



# Muhammadiyah ad the Early Statehood Politics of Indonesia

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#### Abstract

This article discusses Muhammadiyah and the statehood politics in Indonesia. Through the literature study method, this article reveals that Muhammadiyah is a social organization that grows and develops in tandem with the socio-cultural and political growth and development in Indonesia. In his journey, Muhammadiyah concentrated more on his social work, but he could not be separated from the correlation with power of politics. The consistency of the non-partisan missionary movement does not reduce the interest of Muhammadiyah activists involved in practical politics. Based on his khittah, Muhammadiyah is not a political organization and will not become a political party. However, with the belief that Islam is a religion that regulates all human life in the world, naturally all matters relating to the world become the fields of Muhammadiyah's work, including matters of state politics. This article underlines that religious modernity can be used as input for political development in the modern state.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, politics, statehood, Indonesia

# Muhammadiyah dan Periode Awal Politik Kenegaraan Indonesia

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan Muhammadiyah dan periode awal politik kenegaraan di Indonesia. Melalui metode studi pustaka, artikel ini mengungkap bahwa Muhammadiyah merupakan salah satu organisasi kemasyarakatan yang tumbuh dan berkembang bergandengan dengan pertumbuhan dan perkembangan sosial budaya dan politik di Indonesia. Dalam perjalanannya, Muhammadiyah lebih berkonsentrasi menekuni kerja-kerja sosialnya, tetapi ia tidak bisa dilepaskan dari korelasi dengan politik kekuasaan. Konsistensi gerakan dakwah non-partisan tidak mengurangi minat aktivis Muhammadiyah terlibat dalam politik praktis. Berdasarkan khittahnya, Muhammadiyah bukan organisasi politik dan tidak akan menjadi partai politik. Meskipun demikian, dengan keyakinan bahwa agama Islam adalah agama yang mengatur segenap kehidupan manusia di dunia, maka dengan sendirinya segala hal yang berhubungan dengan dunia menjadi bidang garapan Muhammadiyah, tak terkecuali soal-soal politik kenegaraan. Artikel ini menggarisbawahi bahwa modernitas agama dapat dijadikan bahan masukan bagi pembangunan politik di negara modern.

Kata-kata Kunci: Muhammadiyah, politik, kenegaraan, Indonesia

# **INTRODUCTION**

Among Islamic modernist movements around the world (Hasbullah, 2014), Muhammadiyah is a more cautious and more flexible movement in the face of waves of political change.

This phenomenon gives the impression to the colonial apparatus, as being less dangerous for the survival of colonialism. By carefully maintaining this character, Muhammadiyah managed to avoid government actions that could bring about the destruction of this movement, as experienced by al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Egypt for example (Maarif, 1996: 66).

Historically, this type of movement in modern times emerged since the end of the 19th century, mainly spearheaded by Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838 / 9-1897) and his student and colleague, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) from Egypt. Muhammadiyah, which was founded on November 18, 1912, by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan (1868-1923), accepted the influence of Abduh's ideas and interpretations about the need for Islamic education reform and renewal efforts throughout the world. This effort is a prerequisite for the rebuilding of public housing in the face of rapid social change in the modern age (Maarif, 1996: 66).

Muhammadiyah as an Islamic reform movement in Indonesia (Sya'bani, 2018) was born with the encouragement of conditions that existed and circled the Islamic world in Indonesia at the beginning of the 20th century, including socio-political, cultural and religious conditions (Sairin, 1995: 23). This condition is described that the turn of the century, many Indonesian Muslims began to realize that they would not be able to compete with challenging forces on the part of Dutch colonialism, Christian penetration (Ali, 2016: 89), and the struggle to advance in other parts of Asia if they continued to continue activities in the traditional way of upholding Islam. They are beginning to realize the need for changes, whether this is by digging for pearls of Islam from the past that has given their fellow believers the ability in the Middle Ages to overcome the West in science and in expanding areas of influence, or by using methods new which had been brought to Indonesia by the colonial power as well as the Christian mission (Noer, 1996: 37)

