



THE ORIGIN OF THE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN MUHAMMADIYAH: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS TOWARD INDONESIA'S MUSLIM-REFORMIST MOVEMENT

Ridho Al-Hamdi

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Email: ridhoalhamdi@umy.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the origin of the political consciousness of Muhammadiyah. Thus, the article aims to investigate the origin of the political consciousness of Muhammadiyah to be a reference for Muhammadiyah's elites, functionaries, cadres, and members in the way of thinking and behaving, mainly in the context of political affairs. Methodologically, this article is a qualitative research by applying two techniques in data-gathering: documentary and interview. The finding demonstrates that the origin of political consciousness of Muhammadiyah can be traced back into a fourfold thing: the influence of the Islamic reformist idea mainly coming from the middle east, the awareness of liberation from backwardness, the awareness of liberation from colonization, and the awareness of liberation from the Christian penetration.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, political consciousness, origin, liberation

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji tentang asal usul kesadaran politik di Muhammadiyah. Karena itu, tujuan artikel ini adalah mengetahui asal usul kesadaran politik Muhammadiyah yang dapat menjadi rujukan bagi elite, pengurus, kader, dan warga Muhammadiyah dalam berpikir dan bertindak terutama dalam konteks politik kebangsaan maupun politik praktis. Secara metodologis, artikel ini merupakan hasil kajian kualitatif dengan dua teknik dalam pengumpulan data: studi dokumentasi dan wawancara. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan, bahwa asal usul lahirnya kesadaran politik di Muhammadiyah bertumpu pada empat hal: pengaruh gagasan pembaruan Islam dari Timur Tengah, kesadaran

pembebasan dari keterbelakangan, kesadaran pembahasan dari penjajahan, dan kesadaran pembebasan dari penetrasi Kristen.

Kata Kunci: Muhammadiyah, kesadaran politik, asal mula, pembebasan

Introduction

Examining Muhammadiyah and politics is investigating unfinished dynamics. Nevertheless, such a dynamic is restricted by time and space because the dynamics of Muhammadiyah and politics in the Dutch colonization Era are different from Old Order Era and so forth. Due to restricted time and space, studying Muhammadiyah and politics is always fascinating to be investigated as a lesson learned for anybody interested in analyzing Islamic movements in Indonesia. Since its establishment, Muhammadiyah has been consistent with declaring as not a political organization. It is a socio-religious organization that commits to disseminate its *da'wah* and ideology to society.

The interaction between Muhammadiyah and the dynamics of national life affects its engagement with political activities. Historically speaking, Muhammadiyah involved directly in the establishment of political parties such as Masyumi in 1945, the Indonesian Muslim Party (Parmusi) in 1968, the National Mandate Party (PAN) in 1998, and the National Sun Party (PMB) in 2006. Some scientists analyze the relation between Muhammadiyah and political parties, such as Syaifullah (2019), who concerns examining the involvement of Muhammadiyah in the political struggle inside Masyumi. In the 1960s, Muhammadiyah ever implemented the political party function as the political-social organization (Ormaspol).¹ In addition, Asyari (2008) puts forward that the politics of Muhammadiyah in the first decade of the Reformation Era since 1998 cannot be separated from the political *ijtihad* of Amien Raies through his party, namely PAN.²

Thus, the dynamics of Muhammadiyah and politics is an unfinished discourse. On the one hand, Muhammadiyah cadres wish that Muhammadiyah take any positions in political practices as Wardana and Hidayat's finding who prove the active engagement of Muhammadiyah in the Regional Representative

¹ Syaifullah, *Gerak Politik Muhammadiyah dalam Masyumi* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2019).

² Suaidi Asyari, *Ijtihād-based Politics: The Muhammadiyah Political Participation in Post- Soeharto*, *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2008, p. 25-83.

Board (DPD) election of 2019.³ On the other hand, other cadres of Muhammadiyah are consistent with maintaining the dignity of Muhammadiyah to not engage organizationally in such a political practice. That is why Nashir et al. underline to take a neutral position and a similar distance with any political forces in coping with the 2019 election not to be trapped as partisan.⁴

Considering these dynamics, Muhammadiyah eventually issued an organizational decision (*khittah*) related to its struggle in the political arena at the end of the 1960s not involve any political forces, including political parties. It is based on the consciousness that Muhammadiyah as a social organization should be consistent with maintaining its struggle as the Islamic *da'wah* movement. Principally, the *khittah* is not aimed to separate Muhammadiyah from politics, but it is a Muhammadiyah struggle strategy. It is not to restrict the political role of Muhammadiyah and not to make Muhammadiyah has a free position in such political activities.

It is absorbing to analyze the origin of political consciousness in Muhammadiyah, where this issue is part of an epistemological study. Consequently, the objective of this study is to discover the origin of political consciousness in Muhammadiyah. The upshot, this study will portray such an origin, and, in turn, it can be a guideline for elites, functionaries, cadres, members, and devotees of Muhammadiyah on how to think and how to behave in dealing with any political issues.

Methodologically, this study is qualitative research by applying a case study approach. In this context, the case study can be conceptualized as an in-depth analysis of certain cases to reach a new finding.⁵ It means that this study is going to investigate the political consciousness of a Muslim-reformist movement, Muhammadiyah, since its establishment. In data gathering, this study employs a document analysis and interviews. The collected data are analyzed with a fourfold step: data organization, data selection, inter-variable analysis and data verification, and interpretation and conclusion.⁶

³ Amika Wardana and Syahrul Hidayat, The Multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's Political Engagement in Indonesia's DPD Election. *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2019, p. 75-111.

