

# The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in Building a New Era Civilization: Application of Cultural Values and Its Impacts

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement in building a superior era, evaluate the implementation of NU's cultural values to society, especially the younger generation, and identify the positive and negative impacts of NU movement development in the new era. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a narrative research approach and utilizes theoretical frameworks from Norbert Elias and F. Ratzel. Data were obtained through literature study, then analyzed using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusions. The results show that the NU movement in revitalizing the civilization of the new era is directed through the preaching concepts inherited from previous scholars, with strategic steps covering religious, political, economic, and social fields. NU places belief as a sub-dominant to encourage aspects of community life based on religious teachings. The positive impact is the preservation of NU's cultural values, while the negative impact is the lack of adaptation to other religious groups. In conclusion, NU applies cultural values into its integrity by referring to the legacy of previous scholars, especially in building the concept of Islam Nusantara, as NU's effort in facing globalization.

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis gerakan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dalam membangun era yang unggul, mengevaluasi penerapan nilai budaya NU kepada masyarakat, khususnya generasi penerus, serta mengidentifikasi dampak positif dan negatif dari pengembangan gerakan NU di era baru. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan penelitian naratif dan menggunakan kerangka teori dari Norbert Elias dan F. Ratzel. Data diperoleh melalui studi pustaka, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gerakan NU dalam membangkitkan peradaban era baru diarahkan melalui konsep-

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*konsep dakwah yang diwarisi dari para ulama terdahulu, dengan langkah-langkah strategis yang mencakup bidang keagamaan, politik, ekonomi, dan sosial. NU menempatkan kepercayaan sebagai sub-dominan untuk mendorong aspek kehidupan masyarakat yang berlandaskan ajaran agama. Dampak positifnya adalah melestarikan nilai-nilai budaya NU, sementara dampak negatifnya adalah kurangnya penyesuaian terhadap kelompok aliran agama lainnya. Kesimpulannya, NU menerapkan nilai budaya ke dalam integritasnya dengan merujuk pada peninggalan ulama dahulu terutama membangun gagasan Islam Nusantara adalah upaya NU dalam menghadapi globalisasi.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The new era marks a period of extensive development in various aspects, ranging from technology to social, economic, and religious domains (Cimini, 2021). This phenomenon is driven by the evolution of human thought from ancient and primitive times to modernity (Winiarti, 2022). 'Modern' in this context refers to Western paradigms, which seek to address ethical lag by drawing on Islam to reconstruct politics and culture (Huang, 2021). Islam extends its influence worldwide through various methods to ensure its teachings remain relevant and applicable on a broad scale, especially through Islamic movements (Bunt, 2009, p. 34).

Islamic movements aim to emancipate humanity, particularly Muslims, from backwardness and stagnation (Wiktorowicz, 2002). They endeavor to reform social systems that marginalize those deemed lowly in society. Among these movements, Islam strives to purify humans in all aspects, guided by the core teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Bayat, 2005). Debates on Islamic renewal have long existed, encompassing discussions on creed and culture. Islamic renewal has emerged since the late period of Khalifah Ali bin Abi Thalib's rule in the 3rd century Hijriah and is considered a new episode in Islamic cultural history by historians (Lapidus, 2002).

In Indonesia, Islamic movements including the Islamic Union, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and others have contributed to the advancement of Islam. NU, with its traditional base in pesantrens, holds a uniqueness in integrating religion into tradition or culture (Ni'am, 2015). NU demonstrates progressiveness in thinking, unlike modern organizations that tend to be stagnant and resistant (Arifianto, 2016). Culture is not static but a continuously evolving transformation process. NU serves to awaken society to the importance of preserving true cultural values and teachings in facing the new era (Ibda, 2023).

