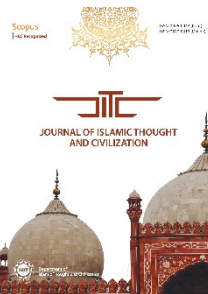
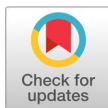


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Title: An-Nadzir Community of Gowa: Historical Traces and Resilience in Preserving Local Islamic Culture Amidst Modernity

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An-Nadzir Community of Gowa: Historical Traces and Resilience in Preserving Local Islamic Culture Amidst Modernity

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Abstract

Living in a rapidly changing global society often poses uncertainty to communities. One of the common examples is the erosion of many socio-cultural values. However, this condition does not occur in the local Islamic community, An-Nadzir. Given this fact, the current study discussed the historical traces and defensive education strategies of this local Islamic community in Gowa Regency South Sulawesi. The study collected data from in-depth interviews with key figures in the An-Nadzir community, such as spiritual figures, school principals, community members, and the surrounding community. The results showed that the An-Nadzir community is a historical trace marking the relationship between universal and local Islamic values that form an identity with unique religious characteristics. They can build harmonious coexistence amidst differences. Despite living in the middle of the city with all the social changes, modernity, and digital disruption, the An-Nadzir community can survive and adapt by adhering to local wisdom and not abandoning their local Islamic identity. This resilience cannot be separated from the value education system that they instill both through formal (schools) and non-formal changes (mosques and households). Then, this system is passed down from generation to generation. This research made a significant contribution to the study of Islam in Indonesia. Moreover, it offered an alternative narrative about the diversity of Islamic expressions integrated with local culture, showing the dynamics between Islamic traditions and unique local contexts.

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Keywords: An-Nadzir, historical traces, local Islam, modernity, resilience

Introduction

In the current era, human beings are living in digital disruption. In this modern time, machines are increasingly replacing human functions and traditional cultural and religious values, leading towards the risk of marginalization. Despite this homogenizing force of modernity and globalization, some communities resist and actively preserve their identity.¹ One such group is the An-Nadzir community in Gowa, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.² This religious community offers a compelling example of local Islamic resilience. Their distinct appearance, including black attire, turbans, long blond hair, and their communal way of life, has often drawn public curiosity, misjudgment, and even stigma.³ Yet, behind this uniqueness, there is a deep spiritual orientation rooted in Islamic teachings, ancestral heritage, and the creative synthesis of local cultural wisdom.⁴

Located in Gowa Regency, a historically significant region in South Sulawesi known for its Islamic sultanates, An-Nadzir emerged in the late 20th century as a spiritual movement and communal discipline. This community presents a fascinating subject of study, not only due to its visual and ritual distinction but also because it challenges rigid dichotomies between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, tradition and modernity, and Islam and localism.⁵

The religious identity of An-Nadzir is neither passive nor doctrinally rigid. Instead, it is adaptive and shaped by their ability to harmonize Islamic principles with the local cultural matrix. This approach echoes the broader discourse of Islam Nusantara, or the localized Islam of the Indonesian archipelago, which foregrounds negotiation between textual fidelity and cultural contextualization. Drawing on frameworks, such as Clifford Geertz's "abangan-santri-priyayi" typology,⁶ Talal Asad's theory of discursive tradition,⁷ and the notion of "vernacularization of Islam" as discussed by

¹Muhammad Farid, "Public Space and the Religion of the Future," *Journal of Social Sciences, Politics, and Government* 2, no. 2 (2021): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.37304/jispar.v2i2.365>; Fitri Rizkiyah, "The Survival of Betawi Condet Ethnic Identity Amidst Change," Undergraduate Thesis, (Jakarta State University, 2018), 1–107, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/223126469.pdf>.

²Eka Prasatiawati, and Habib S. Asnawi, "The Indigenization of Islam in the Archipelago and Its Relevance to Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia," *Religious: Journal of Religious Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 220–258, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v3i1.283>.

³Sapriallah et al., "Religious Contestation Among Urban Moslem Society," *Al-Qalam* 26, no. 1 (2020): 39–56, <https://dx.doi.org/10.31969/alq.v26i1.844>.

⁴Roibin, *Resolving Conflict and Violence in the Name of Religion* (UIN Maliki Press, 2020), <https://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/5314/1/5314.pdf>

⁵Indri Indri, Muhammad S. Tajuddin, and Fajar Fajar, "Jamaah An-Nadzir Islamic Social Movement in Maintaining Political Economic Activities," *Vox Populi* 3, no. 2 (2021): 91–104, <https://doi.org/10.24252/vp.v3i2.18372>.

⁶Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (The University of Chicago Press, 1960), https://monoskop.org/images/d/d9/Geertz_Clifford_Religion_of_Java_1976.pdf; Yusnia I. Rofiqoh et al., "Islam and Syncretism in Java: Reflections on the Thought of Geertz and Woodward," *Muharrrik Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 4, no. 1 (2021): 47–61, <http://dx.doi.org/10.37680/muharrrik.v4i01.634>.