⁴ Haedar Nashir et al., Muhammadiyah's Moderation Stance in the 2019 General Election: Critical Views from Within, *Al-Jami'ah*, Vol. 57 No. 1 (2019.), p. 1-24.

⁵ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Third Edition (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2013); B. Flyvbjerg, Case Study, in Norman K. Denzin, & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Edisi Keempat, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), p. 301-316.

⁶ Ridho Al-Hamdi et al., *Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar and Lab IP UMY, 2020), p. 129-134.

Muhammadiyah as Muslim-Reformist Organization

Muhammadiyah is the largest Muslim-reformist organization in Indonesia, established in Yogyakarta, 18 November 1912. The embedded feature in Muhammadiyah is “tajdid” which has two inseparable sides: purification and dynamization, referring to the authenticity of Islamic teaching, and, in turn, conducting a renewal for human development, mainly Muslim society in the changing life.⁷ Therefore, Alfian labels Muhammadiyah as (1) the religious reformist movement; (2) the social change agent; (3) the moral force. As the religious reformist movement, Muhammadiyah aims to purify Islamic teachings by removing mystical practices and local traditions. In other words, Muhammadiyah attempts to restore Islamic teachings into the pure pattern as taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Muslims should refer directly to Al-Qur’an and As-Sunnah by providing the possibility of new interpretations based on sciences and technology.⁸

It can be known that the Muslim reformist-modernist organization has six main features. Firstly, Islamic teachings encompass all aspects of life, social and spiritual. Secondly, religious beliefs and practices should be implemented daily based on Al-Qur’an and As-Sunnah and the adjustment to current situations. Thirdly, sharia laws should be realized in all aspects of life flexibly. Fourthly, using multiple approaches in interpreting certain Islamic teachings, including western approaches. Fifthly, recognizing the Muslim triumph in the past and not trapped into a romanticism, but making it a spirit to deal with the present and future life. Sixthly, accepting a change as an inevitability as long as the present life does not represent the true Islamic teachings.⁹ The six features are embedded and can be found in Muhammadiyah.

The Origin of Political Consciousness in Muhammadiyah: An Epistemological Analysis

The term “epistemology” is one of the branches of philosophy that studies the way of knowing anything that we believe is true, and, in turn, others are wrong so that the early statement can be validated its truth.¹⁰ There is a

⁷ Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 144-146.

⁸ Alfian, *Muhammadiyah the Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism*, (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), p. 5.

⁹ Achmad Jainuri, *Ideologi Kaum Reformis: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Muhammadiyah Periode Awal* (Surabaya: LPAM, 2002), p. 101.

¹⁰ John L. Pollock and Joseph Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), p. 152.

fundamental difference between knowledge and science. The former is more general and based on daily experiences, while the latter is specific with the feature of systematic, logical, scientific, and can be validated.¹¹ Thus, epistemology discusses the nature of science, and science as a process is the effort of systematic and logical thoughts to find truth principles on the object of science. What is the object of science? To what extent does the truth can be achieved? Which truth can be achieved in a science: objective truth, subjective truth, absolute truth, or relative truth?¹² Some epistemological questions can be provided here: What is the origin of our knowledge? How do we know that we have knowledge? How do we differentiate between knowledge and opinion? What is the pattern of knowledge? How do we gain knowledge? What are the truth and falsehood?¹³

Those questions proposed by Kattsoff is similar to epistemological statements offered by Mustansir and Munir: the origin of knowledge, the relationship between knowledge and inevitability, the relationship between knowledge and truth, the possibility of universal skepticism, and the changing pattern of knowledge generated from a new conceptualization of the new world.¹⁴ Considering those questions, this study focuses on a principal question: How does the origin of political consciousness in Muhammadiyah? Consequently, this study is going to investigate the driving factors influencing Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts in establishing Muhammadiyah. It can be known that the political consciousness in Muhammadiyah can be traced back into a fourfold thing: the influence of the middle east renewal, the consciousness to liberate itself from backwardness, the consciousness to liberate itself from colonization, and the consciousness to liberate itself from Cristian penetration.

The Influence of the Middle East Renewal

At the end of the 19th Century, the notion of an Islamic reformation was introduced in Indonesia. Indonesian Muslims at that time realized what happens in another Muslim world, particularly Egypt. Entering the 20th Century, such a notion developed by Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rasyid Ridha can be accepted by Muslims in Indonesia. The main principle of the notion can be traced back to two inter-related schools. The first school is the demand of

¹¹ Rizal Mustansir and Misnal Munir, *Filsafat Ilmu* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), p. 44.

¹² Musa Asy'arie, *Filsafat Islam: Sunnah Nabi dalam Berfikir* (Yogyakarta: Lesfi, 2002), p. 63.

¹³ Louis. O Kattsoff, *Elements of Philosophy* (New York: Ronald Press Co, 1953).