Existing studies related to culture within NU have been conducted on several important topics, especially focusing on three aspects: refuting the label of NU as a traditionalist movement, examining culture in NU's political activities, and exploring the compatibility of local culture with NU's characteristics. Concerning the rejection of the NU label as traditionalist, research has poured into refuting it. For instance, (Setia & Iqbal, 2021) refute arguments that NU is highly traditionalist by examining NU's efforts on social media. Similarly, (Wahid, 2020) discusses NU's activities on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic while affirming that NU is not a traditionalist organization opposed to the use of technology. Meanwhile, regarding culture in NU activities, researchers have also studied it. For example, (Isnaeniyah, 2017) studied women's participation in

NU politics, (Muhammad, 2015) examined the dynamics of NU politics concluding that NU is highly adaptive to political developments, and a study by (Ulzikri et al., 2021) specifically observed the candidacy of Ma'ruf Amin in the 2019 Presidential Election as an exemplary figure for NU members to follow.

The aforementioned studies have shown that research on NU movement culture is essential. Studies conducted by Setia and Iqbal (2021) and Wahid (2020) specifically looked at aspects of progress or adaptation within NU in the new era, but their research focused on technological advancement, leaving room for other aspects, particularly cultural aspects. Therefore, this research will focus on how NU builds and develops its culture in the new era, integrating that culture into modern times, especially concerning local cultural aspects.

The objective of this research is to investigate how the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement builds and develops its culture in the new era, particularly in the context of the modern era. This research will evaluate the application of NU's cultural values to society, especially the younger generation, and identify the positive and negative impacts of NU movement development in building civilization in the new era.

To address the aforementioned research objectives, Norbert Elias and F. Ratzel provide relevant theoretical foundations for understanding the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement in the context of building a new era. Elias portrays humans as social beings interdependent within social configurations, where individuals are involved in complex networks of interdependence (Elias, 2001, p. 28). In the context of NU, this depicts how NU's cultural values and religious teachings applied are closely related to social relations among individuals and groups within society. Meanwhile, the diffusion theory by Ratzel explains how culture and values are applied and disseminated from one community to another (Ratzel, 1898). This concept is relevant in understanding how NU preserves and spreads its cultural values, as well as how these values adapt to the changing times in the new era.

In the modern era, where traditional values often clash with new values, the concept of civilization becomes crucial in evaluating societal progress and change (Zemmin, 2018). NU as an Islamic movement in Indonesia seeks to bridge the gap between Islamic ideals and contemporary needs, aligning with efforts to build a new civilization integrated with local and global cultural values. Thus, this theoretical framework provides important insights into understanding how NU builds and maintains the integrity of its culture in facing the dynamics of the new era, and how this movement contributes to building a superior civilization.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a narrative method (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 45) to explore and understand how the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement builds and develops its culture in the new era. The descriptive approach is utilized to describe the social phenomena occurring, while the narrative method assists in comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating the narratives emerging concerning NU culture (Craswell, 2009, p. 112). This approach is based on August Comte's thoughts on social dynamics and statics (Ritzer, 2014). Social statics studies the social order and moral values existing within society, while social dynamics explain the development and progress of society (Stolley, 2005, pp. 15–16). In the context of NU, this approach aids in understanding the organizational structure and significant growth experienced by this movement.

Data collection is conducted through literature review related to the history, policies, and monumental works of NU (Setia & Haq, 2023). The data is then analyzed using data reduction techniques to detail the integrity of cultural values in NU civilization, presenting data through brief descriptions, charts, tables, and graphs, and conclusions are formulated as interim stages based on evidence found in data collection. Through this approach, this research aims to uncover how NU maintains the integrity of its culture in facing the dynamics of the new era, aligning with the research

objective of understanding, evaluating, and identifying the positive and negative impacts of NU movement development.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### a. NU Movement in Revitalizing Civilization in the New Era