⁷Talal Asad, "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 114–32; Ramadhanita M. Sari et al., "An Examination of Talal Asad's Anthropological Thought on the Islamic Community of Sasak Lombok," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 14, no. 1 (2024): 117–44, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v14i1.117-144>.

scholars, for instance Greg Fealy and Sally White,⁸ and Martin van Bruinessen,⁹ this study situates An-Nadzir within the wider academic conversations on Islamic pluralism, resilience, and identity formation in the age of modernity.

In the post-New Order era, the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia provided new opportunities for marginalized communities to articulate their beliefs and traditions without fear of state repression.¹⁰ For An-Nadzir, this meant greater visibility and confidence in practicing their beliefs publicly.¹¹ However, the challenges posed by digital technology, mainstream education, and the homogenizing pressures of national religious discourse remain significant.

To navigate these challenges, An-Nadzir has developed an educational model that integrates religious instruction with local cultural knowledge. This model is not merely pedagogical; it also functions as a mechanism of social reproduction, transmitting communal values, building identity, and fostering resilience in the face of external pressures.¹² Through this education system, the community maintains its internal coherence while adapting selectively to the broader society.

The current study aimed to explore the historical origins and spiritual genealogy of An-Nadzir, its collective cultural expressions, and the educational strategies that underpin its resilience. Furthermore, it examined how this community negotiates its identity amid modern social transformations and how the surrounding society and government respond to its presence. To achieve these goals, the study employed a cross-disciplinary approach combining history, anthropology, and religious studies to fill the gap in existing literature, which has often treated An-Nadzir from a narrowly doctrinal perspective.

Previous studies, such as those by Mustaqim et al.,¹³ Andi Alpian Syamsu Alam,¹⁴ and Saprillah,¹⁵ offered valuable descriptive accounts of An-Nadzir's rituals and community structure. However, they often overlooked the deeper historical and educational dynamics at play. More recent

⁸Greg Fealy and Sally White, (eds)., *Expressing Islam: Religious Live and Politics in Indonesia* (ISEAS Publishing, 2008), 1–23.

⁹Van Martin Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam," *Southeast Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 158–175, <https://doi.org/10.20495/tak.37.2.158>.

¹⁰Ahmad Suaedy, "The Progressive Muslim Movement after the Suharto Regime in Indonesia," *TOLERANSI: Scientific Media for Religious Communication* 10, no. 2 (2019): 117–136, <https://doi.org/10.24014/trs.v10i2.7081>.

¹¹Syaifudin Zuhri, "The Islamic Public Sphere : Manifestations of Islam in the Contemporary Indonesia," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 11, no. 2 (2016): 453–72, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.volxi.iss2.art6>.

¹²Eka Prasatiawati, and Habib S Asnawi, "The Indigenization of Islam in the Archipelago and Its Relevance to Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia," *Religious: Journal of Religious Studies and Cross-Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 220–58. <http://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v3i1.283>.

¹³Mustaqim Pabbajah et al., "Contested Socioreligious Reality: An-Nadzir, a Non-Mainstream Islamic Movement in Indonesia," *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 9, no. 2 (2019): 71–78, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v09i02/71-78>.

¹⁴Syamsul Alam, and Andi Alfian, "Jamaah An-Nadzir: Understanding the Dynamics of Minority Religious Communities in South Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 1 (2023): 29–49.

¹⁵Saprillah et al., "Religious Contestation Among Urban Mosleem Society," *Al-Qalam* 26, no. 1 (2020): 39–56. <https://dx.doi.org/10.31969/alq.v26i1.844>.

research has begun to expand this discourse. For instance, M. Ilham et al.¹⁶ examined how theological narratives and cultural practices contribute to the resilience of Muslim minority communities. Baso Hasyim et al.¹⁷ explored the layered marginality and adaptive strategies employed by local Islamic groups facing socio-cultural pressures. Meanwhile, Gustia Tahir et al.¹⁸ illustrated the integration of Islamic values with ecological wisdom through local traditions. Although these studies provide important comparative insights into how local Islamic identities negotiate survival and resilience, specific studies that focus on An-Nadzir's internal educational system, spiritual genealogy, and adaptive cultural strategies are still scarce. This study aimed to fill that gap by emphasizing how local Islam sustains itself through dynamic cultural mechanisms. In doing so, it contributed to a richer understanding of living Islam as a flexible, contextually grounded, and globally conscious force.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Local Islam in the Midst of Modernity

The concept of local Islam is an important framework to understand the diversity of Islam in Indonesia.¹⁹ The term actually refers to how society practices religion as a form of expression of understanding that is formed through a process of dialogue between Islamic teachings and the cultural, social, and historical realities of the local community.²⁰ Therefore, in this context, local Islam is not considered a deviant or weak form of Islam, rather a form of faith that is contextual, dynamic, and deeply rooted in the life experiences of its people.²¹

This dynamic interaction between Islam and local culture is evident in the history of Islamization in the Indonesian archipelago. Historically, the spread of Islam took place gradually and with full adaptation to local culture.²² Islam did not come to replace the existing culture; instead, it

¹⁶M. Ilham et al., "Theological and Cultural Construction: Resilience Strategies of the To Sallang Minority in A Multicultural Society," *FITRAH: Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2023): 247–64, <https://doi.org/10.24952/FITRAH.V9I2.8693>.