¹⁴ Rizal Mustansir and Misnal Munir, *Filsafat Ilmu*, p. 17.

ar-ruju' ilal Qur'an was Sunnah (back to the authority of Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah) as the primary source in deciding Islamic teachings and practices. It can be called "scripturalism". The second school as the supporting system of the first school is the notion of re-interpretation of Islamic teachings where previous interpretations cannot address existing circumstances. The second school focuses on answering the challenges which come from the Western world. Abduh and Al-Afghani are both consistent reformists who struggle for Muslim unity around worldwide against European domination. The Abduh's notions in Egypt eventually were accepted by most Muslim countries, including Indonesia.¹⁵

The reformation movement directed by Al-Afghani and Abduh in Egypt at the end of the 19th Century has a powerful impact on the emergence of Islamic modernism in Indonesia. One of them is Muhammadiyah, established by Ahmad Dahlan. It can be denied that the reformation agenda of Abduh and Dahlan are similar in focusing on the improvement of education aspects rather than political issues. The proof of Abduh's influence on Dahlan was the acceptance of Dahlan on Abduh's notion regarding the need to come back into orthodoxy. The Abduh's influence can be seen in emphasizing Muhammadiyah on the need to create a new social structure that can transform Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah's values into new Islamic cultures. Dahlan's actions in increasing Muslim education can be evidence that Dahlan is still under Abduh's effect. The approval of Muhammadiyah toward modern notions and methods, its position toward politics, and the non-opposition attitude toward richness demonstrated the influence of Abduh's thoughts.¹⁶

The first time of Dahlan's introduction towards Middle East Muslim reformists' works took place when he pilgrimaged for the second time in 1902. In addition to that, Dahlan also dwelled in Mecca to learn the Islamic religion. During his stay in Mecca, Dahlan studies Islam deeply with various Muslim scholars and works of Egyptian reformists, such as Ibnu Taimiyyah, Muhammad Abduh, and Rasyid Ridha. Those works also influence Dahlan's thoughts so that when he came back into Yogyakarta, Dahlan teaches his students using those influential works.¹⁷ Before Dahlan learns Abduh's works, he already learnt Islam in Mecca in his first *haji* trip in 1890 with some Muslim scholars originated from Indonesia such as Kyai Mahfudz from Termas, Syekh Akhmad Khatib and Syekh

¹⁵ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus: Respon Gerakan Muhammadiyah terhadap Penetrasi Misi Kristen di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2016), p. 231-234.

¹⁶ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 238-240.

¹⁷ Ahmad Adabi Darban, *Sejarah Kauman: Menguak Identitas Kampung Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 34.

Jamil Jambek from Minangkabau, Kyai Najrowi from Banyumas, Kyai Nawawi from Banten as well as Arabian Muslim scholars.¹⁸

On the second hajj, Ahmad Dahlan met Rasyid Ridha. Through Ridha, Dahlan can learn Abduh's works and thoughts deeply. The second hajj of Dahlan is based on the request of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII. Sultan asked Dahlan to comprehensively study Islam, including learning how to address the apostasy without any clashes among society. In Mecca, Dahlan was introduced by Kyai Bakir into prominent Muslim scholars of the Middle East, including Rasyid Ridha. Kyai Bakir is a nephew of Kyai Dahlan. The meetings between Dahlan and Ridha took place intensive so that when Dahlan came back into Yogyakarta, he brought a lot of Abduh's works. The first teaching of Ahmad Dahlan toward his students in Kauman Village was *Al-Ashr* verses. The *Al-Ashr* study was taught by Dahlan every day for at least seven and eight months with the study group's chief, Raden Hadjid.

The communication of Islamic-reformism goals between Ahmad Dahlan and the Middle East was conducted through the conveyance of Egyptian works into Indonesia like *Al-Manar* written by Abduh and Ridha and *Al-'Urwatul Wutsqa* magazine. These works are a channel for Muslims to criticize European domination, a demand to compete with the West, and Muslim scholars' call to purify Islam from *bidah* (innovation in religious matters) and *khurafat* (absurdity). Besides *Al-Manar*, other Egyptian reformist magazines entered Indonesia, such as *Al-Mu'ayyad*, *Al-Siyasah*, *Al-Liwa*, *Al-'Adl*, and Beirut's magazines like *Tsamarat*, *Al-Funun*, *Al-Qistas* *Al-Mustaqim*. The Dutch government banned these magazines from entering Indonesia. Nevertheless, Dahlan can receive those magazines through contraband ways. Compared with other works, *Al-Manar* and *Al-'Urwatul Wutsqa* were two works that more comfortable to come to Indonesia despite illegal ways.¹⁹

A Muslim organization in Jakarta, *Jami'atul Khair*, has a significant role in delivering Abduh's notions to Dahlan, where many Arabian teachers teach in this school of *Jami'atul Khair*. Two teachers who enthusiastic about disseminating Abduh's teachings maintain a good relationship with Dahlan, namely Muhammad Noer (former Abduh's disciple) and Ahmad Surkati, who strengthened the establishment of Al-Irsyad after he resigned from *Jami'atul*

¹⁸ Majelis Diktilitbang and LPI PP Muhammadiyah, *1 Abad Muhammadiyah: Gagasan Pembaruan Sosial Keagamaan* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), p. 17.

¹⁹ Ahmad Adabi Darban, *Sejarah Kauman: Menguak Identitas Kampung Muhammadiyah*, p. 34-35. Juga, Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 240.