Since the colonial era until now, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has played a significant role in driving out the colonizers from Indonesia (Wasito, 2016). Since its inception, the NU organization has been a platform for struggle and actively engaged in propagating Islamic teachings to maintain the unity of the Republic of Indonesia under the framework of NKRI. There are three major reasons behind the birth of Nahdlatul Ulama: first, religious motives; second, the motive to uphold the Ahlu al-Sunnah wa 'l-jama'ah doctrine; and third, nationalism (Bush, 2009). The goal of the NU movement is to mobilize students, the Muslim community, and scholars to gather strength to fight against colonization in Indonesia. Even the prominent NU scholars who endeavored to transform spontaneous movements into mechanical or organic ones, through prayers and recitations given by NU scholars (such as *asmā'*, *ḥizb*, *dhikr*, *ṣalawāt*, and others), turned into a significant suggestion for sanctification and a powerful force to fight against the colonial powers, thus leading to independence by the grace of God (Farih, 2016).

To realize the NU movement in revitalizing civilization in the new era, the organization must move according to its steps, such as NU's ideological movements related to the dissemination of Islamic teachings (religious movements), digital missionary movements, economic movements, and movements in the social sphere. Below are explanations of some of the movements that form the basis for NU's civilization development in the new era:

##### 1) *Religious Movements*

NU adopts traditions to be developed for the interests of the new era, which is a step from the paradigm interpretation, as transformation, whether in thought, must move and draw inspiration from traditional elements (Izzuddin, 2022). Therefore, effort and renewal are needed to delve into cultural values within traditions to support transformation. In 1926, NU created a movement to become a cultural paradigm. According to Fealy, there are three fundamental themes underlying the establishment of NU: first, NU's integrity towards the nation; second, independence from colonialism; and third, the right to belief. These three contexts form the framework of the 1926 Khittah, which is used as a cultural paradigm, not a political one (Fealy, 2012). It is clear from the formation that within this context, the Khittah interprets NU's concern for national issues, its critical stance towards authority, and its protection of citizens' rights to freedom of belief and religion (Subandi, 2018).

Through NU's religious movements, changes have been made in schools. NU introduced a class system accompanied by an implemented curriculum. NU exemplified this approach taken from modern cultural habits, such as holding religious lectures not only in mosques but also in other places like fields. NU also published magazines and brochures (Akmaliah, 2020). This change, involving a blend of tradition and modernity, fosters an approach that remains steadfast in addressing religious matters (Fadholi, 2020). NU positions the tradition of preaching initiated by the nine saints, leaving behind traditional values as practices and uniqueness to be preserved for each generation.

According to Said Aqil Siradj (in Daisaku Ikeda, 2013), NU as a socio-religious organization has a high commitment to humanitarian and national movements, as NU presents Islam Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah formulated into three pillars of brotherhood: Islamic brotherhood, national brotherhood, and human brotherhood. Islamic brotherhood is explained as the theological basis or faith foundation in building brotherhood ties, as well as the main point of development for other brotherhoods. This theological belief is translated into sociological and anthropological realities where the creation of

faith is reflected in cultural and civilizational forms, and then Islamic brotherhood is applied to international brotherhood (*wathoniyah* brotherhood).

Moreover, through Islamic Nusantara missionary activities, NU seeks to campaign for understanding of social realities. Looking back or viewing its history, NU has sought to provide human understanding of reality through various means, including using divine understanding, i.e., the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ismail, 2011). Additionally, NU employs rational understanding such as *ijma* and *qiyas*, resulting in the birth of jurisprudence. With jurisprudence, society can practice religious teachings in detail and operationally. Through these methods, NU adopts several attitudes: moderation, balance, and tolerance, which serve as principles of the Aswaja Islamic teachings (Fealy & Bush, 2014). These attitudes refresh the understanding of religion within society. Moderation allows for goodness from various groups and appreciates truth from various societal groups, avoiding extremes. Balance encompasses religious and societal attitudes to consider various perspectives and make balanced decisions, taking a proportional and balanced position. Tolerance enables NU to implement a religious attitude within society to appreciate diversity, enabling individuals to accept differing opinions and face them tolerantly (Bilfagih, 2016). With these three categories of attitudes, society gains a refreshment in understanding religious teachings (Jamaludin, 2015).