¹⁷Baso Hasyim et al., "Islam Garassik: Duple Minority Struggles and Survival Strategies in A Multicultural Society," *Al-Qalam* 30, no. 1 (2024): 50–62, <https://www.jurnalalqalam.or.id/index.php/Alqalam/article/view/1401>.

¹⁸Gustia Tahir, M Ilham, and Andi Asrifan, "Eco-Sufism in Ammatoa Community: Harmonizing Islamic Values and Local Traditions for Environmental Conservation in Kajang Bulukumba," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 15, no. 1 (2025): 124-145, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.151.08>.

¹⁹Syarif Maulidin and Muhamad L. Nawawi, "Local Wisdom in Islamic Tradition: Contribution of Islamic Culture in Indonesia Islamic Education Perspective," *Islamic Education Journal* 2, no. 2 (2024): 41–50, <https://doi.org/10.59966/isedu.v2i2.1473>.

²⁰Syamsurijal Adhan et al., "Aji Ugi: Islam's Struggle with Local Traditions and Lifestyle in Bugis Society," *Al-Qalam* 26, no. 1 (2020): 19, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v26i1.846>; Khomsinuddin et al., "Modernity and Locality: Building Sustainable Islamic Education," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 4 (2024): 418–28, <https://jer.or.id/index.php/jer/article/view/1523>.

²¹Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Dialectics of Islam and Local Culture: The Survival Strategy of the Bawakaraeng Community in South Sulawesi," *Dialektika: Journal of Islamic Thought and Social Sciences* 13, no. 01 (2020): 38–52, <https://doi.org/10.33477/dj.v13i1.1392>.

²²Hanum J. P. Astuti, "Islam Nusantara: A Religious Argument in a Cultural Framework," *INJECT (Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication)* 2, no. 1 (2017): 27–52, <https://doi.org/10.18326/inject.v2i1.27-52>; Ibrizatul Ulya, "Islamization of Nusantara Society: Early Historicity of Islam (7th - 15th Century AD) and the Role of Wali Songo in Nusantara," *Historiography* 2, no. 3 (2022): 442-452, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17977/um081v2i32022p442-452>.

grew with it and merged into it.²³ Thus, Muslim scholars often echo the importance of the process of indigenization and internalization of Islamic values into local symbolism and social structures.²⁴

In this context, the presence of the An-Nadzir community in Gowa South Sulawesi is one of the real manifestations of local Islamic practices. Their religious characteristics, such as the use of black clothing, turbans, long blond hair, strict enforcement of communal life, and their understanding of prayer times as well as other rituals, are the result of historical interpretations of Islamic teachings based on the traditions and cultural memories of the Bugis-Makassar.²⁵ What they practice is not just Islam with a local character but a form of Islam that is embodied in culture, lives in its social space, and is integrated with the identity of the community.

The example of An-Nadzir also highlights a broader function of local Islam, serving as a form of resistance to the current purification and homogenization of modernist Islam that often ignores the richness of local contexts. In fact, Islam is not only a uniform and universal normative system but also a discursive tradition that is always manifested through unique and contextual social and historical practices. The religious practices and narratives presented by Muslims often promote attitudes that comprehensively express the values of virtue and awareness of God. A global understanding of Islam rather than a local understanding has become the standard to promote a peaceful Islam that can be easily practiced in everyday life.²⁶ Thus, the existence of the An-Nadzir community is not a deviation from "true Islam" rather it is one of the legitimate forms of religiosity formed by a long history and local cultural wisdom.

2.2 Modernity and Resilience of the An-Nadzir Community

Modernity refers to profound structural changes in social life due to technological progress, industrialization, globalization, and rationalization.²⁷ These changes create a new paradigm that emphasizes individualism, efficiency, and secularization. Consequently, society's relationship to religion and traditional values has shifted. For instance, in the current modern era, many individuals are more likely to choose a more independent lifestyle and are not tied to existing religious norms or traditions.²⁸ This can be seen from the increasing number of people who choose not to follow a

²³Yusnia I'anatur Rofiqoh et al., "Islam and Syncretism in Java: Reflections on the Thought of Geertz and Woodward," *Muharrrik: Journal of Da'wah and Social Affairs* 4, no. 01 (2021): 47–61, <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrrik.v4i01.634>.

²⁴Abdul Halim, "Multicultural Islamic Education in the Perspective of Azyumardi Azra," *FIKROTUNA: Journal of Islamic Education and Management* 10, no. 01 (2021): 139–57, <https://doi.org/10.32806/jf.v13i01.5081>.

²⁵Radhie Munadi, "The Length of the Prophet Muhammad's Hair (Ma'ani Al-Hadis Study and Its Implementation in the Jamaah an-Nadzir Gowa - South Sulawesi)," *Tahdis: Journal of Hadith Studies* 10, no. 2 (2020): 212–38, <https://doi.org/10.24252/tahdis.v10i2.11615>.

²⁶Lukis Alam et al., "The Changing Piety and Spirituality: A New Trend of Islamic Urbanism in Yogyakarta and Surakarta," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 13, no. 2 (2023): 227–52, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v13i2.227-252>.

