini (2017), Nurcholish Madjid asserts that Muslims must abandon blind imitation and begin to develop critical and scientific thinking so that Islam can evolve dynamically in the modern era. This perspective demonstrates that Islam is not at odds with modernity but can coexist with scientific and technological progress.

The theory of modern Islamic thought explains that renewal in thought is undertaken to adapt Islamic teachings to the needs of modern society without eliminating its fundamental values. Modernization in Islam does not mean imitating Western culture in its entirety, but rather an effort to build a rational, open, and progressive mindset in response to the developments of the times. According to Nurcholish Madjid, modernization is a form of rationalization—that is, the process of transforming outdated ways of thinking into new ones that align with scientific progress and the needs of modern society (Madjid, 1997). This perspective is also supported by Abidin (2014), who explains that the concepts of Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity developed by Nurcholish Madjid aim to create an inclusive, tolerant, and diversity-respecting Islamic society. Furthermore, Amos Sukanto (2009) explains that modernity, in Nurcholish Madjid's view, is a form of transformative spirituality that encourages Muslims to continue evolving and remain open to social change. Thus, modern Islamic thought does not merely emphasize religious aspects but also positions Islam as a moral foundation for building an advanced and democratic society. Nurcholish Madjid's thought plays a significant role in promoting an inclusive approach to religion in Indonesia. He emphasizes that Islam is a religion that teaches universal values such as justice, humanity, brotherhood, and tolerance. Therefore, Muslims must be able to live in harmony alongside other groups with different religious or cultural backgrounds. According to Madjid (1992), pluralism is an inevitable social reality and must therefore be accepted as part of God's will in human life. This perspective demonstrates that diversity is not a threat to Islam but rather an opportunity to build a peaceful and mutually respectful social life. In addition to emphasizing the importance of pluralism, Nurcholish Madjid also explored the relationship between Islam and democracy. He stated that democratic values such as consultation, justice, freedom of expression, and respect for human rights align with the principles of Islamic teachings. Therefore, Muslims should not view religion and

democracy as being in conflict.

According to Madjid (1997), democracy is a system that provides space for the public to engage in political life fairly and responsibly. This line of thought makes a significant contribution to fostering the awareness that Islam can coexist with modern democratic systems without losing its religious identity. In the field of education, Nurcholish Madjid's thought highlights the importance of developing an intellectual culture among Muslims. He argues that The decline of the Muslim community is partly due to a lack of a tradition of critical thinking and a low level of scientific enthusiasm. Therefore, Muslims need to develop an education system that not only focuses on religious aspects but also encourages the mastery of science and technology. According to Azra (2002), the concept of Islamic educational reform proposed by Nurcholish Madjid had a significant impact on the emergence of a moderate, open, and adaptable Islamic thought capable of keeping pace with the times. The modern Islamic thought developed by Nurcholish Madjid also rejects fanaticism and exclusivism in religion. He argued that a narrow understanding of religion can foster intolerance and hinder the progress of the Muslim community. Therefore, a more rational and dialogical approach to religion is needed so that Muslims can understand differences as part of the dynamics of social life.

According to Muhsin (2016), Nurcholish Madjid emphasized the importance of intellectual openness and respect for diverse perspectives within Islam as a step toward building a more democratic and harmonious society. Through these various ideas, Nurcholish Madjid became one of the influential reformist figures in the development of modern Islamic thought in Indonesia. His thought has made a significant contribution to building a paradigm of Islam that is moderate, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of modern society. According to Yusnaini (2017), the concept of Islam developed by Nurcholish Madjid can bridge the relationship between religious values, modernity, and national life so that Islam can function as a moral force in realizing an advanced, democratic, and tolerant society. Therefore, Nurcholish Madjid's thought remains relevant as a reference in addressing the various challenges of societal life in the current era of globalization.

Studies on Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts regarding Islamic renewal have actually been extensively conducted by previous researchers. Akmalia, Nurkhalis, and Wildan (2021) discuss the relationship between Islam and the challenges of modernity from Nurcholish Madjid's perspective. Muhsin (2016) examined neo-modernism in Nurcholish Madjid's thought, while Abidin (2014) analyzed the harmonization of Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity in Nurcholish Madjid's thought. However, this article offers a novel perspective as it focuses more on the relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's Islamic reformist thought in addressing various issues facing modern Indonesian society today, such as intolerance, radicalism, a lack of critical thinking, and the challenges posed by technological advancements and globalization. This article also highlights the importance of applying modern Islamic thought in building a society that is open, tolerant, democratic, and capable

of critical thinking regarding the developments of the times. Thus, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of Islamic thought renewal in the modern era as well as the contribution of Nurcholish Madjid's thought to the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia.