## 2) *NU Political Movement*

In its political movement, NU portrays itself as an organization ready to uphold plural national values by accepting Pancasila as its common platform (Bruinessen et al., 1996). NU is an organization that explicitly embraces Pancasila as the ideology of Indonesia, a final decision that cannot be altered. Indonesia's civilization is intended to be shaped by NU as a national civilization based on moral religious (Islamic) foundations. Islamic teachings provide momentum for the life of the Indonesian nation, although it is established not as a religious state, but a state with religion (Saenong, 2021). NU realizes that the empirical reality of the Indonesian nation is pluralistic, with the nation being built on fair synergy from various ethnicities and different religions. NU instills awareness among the nation's children that Indonesia is built on a collective spirit despite differences in ethnic backgrounds (Al-Hamidy et al., 2008).

NU's political movement is divided into several parts that break political barriers, namely (Saenong, 2021): first, NU's political movement involves renewal in the paradigms of modernism and traditionalism. In this reform, the spirit of religiosity drives NU to practice traditions in creed and sharia practically, making it a starting point for productive and innovative *ijtihad*. Second, NU is also active in building an understanding of Human Rights (HR). This organization proactively guides its members in understanding the values of truth and evil amidst significant changes in lifestyles. NU demonstrates compassion for all of Allah's creatures extensively and dynamically, possessing the ability to manage life and fulfill worldly and afterlife needs. The movement is also evident in the efforts of NU's Bahtsul Masail Institution (LBM) to rediscover Islamic intellectualism, especially in the field of law, to formulate laws relevant to the times. Third, NU experiences a resurgence of humanitarian nationalism in the reform era. The organization emphasizes the importance of restoring the spirit of nationalism given the decline in societal morality, especially among the younger generation. NU faces challenges such as the waning spirit of patriotism, declining national identity, increasing sectarian conflicts, and the strong issue of national disintegration. Fourth, NU is involved in the development of Moderate Islam in response to the emergence of a new ideology that tends to be conservative. This organization tends to lean towards conservatism rather than progressivism, especially in the face of liberalism advocated by progressive young thinkers. In this context, NU stands out as an agent directing a more moderate Islamic ideological orientation (Muzakki, 2014).

Therefore, the strong importation of ideologies in developing new thoughts and movements in this country cannot be overlooked. These attitudes will shape the nature of each generation, transforming the new era towards a more positive direction without losing religious values.

### 3) *NU Movement in the Economic Field*

The industrial revolution rapidly transformed from an implementation effort to a production process. This industrial movement is fundamental, changing old patterns to create new ones. This era developed alongside the digital world and the advancement of science and technology. Thus, disruption initiated the birth of new business models with more innovative and disruptive strategies (Fithriyyah & Umam, 2018).

Economic development, with the impact of industrial evolution, builds an advanced civilization. This condition is crucial for society because the saying of the Prophet Muhammad SAW indicates that poverty leads to disbelief (Sadeq, 1987). This reflects that in Islamic teachings, economics is about fulfilling basic needs and significantly affects a person's faith. Muslims can empower themselves in the economic field, and this movement must be consistent and focused to target its markets accurately. Therefore, Islamic organizations must formulate strategies from the beginning to face the waves of the new world market era. The promptness of NU officials in facing the world market has initiated progressive steps in economic development for the community.

This is reflected in the NU regional officials led by K.H. Muhammad Nuh Addawami and K.H. Hasan Nuri Hidayatullah, who have made new breakthroughs in building understanding with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Indonesia (KADIN) and initiated the birth of Modern NU Kiosks, BMTs, Cooperatives, and NU Zakat Amil Institutions (Fealy & White, 2008). This economic development aims to improve the welfare of the community, especially those directly overlooked by the government. Also, to strengthen the NU community's economy aims to nurture and motivate religious life in society as *mad'u* (Sutisna, 2019).