## **METHOD**

This article uses qualitative methods (Burton, 2013; Hess, 2014), while the data collection technique through two types of processes, namely: book review (Curtis, 2005), and documentation (Dobinson and Johns, 2017). Book Review is a data collection technique by taking the main ideas (Snyder, 2019). This article examines written data such as books (Ramdhani et al., 2014), journal articles, and other written sources (Palmatier et al., 2018) and documentation through a review of written data (Bowen, 2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# 1. Muhammadiyas as the Social Organization

Talking about the factors underlying the birth of the Muhammadiyah reform movement (van Doorn-Harder, 2013), Indonesian Islamic writers have various views. Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (HAMKA), as quoted by Syafi'i Maarif, stated that there were three factors that led to the birth of the Muhammadiyah movement (Maarif, 1996: 66). First, the

backwardness (Rauf, 2015: 149) and ignorance of Indonesian Muslims (Fogg, 2019: 187) in almost all aspects of life. *Second*, the extreme poverty (Nakamura, 2010: 58) suffered by Muslims is precisely in a rich country like Indonesia. *Third*, the state of Islamic education is very old-fashioned (Ricklefs, 1993: 171) as can be seen through pesantren (Rasmussen, 2010: 158).

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan on Dhū al-Ḥijjah 8, 1330, to coincide with November 18, 1912, in Yogyakarta (Rusydi, 2017). Six years later he founded the Muhammadiyah school with a modern style. One year later, with the help of several students and friends, he founded the Muhammadiyah movement. This organization has the intention of spreading the teachings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Maarif, 2018) to the population of the indigenous (pribumi) (Darajat, 2015) and to advance Islam to its members. To achieve this the organization intends to establish educational institutions, hold meetings, tablīgh (preaching), discussing Islamic problems, establishing waqf and mosques and publishing books, brochures, newspapers, and magazines (Noer, 1996: 86).

There are a number of reasons put forward by the Muhammadiyah community that were the factors for the establishment of this organization by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, including (Dewan Redaksi Ensiklopedi Islam, 1994: 275): (1) He sees that Muslims do not hold fast the Qur'an and Sunnah in charity so that superstition and shirk are rampant, the morals of society collapse. As a result, their practices are a mixture of right and wrong. As is known, the Indonesian people were Hindu before the advent of Islam. According to historical records, Hinduism was first brought into Indonesia by Indian traders so that its influence was inseparable from Muslims (Koda, 2017); (2) The religious education institutions that existed at that time were inefficient. Pesantren, which became an educational institution of the lower classes, at that time were considered no longer in accordance with community development (Arifin, 2013). At that time education in Indonesia had been divided into two, namely secular education developed by the Dutch and pesantren education which only taught the sciences related to religion (Lukens-Bull, 2013). As a result, there is a very deep divide between those who receive secular education and those who receive pesantren education (Abdullah, 2009: 405). This resulted in the breaking up of the sense of brotherhood (al-ukhuwwah al-islāmiyyah) among Muslims and the weakening of the power of Muslims. (3) Poverty befalling the people of Indonesia, especially Muslims, who are mostly peasants and informal laborers (Buehler, 2016). The rich are only concerned with themselves, and even many scholars forget to remind people that Islam requires zakat for the rich, so that the rights of the poor are ignored. (4) Catholic and Protestant missionary activities have been actively operating since the early 19th century and even mission schools receive subsidies from the Dutch East Indies government (Hefner, 2017). (5) Most Muslims live in a realm of narrow fanaticism (Muslam and Santoso, 2018), blind imitation (taglīd) (Nurtawab, 2019), and dogmatic thinking (Muttagin, 2015). Muslim life is still characterized by conservatism, formalism, and traditionalism (Dewan Redaksi

Ensiklopedi Islam, 1994: 275; Machmudi, 2008).

