

Islam In Indonesia: From Puritanism To Enlightening Religion in the Case of Muhammadiyah

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Muhammadiyah as a religious movement founded in Indonesia in 1912 has been in existence for 106 years. This Islamic organization has gone through various government eras and its contribution to the country is significant. This paper presents Islam in Indonesia in which Muhammadiyah with the modern views plays important role to bring forward Islam as the enlightening religion in the country. The adaptive characteristics in Muhammadiyah were used to portray the transformation process of Islam in Indonesia. The considered adaptive parameters were renewal of thought, political movement, democratization of attitudes and elite thinking, transformative movement and ideological strengthening. Looking into the individual parameter, the transformation journey to the enlightening religion can be seen qualitatively by describing the historical facts supported by documented information. As a modern Islamic organization Muhammadiyah brings the advancement of Islam in a progressive response to the nation development building of Indonesia and to the world at large.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, Islam in Indonesia, religion, religious organization

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INTRODUCTION

Every political change in Indonesia, Muslims have always been an important determinant component (Alfian 1990). Through youth organizations established since 1908, Muslims have contributed to independence, post colonialism, the New Order era to the current government. In the constellation of the people movement, the contribution of Muslims is shown by the strengthening of the role of mass organizations that cannot be replaced by new political parties and mass organizations that emerged after the reform movement (Choudhry 1993, Asyari 2007, Beck 2014).

This mass organization has a large mass and is characterized by strong elite relations with its members. This relation determines the effectiveness of the state, even in the extreme context, the success and failure of the state is determined by the participation of this organization. Therefore, at every stage of history, the state needs political legitimacy from Islamic groups by co-opting and hegemonizing the power of Islamic groups. (Shukri *et al.* 2008)

In response to the state's maneuvers, the compromise and non-compromise strategies were implemented by these groups. The group that took steps to compromise implemented an accommodative political path, while those who applied non-compromise chose a fundamentalist radical political path (Jung 2009, Jung 2014).

However, the relationship among Islamic groups in Indonesia actually shows the same tendency. Even though democracy has an effect on the political attitudes and freedoms of Muslims, this change has not had a clear effect. The conditions are the same as the New Order era where Islamic groups are still in a weak position. There is no change in the contestation of the State responding to Islamic groups. The colorful of Islamic groups are not the same. Compromise groups and non-compromise radical groups still color the Islamic movement.

Cases of puritanism still characterize Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as the emergence of Shia, Ahmadiyah and HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia). Both Shia and Ahmadiyah are responded by a group of community as an exclusive movement that is not the same as the mainstream religious pattern of the majority of Indonesians, so that their behavior triggers conflict and violence. The case in Sampang, Madura shows the phenomenon of violence that occurred to Shia members which resulted in expulsion of them.

Meanwhile, the 212 movement showed Muslim militancy in response to the statement of "blasphemy" by former Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (better known by his nickname Ahok) who represented non-Muslims. This action succeeded in thwarting the election of Ahok as the Governor of DKI in his second period.

Whereas the strengthening of HTI which promotes the ideals of the *Khilafah Islamiyyah* which is the aspiration of a small portion of Muslims and is not in line with the constitutional foundation of the state. Therefore, the state restricts HTI movement which ends with the dissolution of this organization.

Apart from the issues of Muslims at the internal level, Muslims in Indonesia cannot actually be separated from the Muslim world who is engaged in global

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governance which demands interaction between countries. The rapid changes of the world require mutual relations, therefore no country dominates. For this purpose, plural values, multiculturalism and democracy are important prerequisites. The adaptive ability is an important requirement for both the state and civil society. This is where Muslims actually become an important part that must develop these accommodative values. In other words, we need an adaptive Islamic movement which is an alternative to new developments.

What type of the Islamic movement that can answer the changes of the world to come?

Extreme and fundamentalist patterns are a threat to the world because they do not develop the character of compromise and also tend to develop ideas and thoughts that are identical with violence. Both do not open dialogues that understand each other between different groups and provoke conflict and anarchism (Nashir 2007). In other words, a radical Islam is not an accommodative Islam.

Radical Islam is not an Islamic representation in Indonesia because Indonesia is a multicultural country characterized by diversity in ethnicity, customs, language and affiliation of religious interests (Aslam 2009). Included in the attitude of religious organizations, not all Islamic movements are fundamentalist oriented because there are groups that do not provide extreme points, both left and right. In the opinion of the writer, various types of the Islamic movement are alternative Islam that can answer the challenges and changes of the world to come.