Khair.²⁰ An unexpected meeting between Dahlan and Surkati in the early 20th Century during their trip on the train from Jakarta to Surabaya can be claimed as tangible evidence of Dahlan's pride in Abduh's works. During that trip, Dahlan and Surkati discussed Abduh's works, including the Islam and Muslims dynamics in Indonesia. Dahlan and Surkati eventually declared to disseminate Abduh's notions and change Islam and Indonesian Muslims situation into a better life at that meeting.²¹

Besides, two fundamental issues unify Abduh and Dahlan in realizing their reformism agenda. The first issue is their cooperative relationship with the colonial regime. They do not upset the regime so that they have the freedom to disseminate their reformism agenda. The second issue is a similar position toward Sufism issue. Most simply, the agenda of Abduh reformism and Muhammadiyah are similarly religious, which is based on Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah. Both calls for *ijtihad* and censure *taklid*, including positioning Ibnu Taimiyah's views as the primary reference. This is evidence that Abduh's thoughts influence the reformist agenda of Muhammadiyah.²²

It can be underlined that the influence of Abduh's notions toward Dahlan prefers to stress on the development of education sectors rather than political issues where Abduh has terrible experiences in political practices and resigned from any political activities at that time. Therefore, political issues are not being a vital consideration of Dahlan in establishing Muhammadiyah. The similarity of the Muhammadiyah movement and reformists' notions like Al-Afghani, Abduh, Ridha, including Ahmad Khan refers to the double movement, i.e., purification and dynamization. It is tangible that the reformist movement in the Middle East was the inspiration of Dahlan in the establishment of Muhammadiyah. Dahlan, Abduh, and Khan have a similar feature of reformism and modernism of Islam, namely renewal by prioritizing Islamic values to be implemented in modern life. The double movement of purification-dynamization of Abduh at least influences Dahlan's thoughts and Muhammadiyah features in terms of da'wa, educational, health, social, and political issues despite having specific differences.²³ If Abduh

²⁰ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 241-242.

²¹ A. Mukti Ali, *The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction* (Montreal, Canada: McGill University, 1957), p. 48-49.

²² Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 243-246.

²³ Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 143.

merely underlines intellectual movements, Dahlan strengthens community empowerment despite referring to the intellectual spirit.²⁴

Dahlan's courage in revising the *qiblat* direction in 1889 among aristocrat traditions when he was 21-year-old was a real manifestation of his intelligence that adhering to a religion should be based on the pure teachings supported by scientific-technological means. The effort of Dahlan in employing technological ways to find out the *qiblat* position, in turn, well-known as *Falak studies*, which is a method of Muhammadiyah to decide the first day each month in the *hijriyah* calendar. Although the discussion of *qiblat* direction inviting approximately 17 Muslim scholars around Yogyakarta in 1889 has no agreement, two youths who heard that meeting quietly created a white line in the Great Mosque, which changed the *qiblat* direction. That deeds made Kanjeng Kyai Penghulu H. M. Kholil Kamaludiningrat was angry and demanded the two youths to remove such a line.

Consciousness to Liberate from Backwardness

The emergence of a consciousness of self-liberation from backwardness or ignorance should be understood as a response toward existing sociological realities. Indonesian situations before the establishment of Muhammadiyah were colored by syncretism customs where *bidah*, *khurafat*, and *syirik* (worship of anyone or anything besides Allah) were part of daily activities of Indonesian societies, including Muslim inside. Hinduism values in Islamic ritual practices make the worship of the Holy Spirit take place in Muslim societies. Salam states that most Muslims lived in a narrow fanaticism, conservatism, formalism, thinking dogmatically, and *taklid* (imitation without any logical reasons).²⁵ In line with Salam, Nashir puts forward that Muslims blended Islamic teachings with Animism, Dynamism, and Hinduism teachings, which have been part of societal consciousness without any critiques.²⁶

Ahmad Dahlan was born and growing in religious societies where Islam dealt with Javanese-Hinduism threats. When *Boedi Oetomo* was established, Dahlan witnessed syncretic Islam's power through the awakening of aristocratic cultures. This situation makes Dahlan resists it. For Dahlan, establishing an organization is a strategic way to liberate Javanese Islam from the mixture of local

²⁴ M. T. Arifin, *Muhammadiyah Potret yang Berubah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2016), p. 3.

²⁵ Junus Salam, *KHA Dahlan Amal dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Depot Pengajaran Muhammadiyah, 1968), p. 33.

²⁶ Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan*.

customs and beliefs. Therefore, Muhammadiyah was established as part of a response to “impurity”, which already flourished by aristocratic cultures.²⁷ The impurity can be defined as the mixture of Islam and local customs which not part of pure Islamic teachings. Such an impurity is the source of ignorance, which causes Muslims in the backwardness situation, far away from a healthy life, and not educated.

As the impact of such a religious understanding, Muslims lived in low economic situations (*dhuafa*), colonized politics, and backward cultures. This sociological situation inspired Ahmad Dahlan to find out solutions for Indonesian society, particularly Muslims. It affects the feature of an Islamic reformist movement, namely Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, where reformist-modernist features are the main topics of Islamic reformist movements in other countries pioneered by Ibnu Taimiyyah, Muhammad bin Abdil Wahhab, Muhammad Abduh, Rasyid Ridha, etc.²⁸ That is why, Peacock believes, that Muhammadiyah as the Islamic reformist movement succeeded in purifying Islamic teachings by removing syncretism practices such as the worship of the Holy Spirit and the usage of media like particular flowers and foods as tools to deliver spiritual messages as well as the utilization of science which is not genuinely scientific in understanding realities.²⁹

The backwardness of Muslims eventually stimulated Dahlan’s consciousness on the importance of caring among humankind as a real manifestation of religion. Dahlan believes that someone who has a religion understands holy texts and has social care and solidarity attitudes. Religion is not living in a space which far away from society. Religion balances spiritual dimensions (*hablum minaallah*) and human engagement in society’s real-life (*hablum minannas*). That is why when the Prophet Muhammad SAW carried out his spiritual trip toward *sidratul mutaha* in the seventh level of heaven to earn the command of praying five times in a day, he does not stay in heaven but come back into the earth to continue his prophetic responsibility.