²⁷Alfayubi Aria Buana, "The Impact of Modernization on the Social and Cultural Systems of Farming Communities," *RESWARA: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Teknik* 1, no. 2 (2023): 69–74, <https://doi.org/10.62238/reswara:jurnalrisetilmuteknik.v1i2.54>.

²⁸Muhammad Sakdullah, "Sufism in the Era of Modernity (A Comprehensive Study of Neo-Sufism)," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 3, no. 2 (2020), 364–386. <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijd.v3i2.2504>.

particular religion or combine various elements of spirituality in their lives without being tied to one group.²⁹

In many contexts, modernity has transformed religious practices into increasingly formalistic and privatized ones, weakening local spiritual authority and creating a disconnect between young people and tradition.³⁰ Previously sacred social spaces are now undergoing a process of desacralization, while religious values are often reduced to consumer symbols in the cultural and media industries.³¹ However, the An-Nadzir community shows a different pattern. Although it does not completely reject the development of the times, they can maintain a system of values, social structures, and distinctive religious practices rooted in local Islamic spirituality and Bugis-Makassar traditions. This kind of condition is often referred to as a form of cultural resilience, namely the collective ability of a community to maintain its identity through historical narratives, religious symbols, and leadership structures based on spiritual charisma.³² Good leadership, simplicity, and a strong communal life structure are the main capital for this community in building a fortress and maintaining local wisdom from the modern individualistic and materialistic lifestyle. This makes An-Nadzir an example of a counter-modernity community, namely a group that consciously builds an alternative to the hegemony of modernity while affirming the values of spirituality, social solidarity, and continuity of tradition.

The resilience of the An-Nadzir community was also formed through a pattern or system of internal education, including cultural, social, and spiritual, that takes place continuously in the community. Masten calls resilience ordinary magic, namely adaptive capacity formed from a stable support system, collective learning, and value reinforcement.³³ In this case, education in the An-Nadzir community does not only take place in formal spaces but also through internalization of values, exemplary figures, and daily life practices that form moral and spiritual resilience to external pressures.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method, aiming to deeply understand the internal dynamics of the An-Nadzir community, including historical, cultural, and religious aspects. It examined how internal education was developed to shape their identity. The

²⁹Eni Zulaiha, "Spirituality of Repentance and the Misery of Modern Man," *Syifa Al-Qulub* 2, no. 2 (2018): 33–40, <https://doi.org/10.15575/saq.v2i2.2976>.

³⁰Jamal Ghofir, and Hibrul Umam, "Transformation of Religious Education Values in the Millennial Generation," *Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education Research and Thought* 14, no. 1 (2020): 92–111, <https://doi.org/10.51675/jt.v14i1.74>.

³¹Theguh Saumantri, "Hyperreligiosity in the Digital Age: Jean Baudrillard's Postmodernist Paradigm Analysis of Religious Phenomena in Social Media," *Al-Mutharahah: Journal of Religious Social Research and Studies* 20, no. 1 (2023): 107–23, <https://doi.org/10.46781/al-mutharahah.v20i1.646>.

³²Imamul Hak, and Ibrahim, "Riolo Tradition as Community Resilience: Social Practices of Indigenous Peoples During the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Highlands, Gowa," *Vox Populi* 5, no. 2 (2023): 266–85, <https://doi.org/10.24252/vp.v5i2.34886>; Yanwar Pribadi, "Identity Contested: Cultural Resilience in the Midst of Islamization of Politics," *Al-Jami'ah* 56, no. 2 (2018): 255–80, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2018.562.255-280>.

³³Ann S. Masten, "Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development," *American Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (2001): 227–238, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.227>; Bay Dhowi and Esther W. Andagsari, "The Influence of Values on Resilience," *Business Economic, Communication, and Social Sciences (BECOSS) Journal* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.21512/becossjournal.v1i1.5971>.

research was conducted in the An-Nadzir community located in Romang Polong Mawang Village, Bontomarannu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. Regarding the time, the research took place from January to March. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with key figures, such as the An-Nadzir spiritual leaders, An-Nadzir school principals or teachers, community members, local government, and academics. These participants helped explore the community's historical narratives, religious practices, survival strategies amidst the waves of modernity, and values of education system. Additionally, direct observation was also conducted to observe their daily lives, religious practices, cultural rituals, and social interactions. This observation method helps capture meanings that are not always conveyed in interviews. Data from interviews and observations was then strengthened by a number of written documents, such as community archives, local historical records, previous scientific publications, and media news.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Historical Narratives and Spiritual Genealogy of An-Nadzir Community

The An-Nadzir community in Gowa emerges as a unique synthesis of historical migration, spiritual genealogy, and local Islamic traditions.³⁴ Although formally established in Dumai, Riau, in 1985 by K.H. Syamsuri Abd. Madjid, the community finds its spiritual and socio-cultural roots deeply embedded in South Sulawesi, particularly in areas, such as Palopo, Bone, and Gowa.³⁵ In fact, Sulawesi is located on a different island and far from Sumatra island. However, the distance does not prevent the spiritual migration of this community.

