MUHAMMADIYAH: THE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF MODERNIST MUSLIM ELITE IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper discusses the political behavior of the Muhammadiyah elite in building a political culture in Indonesia.

Methodology: This paper provides a literature study in which the data obtained from various sources of literature, the findings of previous researches, and the official decisions of the organization. The political-sociological approach was used in this study, to discuss the meeting point of Muhammadiyah in non-political parties since the post-independence to the reform era.

Result: The Muhammadiyah elite has a central role and contribution in building Indonesian political culture, both at the regional and national levels. The elite of this movement occupies a strategic position in the government and state institutions. The movement affects the political dynamics and contributes a lot in determining the direction of political policy in Indonesia.

Applications: This research can be used for the universities, teachers and education students.

Novelty/Originality: Essentially, the Muhammadiyah elite is accommodative by being proportional, neutral in instigating collaboration, and relatively adaptable to political developments, yet being critical towards power.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, Islam Modernist, Political Movement.

INTRODUCTION

The sociological study on the political behavior of the Muhammadiyah elite is an interesting scope of study similar to those that have been developed in examining other socio-religious communities in Indonesia. There are many studies had been conducted and reported in academic theses also various publications discussing the Muhammadiyah organization, political reforms and the elite behaviors (Koda, 2017).

It is already known that the existence of each religious community brings distinctive political and community implications particularly in relation to the Islamic religion embraced by the majority of people in this country. In the Islamic community, there are assorted groups that have different inclinations regarding their social and political attitudes and behaviors. The attitudes and behaviors of each religious community are based on religious moral obligations to realize a civilized life.

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic Association established by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta on Dzulhijjah 8, 1330 in the Islamic calendar or November 18, 1912. The name “Muhammadiyah” is attributed to Prophet Muhammad, which means as followers of Prophet Muhammad. During this time, Muhammadiyah is prominent as the organization of da’wah and religious social movements, which devote most of its activities in the field of education, social, health, and philanthropy. In the religious social field, Muhammadiyah occupies a significant position and role, even Jung mentioned Muhammadiyah as powerful organization in Southeast Asia.

Muhammadiyah is the largest modern religious organization in the world, particularly among Muslim majority countries. As an Islamic movement, Muhammadiyah primarily devotes its religious movements in the realm of Islamic da’wah with the main orientation on the enlightenment of Muslims regarding the authentic Islamic teachings (Fauzia, 2017). The da’wah movement of Muhammadiyah is renowned as the multi-faceted Islamist movement in a neutral sense, indicating that this modernist Islamic movement should not be judged only from one side since it requires a holistic approach. Meanwhile, Alfian suggested the role of Muhammadiyah as an Islamic renewal movement in Indonesia, including as religious reformist, agent of social changes, and political force at once, particularly in the colonial period.

METHODOLOGY AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

This paper provides a literature study in which the data obtained from various sources of literature, the findings of previous researches, and the official decisions of the organization. The political-sociological approach was used in this study, to discuss the meeting point of Muhammadiyah in non-political parties since the post-independence to the reform era. The intersection of Muhammadiyah with politics can be investigated through the study of Muhammadiyah and politics, specifically on political behavior and the theory of religious elites. The political behavior of the Muhammadiyah elite is political activities carried out by citizens who are classified as elites or leading figures in Muhammadiyah.
The theoretical framework used in this study includes:

a. The political behavior as a social act to theoretically understand the aspects of political behavior as part of social action.

b. The concept of the elite in Islam and elite within Muhammadiyah as part of the Muslim community in the Islamic community in order to understand the characteristics of each elite in Islam and Muhammadiyah.

c. The political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite which depicts the inclination of the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite and its impacts.

The study of Muhammadiyah and politics can be examined from several studies, including those carried out by Syamsuddin (Mulyono, 2017) entitled Religion and Politics in Islam: Syaifullah in Gerak Politik Muhammadiyah Dalam Masyumi [Political Muhammadiyah Movement in Masyumi]; Asyari in Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Political Responses of Muhammadiyah & Nahdiulul Ulama in the Outer Islands of Java 1998-2007; Kim in Reformist Muslims in Yogyakarta Village: The Islamic Transformation of Contemporary Socio-Religious Life; Jurdi in Muhammadiyah Dalam Dinamika Politik Indonesia 1966-2006 [Muhammadiyah in Indonesia Political Activities 1966-2006]; and Arifianto in Faith, Moral Authority, and Politics: The Making of Progressive Islam in Indonesia.

