

Politics of Education: Multiculturalism Practice in Universitas Muhammadiyah Kupang, NTT.

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Abstract-*In Indonesia post authoritarian era, the education practice in many districts is facing several dynamics especially as logical consequence from political decentralization including in education sector. There have been many horizontal conflicts in regions as political response in opposing central government acts to build local identity that frequently being clashed with racial/race/region based social conflict. This research aims to analyze the dynamic of higher education in Muhammadiyah university of Kupang (UMK) that managed by Muhammadiyah as private institution, to eventually understand how the design and practice of multiculturalism education in this Islam based university in Kupang. Of several FGD and interviews that we combine with political theory analysis about multiculturalism education, we find several conclusions that lead us to say that multicultural education design in UMK is not sufficient. Practice of respecting diversity in UMK is mostly based in individual awareness to naturally accept pluralism. This is also supported by family experience of student that since their early has been living in diversity.*

Keywords: *Politics; Muhammadiyah; UMK, Multiculturalism; Higher Education, dan UMK.*

Abstract-*Pasca Orde Baru, praktik pendidikan di daerah-daerah mengalami dinamika terutama sebagai konsekuensi logis dari desentralisasi politik termasuk di lembaga pendidikan. Banyak persoalan konflik horisontal di daerah sebagai bagian dari respon politik yang menantang pusat untuk membangun identitas daerah masing-masing yang kerap bersinggungan dengan konflik sosial yang dilatari masalah SARA. Riset ini dilakukan untuk melihat bagaimana dinamika pendidikan tinggi di UM Kupang dimana kampus ini dikelola oleh lembaga swasta yaitu Muhammadiyah, yaitu menjawab bagaimana desain dan praktik pendidikan multikultural di lingkungan pendidikan*

tinggi islam (Muhammadiyah) di Kupang. Dari serangkaian FGD dan wawancara dan analisis teori politik pendidikan Multikulturalisme, maka ditemukan beberapa kesimpulan bahwa desain pendidikan multikultural di UM Kupang belum memadai. Praktik penghargaan terhadap keberagaman di lingkungan UMK lebih didasari pada kesadaran individu untuk menerima keragaman. Hal ini juga didukung oleh pengalaman kehidupan keluarga mahasiswa yang sudah cukup beragam sejak usia dini.

Kata-kata Kunci: Politik, Muhammadiyah, Multikulturalisme, Pendidikan Tinggi dan UMK.

1. Introduction

As a country, Indonesia is an evolving giant laboratory. Although its age is 70 yet Indonesia still have to learn a lot of things to become ideal nation-state. Since its establishment as republic, Indonesia chose to apply democracy system. The chosen state form is unitary state. In its history, the unitary democracy has faced so many dynamics.¹ One of crucial problems in keeping state integration is horizontal conflict triggered by religion, race, tribe, and other values different. Indonesia's multicultural situation is like fire within a husk that potentially can be burnt if something triggers it. Indonesia is one of the most plural countries in the world. Both Indonesia socio-cultural and geographical condition are so diverse and broad. Indonesia is 13.000 islands, consist of big and small islands. Indonesia total population is reaching more than 200 million inhabitants and they are come from 300 different tribes with different 200 local languages. The religion and faith that these people embrace are also diverse, those are Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, Konghucu, and other beliefs.² Within each of these religions also have so many variants. In other word, Islam that followed by Muslims in Indonesia also varies Ahlu Sunnah, Shia, Ahmadiyah, and even Wahabi. Other religions beside Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, and Budha are too having many variants within.

This plural condition is, in one side, a social capital of nation. Social capital is collective energy of society that if it is managed properly and effectively would greatly contribute to the development

¹Firmanzah. *Persaingan, Legitimasi Kekuasaan, dan Marketing Politik* (Jakarta, 2010)..

²M, Ainul Yakin, *Pendidikan Multikultural, Cross-Cultural Understanding, Untuk Demokrasi dan Keadilan*, (Yogyakarta : Pilar Media, 2007), 1.

and dynamic of society. Collective energy in form of togetherness, solidarity, cooperation, tolerance, trust, and responsible will generate harmony and balance in society. However, on the other hand, this plurality is vulnerably could turn into a conflict between religion, race, tribe, and values applied in society. Conflicts in Ambon, Poso, Sampit, Shia expulsion in Madura, and Ahmadiyah that attacked by FPI are some examples of conflict that highly talked in both local and national level, and even some of them are spread to global society.

It requires special strategy through various sectors education, politic, economy, culture, and social compactly to deal with this problem. Education is a foundation and also a main medium to nurture and develop national character and identity that based on cooperation, amicable, firm, and polite. Multicultural education can be an alternative to realize that strategy. The spirit of multicultural is actually has accommodated by law number 20 2003 about national education system. In chapter III, article four point one mentions that education is held democratically, anti-discriminative and honouring human rights, religious values, cultural value, and nation's development.

An empirical reference point of this research is multicultural education program in Muhammadiyah University of Kupang (UMK), Nusa Tenggara Timur. Muhammadiyah University of Kupang (further will be shortened to UMK) is seen interesting due to 70% of 4.270 students are non-Muslim.³ As one of private higher education in NTT, UMK that was established on 1987, in its 27 years has yielded 12.475 alumni. Its alumni have worked for both private and public sectors. UMK also has been improving its physical aspect through many infrastructure development programs like building several new representative buildings. From its quality, UMK now sitting in the second rank of best private university in NTT as measured and graded by KOPERTIS region VIII because it success to maintain its most programs accreditation in B. UMK is the only private university in NTT that has its own student dormitory since 2014.