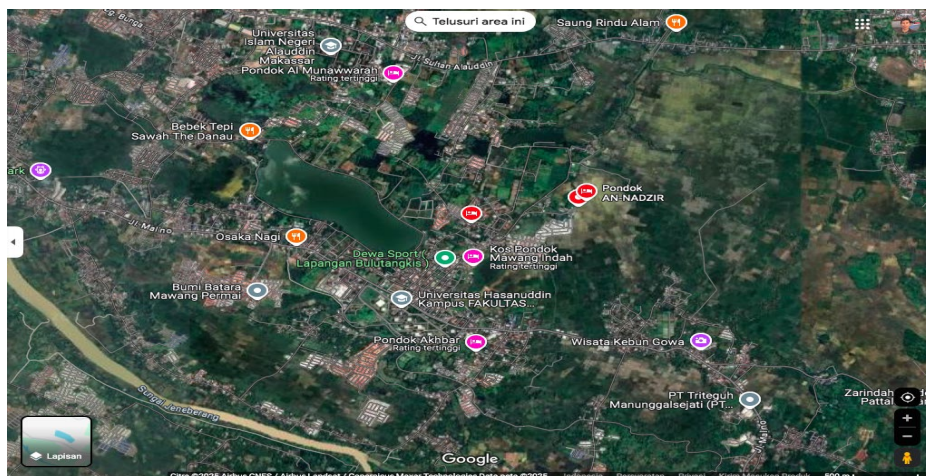


Figure 1. Map of the An-Nadzir Area³⁶

³⁴Suandi, and Achmad Musyahid, "The Characteristics of the Al-Nadzir's Fiqih in Following a School of Thought (Case Study of the Al-Nadzir Congregation in Romang Lompoa Village, Bontomarannu District, Gowa Regency)," *Shautuna: Student Scientific Journal Comparison of Schools of Thought and Law* 1, no. 3 (2020): 261–76, <https://doi.org/10.24252/shautuna.v1i3.14907>.

³⁵Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview," 2025.

³⁶Google Source, "Map of An-Nadzir Area," 2025.

This spiritual migration does not merely occur geographically but also ideologically. At that time, the migration was a response to socio-political shifts in post-New Order Indonesia, a period when alternative expressions of religiosity gained new momentum due to the weakening of state-sponsored religious uniformity.³⁷

An-Nadzir's religious identity was kept alive through oral teachings, esoteric rituals, and respect for charismatic leaders.³⁸ These practices not only preserve religious teachings but also shape a sustainable identity narrative that provides meaning and cohesion in the face of socio-religious marginalization.³⁹

During the early period of the move to Sulawesi, An-Nadzir attempted to settle in Palopo and parts of Bone. However, they received a social rejection, pushing them to move to Romang Lompoa, Gowa, in 2006. Gowa was chosen because the region has historical ties to both orthodox and mystical Islam, allowing the re-rooting of spiritual practices within a more tolerant context. This relocation underscores the community's flexibility and resilience in socio-political displacement.

Within the community, K.H. Syamsuri was not only regarded as a religious founder but also as a spiritual *wali* (friend of God) endowed with inner vision.⁴⁰ This charismatic and spiritual leadership was key to understanding the esoteric Islam they practice. He did not focus on legalistic norms⁴¹ but on the search for inner meaning through rituals, such as zikr, meditation, and guided reflection.⁴²



Figure 2. The Mosque of An-Nadzir Community⁴³

³⁷ Robert W. Hefner, *Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia Civil Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

³⁸ Imran, "Religious Practices of the An-Nadzir Gowa Congregation," *Journal of Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2017): 311-320. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ret.v5i1.1516>.

³⁹ Talal Asad, *Genealogy of Religion*, (The John Hopkins University, 1993), 44.

⁴⁰ Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview," 2025.

⁴¹ M. A. Adib, "Efforts to Dialogize Normative and Historical Approaches in Islamic Studies: Amin Abdullah's Concept of Integration-Interconnection," *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 2 (2022): 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tarbawi.v7i2.11665>.

⁴² Ukasyah, "In-dept Interview," 2025.

⁴³ Muhammad Yunus, "Seeing the Origins of the Jemaah An Nadzir Village in Gowa Regency," *Suarasulsel.com*, April 10, 2021, <https://sulsel.suara.com/read/2021/04/10/191438/melihat-asal-usul-perkampungan-jemaah-an-nadzir-di-kabupaten-gowa>.



Figure 3. An-Nadzir Community⁴⁴

As mentioned earlier, the emergence of An-Nadzir community was a form of alternative expression of religiosity, often considered as symbolic resistance to mainstream religious homogenization. This resistance was symbolized in various markers, such as their communal dress code, unique hair coloring, distinct religious calendar, and ritual practices.⁴⁵ These symbols reflect a conscious effort to assert cultural autonomy against globalized consumerism and institutional religious control.⁴⁶

Crucially, An-Nadzir's teachings also reflect a localized educational model, where knowledge transmission is anchored in spiritual closeness, oral authority, and lived values.⁴⁷ This form of "spiritual pedagogy" reinforces communal solidarity and counters the depersonalized logic of modern schooling.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Syahrul Alim, "Eid 2025, An-Nadzir Congregation in Gowa Performs Eid Prayer Tomorrow," *Detik.Com*, March 29, 2025, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7847300/lebaran-2025-jemaah-an-nadzir-di-gowa-salat-id-besok>.