The studies emphasized on the responses of Muhammadiyah in the context of the institution towards the evolving political dynamics but uncorrelated to the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite.

In terms of its political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite, Jurdi revealed the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite especially in the Bima region, West Nusa Tenggara. It discussed the dynamics of the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite in the post-Order era in particular in responding the local political issues related to the government and party system. Furthermore, in Politik Elite Muhammadiyah, Nashir et al. (2017) investigated the political fragmentation of Muhammadiyah elite in the 2009 election. In the discussion, the modalities employed by Muhammadiyah elite to legitimize their political maneuver, as well as the methods and implications of the fragmentation was uncovered and explicated.

The elite in Islamic Politics

In general, the discussion of the elite within this theoretical framework refers to the concept mentioned by Putnam) that the elite as a group of people who has higher political power compared to others. The focus of the study is that power can be divided into two conceptions. First, power as the ability to dominate others. Second, power as the ability to influence collective decision-making, e.g. legislation. Essentially, Putnam divides elite into two groups, namely those with and without “important” political power.

From previous theories, it can be understood that the concept of the elite at least meets the criteria of: First, the elite is a selected minority group. Second, the elite have lofty political power. Third, the elite can influence and determine the direction of social change within the range of its power. Fourth, the elite is an organized and structured group. Fifth, the elite can command other groups or unorganized mass of people.

In the Indonesian context, Kartodirdjo provides an understanding of the elite as an outstanding social class that has power and plays an important role in determining the direction of social change in Indonesia. The Islamic community—as a social bond that forms the basis of an individual role and status in social relations—must be initially perceived as a community that has a sacred commitment to the relationship. Furthermore, it must be recognized as a local sociological reality that demonstrates its fragmentary feature. (Malik, 2017)

In the dynamics of the relationship between the teachings and the Muslims, the tensions among the Muslims frequently occur including the behaviors of the elite. From such tensions within the Islamic community, different Islamic leaderships or elite are born (Valeev, 2018). The analysis indicates the emergence of the three elite groups within the Islamic community, namely: the independent ulama (religious community leaders), the religious and organizational elite and the intellectual elite, which reflects the sociological phenomena and Islamic leadership in Indonesia.

The pattern of Islamic leadership as a historical or sociological phenomenon has undergone a shifting due to the new tendency of circulation or shift in position and role of the elite among the Muslim community. The presence of the elite in the leadership of the Islamic community in Indonesia demonstrates the diverse dialectics of social relations in every chapter of its history, particularly in the political arena concerning the relations of power.

The various patterns of the political behavior of the Muslim elite can also be observed, which shows the diversity of orientation and Islamic thoughts in response to the reality of life. In the New Order era, the behavior of Muslim idealists appears in response to the development and at the same time in relation to the political behavior of respective group.

The political views of the Islamic groups can be described as follows. First, the idealists who view that Muslims should directly enter the political arena and establish a distinctive political party to promote the Islamic interests, under the pretext that the political role is crucial otherwise other opponent groups will direct the fate of this nation.

Second, the Muslim center group that perceives that the political priorities of Muslims are to realize the integration and unity under the leadership of Muslims, meanwhile the involvement of Muslims in partisan politics will be in vain in the contexts of the aims of the Muslims. This group is comprised of many reformists who view that the achievement of Muslims’ socio-political goals must be pursued in the context of constitutional and judicial decisions provided by the state.
Third, the pragmatic group that perceives that Muslims should perform practical steps by concentrating on a certain developmental aspect by abandoning idealistic and impractical outlooks. The group also advocates the desertion of the conventional politics marked by personal conflicts and class conflicts and insists a leadership transition from the older to younger generation. This third group gained a central position the new order regime, in contrast to the first and second groups that were fiercely suspected and marginalized in the political arena in the two decades of the New Order era. Fourth, as another variant of the previous Islamic groups, there is a realistic-accommodationist and modernist reformist group.