³Several studies have been carried out, including: Dwi Fanda Larasati, entitled *Implementasi Pendidikan Multikultural Dalam Institusi Pendidikan*; Laila Octaviani, *Implementasi Pendidikan Multikultural di SMA Taruna Nusantara Magelang*; Erik Aditia Ismaya, *Pendidikan Multikultural di Yogyakarta*; Ceceng Salamudin, *Nilai-Nilai Multikultural Dalam Tafsir al-Maraghi dan Al Misbah serta Implikasinya Bagi Pengembangan Materi Pelajaran al-Qur'an-Hadits di Madrasah Aliyah*; Nunuk Hariyati, *Analisis Rencana Pengembangan Kurikulum Berbasis Multikultural: Studi Kasus di SMA Selamat Pagi Indonesia Kota Batu*; an. Abdullah Aly, *Pendidikan Multikultural di PPMI Assalaam*.

Muhammadiyah track record through UMK multicultural education program has given new positive color for “tolerance” that lately is becoming unheard in Indonesia. UMK will be a magnet for many researchers to find how tolerance is applied due to strong element of needing each other. In 103/100 reflection of Muhammadiyah, Monday (19/11/2012), in Jakarta, ex vice chief of PP Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, said that since the beginning of its birth, Muhammadiyah has been an organization that open and tolerance to difference, including difference on belief. KH Ahmad Dahlan, founding of Muhammadiyah, was friend and interacting with people from various religion and racial background. “Even to be friend with an atheist is fine,” asserted by founding of Syafii Maarif foundation who well known to be called as Buya. Ahmad Dahlan’s tolerance attitude is continued by his successors until today. All groups say that Muhammadiyah is a “house for all, a house for sheltered to all human of this nation.

This research is held in UMK, Kupang, NTT. Kupang has been known for its high plurality level. The reasons in choosing Muhammadiyah university as research object are; First, the rate of non-Muslim percentage that reaches approximately 70% of total students and the fact that some of teaching staffs who are non-Muslims and some religion based student organization whose their existence are not taken as issue. Another interesting thing in this reason is the fact that UMK invites several non-Islam religion lecturers from other universities to teach the non-Muslim students their own religion. Second, the fact that Kupang is not impacted by many conflicts happened in many regions in East Indonesia. People there say that there is no religion based conflict in Kupang. Even the non-Muslim Major was helping the building of mosque that has been delayed.

B. Theoretical Framework

The concept of multicultural education embraces definition, dimension, phase, and goal. Multicultural education is a concept or a thought in the idea of education sector governance that was not simply emerges and grows. As a product of policy, there must be political, economy, social, and intellectual interest that encourages the emergence of this concept. In the beginning, the idea of multicultural education was highly America ‘bias’ due to its historical root that associated with the struggle of human right movement and the oppression towards various groups in America at 1960s. Education institution was specifically highlighted because it was not in line with the idea of racial equality.

Supports that demand education institution to be consistent in accepting diversity were getting massive in the 1960s until the beginning of 1970s. They demand an equal opportunity in job and education. This momentum was considered as the beginning of conceptualization of multicultural education idea.⁴

To obtain theoretical basis of this research, it should be emphasized that some basic concepts in this study are (1) Citizenship education; (2) Inclusive citizenship or democratic citizenship; (3) Pluralism; dan (4) Multiculturalism.

1. Civic Education

In Indonesia, citizenship education/civic education is an inherent obligation to any education institution both delivered by government and private institution. This is appropriate as mentioned in various laws both ministry regulation and law (*UU*) regarding to human rights; law number 34 1999, another older law that still exist law number 3 1946, and law number 62 1958 (about citizenship). In decentralization context, as referred to law number 23 2014, it does not remove this “multiculturalism obligation”, and even it should be more accommodated in order to reintegrate and strengthen the unity of Republic of Indonesia.

The clear definition of citizenship and civic education found itself in 1972 through national seminar about “teaching and civic education” in Tawangmangu, Central Java. After the seminar, we then have a clear definition on our civic education:

“ Civic education is an education program that its main aim is to nurture citizen decently in accordance to requirements, criteria, measurement, and provisions as regulated in the opening of UUD 1945.”

In law number 2 2000 about national education system mentions about what is used as a basic in providing higher education. The article 32 point 2 mentions that curriculum content of each kind, track, and level of education compulsorily contains: (a) Pancasila education; (b) Religion education; dan (c) Civic education that includes “The

⁴Dwi Fanda Larasati, *Implementasi Pendidikan Berbasis Multikultural Dalam Institusi Pendidikan*, a paper in *Temu ilmiah Nasional Guru* in 2011 organized by Universitas Terbuka.

introduction education on State Defense” (PPBN).⁵ Civic education subject in higher education is part of character building subject (MPK).

2. Inclusive Citizenship

Hefner (2007) noted that only a few of challenges toward the dream of democratic citizenship that could be more danger from any disintegration in society—ethnic, religious, and linguistic disintegration. Since the beginning of modern era, liberal group in Western has showed pessimism towards the realization of democratic state governance in the middle of multicultural society. According to J.S Miller (1958):

“Independence or free institutions are impossible to be born in countries that consist of diverse races/tribes. Among those who have no similarity, especially if they speak and talk different language, connectivity of public opinion as important factor for the establishment of representative government, is hardly could live.”