⁴⁵ Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview," 2025; Salmiah, "In-depth Interview" 2025.

⁴⁶ Agung Suharyanto, and Wiflihani Wiflihani, "Preserving Local Culture in the Era of Globalization: Balancing Modernity and Cultural Identity," *Path of Science* 10, no. 3 (2024): 5001–5, <https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.102-116>; Stefano Tartaglia and Monica Rossi, "The Local Identity Function in the Age of Globalization; A Study on a Local Culture," *Community Psychology in Global Perspective* 1, no. 1 (2015): 105–21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22178/pos.102-16>; Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2004), 23; M. A. Adib, "Efforts to Dialogize Normative and Historical Approaches in Islamic Studies: Amin Abdullah's Concept of Integration-Interconnection," *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 2 (2022): 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tarbawi.v7i2.11665>.

⁴⁷ Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview," 2025; Ukasyah, "in-depth Interview," 2025.

⁴⁸ Juliadi, Hafied Cangara, and Tuti Bahfiarti, "Semiotics of Non-Verbal Communication Symbols of Jamaah An-Nazir in Spreading Islamic Ideology in Gowa," *Journal of Communication KAREBA* 7, no. 1 (2018): 150–57. <https://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/kareba/article/view/6482>.

In this sense, An-Nadzir not only preserves a version of local Islam but also reclaims it as a tool for cultural continuity and resistance.⁴⁹ Their vision of Islam emphasizes simplicity, social solidarity, and collective responsibility, which are values often obscured by the rationalized and commodified forms of modern religion.⁵⁰

Therefore, the An-Nadzir community should not be seen merely as a sectarian entity but as a cultural-religious movement that synthesizes South Sulawesi's Sufi heritage, post-authoritarian religious fluidity, and symbolic resistance to modernity.⁵¹ Their presence in Gowa embodies what scholars of local Islam terms "spiritual counter publics," which are alternative religious spaces that challenge dominant narratives while remaining rooted in historical legitimacy.

4.2. Collective Culture and Pedagogical Patterns

The An-Nadzir community of Gowa exemplifies a distinctive model of collective religiosity and socio-pedagogical resilience. Far beyond being a mere spiritual enclave, An-Nadzir presents an integrated system of communal life where economy, education, and religious activities are governed under a cohesive social ethos.⁵² This collective culture is both the bedrock of their internal solidarity and a strategic bulwark against the disintegrative pull of modernity.⁵³

According to Samiruddin, An-Nadzir's communal system is not solely rooted in kinship bonds but in a mutualistic social contract that promotes cooperation and shared responsibility. The physical proximity of members, who live in closely-knit clusters, enhances interdependence and immediacy in mutual aid. As he noted, "we don't just live near each other, we care for and protect each other."⁵⁴

Every social or religious decision, from education to economy, is made through collective deliberation (*musyawarah*), reinforcing communal ownership and participatory governance. This collective culture distinguishes An-Nadzir from many other Islamic communities in Indonesia that may be more individualistic or fragmented in their institutional operations. For instance, while many *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) focus on individual mastery of Islamic knowledge, An-Nadzir integrates communal spiritual formation, where values, such as simplicity, service, and mutual care are explicitly institutionalized across all domains of life. Salmiah,⁵⁵ a prominent female figure in the community, affirmed that "a jointly managed economy is more sustainable", reflecting the community's commitment to collective economic resilience. Their informal cooperative system ensures that when one member struggles, others support them. This system emphasizes a spiritualized version of *gotong royong* rooted in both Islamic ethics and local wisdom.

⁴⁹Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview," 2025; Ukasyah, "In-depth Interview," 2025; Rohani, "In-depth Interview," 2025.

⁵⁰Agung Suharyanto, and Wiflihani, "Preserving Local Culture in the Era of Globalization: Balancing Modernity and Cultural Identity," *Path of Science: International Electronic Scientific Journal* 10, no. 3 (2024): 5001-5005 <http://dx.doi.org/10.22178/pos.102-16>; Tartaglia and Rossi, "The Local Identity Function in the Age of Globalization: A Study on a Local Culture," *Community Psychology in Global Perspective CPGP* 1, no. 1 (2015): 105-121.

⁵¹Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Religious Consistency and Commitment to Local Tradition Within the Bawakareng Community in Indonesia's South Sulawesi," *Al-Albab* 9, no. 2 (2020): 179-98, <https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v9i2.1789>.

⁵²Abd. Rasyid Masri, *An-Nadzir Islamic Community Network* (Ruas Media, 2020), 45-72.

⁵³Mustaqim Pabbajah et al., "Contested Socioreligious Reality: An-Nadzir, a Non-Mainstream Islamic Movement in Indonesia," *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 9, No. 2 (2019): 71-78, <https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v09i02/71-78>.

⁵⁴Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview" 2025.

⁵⁵Salmiah, "In-depth Interview" 2025.