Muhammadiyah Elite

Muhammadiyah elite is the leading figures who occupy the official top positions and play a significant role in determining the internal organizational policies. By following the concepts and analysis developed by previous theorists, the focus of analysis of Muhammadiyah elite in this study was on the positional elite or the figures at the top of the Muhammadiyah formal organization structure. Furthermore, the social life of Muhammadiyah elite is linked to the aspects of reputation and decision making that grew and developed in the life of the Muhammadiyah elite community.

The elite who have formal and central positions in the structure of leadership and organization of Muhammadiyah as the subject of this study are classified into five groups: First, the ulama/religious elite who specifically have the competence as kyai or religious leaders. Second, the entrepreneur elite whose main job is specifically on entrepreneurship or trading sector. Third, the bureaucratic elite who specifically have the main job as civil servants. Fourth, the private elite who specifically have the main job as officer or private employees. Fifth, the elite politicians who have positions and political parties.

The power of the Muhammadiyah elite is defined as the role carried out or performed by the group in accordance with the position or in affecting the other groups based on the intended purpose or interest. Thus, based on Putnam’s view about people who have more power than others, the Muhammadiyah elite can be classified into three categories. First, elite power as the ability to influence other individuals including members/masses. Second, elite power as the ability to influence organizational decision-making. Third, elite power as the ability to allocate values authoritatively in order to build the political culture of Muhammadiyah.

Political culture affects the political behavior of the elite that is manifested into the elite political culture. Furthermore, based on the concept of political culture from Apter, Almond and Wijaya, the concept of the political culture of Muhammadiyah elite are developed as follows: The political culture of Muhammadiyah is conceptualized as a view and value system that influences the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite.

The main indicator of the variables or dimensions of the political culture of Muhammadiyah elite is the orientation of value system that influences the political behavior of Muhammadiyah elite. Furthermore, accommodative political culture as innate in this organization from its early establishment to the advanced development.

MUHAMMADIYAH ELITE AND THE DYNAMICS OF NATIONAL POLITICS

The National Movement Period

From the establishment to the first century of its journey, Muhammadiyah has passed the history of a dynamic struggle. In the early phase until 1945, Muhammadiyah endured its stage of pioneering, constructing and thriving under the rule of the Dutch colonialism. Muhammadiyah (established 1912) and other organizations, such as Boedi Oetomo (established in 1909) and Sarekat Islam (established in 1911), are the initial generation of national awakening movement that have power to mobilize the force of Muslims and people in general in accordance with their respective ways and social segments to rise up against colonialism and move forward to attain Indonesian independence. Other movements such as Taman Siswa (established 1922), Persatuan Islam (established 1923) and even Nahdlatul Ulama (established 1926) were born in the next decade after Muhammadiyah, therefore Muhammadiyah is included as the earliest Islamic movement and national awakening movement.

The milestone is become important in demonstrating the initiative and ground-breaking made by Muhammadiyah in the national awakening and the Islamic revival prior to others. Moreover, in confronting the Dutch colonial, Muhammadiyah also confirmed its resolute stance against the 1926 Teacher Ordinance policy that harmed the private sector and Muslims. The attitude verifies the non-cooperative attitude of Muhammadiyah in accordance with the encountered problems to uphold the interests of Islam.

In the national movement, the Muhammadiyah elite has been proactive in mobilizing Muslims. It instigated the alliance of the Ummah through Partai Islam Indonesia (PPI) in 1937 and the Majelis Islam ‘Ala Indonesia (MIAI) through the leadership of Kyai Mas Mansur who was the Chairman of Muhammadiyah at the time. In the 1945 Independence period, Muhammadiyah which had been represented by Ki Bagus Hadikusuma actively involved in the discussion and debate over the basic and the format of Indonesia as an independent state. Mas Mansur is best-known as one of the Four Sultans with Soekarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Meanwhile, Ki Bagus plays a decisive role in the debate on the basis of the state, particularly during the historic formulation of the Jakarta Charter and the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution. Despite the decisive episode of history has often been controversial for the minority of Muslims afterward,
leaving a stumbling block in political history of Indonesia. Yet in the context of a broader nationality, it becomes a precious Pearl for the journey of this pluralistic nation.