One type of moderate adaptive Islamic movement is Muhammadiyah (Ali 2015, Arifianto 2012, Ishomuddin 2014, Fauzia 2017, Koda 2017). This Islamic organization was born and developed in the midst of the history of the struggle and development of the Indonesian Nation. Organizational ability through business charity activities is the style of this organization based on Islamic characteristics that are adaptive in answering the changing times.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper presented the progress in Muhammadiyah organization in a chronological adaptive process approach supported by documentation relevant to each considered parameter.

The adaptive characteristics were seen in five unique parameters, namely: *renewal of thought, political movement, democratization of attitudes and elite thinking, transformative movement and ideological strengthening.*

The comprehensive information of each adaptive parameter was discussed and analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The adaptive characteristics of the Muhammadiyah organization to accommodate current and future social transformation following the advancement of social community development can be grouped as follows:

Renewal of Thought. The main character of Muhammadiyah is dynamism, a characteristic that distinguishes it from other Islamic movements after the New Order which tend to be trapped in a fundamentalist and rigid model of religion.

Since its founding in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah broke away from the hegemony of Javanese tradition by developing Malay-Indonesian *santri* culture. The advantage of this tradition is that it eliminates Javanese feudalism and puts the values of equality (Peacock 2006: 61). Muhammadiyah also always opens itself to modern science through the development of Islamic education and non-religious education (Carool 2017: 197).

In addition to this knowledge base, Muhammadiyah ideas and thoughts developed through discussions and debates in the context of Islam and Indonesia at their conference (also known as “Muktamar”) held every five years. The dynamics of the conference illustrated the development of thought which eventually became a reference for the branches of Muhammadiyah.

At the national conference of Tarjih Council in Jakarta in 2000, Muhammadiyah integrated three perspectives, namely: *bayani*, *burhani* and *irfani*. These approaches made a dynamic movement, then at the 46th Congress in Yogyakarta in 2010 as explained in the *Statement of the Muhammadiyah Mind in the 2nd Century*. (Nashir 2016b: 303)

The enlightenment movement (*tanwir*) is an Islamic praxis that advances to liberate, empower and advance life (Nashir 2015a). In fact, the enlightenment in question is to provide answers to humanitarian issues, such as: poverty, ignorance, backwardness, spiritual drought, moral crisis, violence, terrorism, conflict, corruption, ecological damage and crimes against humanity (Nashir 2015b: 61)

The next issue is the paradigm of “the advancement of Islam (*Islam Berkemajuan*)” in the midst of the challenges in the struggle for Islamic power after the New Order, the spirit of “*Islam Berkemajuan*” is the embodiment of the Muhammadiyah Movement. Haedar Nashir stated that the Muhammadiyah teaches Islam which has become a motor of religious renewal that is open to the advancement of science, while remaining firm in the foundation of an authentic Islam (Nashir 2016a: 60).

The advantage of this paradigm is that it affirms the creative and competitive ethos and becomes an alternative to radical and moderate thinking movements. Finally, it is adaptive when interacting with the world civilization and results in the ability to answer the challenges of the times.

Political Movement. Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement that implements *da'wah* and *tajdid* missions. Since its inception, Muhammadiyah did not declare a political organization, but as a socio-religious and cultural movement that distinguished it from the previously born Islamic organization, Syarikat Islam (SI). Muhammadiyah ruled out political problems and paid more attention to religious issues and Islamic welfare (Nashir 2006: 97, Nakamura 2012, Carool 2017: 195, Koda 2017). For this reason, Muhammadiyah has never intended to establish an Islamic state, but what is sought is the realization of the true Islamic community (Nashir 2005, Nasri *et al.* 2018).

To achieve this, supporting factors are needed, such as: (1) The awakening of public awareness of Islamic life that guarantees safety and happiness in the world and the hereafter, and (2) The establishment of Islamic teachings in the life of society, nation and state which is conducive to the growing development of Islamic

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society in Indonesia, that is reflected in the mid-society (*ummatan wasathan*) which advances in the form of socio-cultural values systems, social systems and physical environment. The steps taken include placing the faith, cleansing the mind and disseminating the knowledge of Islam and practicing it with great joy and enthusiasm, as stated in the Muhammadiyah Khittah at 1956-1959 in Palembang.

As a result of the pressure of the New Order regime in 1985, the term “true Islamic society” was replaced by “the main community”. From institutional side, the main community is the system, social and cultural order that is conducive to an orderly, safe, fair and prosperous life, while from the individual side, the main community consists of the main individuals who are aware of the role of God’s servants (*abd Allah*) and representatives of God on earth (*khalifatullah*) (Nashir 2016b: 330).