In the educational domain, the An-Nadzir community has established an alternative pedagogical paradigm, integrating conventional knowledge with spiritual Islamic values. In their teachings, education is not merely addressed for academic achievement but a process of *tazkiyah* (soul purification). As Samiruddin articulates, “education is not only to shape the brain, but also the heart and soul”. The mosque, school, and family function as interconnected pedagogical spheres, transmitting religious, ethical, and cultural values. Mosques act as both spiritual and educational hubs where children absorb values from spiritual leaders. Meanwhile, schools follow a curriculum tailored to preserve both national education standards and local spiritual identity, emphasizing character-building based on community-approved virtues.⁵⁶ Families uphold the moral character and ensure that generational continuity is maintained through daily practices and parental modeling. This triadic model of education, which is a synthesis of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, functions as a fortress of identity in the face of global cultural currents. It is a form of what scholars call “counter-hegemonic education,”⁵⁷ aimed at sustaining local epistemologies while still equipping the next generation with the tools to navigate modern life.

An-Nadzir’s resilience to global modernity is thus not a form of isolationist retreat but a strategic adaptation rooted in collective ethics. In a globalized world that often promotes individualism, commodification, and cultural homogenization, An-Nadzir reasserts spiritual collectivism and ethical simplicity. Ukasyah noted that although the world around them is changing rapidly, they “still believe in the values passed down by KH. Syamsuri,” which provide an anchor amidst socio-cultural flux.⁵⁸

In short, their commitment to tradition is not driven by nostalgia but by a conscious, future-oriented choice. The community’s self-managed systems in education, economy, and worship do not signify a rejection of change, rather a thoughtfully curated continuity. Thus, An-Nadzir’s collective life is not simply a religious choice but a cultural and civilizational strategy. Their model offers an alternative path for Islamic communities navigating the pressures of modernity not by disengagement but by fostering rootedness, solidarity, and internal pedagogical strength. In this way, the An-Nadzir community contributes meaningfully to broader conversations on Islamic resilience, communal pedagogies, and local agency in the global age.

4.3. Adaptation Strategy to Modernity

As mentioned earlier, the An-Nadzir community offers a compelling case of selective adaptation to modernity, where openness to change is balanced carefully with the preservation of core spiritual and social values. While firmly rooted in the inherited principles of their founders, the community exhibits a pragmatic yet principled approach to engaging with the challenges and opportunities posed by the modern world.

One notable aspect of their adaptive strategy is the flexible social boundary. Members are free to interact with the broader society, including utilizing Information Technology (IT) and participating in economic activities beyond the village confines. However, when they return to the An-Nadzir communal space, all members must adhere strictly to the community’s norms and spiritual codes. Samiruddin explained that despite external perceptions of exclusivity, An-Nadzir is essentially open to the outside world. Community members have the right to engage with global social media

⁵⁶Samiruddin, “In-depth Interview,” 2025.

⁵⁷H. Giroux, “Resistance in the New Sociology,” *Harvard Educational Review* 53, no. 3 (1983): 257–94, <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.53.3.a67x4u33g7682734>; Paulo Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” in *The Community Performance Reader*, ed. P. Kupperts and Gwen Robertson (Routledge, 2020), page number, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003060635-5>.

⁵⁸Ukasyah, “In-depth Interview” 2025.

platforms and other technological tools, provided these do not breach the community's spiritual and ethical standards.⁵⁹

In addition to communal flexibility, the community demonstrates adaptability through its constructive engagement with local government institutions. Rather than adopting a passive or resistant posture, An-Nadzir actively cultivates dialogue and cooperation with authorities. Their participation in governmental social programs, such as child education and public health initiatives, exemplifies this collaborative approach.⁶⁰ Rohani, a kindergarten teacher in An-Nadzir, emphasized that while they cooperate with the local government, they vigilantly preserve their community's simple character and local wisdom, ensuring external influences do not erode their identity.⁶¹

A significant challenge in the modern context is the rise of consumerism and individualism, which threatens the cohesion and traditional values of many societies. Then, An-Nadzir resists these trends through a conscious embrace of simplicity, communal sharing, and mutual assistance. Salmiah, a respected community member, highlighted that they prefer simple living, valuing inner peace and spiritual connection over material accumulation. This rejection of consumerist culture aligned with their emphasis on collective well-being and spiritual focus rather than the pursuit of transient worldly pleasures.⁶²

Salmiah further articulated that simple living is a deliberate spiritual discipline: "The less we have, the closer we feel to God's will."⁶³ This worldview anchors the community's resilience in the face of modernity by prioritizing spiritual depth over material wealth. Their lifestyle is an active statement of identity, rejecting individualistic pursuits in favor of cooperation and social solidarity.

Therefore, the An-Nadzir community exemplifies a controlled and selective form of adaptation to modernity. They appropriate elements, such as IT and government partnerships, however, regulate these within the framework of spiritual and communal norms. Their strategy embodies a dialectical balance between embracing beneficial aspects of the modern world and safeguarding traditional values. This adaptive approach not only preserves their community integrity but also offers a valuable model for other traditional societies navigating the complexities of globalization and cultural change.

4.4. Response of the Surrounding Community

The An-Nadzir community often faces challenges regarding perceptions from the wider society, particularly due to their distinctive characteristics in dressing and worship practices that differ from mainstream Islam. Their distinguishing clothing, featuring the colors black, white, and green, along with certain rituals, often give the impression that they are an isolated group or do not fully conform to the social norms of the majority. Resistance to external stigmatization and dominant narratives associating them with heretical sects or extremist groups reflects the complex socio-political dynamics between minority religious communities and majority authority structures.⁶⁴ The exclusive

⁵⁹Samiruddin, "In-depth Interview" 2025.