The smart consciousness of Dahlan in understanding the sociological realities of Muslims in the backward and ignorant situations stipulates him to teach *surah* Al-Ma’un to his disciples for almost eight months. Consequently, one of Dahlan’s disciples asked him why they should learn only such a *surah* for a long time without learning other topics? Dahlan replied, did all of you realize the

²⁷ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 255-256.

²⁸ Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan*, p. 35-36.

²⁹ James. L. Peacock, *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1978).

substance of that *surah*? No one can answer it. Such a *surah* triggers Dahlan's disciples and Muhammadiyah followers to establish hospitals, orphanages, and modern educational institutions as a solution to address Muslim backwardness. Indeed, the *surah* underlines the importance of religion as an actual act of caring for poor and destitute people.

According to Hadjid, one of Dahlan's disciples, the way learning Al-Qur'an of Ahmad Dahlan focuses on one, two, or three verses; they are read with *tartil* (slowly and full of appreciation) as well as discussed: How does its interpretation? How do we know the substance? Is this a prohibition, and did you leave such a prohibition? Is this a mandatory command? Did we run it? If we cannot execute it, it is not necessary to read and understand other verses. We always think along the day, whether morning and evening. We need to discuss with other mates how to execute it? Which barriers impede to execute it? When do we realize the verse? With such a method, Dahlan succeeded in stimulating his disciples' consciousness to care about social inequality.³⁰

In the following development, the involvement of Dahlan in various modern organizations like *Boedi Oetomo* and *Jami'atul Khair*, as well as the societal supports affected him to initiate the establishment of a school which combining religious studies and secular sciences as the pattern of consciousness that society should liberate itself from backwardness and ignorance. Although Dahlan already shared his idea to invent such a school with anybody, most people did not care even rejected the idea because they assume that Dahlan's idea contradicted Islamic traditions. Nonetheless, Dahlan still started his school with eight pupils in his home's family room with 2.5 x 6 meters. Dahlan was acting as the teacher. His disciples, who were in the adolescent age, such as M. Soedja', Fachroedin, and Hisyam assisted him in preparing chairs and tables as media of learning activities. Those eight pupils were still children and having a family bond with Ahmad Dahlan.³¹

Although learning activities were seemingly fine in the early time, denial and boycott movements behaved by societies were emerging. Even the eight pupils seldom came to the school. Dahlan did no doubt visit those pupils' homes and asked them to come back to the school. Besides, Dahlan was looking for other potential pupils. After six months later, the number of pupils increased to 20. The support was coming from *Boedi Oetomo*, educated communities outside the

³⁰ Hadjid, *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan: 7 Falsafah dan 17 Kelompok Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018), p. 89-90.

³¹ Majelis Diktilitbang and LPI PP Muhammadiyah, *1 Abad Muhammadiyah: Gagasan Pembaruan Sosial Keagamaan*, p. 22-23.

Kauman Village, and pupils of Kweekschool Jetis. The school taught religious studies in the morning and secular sciences in the afternoon. Although various rejections were still coming up, the number of pupils was always increasing, so that Dahlan redeployed the learning room from the family room into the home terrace. After stable situations, Dahlan officially named the school “Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah” (Islamic Elementary School), established on 01 December 1911.³²

In addition to the importance of education as a strategy to eliminate society’s ignorance, the healthcare centers establishment is an applicable consciousness as the sustainability of spiritual consciousness on the significance of being a problem solver among financial impediments. Muhammadiyah’s hospitals and clinics were born in low Muslim situations. Dahlan already spent his treasure and sold all his properties to activate Muhammadiyah programs and agendas because of the full consciousness of being a problem solver rather than surrendering on an uncertainty. The upshot, the constructed consciousness affects spectacularly to the development of Indonesian society. Various Muhammadiyah’s education and healthcare centers in different regions took part in helping this country in terms of eliminating backwardness. The slogan of Muhammadiyah, “speaking less, acting more”, proved the Muhammadiyah contribution to this country without demanding any rewards.

Consciousness to Liberate from Colonization

The arrival of the Dutch government into Indonesia began in the 16th Century with the primary goal of profitable seeking of natural resources. The colonization took place approximately three centuries before the establishment of Muhammadiyah. Although the call for caring for indigenous prosperity in the early Dutch colonization, it was only a formal statement without any real actions. Before the 19th Century, Indonesian society suffered serious European dominations, although they did not entirely surrender to Western influence. Moreover, in the early 19th Century, after the Napoleon War, the Netherlands was interested in colonizing Indonesia. In 1806, H. W. Daendels was the new General Governor in the Dutch East Indies, the name of this republic before Indonesia’s name. The old VOC system was replaced by the leadership of Daendels, which indicated the beginning of the Dutch government effectively in Indonesia. The main desk of Daendels was simplifying the government and reforming the administrative system of VOC, which having various corruption cases. Under the

³² Majelis Diktilitbang and LPI PP Muhammadiyah, *1 Abad Muhammadiyah...*, p. 23-24.