Even so, that does not mean that Muhammadiyah is absent or anti-political. Some political contributions from Muhammadiyah figures can be explained as follows. KH Ahmad Dahlan was involved in both the political organizations Budi Oetomo and Syarikat Islam. Muhammadiyah contributes to national awakening, which then has political implications for the development of Indonesian society (Kahin 2013: 121).

Fakhrudin who was a student of Kyai Dahlan, in 1918 had joined the strike movement of plantation workers and Dutch-owned factories with labor leader Surjopranoto, so Fakhrudin was later arrested and imprisoned. During the Japanese Occupation Period, under the leadership of Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, Muhammadiyah held protests and disobedience at the discretion of the government of the Japanese that adopted Sai Kirei (bowing and worshipping the Sun) for the Indonesian population (Nashir 2006: 91).

In the Old Order (1945-1959), Muhammadiyah was the initiator and special member of the establishment of the *Masyumi* Party (Indonesian Muslim Syuro Assembly). This experience was quite long until finally Masyumi was disbanded by Soekarno (Syaifullah 1997).

Then, in the New Order (1967), Muhammadiyah was the initiator of the Indonesian Muslim Party (*Parmusi*) after failing to rehabilitate *Masyumi*. In the 1969 Tanwir Meeting in Ponorogo, East Java, it was emphasized that the ideals of the Muhammadiyah could only be realized through Islamic *da’wah* with two channels simultaneously, namely: the political channels and community channels. Political channels use political organizations or political parties, while the community uses non-political organizations or community organizations (Syaifullah 1997: 234). In the end, *Parmusi* failed in the 1971 General Election which finally gave valuable lessons to Muhammadiyah to stay away from organizational politics.

By carrying the mandate of the Palembang Muktamar in 1956, Muhammadiyah positioned itself as an Islamic movement again which carried out *da’wah* in the social field without becoming a political party or struggling in the practical politics. This attitude was reinforced by khittah in 1971 where Muhammadiyah truly withdrew from the political world.

Again, Muhammadiyah is not anti-political, but is always accommodating to political developments which does not position on the extreme side, both in terms

of state ideology and people ideology or stand with political groups representing the people or civilian movements. The New Order era caused the Muhammadiyah to strengthen even more as the “Amar Makruf Nahi munkar” movement (Nakamura 2012). During the leadership of both Amien Rais and Ahmad Syafii Maarif, compared to Amar Makruf, Nahi Munkar was fiercely fought for.

As in the post-New Order era, Muhammadiyah responded to democratic political conditions. Amien Rais’s involvement as both Muhammadiyah’s general chairman and opposition figure led Muhammadiyah to direct practical politics. This was reinforced by the decision of the Denpasar Tanwir in 2002, Makasar Tanwir in 2003, and the Plenary Session in Yogyakarta, fully supporting Amien Rais’s steps as a presidential candidate in the 2004 elections.

This political attitude became Muhammadiyah’s *ijtihad* in order to strengthen the interests of Muhammadiyah. Haedar Nashir stated that Amien Rais was the best cadre of Muhammadiyah who was able to schedule a continuation of national reform and rescue, clean from KKN, and the mention of Amien Rais was not a function of political parties and practical politics (Jurdi 2010: 446).

After Amien Rais’s failure in the 2004 Presidential Election, Muhammadiyah then concentrated on revitalizing and improving the quality of social business and *da’wah* activities. It can be stated that the sustainability of Muhammadiyah owes to the fact that it can prioritize the spread of religion, welfare and education, and keep away from formal political activities (Peacock 2006: 75).

Democratization of attitudes and elite thinking. Muhammadiyah’s thinking is the *amar makruf nahi munkar* and *tajdid* movement. The *amar makruf nahi munkar* movement is the embodiment of the implementation of Surah Ali Imran: 104 and Surah Al Maun, while *tajdid* itself according to Tarjih and Islamic Development (2000-2005) has two dimensions, namely: purification and renewal or development (dynamism) or having the dimensions of *da’wah* and *tajdid*. Aside from being a purification, it is also a renewal (Nashir 2006).

With this character, Muhammadiyah is dynamic because both purification and renewal are things that are not stagnant, thus Muhammadiyah can be said as a modern Islamic movement.

The democratization of Muhammadiyah’s elite thinking as one of the characteristics of the modernization of this movement is marked by differences in elite thinking. Two main figures who characterize the thoughts of the Muhammadiyah elite are Amien Rais (AR) and Ahmad Syafii Maarif. Both are involved in the issues of the people and the nation, but in different ways.