### 4) *NU Movement in Social Communities*

NU in modern social movements has specific characteristics, namely viewing and placing social movements in collective actions rationally and with positive values. The organization improves and contextualizes its relationship with civilization movement theories into the new era. NU's social movement produces rich studies and research, and theories related to modern social movements have successfully identified factors facilitating social movement growth (Subandi, 2018).

The birth of NU is the culmination of a number of ulama figures from various pesantrens, who seek to organize themselves and fight for the preservation of Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah teachings while sacrificing their nationalism against Dutch colonialism (Ismail, 2011). NU's movement, led by K.H. Wahab Hasbullah, protested at the time regarding steps taken by the Saudi Kingdom, sidelining schools of thought, demolishing historical sites, and banning tawasul, banning visiting graves with the pretext of *anti-shirk* and *bid'ah*. In accordance with NU's vision, which serves as a platform for a prosperous social order, it ensures justice and democracy for millions of people. NU is enthusiastic about realizing this through various efforts of policy systems and ensuring the welfare of society, thereby advocating for the community and fostering noble character (Wasito, 2016).

## **b. Implementation of NU Cultural Values Towards the New Era**

Islam as an identity places belief as sub-dominant, this dominance drives all aspects of community life, especially culture, colored by religion, including the push of belief systems that also convert beliefs and culture (Hussin, 2021). Islam's view of society is not inherently apriori, if it does not contradict Islamic law then it is still recognized and accepted, if it contradicts Islamic law then it will be discarded and rejected. If there are cultural or customary practices that contradict Islamic law, then those aspects are discarded, and aspects that do not contradict are recognized.

Some requirements related to legal decisions or customs performed generally based on Islamic law are: first, *mutharid*, which refers to actions performed repeatedly on something. Second, *mun'akis*, which refers to actions done by many people. Third, *tahqiq*, which signifies actions based on benefits and not just mere imagination. And finally, fourth, *muwafiq li al-shar'*, which reflects actions that are in line with the principles and teachings of Islam found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Supiana, 2018).

Islam is a peaceful religion, the spreaders of Islamic teachings in the early days were able to carry out their da'wah proficiently. NU continues to play a role in preserving various cultures rooted in the history of Islam in the archipelago. One of the cultures they spread is the tradition of da'wah inherited from the Wali Songo, which places da'wah as a distinctive practice that must be preserved (Ismail, 2011). Additionally, NU also influences society through the application of transnational ideology in practicing religion, thus bringing significant impacts on the patterns of life of Muslims. However, the legal decision-making tradition within the NU environment still often follows traditional patterns, indicating a tendency to uphold old values. Moreover, NU is also active in promoting modernist thinking and religious paradigms, attempting to integrate Islamic values with the developments of the times. In this way, NU continues to play a role as a guardian and promoter of the sustainability of Islamic culture in Indonesia (Bilfagih, 2016).

Furthermore, NU integrates cultural values into its integrity, developing by referring to the legacy of past scholars as some of NU's thinking constitutes the richness of the organization's identity. NU brings forth a movement in the form of strategies in facing globalization in society, formulated in the form of seven strategies of Nusantara Islamic culture (*saptawikrama*). This concept was born during the PBNU national congress. Here are the seven steps of NU cultural strategy (Bilfagih, 2016):

Firstly, NU gathers and consolidates movements based on customs, traditions, and Nusantara culture. Secondly, NU develops a Sufi education model closely related to the curriculum of educational centers and Rabithah Ma'ahid Islamiyah, thus creating an educational environment rich in spiritual values. Thirdly, NU actively builds independent discourse to interpret local wisdom and Islamic culture epistemologically and ontologically, providing a strong foundation for inclusive and contextual Islamic understanding. Fourthly, NU also reinforces the spirit of togetherness as a nation's children, inviting to reweave the Nusantara civilization by strengthening unity in diversity. Fifthly, NU successfully revitalizes cultural arts rooted in values of harmony, tolerance, peace, and knowledge, making art a means to spread messages of goodness. In facing the digital era, sixthly, NU does not lag behind in utilizing information and communication technology to develop the Nusantara Islamic movement, expanding the reach of da'wah and educational messages. Seventhly, NU continues to prioritize the principle of self-reliant struggle as the nation's identity, affirming that independence is the key to facing global challenges with strength and resilience. With these various steps, NU continues to play a pioneering role in developing a progressive and inclusive Islam in Indonesia.