Daendels regime, the energy of indigenous people was forced immensely rather than the previous regime. After Daendels terminated his regime in 1811, England troops occupied Java Islands.³³

During the 19th Century, some driving factors support the Dutch government in expanding its colonization in controlling this country entirely. The driving factors were the Javanese War (1825-1830), when Diponegoro, a Javanese prince, was fighting against the Dutch, followed by Netherlands' intervention in the Padri War (1821-1838) in Minangkabau, Sumatera. The Dutch regime continued the colonization in the occupation of Bali (1846-1849), Borneo (1850-1854), Sulawesi (1858-1860), Sumatera (1870), and finally Lombok Island in 1894. The Dutch government's successful occupation in the Padri War and the Aceh War designated the beginning of the Dutch expansion into Indonesia's territories. Therefore, the Dutch regime strengthened its occupation in the early 20th Century by making an agreement with all local Indonesian empires that they should surrender and, in turn, recognize the Dutch regime. In addition to that, they also shall pledge to adhere to all instructions of the Dutch regime.³⁴

In implementing such an agreement, the Dutch government conveyed military troops into local authorities as a control to avoid the possibility of local rebellions. Although this strategy was successful, some local authorities remained to resist the Dutch government. Nevertheless, the Dutch colonization was being consolidated in the first decade of the 20th Century despite providing a way for the foundation of united Indonesia in the following development. For some Indonesian citizens at that time, the united Indonesia which the Dutch formed was a blessing in disgust because Indonesia previously was merely a group of islands between the Dutch East Indies and Australia dwelled by some tribes, mainly Muslims, which was unified by the Dutch regime.³⁵

In the following development, there was a changing policy of the Dutch regime to Indonesia, including Muslims. Although the economic prosperity was positive, Javanese farmers were still suffering. Under the Dutch's liberal policy, the indigenous economy was getting worse. The salary for indigenous people was decided unilaterally by the Dutch's employers, which affected the poor prosperity. However, the Dutch government gave space for freedom of the press, the development of education for indigenous citizens, and an obvious regulation regarding human resources. The schools received pupils were coming merely from Javanese aristocrats, not all indigenous people. As the impact of the failure

³³ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 96-97.

³⁴ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 98-101.

³⁵ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 101-102.

of the liberal policy, the politics of ethics was applied. Under such a new policy, the Dutch government provided a financial subsidy to improve indigenous people's prosperity, mainly healthcare, education, and farming. The policy is the invader's breeding pattern to the colonized so that Indonesian society can savor an "advantage" of the Western civilization and, in turn, made the colonized land into a modern world.³⁶

In addition to that policy, the Dutch regime demonstrated its suspicion toward Islam and Indonesian Muslims. One of the Dutch policies toward Islam was stated by Snouck Hurgronje, i.e., refusing the idea of "Pan-Islamism", which aims to involve the foreign power in influencing the relationship between the Dutch regime and the Eastern affairs. The Dutch regime was afraid of the idea of "Pan-Islamism" and prohibiting seriously the arrival of Arabian works into Indonesia despite still success through illegal ways in a small harbor of Tuban, East Java, not a huge harbor like in Jakarta, Semarang, and Surabaya.³⁷ The Dutch hatred toward Islam can also be seen with the expensive payment for the Dutch government's letter of permission for Muslims who want to pilgrimage. The payment is equal to the travel allowance to Mecca. It was tangible that the Dutch government precluded Muslims to conduct their pilgrimage. If someone cannot receive such a letter before the departure to Mecca, he/she shall pay twice when he/she came back to Indonesia. Afterward, if someone just came back from his pilgrimage and before he applies the title of *haji*, he/she should follow a certain exam conducted by the Dutch regime to receive a letter of graduation. The Dutch government created a consulate office in Jeddah in 1872 to control Indonesian Muslim activities there. All these deeds indicate that the Dutch government discriminated Muslim communities.³⁸

In the 19th Century, the Dutch's education policy in Indonesia was not standing on indigenous people where the school was merely provided for the aristocrat class, not all Indonesian indigenous people.³⁹ The indigenous people were poor in the education sector, causing them to conduct mystical traditions, well-known as TBC (*takhayul, bidah, khurafat*). The education of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) as the only Islamic education system in Indonesia cannot change societal life. Such a situation stimulated Dahlan's consciousness to liberate Indonesian Muslims from the colonization of education sectors and, in

³⁶ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 102-108.

³⁷ A. Mukti Ali, *The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction*, p. 14-15

³⁸ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 110-113.

³⁹ A. Mukti Ali, *The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction*, p. 19-20.

turn, inspired him to establish *Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah Islamiyah* in the Kauman Village, Yogyakarta, as the early Islamic education in Indonesia. The aim is Indonesian Muslims are educated and progressive like European people.

For a long time, the Dutch colonization of Indonesia triggers indigenous people's consciousness, mainly Muslim communities, to establish an organization to respond to colonization's arbitrariness. Therefore, in the early of the 20th Century, various Muslim modern organizations and nationalist political movements were born, such as *Jami'atul Khair* (1905), *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (1905), *Boedi Oetomo* (1908), *Sarekat Islam* (1911), *Muhammadiyah* (1912), *Al-Irsyad* (1914), *Persis* (1923), and *Nahdlatul Ulama* (1926). At that time, the Dutch colonization strategy cannot be separated from the Cristian penetration, which will be explained further. These organizations often earned obstacles and discriminations carried out by the Dutch authority. The consciousness to liberate Indonesia from the colonization stipulated Ahmad Dahlan to establish Muhammadiyah so that Islam and Indonesian Muslims can move forward across European modernity.