For example, Amien Rais explained about social monotheism which became the foundation of Muhammadiyah’s ideology (Nashir 2007: 34). Then, after the fall of the Soeharto regime, Amien Rais took a position as a politician, after previously being an academic or locomotive for reform. Even today, Amien Rais’s position as a politician is critical of President Joko Widodo’s policies.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Syafii Maarif explained about Muhammadiyah inclusive thinking which encourages Muhammadiyah members to play a socio-political role in building moral and political ethics. The aim of this movement is to contribute to the political development of a civilized nation, which is moral and siding with the

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interests of the people (Maarif 2019). For this reason, Muhammadiyah members entered in all lines of influential groups in Indonesia, such as the ruling political party. In fact, Syafii Maarif's involvement was more in support of political groups led by Joko Widodo.

Syafii Maarif's way of thinking is: (1) The state must be secular, but the society must obey religion, and (2) Political Islam must follow the principle of "salt", not like "lipstick", and based on the principle of humanity or *rahmatat lil alamin* (Burhani 2016: 145).

From the thoughts and actions of these two figures, they are actually not linear or uniform, even for certain issues; they are in the opposite political position. Even though it does not represent the attitude of the organization, they both represent opposing ideas within the organization. Amien Rais always kept his distance from the state, but Ahmad Syafii Maarif even approached it.

Uniquely, in this difference of thought the general chairman of Muhammadiyah is faced with a position that balances between the two. Even though violent clashes occur, democracy is still practiced among elites with respect for differences and no fluctuation from the downstream.

Muhammadiyah members are not affected by any party. In fact, the two figures are references that educate Muhammadiyah members. Why is that? There are at least three similarities, namely: First, the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* as sources of reference and understanding to use the freedom of reason. Second, realizing a society or state order is the goal of both figures. And third, believe that the guidelines in both the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* are ultimate (Syafillah 1997: 226).

Transformative Movement. Renewal of thought in the socio-religious field shows Muhammadiyah as a transformative movement (Aryanti 2015). The purpose of *da'wah* is transformational which brings changes that are progressive, goodness, righteousness, justice and other core values for the benefit and safety of human life by not discriminating against race, ethnicity, class and religion.

The intended transformation is strategic changes and breakthroughs related to health, social services and community empowerment. The interest of transformation is to change society to a better direction (Nashir 2007: 30).

Amid the growing issue of democratization and the strengthening of civil society, the transformative character in Muhammadiyah is actually not new because it is the best practices that have been carried out by the founder of this organization, KH. Ahmad Dahlan (Nashir 2016a: 73). Kyai Dahlan did not carry out revolutionary strategies, but the steps he took were calm and systematic to pioneer certain social changes (Peacock 2016: 43). Muhammadiyah's transformative work was practiced long before this issue was echoed by NGO activists lately.

Ideological Strengthening. Muhammadiyah is not an administrative organization, but it is a religious movement wherein it contains a belief system, knowledge, organization, and practices activities that lead to goals that are aspired for (Nashir 2007, Nashir 2010).

Like most social movements, Muhammadiyah makes ideology a way to strengthen the organization, even though on every occasion Muhammadiyah never mentions the name of ideology but the content of the above principles is essentially

ideological. The ideology adopted by Muhammadiyah is *da'wah* and *tajdid*. Then ideological roles are as follows:

- (a) Ideology gives direction and explanation of the life system based on the religious understanding.
- (b) Ideology plays a role in binding “ashobiyah” from members of Muhammadiyah.
- (c) Ideology forms the character of Muhammadiyah members collectively as stated in the Personality and Islamic Life Guidelines of Muhammadiyah members.
- (d) Ideology develops strategies and steps for struggle as the *khittah* is the reference, so that the movement is systematic and directed at one movement system.
- (e) Ideology organizes and mobilizes members, cadres and their leaders in a movement system to carry out efforts and achieve solid goals, not individually and unchecked.

Haedar Nashir (2010) stated that an organization in any form requires ideology to dynamize cadres and members. This is very important because Muhammadiyah is a social movement. Therefore, Muhammadiyah idealizes the members of the organization by providing concepts such as the personality of Muhammadiyah, Ideas and Belief, Muhammadiyah Khittah, Muhammadiyah Islamic Life Guidelines and Muhammadiyah Ideas. The term was chosen as an adaptive step because after the fall of Sukarno, the Soeharto Government was very strict with the term ideology that was suspected of opposing the state ideology.