According to Hefner and researchers, the situation that illustrated by Mill is an irony and paradoxes in which West that born from diversity background could imagine the same thing with dramatized fear. A view like Mill’s is many. They are great at accommodating plurality matters in their own country yet not for other countries. They really are not ready to face cultural plurality

Another similarity in these concepts are its focus on citizen protection both the majority and minority. This is different with liberal proponents arguing that protection is given only to individual and if it is done properly then there is no longer need to guarantee minority groups rights. This can lead to situation in which the dominant is oppressing the minority/weak. Indonesia once had this and sometimes it appears again in many cases in education institution regarding to religion subject and the rule that obligates woman to wear veil (to mention some of them).

3. Pluralism

Pluralism is rooted on word “plural” that means diversity and “ism” means a thought, so pluralism is an idea about diversity. In order to build religious and peaceful society, many experts and scholars are emphasizing the importance of pluralism. This thought is asserting the

⁵See, Agustian, Rio A & Julianti, Fitri, *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*, (Bangka Belitung: Universitas Bangka Belitung Press, 2010).

equality aspect, by which all religions are the same in term of many ways to us to get to heaven. According to Indonesia dictionary, pluralism is defined as diverse society related to its political and social system where culturally plural. Robushka & Shepsle (1972) identify plural society characteristically has five indicators; plural in racial, language, religion, tribe, and culture. Therefore, Indonesia is a nation with high level of plurality. According to Robushka dan Shepsle, the above plurality has no positive correlation towards the discordance of political and social system. This kind of society is defined as pluralistic society. On the other hand, Furnival defines “plural society” as society that has two or more social order, group or community, who lives side by side without being integrated into political unity.⁶ A sign of plural society is the absence of common will as shown in Indonesia society (Nasikun, 1995).

Consciousness about religion diversity albeit all are fragmented from the same source is basically a serious theological problem for Prophet Muhammad Saw and this is why Qur’an also provides a guide regarding to this issue. It is common that all religions have their own righteous claim. This is mentioned in Al-Baqoroh point 113 and 213. These actually give progressive Islamic spirit form Muhammadiyah to prove the truth of *Rahmatanlilalamien*. Amin Abdullah gave an important note about how Muhammadiyah could act for now and further, he said:

“...in the journey facing both global world and local-national life that full of dynamics, today and in the future, Muhammadiyah needs multi-perspective *da’wah* vision and also enlightened elites within Muhammadiyah itself. Muhammadiyah has to be ready in delivering multicultural *da’wah* and global *da’wah* systematically...”⁷

Actually, pluralism is an old thought. This thought emerged simultaneously with west countries modernization wave. In a nutshell, this ideology originally appeared in Western, Europe. In the idea of religion pluralism that grows in Western, there is two different streams; First, a thought known with its global theology program and the latter is a thought of transcendent unity of religions. These two groups have

⁶See Nasikun, *Sistem Sosial Indonesia*, 29.

⁷Amin Abdullah, “Muhammadiyah di Tengah Pluralitas Keberagamaan” in *Rekonstruksi Gerakan Muhammadiyah Pada Era Multi Peradaban* (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2000).

built a concept and principle that eventually turn into systemic thought blaming one to another.

The emergence of these two schools of thought also caused by two different motives, even these schools are both born in West and be a reference point for Western society. For the first school that generally dominated by sociological discourse, its main motive was modernization and globalization demand. Due to the importance of religion in this globalization era, so the relationship between religion and globalization is taking a central them in religion sociology.

3. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism and multiculturalism education are two key points in this research. Multiculturalism etimologically has been used since 1950s in Canada. Longer Oxford Dictionary describes the multiculturalism term is rooted on multicultural word to illustrate Canada society as multicultural and multilingual society. Multiculturalism requires egalitarian between existing cultures. Multiculturalism fights for removing any form of law, social, and political discrimination and support these groups in preserving their cultural identity. Multiculturalism still emphasizes the importance of collective political culture that guarantees social unity. Moreover, multiculturalism also only legitimate as long as it is not confronting the private wellbeing principle and thus based its idea on human rights and constitutional rights.

Politics of multiculturalism is a politic that tries to translate the facts of social multiculturalism into institutional politic order. Politics of multiculturalism is urgently important to be socialized and applied because in social, political, cultural, and economy of modern and postmodern society, the significant elements of social reproduction such as group identity, language, and culture that can only survive in public dimension is needing a warranty and state political support. Politics of multiculturalism opposes liberalism model that has been implemented in new order era. According to Otto Gusti (2016)⁸, a basic vision of multiculturalism is to answer a question about how to manage societal life that equal, peace, and in a situation where everyone willing to acknowledge a society that ethnically, racially, culturally, and religiously plural without any dominant culture.