Method

This study employs a library research approach, which is a research strategy focused on collecting information and data from various written sources relevant to the research theme. These sources include books, scientific journals, academic articles, previous research findings, documents, and various other references related to Islamic reform and the thought of Nurcholish Madjid in the modern era. The library research method was chosen because this study does not conduct direct field observations but rather emphasizes the analysis of ideas, thoughts, and concepts contained in various scientific works and academic literature. Literature review is a technique used to obtain data by reading, understanding, noting, and analyzing various written sources related to the research issue. According to Sugiyono, literature review is a data collection method conducted by studying various books, notes, documents, and other sources relevant to the research issue. By applying this method, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the concept of Islamic reform proposed by Nurcholish Madjid, particularly regarding the relationship between Islam, modernity, and societal development in the contemporary era.

Data collection techniques involve searching for, gathering, reading, and examining various reading materials obtained from libraries, electronic journals, university repositories, and other digital media. Once the data is collected, the researcher undergoes a data analysis process by identifying key information, grouping data based on discussion themes, and then drawing conclusions in accordance with the research objectives. Data analysis was conducted systematically to ensure the research results provide a clear picture of the concept of Islamic reform according to Nurcholish Madjid. This research was conducted indirectly, as all data were obtained through literature review and analysis of relevant academic sources. Consequently, this study prioritizes the strength of theoretical analysis over field data collection. The research is scheduled to take place in the second semester of 2026, beginning with the reference collection phase, data processing, content analysis of the literature, and culminating in the preparation of the comprehensive research report. It is hoped that this study will provide a broader understanding of Islamic reform thought as well as Nurcholish Madjid's contributions to the development of modern Islamic thought in Indonesia.

Research Findings

The Concept of Islamic Renewal in the Thought of Nurcholish Madjid

The innovative Islamic thought proposed by Nurcholish Madjid focuses on efforts to evolve the mindset of Muslims so that they are more receptive to modern progress. He

argues that Islam is a global religion capable of adapting to social transformation, scientific advancement, and technological development without sacrificing the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. In this modern era, Muslims are seen as experiencing stagnation in their thinking because they remain trapped in conventional ways of thinking, excessive fanaticism, and a refusal to adapt. This situation has led to Islam being perceived as less capable of addressing increasingly complex contemporary issues. For this reason, Nurcholish Madjid emphasizes that the renewal of Islam is crucial so that Muslims can once again pioneer a progressive and dynamic civilization. He argues that the renewal of Islam, or *tajdid*, does not mean altering the core teachings of Islam derived from the Quran and Hadith, but rather renewing the mindset of Muslims to be more logical and contextually relevant to the progress of the times. He stated that modernization focuses more on rationalization—the process of replacing outdated ways of thinking that are no longer relevant to the advancement of knowledge with new ways of thinking based on logic, science, and openness.

This rationalization is crucial so that Muslims can face the challenges of globalization and modern technological advancements. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid also rejected blind imitation—that is, following ancient opinions without critical evaluation—as this can lead to stagnation in Islamic thought. He also emphasized the importance of *ijtihad* as a platform for finding new solutions to various challenges in modern life. According to him, Islam must be able to provide answers to social, political, educational, and technological issues that are constantly changing. Therefore, Muslims need to engage in continuous intellectual renewal so that Islam remains relevant in every era. He also distinguished between modernization and Westernization. Modernization is defined as the development of science and technology that is acceptable as long as it does not contradict Islamic teachings, while Westernization is defined as excessive imitation of Western culture. Thus, Islam can preserve its identity while adapting to the changing times. In addition to the concepts of rationalization and *ijtihad*, Nurcholish Madjid also introduced the idea of the relationship between Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity. He argued that Islam must serve as the moral foundation for social interaction, national identity, and statehood. In Indonesia's diverse society, Muslims must adopt an attitude of tolerance, be open to differences, and be able to coexist with people of varied cultural and religious backgrounds. This perspective demonstrates that, according to Nurcholish Madjid, Islam is not merely a ritualistic religion but also one that promotes the advancement of civilization, democracy, and a harmonious social life.