The momentum of history is exceptionally essential, including when Ki Bagus Hadikusuma in the interest of the unity and a new nation in the independence day (August 17, 1945) had to acquiesce the seven-words in the draft of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, “Ketuhanan dengan kewajiban menjalankan syar'i'at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya (Belief in Almighty God with the obligation to carry out the Islamic law/Shari’a for the adherents)” into “Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa (Belief in the One and Only God)”, which becomes a vital element in the content of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution and becomes the first principle of Pancasila. Some elements might argue and inquire about the modification process of those words in which by some Islamic figures referred to as “betrayal” against the aspirations of Muslims. Nevertheless, the wisdom, impact, and contribution to the construction of the nation and the state are very substantial and influential. Through Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, Kasman Singodimejo, and other leading figures, Muhammadiyah has made huge sacrifices for the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) which later becomes a milestone for the unity, union, and continuity of the Indonesian nation and state. It is not redundant if the Minister of Religious Affairs, Alamsjah Ratu Perwiranegara, claimed that the sacrifices of these Islamic figures as “the great contribution of Muslims” for the nation and the state.

Muhammadiyah had a major part in unifying and mobilizing the Muslims force as the principal shield in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. After leading the establishment of PII and MIAI, the Muhammadiyah elite and other Islamic forces founded the Islamic Party of Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (MASYUMI) on September 17, 1945, which was established and declared in the building of Madrasah Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah, Yogyakarta. It was a strategic measure since this party was capable to unify all the forces of the Muslims and Muhammadiyah became a special member of Masyumi until this modern Islamic party was forced to be inactive in 1962 due to pressure and attitude of iron hand of Soekarno regime at that time.

Nevertheless, the political alliance of Muslims did not survive in which in 1949 the Sarekat Islam (SI) resigned from the alliance and accompanied by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1952. Later, both of them became separate political parties. For Muhammadiyah, this political move is certainly perceived as a form of responsibility and gait of power and nationality, even though Muhammadiyah is organizationally and institutionally remains an independent Social Organization and does not embody itself as a political party.

Similarly, the involvement of the Muhammadiyah elite through Masyumi in the debate in the 1965-1959 Constituante over the basis of the state, as in prior to the 1945 independence through the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI) and Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (PPKI). Muhammadiyah and other Islamic nationalist forces proposed Islam as the basis of the state while secular nationalists and other nationalist groups propounded Pancasila. The dialogue failed to reach deliberation due to the fail of the majority voting. The deadlock was intervened by Soekarno through the Presidential Decree of 5 July 1959 which, among others, suspended the Constituent Assembly and set up the Jakarta Charter as the soul of the 1945 Constitution.

The adverse view emerged since it was presumed that the involvement of Islamic leaders who proposed Islam as the basis of the state was a sort of desire to establish an Islamic state that opposed against nationalism. Such a view is definitely inappropriate in two ways. Firstly, at that period, the discourse and debate over the basics of the state were legally and constitutionally, instead of an illegal and separatist act. Secondly, the Islamic struggle as the basis of the state is a legitimate alternative scheme among a variety of advanced or modern Islamic views amid a predominantly Muslim population of Indonesia. Thus, the dynamics of the basic of the state cannot be deemed and evaluated in the context of contemporary perspective, moreover based on secularistic propensity that wants to separate religion or religious values from the state. Islamic thought and movement in a certain period must be interpreted in its respective context to provide an objective perspective.

 Likewise, an outlook that accentuates the modernist Islam as if this Islamic group has been determined to uphold the Islamic state before the period of early independence. Such a tendentious assumption is rather subjective and non-objective in understanding history as a nonlinear dynamic. Islamic figures from the modern age such as Agus Salim, Muhammad Natsir, Mas Mansur, Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, Kasman Singodimejo, Kahar Muzakir, Hamka, Sjahrirr Perwiranegara, and others are prominent Muslims who indeed have comprehensive understanding on modern politics and state, as well as Islam in the contemporary context. The commitment and integrity of those modernist Muslims to the nation and the state is indisputable, although their critical and rational as well as their straightforwardness made they are often open-minded. Nevertheless, the traditionalists were unprepared in encountering contemporary Islamic discourse.