Conceptually, multicultural education is interpreted as education about culture plurality/diversity in order to response demographical and

⁸Source: <http://kupang.tribunnews.com/2014/07/21/multikulturalisme>.

cultural change in certain neighborhood of society or even in world.⁹ Education is a way to teaching diversity. Multicultural education requires rationality, ethic, intellectual, inter-relative pragmatic social, that is teaching inclusivism and pluralism values and respect all people and their culture. Multicultural education has five dimensions, which are content integration (integrating various groups and cultures to illustrate a basic concept, generalization, and theory in a course), the knowledge construction process (bringing student to understand cultural implication to the subject), an equity pedagogy (adjusting teaching method with student various learning methods), prejudice reduction (Identifying student racial characteristics and determine their teaching method), exercise (train student and encourage them to participate in sports, and to interact to all different staffs and students).¹⁰

C. Research Method

This research employs qualitative method with ethnography approach. Ethnography method will be used in collecting data. According to Nasution, qualitative research is describing a complex reality.¹¹ Reality in qualitative research is viewed as subjective and multiple things.¹² The types of data include primary and secondary data. Primary data is all information about research concept (or things related with it) that researchers obtained directly from analysis unit that used as research object.¹³ In this research, primary data is taken from interview with informants. Furthermore, secondary data is all information that obtained indirectly, through literatures documenting the condition of research concept (or things related with it) in unit analysis as research object.¹⁴ In this research, secondary data used in this research is official document of legislation, literatures, books, and other official documents published by government relating to observed problems.

An understanding about process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of multicultural education program will be conducted

⁹See, Choirul Mahfud, *Pendidikan Multikultural*, (Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar, 2008), 175-176.

¹⁰James Banks, *Multicultural Education : Historical Development, Dimension, and Practice*, (Review of Research in Education, 1993).

¹¹S. Nasution, *Metode Penelitian Naturalistik Kualitatif*, (Bandung :Transito, 1988), 12-14

¹²John W. Creswell, *Research Design : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (California : SAGE 1994), 5.

¹³Rahmawati, Dian Eka, *Diktat Mata Kuliah Metode Penelitian Sosial*, (Yogyakarta. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2011).

¹⁴*Ibid.*

through (1) Observation to UMK, NTT, (2) Interview with students, lecturers, staffs, and eksternal stakeholders. All of these aimed to obtain correct thought on what Berger & Luckman (1997) said as the meaning of “social reality” in campus everyday life with its cultural plurality interaction pattern. Social reality in this case is vary from subjective, objective, and inter subjective. According to Berger and Luckman, sociology theory should be able to explain how society’s life is shaped within continuity process that also our everyday life. Furthermore, this research’s technique on collecting data uses documentation technique with reading literatures on multiculturalism discourse both in Indonesia and other countries. Hence, this descriptive data is gained from documents, field notes, respondent testimony, scientific books, magazines, bulletins, and newspaper.¹⁵ Observation technique to UMK, interaction, FGD, and in-depth interview with UMK academic staffs are conducted in order to ensure the validity or objectivity and to avoid understanding bias through confirming various information found in field study.

Data analysis is conducted with qualitative technique that is with doing analysis to obtain a picture and category that further will be patterned. The patterns that found in the research is interpreted in accordance to research analysis model. This analysis is formed in inductive form, which means building theory from data through displaying those data first and then they are analyzed, and eventually concluded.

D. Discussion

If we look back and trace the history of Muhammadiyah, we could easily find the as a mass organization, Muhammadiyah has been supportive to the ideas of multiculturalism education. Muhammadiyah is Islamic movement and *amarma 'rufnahimunkar* missionary (*da'wah*) whose aim is to build the real Islamic society with progressive and modern Islamic values in its *da'wah*. Since its establishment on 1912, Muhammadiyah has exerted for inclusive education. The Muhammadiyah education institutions accept student regardless of their religion, ethnic, citizen, and economic background (non-discrimination principle).¹⁶

Given the case of Muhammadiyah University of Kupang, a conclusion considers modern Islamic group like Muhammadiyah

¹⁵*Ibid*, 143.

¹⁶Abdul & Fajar, *Kristen Muhammadiyah*, 18.

unappreciative towards pluralism and local wisdom is highly inappropriate. This is supported by the fact in Kupang that shows how Muhammadiyah can stand for all religion and ethnic. Generally, many research about Muhammadiyah such as the ones conducted by Nakamura, James L. Peacock, Ahmad Jainuri, and Alwi Shihab show us that even Muhammadiyah is highly emphasize on the implementation of Islamic monotheism (*Tauhid*) or the pure Islam yet its founders and figures were an open minded person and tolerate to society tradition and other religion followers, especially Christian and catholic.

For instance, Muhammadiyah University of Kupang (UMK) is one of Muhammadiyah university (PTM), among others, whose majority of student is non-Muslim and of course, not Muhammadiyah members. In Kupang, more than 70 UMK students are non-Muslim and this situation has run for more than 20 years (since 1989). Some staffs and lecturers are too non-Muslim, even the chief of Anthropology department is Christian. Muhammad Ihwan, a secretary of UMK LP3M, said that there has been no domestic conflict in UMY regarding to the religion matters. This information was also confirmed by two non-Muslim lecturers that we met. Essentially, Muhammadiyah has inclusive social ideology.

1. The History of Multiculturalism in Kupang

Kupang multiculturalism history was started since the arrival of Portugal and Netherland in Nusa Tenggara Timur. These two nations were carrying two different missions, and one of them is to spread their belief (missionary quest) in which the Portugal came to spread Catholic and Netherland to spread Christian (protestan). At that time, politically Portugal and Netherland divide NTT territory, by which Portugal got Flores, Solor, Flores Barat, Wai Kusi, Timur Tengah Utara, Belu sampai ke Timor-timor. On the other hand, Netherland took Kupang, Sabu, Rote, Timur Tengah Selatan, Sumba. This political division led to the religion based territory division Protestan territory and Catholic territory. Later on, pluralist culture particularly multiculturalism, in Kupang, grew in most individual especially those who born and grow there due to the diversity of social background and it habituates them to live in this diversity, and eventually shape their tolerance and harmony sense since their childhood. History records one interesting story about 1998 riot. At that time, the local residents who were not involve in the riot helped the property of migrant settlers with putting cross marks in their shops and houses. It shows us that even in unstable condition due

to the sudden riot and outside provocation, the sense to keep and protect each other is maintained and applied, yet we should also recognized that there still many conflict potentials in Kupang that could be erupted anytime because of the elitist power still strongly exist. Hence, in this term, the elites function is to press this potential so it would not be easily turn into conflict.