To provide a basis for the teachings of the movement he formed, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan often quoted (Maarif, 1996: 67) two verses of the Qur'an in the *Sūrah* Āli 'Imrān 104: And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful. and the *Sūrah* Āli 'Imrān 110: You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.

The formulation of Muhammadiyah's Purpose and Objectives, since its establishment until now, has changed several times. Besides intended to adjust the movement of struggle that will be achieved by the Muhammadiyah Association with the resulting program, this change is also caused - this is most important - by adjustments made based on the wishes of the prevailing laws and regulations in Indonesia. The adjustments of the Muhammadiyah's Purpose and Objectives in the sequence are as follows (Maarif, 1996: 277): (1) At the beginning of its establishment, the Aims and Objectives of Muhammadiyah were formulated as follows: (a) disseminating the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to Bumiputera residents in the Yogyakarta Residency, and (b) advancing the terms of Islam to its members. (2) After the Muhammadiyah expanded beyond the Yogyakarta region, and after the establishment of several branches in the territory of Indonesia, the formulation of the objectives and objectives of the Muhammadiyah was perfected to (a) advance and encourage the teaching and study of Islam in the Dutch East Indies, and (b) advancing and encouraging life as long as the will of the Islamic religion to its allies (Maarif, 1996: 277). (3) During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), in accordance with Japanese wishes, the formulation of the Objectives and Objectives of Muhammadiyah reads: In accordance with the belief to establish mutual prosperity throughout the Greater East Asia under the leadership of Dai Nippon, and indeed it was ordered by the Lord God Almighty, then this association: (a) wants to broadcast Islam and practice living in harmony with its demands; (b) wants to do public works, and (c) wish to advance good knowledge and intelligence and character to its members; all of which are intended to be instrumental in educating the public (Maarif, 1996: 277). (4) After the independence period, in the 31st Muhammadiyah Congress in Yogyakarta in 1950, the formulation of Muhammadiyah's Purpose and Objectives was changed and refined so that it was closer to the true soul and movement of Muhammadiyah and read: The purpose and objective of the Association are to uphold and uphold the religion Islam so that it can realize the true Islamic society (Maarif, 1996: 277). (5) The Purpose and Objectives of the Muhammadiyah Conference results of the 34th Muhammadiyah Conference in 1959 is a refinement of the Purpose and Objectives of the Muhammadiyah Conference results of the 31st Muhammadiyah Conference in 1950. This improvement only changes two words, namely the word "can manifest" is changed to "realized". In full, the Purpose and Objectives of the

Muhammadiyah Congress results of the 34th Muhammadiyah in 1959 were: "Uphold and uphold the religion of Islam so that a truly Islamic society can be realized (Maarif, 1996: 278). (6) After the issuance of Law No. 8 of 1985 which requires social organizations to include one hope, namely Pancasila, then there was a change in the principles of Muhammadiyah from "Islam" to "Pancasila". As a result, the formulation of Muhammadiyah's Intentions and Objectives also changed. This change was produced through the 41st Muhammadiyah Congress in Surakarta, which became: "Upholding and upholding the Islamic Religion so that a primary, just, and prosperous society is accepted by Allah the Almighty (Maarif, 1996: 278).

The existence of Muhammadiyah, like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (Sabiruddin, 2018), which although not as a political party, has a big impact on the existence of Muslims in Indonesia as the largest Islamic community organization. The basic *Khiṭṭah* movements and struggles of Islamic organizations, such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, al-Irsyad, Jami'at al-Khair, Nahdlatul Wathan (Binfas et al., 2014) and other socio-religious institutions are standing on cultural footing or under the auspices of cultural Islam ie, which always strive in aspects of propaganda, education, business charity, and efforts to broaden the intelligence and empowerment of the people (Umam, 2005).