In addition to the concepts of rationalization and *ijtihad*, Nurcholish Madjid also emphasized the importance of desacralizing religious understandings rooted in history and culture. He argued that many Muslims often conflate divine teachings (revelation) with human interpretations that are relative and subject to change. Therefore, he urges Muslims to clearly distinguish between Islam as the core values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith,

and human interpretations of religion that can adapt to the context of the times. In this way, Islam can remain sacred in its fundamentals yet flexible in its application within the social sphere. This perspective is also intended to prevent Muslims from easily regarding a particular religious opinion as absolute and beyond criticism, thereby ensuring that the intellectual space within Islam remains open and dynamic. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid also placed great emphasis on the development of Islamic social ethics in modern life. He emphasized that the core of Islamic teachings lies not only in ritual worship but also in the cultivation of moral character, social justice, and humanitarian responsibility. In this context, Islam is understood as a moral force that drives the creation of a just, transparent society that respects human dignity. He also emphasized the importance of values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and openness in the political and social spheres. Thus, Islam functions not only as a religious identity but also as an ethical guide that directs public life toward being more civilized, inclusive, and oriented toward the common good.

Nurcholish Madjid's ideas also underscore the vitality of pluralism in modern society. He argues that religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity is a social phenomenon that must be accepted as part of God's plan. Therefore, Muslims should not view differences as a threat, but rather as a tool for building collaboration and mutual understanding among fellow human beings. According to Nurcholish Madjid, Islamic teachings contain universal principles that promote the creation of peaceful and harmonious life within diverse communities. Madjid (1992) states that plurality is an inevitable law of God and must therefore be met with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the rights of others. This perspective underscores that Islam has the potential to coexist with various social groups in an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid also examines the relationship between Islam and democracy. He argues that democratic values such as deliberation, justice, freedom of expression, and respect for human rights align with the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. Therefore, democracy need not be viewed as a structure that conflicts with religion. According to Madjid (1997), democracy is a tool for realizing public participation in the realm of nation-building and governance in a fair and responsible manner. Through this line of thought, Nurcholish Madjid seeks to demonstrate that Islam can play an active role in supporting a democratic way of life that upholds the values of justice and humanity.

In the education sector, Nurcholish Madjid emphasizes that the progress of the Muslim community depends heavily on the quality of its human resources. Education must serve as a platform for fostering critical, creative, and open-minded thinking regarding scientific advancements. He argues that the Islamic education system must not merely focus on the teaching of religious sciences but must also integrate modern knowledge so that Muslims can compete in the era of globalization. According to Azra (2002), the concept of Islamic educational innovation developed by Nurcholish Madjid has significantly contributed to the emergence of a moderate, rational, and socially adaptive Muslim

generation. Thus, education serves as a vital instrument in realizing the renewal of Islamic thought. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid rejected all forms of fanaticism and exclusivism that could hinder the development of Islamic thought. He argued that the attitude of believing oneself to be the sole possessor of truth and rejecting other viewpoints would only lead to conflict and obstruct the progress of Islamic civilization. Therefore, Muslims need to foster a culture of dialogue, scholarly discussion, and intellectual openness in addressing various differences of opinion. According to Muhsin (2016), Nurcholish Madjid encouraged Muslims to develop a critical mindset and to value diversity of thought as part of Islam's dynamic intellectual tradition. This attitude serves as a crucial foundation for building a democratic and tolerant society. Through his diverse innovative ideas, Nurcholish Madjid made a significant contribution to the development of modern Islamic thought in Indonesia. His ideas not only sought to renew Muslims' perspectives on religion but also to foster harmonious relations between Islam, modernity, and national life. According to Yusnaini (2017), the concept of Islam developed by Nurcholish Madjid serves as a bridge between religious values and the demands of modern life, ensuring that Islam remains relevant in facing the various challenges of the times. Therefore, Nurcholish Madjid's thought remains one of the key references in studies on Islamic renewal and religious moderation in Indonesia to this day.

Tabel 1. The concept of Islamic renewal according to nurcholish madjid

Concept of renewal	Explanation
Rationalization	Developing logical and scientific thinking in understanding Islamic teachings
Ijtihad	Efforts to find new solutions so modern problems based on the quran and hadith
Modernization	The adaptations of muslims to advancements in science and technology
Anti-blind followership	Rejecting the attitude of blindly following opinions without critical understanding
Islam universal	Islam is viewed as capable of being applied in all

The Relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's Thought in the Modern Era