In addition to their understanding of Islam, the modernist group also comprehends the problems of the state in the context of modernity, therefore they are capable of dialogue and debate with other nationalists. However, when this group rules most of government institutions, it is a logical consequence of their capacity and not because of the politics of domination that want to exclude other Islamic groups. In this context, the role of modern Islamic figures and organizations in the dialogue on the basis of the state should be interpreted in the process of objective historical dynamics and not due to the separatist attitude toward the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. These groups and prominent Islamic figures are
popular to be loyal and full of sacrifices to the Republic of Indonesia, hence they deserve to be considered as representative of an authentic Muslim nationalist.

Indeed, these modernist Muslims have absorbed modern thought leading to their critical, open-minded, and transparent characteristics, instead of being secretive and pragmatic in politics. Furthermore, due to their mature, modernist Muslims are not used to be a hypocrite or pretender like a tree that is easily blown by a strong wind and then falls down. On the contrary, the Muslims who are pragmatic in politics tend to be simply survived and adaptive to power, therefore they seem to be loyal and unbeatable in the power arena.

The New Order Era

After the collapse of the Old Order in 1965, Muhammadiyah was situated under Soeharto’s leadership. During the New Order era, the Muhammadiyah elite had the opportunity to focus more on education, health, social services, and other community services in relation to religious teaching. Along with its affirmation as a da’wah movement, the Muhammadiyah elite appeared to have the space to broaden their domain, particularly with the New Order policy which was concentrated on national development. The orientation on the development was coincidence with Muhammadiyah movement that was preoccupied with education, health, social welfare, and other community-based charitable programs. It was during this period that Muhammadiyah’s charity and services growth rapidly as a new force for the Islamic movement.

The assumption that claims the New Order regime and Muhammadiyah had set aside traditional Muslims even eradicated them is incorrect. The participation of the Muhammadiyah elite and human resources in the governance structure at the time was stimulated by two reasons. First, the human resources of Muhammadiyah were prepared and professional to be allocated in various government structures, including in the bureaucratic environment. Second, both the members and Muhammadiyah were institutionalized with the Developmentalism adopted by the New Order, hence they easily adapted and cooperated. Under such circumstances, it might seem opportunistic for Muhammadiyah, but it is the political orientation of Muhammadiyah. Objectivity is an inherent culture of Muhammadiyah. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah was persistent in being critical against the New Order, as demonstrated by its involvement in the drafting of the 1974 Marriage Law, the decree of Minister Daud Joesoef on Education, and the 1985 Mass Organization Law that caused the rescheduling of Muhammadiyah Congress until all problems were solved. It indicated that Muhammadiyah was not an opportunist in the New Order era, even though President Soeharto claimed himself as a seed of Muhammadiyah.

The Reform Era

In the transitional period from the New Order to the Reform era, M. Amien Rais as the General Chairman of Muhammadiyah Central Executive at that time set an oppositional political stance and led the reformation regardless of all the risks. After the collapse of the New Order in 1998, the Reform era presents as a new, more democratic era. During the period, M. Amien Rais as the representative of Muhammadiyah had a key role in which he is known as an icon of the reform movement. Later, his leadership was continued by Ahmad Syafi’i Ma’arif, an intellectual figure who brought Muhammadiyah to the cultural realm and best-known as the teacher of the nation. He surely complements the existence and role of Muhammadiyah in the dynamics of nationality. During the leadership of M. Din Syamsuddin, Muhammadiyah continues to move dynamically since he is a prominent figure among the national and international circles and successful in expanding the identity of Muhammadiyah.

The reform movement has brought fundamental transformation in the state and national life, including the open gate of political democracy which was locked during the New Order regime, the consciousness of human rights, the expansion of civil society to various lines of society, and the eradication of habitual corruption, collusion, and nepotism. The new development of the reform is the mobility of national and local leadership in the executive, legislature, and judiciary and other government institutions that have been limited to certain segments that support the government regime. Moreover, the mobility of the Muslim elite occupying the top institutions of government which had not occurred before. The achievement is linked to the role of Muhammadiyah in inspiring the reform movement. Even though afterward there is stagnation and adverse perception about reform movement, even a longing for the old system, it was prompted by the inadequate understanding about and consolidation for reform and the emergence of new problems in national life which were blamed on reform.