1. The Multicultural Education Design in UMK

There are three kinds of structure that can encourage the establishment of multiculturalism education practice in Islamic education institution. Furthermore, state and Muhammadiyah support can guarantee the continuity of reality based education model. It is hard to deny that Muhammadiyah can even represent a state within a state so it has power to intervene the institution design in teaching in formal education institution.

a. University Support

In the account, what makes it interesting was how participants in FGD (lecturer, staff, student, student movement activist) identify their own dynamic biography and mostly accommodative to multicultural life. This experience is becoming crucial to be identified as personal capacity regarding to individual attitude and the meaning of life in the middle of diversity. This is also one of valuable entry points in designing multiculturalism based education service as local contain or what so-called as 'local asset'. Those who have strong profile coming from diverse social background tend to support the notion of multiculturalism education in Muhammadiyah university. For student movement activists, the ideas of multiculturalism are considered to be able to reduce discrimination practice conducted by university to non-Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) student activities. In this term, university's role is actually still crucial even, for certain degree, its effort in realizing multiculturalism campus is not maximal yet.

Personal capacity about diversity values does not necessarily institutionalize properly in university due to, oftentimes, there are certain actors with certain ethnical symbol in the formation of staff/employee structure or foundation officials. In a nutshell, UMK has serious challenge to be seriously accommodating this diversity. It is not all entity in UMK has similar background and even not all of them have known Muhammadiyah since their childhood. One Tidak semua entitas UMK juga berlatar belakang agama yang sama dan bahkan tidak semua

mengenal Muhammadiyah sejak kecil. One of lecturers said (FGD participant):

“...I was anti-Muhammadiyah due to my limited information about it. However, since I became a lecturer, I started learning Muhammadiyah.. I wanted to draw the red line if we want to decide, we also have to be involve and not only seeing its skin, because what is inside could be different with the skin, maybe that is my experience...”

The dynamic of life in the middle of plural society is sometime not merely personal matter. In other words, it requires proper behave and a willing to learn before concluding a mistake. One of young lecturer, Sulastuti, who originated from Java gave a testimony about her success story when in adapting with new neighborhood and culture in Kupang. Even in democracy era that we believe now as our most appropriate system of value, there still a way of thinking that supports nationalism in one side, and neglecting the local culture on the other side. This is a common challenge that frequently appears in decision making.

That is why for NTT people, pluralism is not a strange concept. They used to live in diversity. Muslim and Catholic who do marriage is also not really a big thing. The figures of NTT people too are inclusively respect to any differences and routinely visit other groups as what Pak Mukarim (MUI chief) always do—he used to come to any religious ceremony invitation. This has given a positive signal especially to Christian as majority element in NTT. He, Pak Mukarim, has great influence in strengthening and uniting relationship between religion and ethnic.

According to Pak Welham (Christian UMK lecturer), if survey is conducted among Christian and Catholic in NTT, some figures that they admire most would be Gus Dur and AzumardiAzra. Pak Welham emphasizes that Gus Dur and Azumardi figures have have tremendous influence in Kupang. If the upper-middle class in national scope has some figures like them so there would be no reason to sharpen a different and hatred.

“To be honest, that is my experience and so I am feeling so lucky that I live at NTT even I also experienced to study and live in Bali for years. I was born there and moved to Jakarta for years. But, finally I decided to move and stay here in NTT because I

feel happy to live here since we never have any conflict. I further also have experience when I first live in my neighborhood there is a mosque near my house, and its speaker was quite a loud, yet afterward I realize that it has to be accepted as something natural.”

Similar with above story, Pak Ibi’s experience as Catholic lecturer in UMK was too unique. He became a lecturer in UMK in 1987 because his senior was asking him to. Then, he did not feel worry even some of his friends were saying like ”why should you work there? Is your salary not big enough in Catholic university?” and Pak Ibi gave very interesting answer:

“... That is not the reason and to me personally, Muhammadiyah has become my second university after previously I teach in UNDANA yet here, in UMK, I feel like I am home, I feel so enjoy. I do not feel like something is restricting my move, and to me, everything I do in UMK is for the sake and wellbeing of all NTT people. Our graduate, in the future, is what I think as the most important priority.”

So the values applied or believed by Muhammadiyah that makes the teaching staffs comfort is the inclusive ideology or the progressive ethic with its humanity principles. The FGD participants unquestionably accept plurality and then manifested from democratic campus life, not exclusive, and good relationship among academic staffs. This is what makes both non-Muslim students and academic staffs are having no psychological burden. It is also important to be noted, there is no exclusive religion based organizations.