Nurcholish Madjid's views on innovation in Islam remain highly relevant for application in contemporary modern society. The evolution of our times, marked by technological advancements, globalization, and rapid social change, necessitates that Muslims adopt an open-minded approach and be capable of adapting to these transformations. According to Nurcholish Madjid, Islam is fundamentally a universal and adaptive religion, capable of providing solutions to various human challenges across every

era. However, in reality, many Muslims remain resistant to modern developments out of fear that modernization will erode religious values. Such an attitude leads to intellectual stagnation and a lack of capacity among Muslims to address global challenges. Therefore, Nurcholish Madjid introduced the concept of Islamic innovation so that Muslims can rise and thrive in step with the times without losing their Islamic identity. The relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's thought is evident in his ideas regarding the rationalization and modernization of Islam. He argued that modernization is not a total imitation of Western culture, but rather a process of renewing one's mindset to become more rational, scientific, and open to science and technology. This perspective is crucial to apply in the modern era, as today's society lives amidst rapid digital advancements and the fast-paced flow of information. Muslims are called upon to be able to utilize advances in science and technology for the advancement of education, the economy, and the social life of the community.

With a rational mindset, Muslims are less likely to fall into excessive fanaticism or a narrow understanding of religion. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid's concept of the importance of *ijtihad* is highly relevant to the conditions of modern society. According to him, the challenges of human life are constantly evolving, necessitating continuous efforts to renew Islamic thought so that Islamic teachings can continue to offer solutions to social, political, economic, educational, and technological issues. He emphasized that Muslims should not merely rely on outdated ideas or engage in blind imitation without critical thinking. Through *ijtihad*, Muslims can adapt their religious understanding to the needs of the times without abandoning the primary sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. This approach encourages Muslims to be more active in the advancement of knowledge and to be able to compete in the era of globalization. The relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's thought is also evident in his ideas regarding the relationship between Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity. He argued that Islam must serve as the moral foundation for national and state life.

In Indonesia's diverse society—comprising various ethnic groups, cultures, and religions—Muslims must foster tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. This philosophy is particularly crucial in the modern era, as contemporary society frequently faces social conflicts, intolerance, and divisions stemming from differing viewpoints. According to Nurcholish Madjid, Islam, with its universal nature, should be capable of serving as a moral force to build a democratic, harmonious society that values human dignity. Therefore, the concept of Islamic innovation proposed by Nurcholish Madjid remains highly relevant in upholding the unity of the Indonesian nation amidst the challenges of modernity and globalization. Furthermore, the relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's ideas is evident in efforts to strengthen Islamic education in the modern era. He emphasized that education must not focus solely on dogmatic and rote-learning aspects but must also cultivate critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. In this context, Islamic educational institutions such as

madrasahs and pesantren need to update their curricula to meet the demands of the times. The integration of religious studies and general knowledge is crucial to prevent Muslim youth from experiencing a dichotomy in their education. Thus, graduates of Islamic education are expected to compete globally without abandoning the spiritual and moral values that define their Islamic identity.

Tabel 2. The relevance of nurcholish madjid's thought in the modern era

Relevance of thought	Explanation
Openness to modernity	Muslims are encouraged to embrace advancements in science and technology without abandoning Islamic values
Rationalization of thought	Developing a logical, critical, and scientific, mindset in understanding religious teachings
Tolerance and pluralism	Addressing new issues in the modern era based on the Qur'an and hadith
Islam and Indonesian identity	Islam serves as the moral foundation for as a nation and a state
Rejection blind imitation	Muslim do not merely follow old traditions, but also actively think critically and innovatively
Islam as a universal religion	Islam is seen as capable of being applied in every era and in modern societies

Discussion

The concept of Islamic renewal in Nurcholish Madjid's thought stems from intellectual unease regarding the condition of the Muslim community, which has experienced decline in various aspects of life—whether in the fields of science, society, or religious thinking. According to him, one of the main causes of this decline is the strengthening of an attitude of stagnation (stagnation of thought) and blind imitation, which makes Muslims tend to accept teachings without a process of critical understanding. This situation prevents Islamic teachings from evolving dynamically in line with the changing times. Therefore, Nurcholish Madjid proposes a concept of Islamic renewal that emphasizes that Islam is, by its very nature, universal, flexible, and always relevant to the course of human history. In his view, Islamic renewal does not mean altering the core tenets of the religion, but rather renewing the way these teachings are understood and implemented so that they remain relevant to the context of the modern era.