In its historical progress, Muhammadiyah has successfully placed its national cadres in various lines of government such as government bureaucracy, legislature, and the judiciary. Moreover, national leaders such as Soekarno, Soeharto, and other national elites have affiliated themselves with Muhammadiyah. The positive developments are a logical consequence of the success of this Islamic movement in constructing its educational institutions and reform movement towards modernism, resulting in the flourish of reliable national leaders. Nowadays, the development is extended and fragmented among various groups within the society, thus, the recent challenge for Muhammadiyah is how to reproduce the prospective cadres of the nation in the future.

POLITICAL CULTURE OF MUHAMMADIYAH ELITE

Muhammadiyah has to some extent been linked with the practical-political sphere (politics-oriented to state power) when it became a Special Member of Masyumi in the Old Order era, set up the establishment of Parmusi at the early of the New Order era, and granted permission to M. Amien Rais who was the General Chairman of Muhammadiyah Central Executive
to conduct political “ijtihad” at the beginning of the Reform era. Nevertheless, the political involvement remained measurable and did not change the identity of Muhammadiyah as an Islamic movement that is primarily devoted to da’wah. There are three points that can be explicated about the political involvement of Muhammadiyah. First, unlike Sarekat Islam and Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah does not transform itself into a political party. Second, Muhammadiyah does not institutionally affiliate the organization with and engage in a direct practical-political struggle. Third, the decision made in certain situations, often in an urgent situation, or to seek a midpoint decision of inevitable political necessity, though it remains reasonable and does not involve organizational institutions.

Muhammadiyah devotes its movement in the field of community da’wah that is frequently entwined with the political sphere. Despite being acknowledged as a result of the intersection, particularly the involvement of Muhammadiyah as a special member in Maysumi, it eventually brought certain impact for Muhammadiyah, which is its less deliberation of da’wah and charity and services. In addition, the contact between Muhammadiyah and politics led to the situation where political culture penetrated into the organization’s management, which was then countered by the concept of Muhammadiyah Characteristics (1962) and Basic Strategies of Muhammadiyah (Khittah Muhammadiyah). Both of them are Islamic movements carried out in the field of da’wah and tajdid in the society, without any engagement with political movement in the context of the struggle of state power.

The neutrality of Muhammadiyah from any political parties is perceived as the political culture of Muhammadiyah elite. It is demonstrated by being moderate and relatively cooperative, yet critical at once. (Ali, 2015) Recently, Muhammadiyah and other Islamic movements are facing a strong political attraction. Political parties and political activists or politicians have an enormous interest in social organizations that have a large influence and mass bases, such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Moreover, several political parties distinguish themselves for having a logical social association with these largest Islamic organizations. The political attraction is even stronger with the rise of Islamic parties carrying the political ideology of Islam, which revive new-fangled political thrill in some members of Islamic mass organizations. They are motivated to open themselves to the presence of Islamic political parties and consequently, there is overlapping affiliation and relationship between da’wah as religious movements and political parties or political struggles on behalf of Islam to a certain extent (Suleri & Cavagnaro, 2016). The synergy or overlapping between the spheres of mass organizations and politics with theological, ideological, sociological and practical legitimacy occurs in this situation. Muhammadiyah senses the prevailing political attraction which seems soft on the surface but rough inside. The powerful Islamism and political activism in addition to the pragmatic interests of politics have generated an interruption to the political pressure that is echoed among the Muhammadiyah elite.

Politics is a process of the power struggle and the management of state affairs in various aspects and activities, therefore, it is essential and distinguished to build prosperous, just, and civilized state life. Politics is a fragment of the history of civilization from the prehistoric to the present and future. Nevertheless, the practices of politics are laden by biases and indiscretions. In fact, in addition to idealism, politics is frequently entrapped by pragmatism, particularly in dealing with limited or rare interests and powers. Overall, pragmatic is not a political attitude of Muhammadiyah.