Therefore, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has become the driving force behind various important movements in the history of Islam in Indonesia. They have successfully revived indigenous Islamic movements, following in the footsteps of the nine previous saints who left valuable legacies. Then, NU played a crucial role in leading the struggle for denominational freedom in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. In 1937, NU participated in the establishment of the Majelis Islami A'la Indonesia and fought for Indonesia's demand to have a parliament. In 1945, NU mobilized physical resistance against imperialist forces through the Resolution of Jihad. Not only that, NU is also active in politics by forming political parties and successfully gaining national support. In 1965, they initiated the organization of the Asian-African Islamic Conference. Moreover, NU also led cultural Islamic movements and strengthened civil society in Indonesia throughout the 1990s. With its various roles encompassing political, social, and cultural domains, NU has left significant marks in Indonesian history that deserve appreciation (Wasito, 2016).

In the development of the new era, NU responds to the high tide of globalization by making every principle of benefit as a benchmark (Bilfagih, 2016). Specifically, in realizing the vision of facing the new era, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) not only becomes a messenger of religion but also pioneers a "grand narrative" whose principles reject and build theories to control biological factors, becoming a unifier in the differences of life realities in modern times (Saenong, 2021). In implementing NU's cultural values towards the new era, Islam becomes the main identity that places belief as sub-dominant, which drives all aspects of community life, especially in the field of culture, to be colored by religious teachings. NU applies Islam's view of society that develops non-apriori, by selecting cultural aspects that do not contradict Islamic law.

In the context of making legal decisions or customs, NU refers to several requirements based on Islamic law, such as *mutharid*, *mun'akis*, *tahqi*, and *muwafiq li al-shar'*. NU also plays a role in preserving Nusantara Islamic culture by disseminating the da'wah tradition inherited from the Wali Songo, and influencing society through the application of transnational ideology in religious practices (Saude, 2018). However, there is a tendency to uphold traditionalism in the decision-making process within NU, although the NU movement remains active in promoting modernist thinking and religious paradigms.

In the context of Norbert Elias' theory, the cultural values and religious teachings applied by NU are closely related to social relationships among individuals and groups in society. NU becomes part of a complex social figuration in Indonesia, where the cultural values of Islam become a unifying factor in complex interdependence networks. Meanwhile, F. Ratzel's diffusion theory explains how NU maintains and disseminates its cultural values from one community to another, and how these values adapt to the developments of the times in the new era, strengthening NU's position in leading the Islamic movement in Indonesia.

### c. Impact of NU Civilization Development in the New Era

In facing the new era, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization fundamentally redesigns paradigms that reject and create theories to control biological factors that cause differences in the realities of life in modern times. By striving to develop and awaken the new era from the foundation already laid, NU can adapt to the demands of the new era, allocate tasks appropriately, and manage power transitions to achieve movement goals.

The positive impact of NU's steps in developing cultural values in the new era is significant. Firstly, NU earnestly endeavors to preserve the cultural values that characterize its organization, thereby ensuring that the identity of Islam Nusantara remains preserved and relevant in the constantly changing context of time. Secondly, NU serves as an inclusive platform for all religious communities, enabling them to participate in building a new civilization that is inclusive and progressive. Thirdly, NU has successfully gained broad dominance in disseminating civilization-building concepts, influencing the direction of social and cultural trajectories in society. Fourthly, NU can embrace religious movements effectively to achieve positive outcomes and enhance community welfare by continuously adapting to the changing times.