Another thing is about the obligation for all Muhammadiyah university to provide Islamic course and *Kemuhammadiyah*an. According to Pak Wilm and Pak Ibi, this is a consequence to UMK as Islam based university that clearly states a vision to provide an understanding about the history and values of Muhammadiyah. About the possibility for non-Muslim students to not being charged with these Islamic courses, it seems that not many of Muhammadiyah top officials who have thought about this. Pak Wilhem said:

“... I have been working quite a long time in department which edits and formulates a curriculum that we actually have authority

to design our own, so the institution curriculum is having Al-Islam course and well known with *haika* and religion and this is a national scope. Since the establishment of this university, those religion courses have been designed inclusively so students study their own religion course and have no obligation to follow other religion courses. For instance, the catholic will have a priest teaching in their class for the religion course.”

Generally, the non-Muslim students who quantitatively reach 70% of total students are fine with the ‘non-Muslim’ term labeled to them. They do not take it as discriminative term. Moreover, they receive AIK courses (Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah*) finely. It means they are not annoyed to follow other religion courses. Those non-Muslim students having no complain on these courses as a consequence from UMK status as Islam based university yet still not in religion comparative frame. One of benefits of these Islamic courses for those non-Muslim students is they learn new lesson on societal life.

b. State Support

Indonesia people are society with high rate of diversity with deep complexity. Society with this vary diversity is called with multicultural society. If we identify our society as a group of people who, for a long time, have been living together and cooperate so they can organize and think about themselves as one social unity with certain territory (Linton), so that concept of society if we combine it with multicultural concept, we will have too wide meaning of society. Therefore, there is a need to have a deep understanding to understand what multicultural society means.

Basically, the existing multiculturalism in Indonesia is shaped by the diversity and the broad of both socio-cultural and geographical aspect. Geographically, Indonesia has a lot islands in which those islands are inhabited by groups of people then build a society. From this society, it furthers will build its own culture about its people. Surely, it contributes in the making of cultural diversity. The Kupang city administration has quite enormous commitment in supporting the development of multicultural society. This commitment will be important support if UMK is employing multicultural education method.

Abdul Munir Mulkhan, a member of official Dikti Assembly PP Muhammadiyah, has once appreciated president Jokowi’s plan in

fighting for the establishment of curriculum that respects the balance between local wisdom/contain and national aspect in order to build an intrinsic understanding of Indonesia fundamental value, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This president and vice president pair of 2014 election result was also promise not to apply the uniformity model of national education system including the national examination. This is crucial so *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* would not stop only as a jargon. According to Prof MunirMulkhan, education practice that applies the uniformity model or monoculture with neglecting the local uniqueness and plurality as what has been practicing for decades would dangerously suppress the development of critical and creative personality.

State should actively promote and design the multicultural education system for kids since their early so our young generation would not stuck in single-way of living in our nation life that will lead them to the failure in facing contemporary nation's complex problems. This kind of generation the ones with strong multicultural understanding will be more stable and not easily provoked by any political issues. In general, multicultural could be shaped in Indonesia due to several factors; geographical position, cross ethnic, religion or tribe marriage, and the last is climate factor. In many other countries, some factors such as urbanization, transmigration, and immigration have also contributed in the making of multicultural society. In Indonesia, multicultural is naturally normative. The normative multicultural is a guide about interest that leads to higher acknowledgement regarding to the nationality and different group identity in society. Normative multicultural first mandated in UUD 1945. The clause in constitution clearly mention that people and Indonesia as a nation embraces various ethnic groups.

c. **Muhammadiyah Support**

Former leader of PP Muhammadiyah, Professor DienSyamsudin, said that Kupang's jargon as "miniature of Indonesia" is definitely correct considering its existing ethnic and religion diversity, as also exist in UMK since its establishment on 1987. There were also non-Muslim among UMK founding fathers, as there is also non-Muslim active department chief (anthropology). The students, of more than 4.000, 70% are non-Muslim. Interestingly, there has been no conflict until now. Furthermore, those non-Muslim students are taking Arabic language and AIK course. This is considered as best life practice in creating a harmony in diversity. One of FGD participants, Drs Ipi de Rosari, said that NTT main characteristic is its harmony culture—

society is putting harmony beyond other things which make them uneasy to be provoked by any issue. This kind of practice could be easily found in university. One of UMK lecturer, Beraga Ngonggoek, a protestant, testified that he feels comfortable to work in UMK due to the strong respect to pluralism.

In the context of multiculturalism design in UMK, there has been no special design that manifested in education curriculum that integrative in curriculum context and social need. Many students recognized UMK not in the context of Islam based institution which delivers education service yet it is more recognized as a place to gain knowledge and transform into better and competitive individual in the job market. This energy is possessed by alumni or families who have graduated from UMK. Kekuatan ini berada pada alumni atau keluarga yang telah lulus dari UMK. This is confirmed by one of respondents who testified:

“...I come from Maggarai, Flores. I came to Kupang with my old brother. I heard that there is a university named Muhammadiyah university. I was so interesting, yet not in the religion aspect, rather on the inclusivity of this university that being a house for various ethnics and religions. I did not see its religion yet more on the education quality aspect.”

Actually, the existence of UMK has indirectly contributed in reducing conflict, this could be motivated from students who study in UMK that previously have no idea on Muhammadiyah movement and tend to antipathy to Muhammadiyah have gradually changed when they find out the real meaning of Muhammadiyah movement. They afterward could change their mindset and put Muhammadiyah in its more proportional and just position, and eventually can reduce any conflict potential between Islam organizations in Kupang. UMK is a proper barometer and a benchmark university that has wide diversity both ethnic and religion with strong sense of tolerance. This is showed by UMK majority students who are non-Muslim and reach 70-75%.