Consciousness to Liberate from Christian Penetration

The vigorous Christian penetration in Java Islands began when the Dutch government pressured the authority of *Kraton* (empire) in Yogyakarta in 1889 to accept the revocation of the prohibition on evangelism (*penginjilan*) toward Javanese society. Since that, as an Island for most Muslims, Java was open for activities of Christian missionaries. The brutal Christian penetration took place in the 1850s in Central Java, which triggered the Muslims' consciousness to resist the penetration activities. In the early 20th Century, Christian schools engaged in the Dutch education program. It stimulated Muslims to act the same thing. For Muslims, the provision of permission in widening Christian teachings in Java Islands issued by the Dutch government was tangible evidence of the Dutch ambition to Christianize Javanese society.⁴⁰

The report of several Dutch missionaries like Snouck Hurgronje and L. W. C. van den Berg confirmed that Islam in Indonesia, particularly Java, merely "Islam as a formal name", stipulated the Dutch government advance its Christian penetration. In 1890, the Dutch King provided authority to the General Governor in Indonesia to subsidy Christian schools. By 1898, the Minister of Colonization J. T. Cremer stated that Christian mission activities should be supported powerfully because they affected prosperity, serenity, and stability. Long before, in 1810, the Dutch King Willem I issued a regulation on the need for Christian

⁴⁰ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 261-262.

missions to Indonesia so that the King conveyed various Christian missionaries into Java and Ambon. Between 1835 and 1840, the King issued a decision on the Dutch East Indies church organization: the church administration (in Jakarta) was set up under the General Governor's supervision who can complete its members. In 1854, the King's decision suggested that the church administration has had tasks to uphold the gospel doctrines and teachings. Thus, the 19th Century and the early of the 20th Century were the sign of Christian mission power in Indonesia.⁴¹

Although most Javanese people were not orthodox Muslims, they still have a robust tie with Islam. The foundation of Muslim movements like *Sarekat Islam* and Muhammadiyah earned tremendous support from societies. Muhammadiyah was born when the Christian mission in Central Java was successful. Thus, the Dutch government always discriminated against Islam by expanding Christian mission activities through financial subsidies and declared a Christian state. Before Muhammadiyah was established, Indonesian Muslims' situation suffered multi-crisis and backwardness due to static educational systems. In the meantime, Christian mission activities and non-Islam organizations were pioneers. It was affected by the power of Christian lobby influence in the Dutch government, aiming to castrate Islam's role in Indonesia. The upshot, the influence of this mission, successfully set up Christianity in the center of Indonesian life. When Christian schools were developing, most people apply their children to study at those schools. This eventually enhanced their reputation.⁴²

According to Syukriyanto AR, one of the driving factors causing the pilgrimage departure of Dahlan for a second time was supported by the anxiety of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII in terms of the robust Christian infiltration in Yogyakarta in the 1890s where they behaved preaching not merely to Catholic devotees but also Christianize labors in 17 factories in Yogyakarta. Considering this situation, Sultan eventually demanded that Dahlan address this missionary issue by studying Islamic studies in Mecca and returning to Yogyakarta soon. At that time, Dahlan got married to one of the Kraton princes, i.e., Ray Soetidjah Windyaningrum, or well-known as Nyai Abdullah (the widow of Haji Abdullah, originated from Kudus, Central Java). Dahlan married Soetidjah when she was a 15-year-old widow. They have one son, namely R. Dhurie, who later became the

⁴¹ Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), p. 186-187.

⁴² Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 262-263.

treasure of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah in Mas Mansur era.⁴³ The Syukriyanto AR story was reinforced by Abdul Munir Mulkhan when the Author interviewed him.⁴⁴

The robust Christian penetration affected Muslims' scare of their religion while, at the same time, the Islamic influence was decreasing. Muslim communities in Yogyakarta were triggered to institute an organization to handle such a crisis, at least to restrict the penetration. Muhammadiyah was established to offer a way to deal with such penetration. It can be known that the establishment of Muhammadiyah is a response in addressing the Christian penetration, which the Dutch government powerfully supported. Thus, Islam and Christian competed at that time to take control of Indonesia. According to Addison, Indonesia's religious movements for roughly 400 years are a contestation between Islam and Christian.⁴⁵

Tangible proof of this fact is that Dahlan's statement to Muslim communities, that if Muslims do not act anything and do not care about this situation without any actions, a poor situation will take place soon, and, in turn, it cannot be handled again. Dahlan said, "Although Islam will never disappear from this earth, Islam disappears from Indonesia is likely". This statement denotes that Islam's power in the Java Islands was not stable due to Christian missionaries' power from time to time. It also indicates the full consciousness of Dahlan on the massive influence of the Christian penetration in Indonesia, which Muslim communities should address.⁴⁶

Therefore, Ahmad Dahlan has a moral responsibility to conduct similar activities with Christians, mainly in the education sector. Through Muhammadiyah, Dahlan realized to maintain the existence of Islam in Indonesia by introducing reformist notions. Although there are not many documents that explain the contradiction between Christians and Muhammadiyah in the era of its establishment, Dahlan's statements, which were recorded, denote his concerns on this missionary's hazard. When other movements like *Boedi Oetomo*, *Sarekat Islam*, and *Jami'atul Khair* did not care about the threat of the Christian penetration in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah has had a serious concern to deal with such a threat. The neutral position of *Boedi Oetomo* in responding to religious

⁴³ Interview with Syukriyanto AR, coordinator for the Institute of Arts, Culture, and Sport (LSBO), Central Board of Muhammadiyah 2015-2022, on 16 November 2019.