Affirmation of Islamic organizations to pursue the area of cultural Islam is very important (Parjiman, 2018). First, the basic foundation of the Islamic mass movement movement from the start was the development of a strict cultural area. Islamic organizations are unrelated and have no organizational political affiliation with political parties and other practical political power pillars. This basic *Khittah* emphasizes that mass organizations are only involved in the development of grassroots bottom-up, not through top-down strategies that tend to be political. Second, be aware of the tendency of Islamic politicization and Islamic political sacralization (Umam, 2005). Through this understanding, it became clear that the goal to be achieved through the cultural struggle of Islamic organizations was the earthing of a culture of tolerance, egalitarianism, and democratic civilization amidst a plurality of nationalities. Islamic organizations as part of Islamic civilization have finally made it clear that Islam is compatible with, even based on democratic values. This is an important part of the revitalization project of Islamic culture which is a large future investment. The face of cultural Islam is broadly interpreted that Islam is a cultural foundation for the life of the nation and state (Umam, 2005).

The role of Muhammadiyah in the national movement is very strategic given that the education it carries is building communities in three fields, namely culture, civilization, and creed ('aqīdah). Modernization and democratization in this organization, according to Inu Kencana, is a meeting of the western mindset with the Islamic mindset, which is assembled and modified in the mindset of Indonesia with all its sub-cultures. Muhammadiyah thinkers freely migrate, even in the face of conceptual and operational problems. This conception makes people respond that Muhammadiyah is a reformist school in Islam (Syafiie, 2002: 51).

# 2. Muhammadiyah and the Politics of Statehood

If traced - both institutionally (collective organizational decisions) and individually (individual steps of Muhammadiyah elites) - Muhammadiyah's footprint was never devoid of politics. Institutionally, in the era of liberal democracy, Muhammadiyah had a significant role in giving birth to and "raising" Masjumi; in the New Order era, Muhammadiyah gave birth to the birth of Parmusi; and in the reform era, Muhammadiyah became the most instrumental organization in giving birth to and maintaining the Partai Amanat National (PAN) (Effendy and Nurjaman, 2015).

Formally, Muhammadiyah is not a political party, but often its actions are clearly political. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan as the founder of Muhammadiyah could not be classified as a politician (Proyek Pembinaan Pahlawan, 1983: 171), even though during his lifetime Ahmad Dahlan was listed as a member of various political parties. Muhammadiyah, whose establishment is a religious movement towards the formation of a truly Islamic society in Indonesia. However, that does not mean that Muhammadiyah does not pay attention to politics and has never had any contact with political activities (Kutoyo, 1998: 289).

Several Muhammadiyah leaders in the early days of independence, such as Abdulkahar Muzakir and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo did struggle to win the realization of Indonesia as an "Islamic state" or at least make Islam the basis of the state (Munhanif, 2012). However, the "concept" - or rather the "idea" of the Islamic state which they put forward is not related at all to the discourse developed by the Salaf thinkers, especially Jama al-Din al-Afghani. Therefore, the "Khilafah" framework, for example, initiated by al-Afghani, was also an abscess in the discourse of the two Muhammadiyah figures and thinkers mentioned earlier. And because of them - plus some evidence and other reasons - their ideas and Muhammadiyah generally about the state and politics are more compatible with the framework of modernity than the frame of Salafism (Azra, 2002: 103). Considering Muhammadiyah's discourse and praxis in terms of the state and politics, it is seen that there are specific "difficulties" faced by this organization. The difficulty is related to the theological and sociological gaps between Muhammadiyah as a modern phenomenon and the reality of the Salafiyah community (Azra, 2002: 103).

Officially, since its establishment until now, Muhammadiyah is not a political party or organization that actively fights in the political field. However, Muhammadiyah, throughout its history and struggle, has never been absent and has always participated in defending the interests of religion, nation, and homeland. Muhammadiyah itself tends to occupy the position of Islamic modernism. Muhammadiyah is indeed not a political organization, but its movement has political implications, often even involved in political activities. It has been done since the Dutch colonial era (Kutoyo, 1998: 304).