In changing both individual and collective mindset of present-days and future generation of Indonesia, in order to face various socio-cultural problems, education is considered as crucial factor in developing multicultural perspective. Education in multicultural perspective can be viewed as a way to mature human being, liberation of human from destructive anarchism, or self-transcendence of human towards multicultural values in nation life, so it would shape a better quality of our socio-cultural life. The multicultural awareness is a

readiness in accepting another group equally as a unity, regardless the cultural, ethnical, gender, language, and religion differences.¹⁷

To shift a society's mindset, one of multicultural education strategies in UMK is with introducing a different side of Islam to counter a contemporary common perception of Islam that used to be associated with terrorism. The strategy is with teaching them Al-Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah* course (AIK) which has three phases; first is learning Islam specifically, second is learning Islamic history, and the last is *Kemuhammadiyah*. This course is taught with an expectation that all students can correctly recognize Muhammadiyah so with this understanding they will have a greater sense of tolerance both for non-Muslims and Muslim. An end goal of this lecture for non-Muslim is providing a general thought about Muhammadiyah and Islam in general.

In the teaching method, *Kemuhammadiyah* is divided into two categories. First is basic *Kemuhammadiyah* for non-Muslim so when they have graduated from UMK, they can tell people about Muhammadiyah in accordance with correct source. Second, a deeper study of Muhammadiyah for Muslim students that consist of system of belief (*Aqidah*) materials, so these materials can help them to participate in reducing horizontal conflict in NTT particularly in Kupang, as we know that there have been many conflicts happened due to lack of information or disinformation about Islam and Islam organization like Muhammadiyah that led to the rough prejudice among society members and resulted on the conflict between religion and conflict within Islam itself. According to several respondents, the practice of AIK education has directly suppressed the post 1998 riot resistance effect in Kupang among conflicted groups.

Another strategy employed by UMK is with introducing students to Arabic language to give them a wider knowledge. In the learning process, the class is divided into two classes, a class for Muslim and non-Muslim. For example, there is Catholic only class and Muslim class. The subject being taught is a simple lesson and related with everyday life. One example is they are taught how to say 'Bapa' in Arabic language. This course is aimed to tell people that Arabic language is not only for Muslim and to remove a thought that saying Islam is Arab, so there will be no *phobia* towards the using of Arabic language for non-Muslim and this eventually aims to correct the non-Muslim students view about Islam itself that contains peace values.

¹⁷Tobroni, *Pendidikan kewarganegaraan Demokrasi, HAM, Civil Society, dan multikulturalisme* (Yogtakarta. Nuansa Aksara. 2007).

It is not only AIK a subject the students (non-Muslim) receive, yet they also get a religion course in accordance to their own religion. This is confirmed by the availability of religion course for non-Muslim students. The teaching is held on special class, like Protestant and Catholic class in big auditorium. The size of the class will be determined by the quantity of registered students. This non-Islam religion course invites Priest and *Romo* routinely to facilitate the non-Muslim students.

This design is the only education design in Islamic university in Indonesia that facilitates non-Muslim students to deepen their religion which means this university has serious commitment in keeping tolerance value with an expectation that all students both Muslim and non-Muslim will receive the same comfortable and peace feeling. This design should be a benchmark for other education institution so unproductive prejudice among and between group members could be reduced.

As explained by Madjid (2000), basically, Islam as religion does not contradict multiculturalism. He even argued that Islam is in line with multiculturalism. Many of Islam lessons teach the importance of respecting diversity. Let us dig some of these values that absorbed from Allah swt sayings: (1) We are reminded that we are created in very diverse in tribes and nations, (2) And this diversity is created so we can know and interact one to another with respect, (3) We should not distinguish people based on racial considerations, (4) Allah swt distinguishes the level of people based on their spirituality/*taqwa*, (5) And human would not be able and not be allowed to measure other people's level of spirituality/*taqwa*. Allah is omniscient and very careful. Therefore, it is safe to say that UMK has implemented Islamic values in its multicultural education design in everyday learning process regardless their student tribe, ethnic, and religion.

Gorski dan Covert in Tobroni (2007) tried to define the multicultural education deeply with emphasizing several points:¹⁸

- 1) Every student has to has an equal chance in developing their potential.
- 2) Preparing every student to participate competently in intercultural society.
- 3) Teacher is prepared to help student's learning process effectively regardless their student's cultural background
- 4) Schools have to actively participate in ending any oppression and violence

¹⁸*Ibid*, 302.

- 5) Education should be a student-center and inclusive to any student's aspiration and experience

In case of student potential development, UMK has not given special attention, as told by one of UMK students. He explained that student executive body (BEM) and student representation body (DPM) do not run really well due to the overlapping of Muhammadiyah internal institution (IMM) and other formal institution (BEM & DPM) that leads not only to smaller space of creativity for student yet it even disturbs the harmony among students in UMK.

In learning process, it requires capable and competent teaching staff. There is an interesting thing about teaching staff in UMK, that there is one non-Muslim lecturer and he is the only and last one—even the rule regulates that it is only Muslim who can be university staff. The existence of this non-Muslim lecturer is due to his contribution and service to UMK. Furthermore, UMK also encourage students through Islamic student organizations such as HMI and IMM to involve in Christmas celebration in Kupang so it would strengthen tolerance as behavior to all religious followers in Kupang.