Furthermore, this renewal is realized through two key concepts: rationalization and

ijtihad. In Nurcholish Madjid's thought, rationalization is understood as an effort to encourage Muslims to use reason proportionately in understanding religious teachings, so as not to be confined solely to textual interpretations. He asserts that the Qur'an itself frequently encourages humans to think, reflect, and develop knowledge, making the use of reason an integral part of Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, ijtihad is positioned as an intellectual mechanism to address new issues not explicitly explained in classical Islamic legal sources. Thus, ijtihad serves as a vital instrument to ensure Islam remains capable of providing solutions to the evolving challenges of modern life. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid also makes a crucial distinction between modernization and Westernization. Modernization is understood as a process of progress in the fields of science, technology, and rational thinking aimed at improving the quality of human life. In contrast, Westernization is the wholesale imitation of Western culture without regard for Islamic values.

In this regard, he rejects Westernization but accepts modernization as part of the development of human civilization. This demonstrates that Islam is not at odds with progress; rather, it encourages its followers to be part of the advancement of science and global civilization. In relation to previous research, Abidin (2014) explains that Nurcholish Madjid's thought emphasizes the harmonization of Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity through the concept of inclusive theology. In that study, Islam is understood as a religion capable of coexisting with diversity and supporting values of tolerance in social life. However, Abidin's analysis focuses more on theological dimensions and pluralism, thus failing to delve deeply into its practical implications in the fields of education and modern social dynamics. Furthermore, Muhsin (2016) examines the thought of Nurcholish Madjid from a neo-modernist perspective that emphasizes efforts to renew Islam as a response to the challenges of modernity. The study explains that Nurcholish Madjid's thought represents a synthesis between classical Islamic tradition and rational modern thought. However, this study remains confined to the theoretical framework of renewal without placing strong emphasis on its application in contemporary society more broadly. Meanwhile, Ulumuddin (2017) focuses his study more on the aspect of rationality within Nurcholish Madjid's Islamic discourse. He asserts that the use of reason is of utmost importance in understanding religious texts. Nevertheless, this research still places greater emphasis on epistemological aspects without fully integrating social, educational, and national dimensions. The studies by Akmalia, Nurkhalis, & Wildan (2021), Zarkasyi (2013), and Siti Makhmudah (2015) share the view that Nurcholish Madjid's thought is relevant in addressing the challenges of modernity. These studies affirm that Islam is not static but dynamic and capable of adapting to scientific advancements and social changes. Zarkasyi (2013) emphasizes that the concept of *tajdid* (renewal) is a crucial element in maintaining the relevance of Islamic teachings, while Siti Makhmudah (2015) highlights the importance of an Islamic society that is responsive to modern social dynamics. Akmalia et al. (2021) also

assert that Nurcholish Madjid's thought provides a crucial foundation for addressing the increasingly complex challenges of globalization and modernity.

This article, however, differs fundamentally in that it does not merely discuss a single specific aspect of Nurcholish Madjid's thought but integrates all his main ideas into a cohesive, unified analysis. The concepts of rationalization, *ijtihad*, modernization, and the relationship between Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity are not treated in isolation but are explained as an interconnected system of thought. Furthermore, this article does not merely remain at the theoretical level but directly connects these concepts to the realities of modern life, such as the development of Islamic education, the challenges of globalization, and the conditions of Indonesia's multicultural society. This makes the discussion more contextual and applicable in addressing current issues. The novelty of this article lies in the integrative and comprehensive approach used in analyzing Nurcholish Madjid's thought. While previous research tended to separate theological, rational, and modernist aspects, this article unites all these aspects within a cohesive intellectual framework. Furthermore, this article emphasizes in greater detail that the concepts of rationalization and *ijtihad* are not only relevant in the academic realm but also have tangible implications for shaping the character of Muslims, strengthening attitudes of tolerance, and developing a more modern, critical, and adaptive Islamic education system in response to changing times. Thus, this article offers a new contribution in the form of a perspective that is more holistic, contextual, and relevant to the needs of society in today's global era.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on Islamic renewal in the modern era emphasize the importance of renewing the mindset of the Muslim community so that they can face the developments of the times without abandoning the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. Islamic renewal, according to Nurcholish Madjid, is achieved through rationalization, *ijtihad*, openness to science and technology, and a rejection of stagnation and blind imitation. He views Islam as a universal religion that is flexible and capable of providing answers to various modern issues when understood rationally and contextually. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid also emphasized that modernization is not the same as Westernization. Modernization is understood as an effort to build a mindset that is more scientific, open, and progressive mindset in line with the development of science. His thoughts on the relationship between Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity demonstrate that Islam can harmoniously coexist with the diverse, tolerant, and democratic life of Indonesian society. Therefore, the Islamic reformist ideas proposed by Nurcholish Madjid remain highly relevant for addressing the challenges of modernity in the current era.

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