These ideas are a formulation of the noble ideals of the movement formulated in 1969 as the mandate of the 37th Congress of 1968 in Yogyakarta. This Congress was a monumental event because it set a new step to do “re-tajdid” or re-establish the Muhammadiyah movement from rigidity (Nashir 2007: 31).

It can be said that Islam introduced by Muhammadiyah is a progressive ideology known as Islamic reformers. As explained in *Tanwir*, enlightenment is a form of progressive Islam that liberates, empowers and improves the lives of all forms of backwardness, oppression, stagnation and injustice of all humans (Nashir et al. 2017)

The dynamics of Islamic groups are strongly influenced by changes in the world because these developments demand adjustments which are not the same as in previous eras (Malik 2017). The question is, in the midst of this world development, do Islamic groups exist?

Indeed, the dynamics of Islamic groups determine social and political changes both in the world and in Indonesia, in addition to the contribution of this group since the colonialism era to the reformation era. In terms of doctrine, both Islam and politics cannot be separated. In colonialism, the real contribution of Islamic groups was to expel the invaders both by confrontation and diplomacy. Confrontation is dealing directly with power, while diplomacy moves through negotiations. Meanwhile, Islamic groups work with social organizations by raising the issue of education to build awareness of the people.

Then in the New Order to the Reform Order, Islamic groups became competing political forces, whether limited to responding to the political situation or being

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one of the “players” who were fully involved, so in this condition they were in the position of exploiting or being exploited by the authorities.

The exploiting group is taking advantage of the democratic climate by raising the position of Muslims from other groups. In addition, the democratic climate is an ideal condition to develop the people’s economy. Whereas exploited groups are seen as Islamic groups or actors who stand behind the state’s agenda which sacrifice the interests of Muslims. This sacrifice is carried out transactionally by personal interests of certain groups. Finally, the presence of the Islamic Group is only a tool of state legitimacy. As a result, the interests of Muslims are not represented.

It is noteworthy that historically not all groups contribute positively, some groups have used violence that is clearly counterproductive to Muslims themselves. Bombing incidents, although not clearly carried out by Islamic groups, are always attributed to Islamic groups.

The dynamics of internal politics that change in each regime change then lead to the emergence of this frenzied condition. This situation is responded differently by Islamic organizations, whether to choose a literal or contextual path, including groups aimed at upholding Islamic law. Here, Islamic organizations are accommodating vis-à-vis the state. When they “lose” with the state, it is certain that the Islamic movement will be left behind or destroyed by the times.

Then, the behavior of the Islamic opposition detaches relations between Muslims and the state. However, not all Islamic organizations choose the above strategies, there are still organizations that take an accommodative stance as those of mainstream Islamic organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah that continue to take an eclectic path by making significant contributions to social services, without entering too deep in practical politics. These attitudes and principles as practiced by Ahmad Dahlan which does not take in an extreme position, even though he adheres to pure Islam but compromise with the Yogyakarta Palace which is a representation of the Javanese Society. He also registered Muhammadiyah to the Dutch East Indies government.

CONCLUSION

The aim of Muhammadiyah is to aspire to the establishment of a true Islamic society or the main community. In fact, it becomes an important contribution because it does not stop at the purification of Islam or the purification of *aqeedah* and worship from the elements of local beliefs and rituals. More than that, it is maintaining the teachings of Islam and cultivating the teachings of Islam for the good of the world amidst diversity. This is actually the character of the implementation and understanding of Islam that is flexible and cultural.

Related to this, Muhammadiyah developed as an organization that pursued a moderate path and praxis orientation by conducting social business in the fields of education and social services. It is not easy to find this choice because of the long journey amid political ups and downs, the historical fact states that Islamic organizations contribute to the nation’s journey with the dynamics of the debate between making Islam or *Pancasila* as the state’s ideology.

Muhammadiyah figures are often tempted, whether to be involved in practical politics or cultural politics. Will it remain as a mass organization or will it make this organization a political party involved in power struggles in the national leadership.

Finally, Muhammadiyah is not in a position that is completely away from politics, but submits political actions and attitudes as part of the implementation of Amar Makruf Nahi Mungkar which does not have to be interpreted equally by Muhammadiyah figures, which makes these differences a democratic dynamic at Muhammadiyah. These attitudes and decisions have been tested by the times so that both have been matured by conflict, opposition, cooperation and accommodation from the history of the nation.

As a modernity movement, the advancement of Islam (*Islam Berkemajuan*) is an alternative movement, progressive in responding to the development of the nation and the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), and Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT) for generously supporting the research and also for providing the required valuable data for the completion of this article.

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