However, there is one big problem that has not gained serious attention from UMK, that it has not designed coordination system of student body/organization. Problems among student organizations are kept untouched with no particular design to establish democracy and tolerance within university and this is like keeping a trigger that can create a conflict that disrupts a harmony. A clear design and transparency from Muhammadiyah organization to students who are not joining Muhammadiyah internal student organization (IMM) because these students have been feeling discriminated and makes social jealousy and sometimes led to small dispute. If there is more transparency by UMK to non-Muhammadiyah based student organization that have been antipathy to Muhammadiyah based student organization, we are sure that there will be more cooperation among student organizations in creating harmony and tolerance environment.

2. Multicultural Education Practice

Based on this field research, it is obvious that UMK has no clear multicultural education design that integrated with various curriculums such as AIK and citizenship education. Our finding also tells that there is no routine up grading towards university staff from UMK to strengthen

staff's understanding about multiculturalism to improve the college's service to plural students.

In detail, Magsino (1985) identifies six kinds of multicultural education model:

- 1) "Emergent Society" education. This model is an effort to reconstruct an existing cultural diverse that directed to the formation of national culture.
- 2) Education for different cultural group. This model is a special education for kids from different cultural group. Its aim is to provide an equal opportunity with reducing the different between school and family, or between cultures they know in school and the one that they know in house. This model aims to help children to master an official language and the dominant norm in society.
- 3) An education to deepen the intercultural understanding. This model aims to nourish an openness and appreciative to different cultural group. This model is pluralist liberal approach that seeing cultural diversity as priceless thing in society. In this case, multicultural education is directed to reinforce social justice with opposing any discrimination and ethnocentrism.
- 4) An education of cultural accommodation. The goal of this model is to underline the equality between groups. To recognize particularism yet still maintain the dominant curriculum.
- 5) An education of "accommodation and reservation" that try to preserve cultural values and vulnerable group identity.
- 6) Multicultural education that aims to adaptation and education to maintain the bicultural competency. This model is overcoming specific group approach, identify and develop a skill to communicate in cross-cultural way to obtain a knowledge about other language and culture (Tilaar, 2004).

If we refer to above Tilaar's notion, we can conclude that UMK has not has a force in institutional aspect. This is confirmed by fact saying that even reference book on citizenship education that published by DIKTI Assembly PP Muhammadiyah and LP3M Yogyakarta has not accommodated multicultural education model. Even so, there has been already some democratic education contain within it that related with a respect towards plurality and openness to diversity values. Hefner testified that an understanding towards democratic values and civil society not always positively correlated to the realization of life

practice of inclusive citizenship that being a substance of democracy.

Paul R. Carr & Thomas R. Klassen (2006) sees one of problems about the failure of multicultural education is triggered by the hesitate of institution to conduct ethnic based data collection to be used as reference to design a curriculum and teaching staff capacity. Ideally, it should not be only for education in university level, but since the elementary and high school. This is also a finding in UMK therefore it requires significant improvement to optimize the service capability for students.

E. Conclusion

Without a tendency to make holistic conclusion that represents the dynamic practice of multicultural education in Muhammadiyah university, this research is intended to conduct a further research. The stakeholders complexity is also important to be calculated because whatever the condition is, UMK is not the only economy or education entity, yet also strongly determined by Muhammadiyah structure as 'owner' and the values its fight for (internal), Kupang city administration, and also various dynamic situation neighborhood (external).

From above discussion, we can draw several points as conclusion and suggestion or recommendation;

- 1) The existence of UMK as education institution that enthused by non-Muslim students is because its tolerance image. The existence of Muhammadiyah university in Kupang should not only be seen merely as Islam institution rather as provider of general education. A fact that majority of UMK students are non-Muslim (70-75%) for decades become our benchmark for us, that our university is chosen not only due to one or several things yet because the level of tolerancy, because Muhammadiyah is preserving tolerance values.
- 2) The candidate of students, especially the non-Muslim, are motivated by a fact about UMK graduates that identified from related family about their job after graduate, how the teaching process, and also the success story after graduate from UMK. Furthermore, an economic factors such as the accessibility of its tuition fee and flexible payment.
- 3) Although UMK has no written grand design as a multiculturalism campus model (there is no multiculturalism word or any word similar to it in university statue), yet the education practice that puts a respect aspect for diversity (*Pancasila* principles) has

been implemented and socially supported by social and political structure in Kupang as a city with decent tolerance practices.

Furthermore, this research gives suggestion and recommendation as follows;

1. There is need to map and evaluate the result/target of AIK education in Muhammadiyah university especially the ones with non-Muslim majority students so the subject being taught shaping better understanding regarding to the values promoted by Muhammadiyah and its nationality role.
2. There is urgency for DIKTI PP Muhammadiyah to formulate responsive AIK towards pluralism to encourage learning process with multicultural perspective in Muhammadiyah universities.
3. The need to design responsive citizenship curriculum towards social reality in Muhammadiyah universities which is the existence of diverse ethnical and religion groups.
4. The need to design and provide training and capacity building for teaching staff and administration staff which based on multiculturalism values.
5. There is a need for input that based on students as a center regarding to the subjects of AIK and Arabic language in Muhammadiyah university, particularly UMK, that has non-Muslim majority students. This is essential considering local contain is becoming a more suitable approach especially in democracy era in Indonesia.

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