Furthermore, in the case of political orientation inclines to pragmatism rather than idealism, practical politics will be ensnared in what mentioned by Rais as a propensity for low politics. Subsequently, the desire for such a huge interest will lead to the tendency of the end justifies the means. When religion or da’wah is at stake and complicated by pragmatic politics, there will be no political sublimation by religion or da’wah but instead the politicization of religion that subordinates religion into power politics.

In a pragmatic and cross-border politics, the system will ultimately sacrifice idealism or main values, but simultaneously trigger or expand the conflicts of interest between groups both social and religious groups within society. Moreover, in the most recent developments, there is a phenomenon where politics become ambitious commander and political struggle supported by furious militancy. It may lead to the absolutism of political struggles that encourages the political attitude of to be or not to be (Fujo & Dida, 2019).

Motivated by militant and passionate political orientation, politics will be progressively more pragmatic and susceptible to conflict with assorted elements in society. Moreover, it may create a new authoritarian regime when finally reaching power. This sort of politics will be distant and more from the orbit of its idealism for the contentment and prosperity of the people as well as for building the aspired state, although it is always constructed magnificently and eloquently in the packing of the public sphere.

Politics must be positioned in a reasonable and rational way based on its advantages and disadvantages, good and evil, for not being trapped and toxic to the public as the only way to the life of the civil society. Muhammadiyah attempts to situate politics in such a reasonable and rational aspect, hence it does not opt as the orientation of movement and handed over to political party which is also realistic without exaggerating it as the commander of life.

Muhammadiyah carries on the follow-up and clarity of reformation. The redefinition of the national vision and character in line with and in order to realize the vision based on the spirit and aspiration of independence in 1945 is required. The success of democracy as the fruit of reform must be accompanied by the development of the national character and the clarity of the national vision, therefore, the independence will provide the maximum benefit for the people and the national development. Indonesia must be an advanced, just, prosperous, dignified, and sovereign nation and state. Reformation
should be the starting point and a new straight path towards the genuine aspirations of independence. In this context, the role of Muhammadiyah and its elite in escorting the reform of Indonesia in the future is challenged.

CONCLUSION

As a religious-social organization (religious organization), Muhammadiyah persistently carries on the mission of al `amr bi-l ma rūf wa-n nahy `an al munkar (Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) as well as being active and constructive in the developmental programs and the national reform in accordance with the basic strategies of the organization (khittah). In addition, it will respond the critical conditions endured by the nation and state. Furthermore, the Muhammadiyah elite prefers to be accommodative by being proportional and neutral in initiating collaboration, being rationally adaptable to political developments, and being critical against the power. The critical-accommodations include several points as follows.

Firstly, the Muhammadiyah elite is summoned to have contribution in the state and national life based on particular values of struggle. Among the values is the theological point of view of Muhammadiyah that politics is inevitably a vital worldly affair and linked to religion (Islam), while the format and method for struggle are in the domain of ijtihad (an Islamic legal term referring to independent reasoning). By devoting its movement through da’wah within the society to realize the Islamic society instead of involving in the state political-power struggle is a form of ijtihad.

Secondly, similar to the standpoint of Islamic modernism or Islamic reformism, Muhammadiyah recognizes the relationship between politics and religion, yet they are not congruent. Hence, the substantial transformation of values which is not necessarily in a single format or construction is required.

Thirdly, the Muhammadiyah elite perceives the political struggle for state power should be carried out by political parties, and any political parties are external as well as having no organizational affiliation with Muhammadiyah. Based on the experience of Muhammadiyah, it turns out that political struggle through political parties has strategic benefits and simultaneously, adverse impacts on the Muhammadiyah movement and affairs. Therefore, the position of Muhammadiyah is to disengage its movement from practical-politics and political parties.

Fourthly, Muhammadiyah elite who decide to establish political party or actively participate in the practical politics should not carry out their activities on behalf of Muhammadiyah organization, even there should be the consciousness as cadre who sincerely carry on the Muhammadiyah mission in realizing politics that is beneficial for people, nation and state. Muhammadiyah in its genuineness through the da’wah movement will continually flourish and grow in any regime of power because its presence is objectively required by the nation and state. Particularly through its national role, Muhammadiyah can carry out its proactive roles in promoting the development of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

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