⁴⁴ Interview with Abdul Munir Mulkhan, former vice secretary for the Central Board of Muhammadiyah 2000-2005, on 26 January 2020 and 31 January 2020.

⁴⁵ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 264-265.

⁴⁶ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 265-266.

affairs and distancing itself from Islam ultimately stipulated Dahlan to establish Muhammadiyah.⁴⁷

The keen interpretation of Dahlan toward the *surah* Al-Ma'un to call for love can be implemented in tangible deeds, and community development programs reinforce his powerful decision to rival Christian directly. Dahlan was aware of the urgent agenda to compete for Christian missions regarding the foundation of schools, orphanages, healthcare clinics, and other institutions. If no party responds to the Christian penetrations, Indonesian Muslims will suffer the loss of various disadvantages. The Dahlan's scare on this fact and was supported by the good expectation for the future of Islam in Indonesia inspired him to establish Muhammadiyah. This organization restored the pride of Muslims when the Islamic influence was decreasing. The rise of many Muhammadiyah followers demonstrated the public's immense support to Dahlan to resist the real Christian penetration.⁴⁸

When Muhammadiyah was under the Dahlan leadership, its oppositional side toward the Christian penetration threat seemed soft to protect its existence and future. After Dahlan's death, such resistance was frankly behaved by Muhammadiyah cadres such as Fachrodin, the vice-chair of Muhammadiyah. Fachrodin was the pioneer to lead the Muslim force to resist the Christian penetration.⁴⁹ Thus, the Dahlan's consciousness to take a serious response to this penetration affected Indonesian Muslims' triumph. The strategy to establish similar institutions with Christians was the political strategy of Dahlan to maintain Islam in Indonesia.

Conclusion

To answer the central question of this study, namely, how does the origin of the political consciousness in Muhammadiyah? The finding demonstrates that such a political consciousness can be traced back into a fourfold thing. First, the consciousness is originated from the influence of Islamic reformist ideas of the Middle East. Second, it can be seen in the consciousness to liberate society and Muslims from the backwardness. Third, it can be discovered into the consciousness to liberate Indonesia from the physical colonization. Fourth, it can be tracked into the consciousness to liberate Indonesian Muslims from the Cristian penetration.

⁴⁷ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 266-268.

⁴⁸ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 268-269.

⁴⁹ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus...*, p. 269-270.

The first factor denotes outside Indonesia's external factors, while others can be classified as the internal factor illustrating Indonesian situations. Both factors eventually shaped the journey of political consciousness in Muhammadiyah for more than one century later with various dynamics. The influence of Islamic reformism of the Middle East and the liberation consciousness eventually become the source of the political consciousness in Muhammadiyah. In turn, they have been inspiring the creation of the political reason (*akal politik*) of Muhammadiyah, including the political paradigm of Muhammadiyah.

References

- Alfian. *Muhammadiyah the Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989.
- Al-Hamdi, Ridho, et al. *Penelitian Kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar and Lab IP UMY
- Ali, A. Mukti. *The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction*. Montreal, Canada: Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University, 1957.
- Arifin, M. T. *Muhammadiyah Potret yang Berubah*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2016.
- Asyari, Suaidi. 'Ijtihād-based Politics: The Muhammadiyah Political Participation in Post- Soeharto'. *Studia Islamika*. Vol. 15, No. 1. 2008.
- Asy'arie, Musa. *Filsafat Islam: Sunnah Nabi dalam Berfikir*. Yogyakarta: Lesfi, 2002.
- Creswell, John. W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Edisi Ketiga. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2013.
- Darban, Ahmad Adabi. *Sejarah Kauman: Menguak Identitas Kampung Muhammadiyah*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010.
- Flyvbjerg, B. Case Study. Dalam Norman K. Denzin, & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Edisi Keempat. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011.
- Hadjid. *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan: 7 Falsafah dan 17 Kelompok Ayat Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018.
- Jainuri, Achmad. *Ideologi Kaum Reformis: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Muhammadiyah Periode Awal*. Surabaya: LPAM, 2002.
- Kattsoff, Louis. O. *Elements of Philosophy*. New York: Ronald Press Co, 1953.
- Majelis Diktilitbang and LPI PP Muhammadiyah. *1 Abad Muhammadiyah: Gagasan Pembaruan Sosial Keagamaan*. Jakarta: Kompas, 2010.

- Mustansir, Rizal, and Munir, Misnal. *Filsafat Ilmu*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004.
- Nashir, Haedar. *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010.
- Nashir, Haedar, et al. 'Muhammadiyah's Moderation Stance in the 2019 General Election: Critical Views from Within'. *Al-Jami'ah*. Vol. 57, No. 1. 2019.
- Noer, Deliar. *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985.
- Peacock, James. L. *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1978.
- Pollock, John L. and Cruz, Joseph. *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*. Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1999.
- Salam, Junus. *KHA Dahlan Amal dan Perjuangannya*. Jakarta: Depot Pengajaran Muhammadiyah, 1968.
- Shihab, Alwi. *Membendung Arus: Respon Gerakan Muhammadiyah terhadap Penetrasi Misi Kristen di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2016.
- Syaifullah. *Gerak Politik Muhammadiyah dalam Masyumi*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2019.
- Wardana, Amika, and Hidayat, Syahrul. 'The Multiplicity of Muhammadiyah's Political Engagement in Indonesia's DPD Election'. *Studia Islamika*. Vol. 26, No. 1. 2019.