However, amidst these significant positive impacts, it cannot be ignored that there are also negative effects of NU's efforts in developing civilization in the new era. This includes challenges in maintaining organizational unity and integrity in the face of the constantly changing dynamics of time. Additionally, there are risks associated with adapting to diverse cultural values and the needs of society, which can lead to internal and external tensions within the organization. Nevertheless, NU strives to manage these impacts wisely while maintaining its commitment to the cultural values that form the foundation of the organization, and continuously adapting to the changing times to remain relevant and effective in realizing NU's movement goals in the new era.

In pursuing the vision of facing the new era, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement cannot escape the negative impacts it faces. Firstly, in efforts to form groups, polarization often occurs,



leading to separation and even self-exclusion from members who feel incompatible with NU's movement direction. Secondly, despite focusing on efforts to obtain equal recognition and treatment based on human rights, religion, economics, and culture, the movement often causes controversy and tension with external parties holding different views or interests. Thirdly, in order to maintain and preserve NU's cultural values, progress is often made without adjusting to other religious groups, which can lead to polarization and division within society. This gives NU a distinctive cultural characteristic from other streams, but can also lead to tension and conflict with other parties. Fourthly, loyalty believed in ethnicity is often stronger than loyalty to the principles held. This can lead to restrictions on cross-ethnic inclusion and cooperation within the NU movement.

Nevertheless, NU still has methods and approaches to develop its thinking, which have become integral parts of its identity and movement. This approach has become ingrained in NU's successors, forming the basic foundation for every thought, action, and policy taken, while still adhering to the ideology and basic principles of the organization to achieve movement goals in the new era.

In the context of Norbert Elias' theory, it can be seen that the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement plays a significant role in social figurations in Indonesia, where the cultural values and religious teachings applied by NU are closely related to social relationships among individuals and groups in society. NU acts as a unifier in complex interdependence networks, where the cultural values of Islam Nusantara become unifying factors in the realities of life in the modern era (Elias, 2001). This approach reflects the concept of "figuration" proposed by Elias, where individuals and groups depend on each other to form complex social structures.

Meanwhile, F. Ratzel's diffusion theory explains how cultures and values can be applied and spread from one community to another. In the context of NU, this can be seen in the organization's efforts to preserve its distinctive cultural values and disseminate them to the wider community (Ratzel, 1898). NU acts as an agent of cultural diffusion of Islam Nusantara, adapting these values to the developments of the times in facing the new era.

Thus, through the theories of Norbert Elias and F. Ratzel, we can understand that the NU movement not only influences social and cultural changes at the local level but also contributes to broader social figurations in Indonesia. NU not only preserves the sustainability of Islamic culture in the archipelago but also acts as an agent that disseminates and adapts these values in facing the changing challenges of the times.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) movement has successfully revitalized civilization in the new era by unifying the inherited concepts of propagation from past scholars. To achieve this, NU has strategically moved across various fields, including religious, political, economic, and social domains. The application of NU's cultural values to the new era prioritizes belief as subordinate, driving societal aspects grounded in religious teachings. NU ensures its integrity by referring to the legacy of past scholars, making NU's thinking a rich identity and foundation for the NU movement in facing globalization challenges. The positive impacts of NU's movement development in the new era include preserving distinctive cultural values, gaining dominance in disseminating civilization-building concepts, and providing a platform for religious communities to participate in development. However, there are also negative impacts, such as insufficient adaptation to other religious groups, which are distinctive features and challenges for NU.

Furthermore, this research innovates in its focus on how Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) builds and develops its culture in the new era, particularly in the context of integrating local culture amidst the dynamics of modern times. Although previous studies have explored cultural aspects within NU, this study adds a new dimension by examining how NU addresses the challenges of globalization and modernization while maintaining its unique cultural values.

Thus, NU remains committed to developing its thinking and maintaining its integrity as an organization, drawing on the ideology and foundational principles that have underpinned the NU movement thus far. However, further research can delve into the strategies used by NU in facing globalization challenges, including a deeper analysis of how NU adapts cultural values and religious teachings to contemporary developments.

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