⁶⁰Eka Prasetiawati and Habib S Asnawi, "The Indigenization of Islam in the Archipelago and Its Relevance to Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia"; Hartono Hartono, "Economic System of the An-Nadzir Congregation, Bontomarannu District, Gowa Regency," *Social Landscape Journal* 1, no. 1 (2020): 40–48.

⁶¹Rohani, "In-depth Interview" 2025.

⁶²Salmiah, "In-depth Interview" 2025

⁶³Salmiah, "In-depth Interview" 2025

⁶⁴Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Dialectics of Islam and Local Culture: The Survival Strategy of the Bawakaraeng Community in South Sulawesi," *Dialektika: Journal of Islamic Thought and Social Sciences* 13, no. 01 (2020): 38–52, <https://doi.org/10.33477/dj.v13i1.1392>; Mustaqim Pabbajah et al., "Contested Socioreligious Reality: An-Nadzir, a Non-Mainstream Islamic Movement in

identity expressed through their attire, rituals, and daily life is not merely a form of religious expression but also a symbol of resistance against religious and cultural homogenization.⁶⁵ In this context, the An-Nadzir community acts as an active social agent in redefining the boundaries of orthodoxy and heterodoxy within Indonesian Islam.

Chairul Mundzir, Head of the Department of Islamic History and Civilization at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar, stated that although the community appears exclusive, they remain open to the outside world. They consistently uphold local customs and Islamic teachings. Although somewhat different from mainstream Islamic teachings, these differences are not fundamentally significant.⁶⁶ Despite frequent misunderstandings, the An-Nadzir community is respected and well-accepted within their environment. Muh. Dahlan, a senior professor in Islamic Civilization History, also emphasized that the community should be accepted and respected as part of the broader society. Differences exist but they remain within the corridor of Islam. The surrounding society views them as a peace-loving, highly solidaristic group that contributes positively to social life.⁶⁷

This community is known for its principles of mutual assistance and strong cooperation in various aspects, including religious, educational, and economic activities. They do not focus solely on religious affairs, however, actively contribute to improving the social welfare of the surrounding community. Hasbuddin, the head of Romang Lompoe District where An-Nadzir resides, highlighted that the community has demonstrated wisdom in maintaining relations with the local government. According to him, the An-Nadzir community cooperates cordially with local authorities pertaining to the matters of civil administration, social order, and public assistance. Economically, they manage natural resources, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and other community-based enterprises. The community always strives to maintain balance in its relations with external parties, including government and state institutions, and deliberately avoids involvement in political or sectarian debates that often divide society.⁶⁸

In summary, the An-Nadzir community serves not only as a custodian of religious teachings but also as a guardian of traditions and local wisdom, all of which are unified through their deep-rooted religiosity. Their internal solidarity is formed through collective spiritual practices and shared historical narratives. Religiosity is understood as a communal lifestyle, not merely a vertical relationship with God but also the foundation for horizontal relationships among members. An-Nadzir perceives religion not only as a bridge connecting oneself with God but also as the fundamental basis for interpersonal relationships grounded in values of simplicity, mutual cooperation, and care. This model fosters close social cohesion and becomes the foundation of resilience in facing external pressures.

5. Conclusion

The An-Nadzir community in Indonesia shows how local Islamic teachings can survive in the midst of modernity and globalization. Through esoteric spirituality, combined with local religious practices, and communal social structures, they resist the homogenization of global culture. Strong education, internal solidarity, and spiritual leadership strengthen the resilience of this community, to preserve traditional values, and prepare the younger generation to face the challenges of the future. This community has succeeded in maintaining the sustainability of local culture and an independent

Indonesia,” *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 9, no. 2 (2019): 71–78, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v09i02/71-78>.

⁶⁵Prasetyawati, “The Indigenization of Islam in the Archipelago and Its Relevance to Local Wisdom Values in Indonesia,” 40–48.

⁶⁶Chairul Mundzir, “In-depth Interview,” 2025

⁶⁷Muh. Dahlan, “In-depth Interview,” 2025.

⁶⁸Hasbuddin, “In-depth Interview,” 2025.

economy. Moreover, they have built positive relationships with the government and surrounding community despite sometimes facing challenges from the wider community who do not understand and comprehend their existence. The current research made an important contribution to the study of Islam in Indonesia. Furthermore, it offered an alternative narrative about the diversity of Islamic expressions integrated with local culture, demonstrating the dynamics between Islamic tradition and the unique local context. This study also confirmed that spiritual genealogy rooted in esoteric teachings provides a new perspective on the formation of local Islamic identity, and how these values can survive amidst the pressures of social change.

Author Contribution

Susmihara: conceptualization, methodology, writing – original draft, supervision. **Syarifuddin:** data curation, investigation, writing – review & editing. **Abdul Rahim Karim:** formal analysis, validation, visualization. **Muhammad Arif:** writing – review & editing. **Amiruddin:** writing – review & editing.

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The author has absolutely no financial or non-financial conflict of interest regarding the subject matter or material discussed in this manuscript.

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