In the period leading up to the end of Dutch colonialism (more or less 1930-1942), the position of Indonesian Muslims, including Muhammadiyah was increasingly threatened by the political logic of the colonizers. Muhammadiyah then initiated the founding of the

Indonesian Islamic Party (Partai Islam Indonesia [PII]). This step can be implemented because, during the leadership of K.H. Mas Mansur (1936-1943), Muhammadiyah formulated an ideology in the formulation of the Muhammadiyah Steps (Kutoyo, 1998: 304).

In addition to the PII issue, at the beginning of the independence era, Muhammadiyah also played an active role in the Masyumi Party as an individual member, but the relationship soon ended. In the early days of the New Order, Muhammadiyah also actively gave birth to the birth of the Indonesian Muslim Party (Parmusi). Muhammadiyah's involvement in Parmusi, similar to Masjumi, is formal involvement through legitimacy and organizational representation, even though those who sit in Parmusi are individuals, namely by the sitting of Muhammadiyah figures, including H. Djarnawi Hadikusumo and H. Lukman Harun (Kutoyo, 1998: 304).

Muhammadiyah's relations with political parties also loosened up and no longer existed. In a conference in Ujung Pandang in 1969, it was decided that Muhammadiyah was not affiliated with any political party. However, that does not mean, as has been said before, Muhammadiyah no longer thinks and acts indifferent to political matters. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah works more in the framework of allocative politics, namely specific political fields, such as in the process of making laws, including the Marriage Bill, the Normality Bill, the National Education System Bill, and the Religious Courts Bill (Kutoyo, 1998: 305).

For Muhammadiyah itself, so far, it has often been confronted with the issue of how to position itself in the process of national political life, considering that Muhammadiyah is a community organization and has chosen not to be involved in practical politics. Because of this, attitudes often appear as if allergic to politics are accompanied by the assumption that the political world is identical with political organizations (political parties) and practical politics, and when the political world is approached, it will undermine preaching. Such a perception will be an obstacle when talking about Muhammadiyah and political participation, which makes Muhammadiyah not close to politics (Kutoyo, 1998: 305).

In the political sphere, Muhammadiyah strives by following its *Khiṭṭah* (Nashir, 2008). By preaching *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, in the true meaning and proportion, Muhammadiyah must be able to prove theoretically, conceptually, operationally and concretely real, that Islamic teachings can regulate society in the State the Republic of Indonesia, which is based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Nurhayati et al., 2020: 36). It has become a just and prosperous society and is prosperous, happy, materially, and spiritually, which is given by Allah the Almighty. In carrying out these efforts, Muhammadiyah still held fast to its personality.

Muhammadiyah's efforts in politics are part of its movement in society and are carried out based on the foundations and regulations that apply in Muhammadiyah (Alfian, 1989). In this context, the 38th Muhammadiyah Congress has emphasized that: Muhammadiyah is an Islamic Propagation Movement that works in all fields of human life and society, has

no organizational relationship with, and is not an affiliation of any Political Party (Bakti, 2000: 2001) or Organization (Azra, 2006: 41). Every member of Muhammadiyah in accordance with their human rights can not became a member or enter other organizations, as long as they do not deviate from the Statutes, Bylaws and the provisions that apply in the Muhammadiyah Association (Nurhayati et al., 2020, p. 37).

The 44<sup>th</sup> Muhammadiyah Congress has emphasized that Muhammadiyah as an Islamic Movement that does not move in the realm of practical politics (real politics), such as political parties, but can develop functions as a compelling interest group through various channels, the media to play a political role actively and strategically in accordance with the principle of Islamic preaching *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* in determining the direction of the nation and state (Nurhayati et al., 2020: 37). Muhammadiyah does not withdraw and tend to be allergic to politics, which in the end the process and system of political life is determined by other forces that may not be in line with the interests of the people and the benefit of the nation (Pasha and Darban, 2000: 157).

### CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The establishment of Muhammadiyah as a response of Muslims to the religious and political problems that surrounded them in the early twentieth century. Muhammadiyah works in all fields of life, has no organizational relationship with and is not an affiliate of any political party or organization.

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