

Book Review

SPIRIT OF MUHAMMADIYAH CIVILIZATION

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There have been very few studies conducted on the sociology and anthropology of Muhammadiyah ethics. Ahmad Najib Burhani wrote books entitled *Muhammadiyah Berkemajuan* (2016) and *Muhammadiyah Jawa* (2016), and MT. Arifin wrote *Muhammadiyah Potret yang Berubah* (1990). Besides, several works discuss Muhammadiyah in the context of cultural politics, particularly related to the establishment of educational institutions, public libraries, and magazine publications (Ali, 2016). Other works depict the religious attitude and behavior of figures affiliated with Muhammadiyah (Kim, 1996). Nevertheless, there is a link among those works, which is the interest to explicate how Muhammadiyah flourishes and renews its movement. Such discussion is crucial for Muhammadiyah as an endeavor to understand one of the transformations of the oldest religious-social movement in Indonesia. The discussions are not merely related to the internal transformation of this movement, but also valuable information about the modernization of Islam in Indonesia.

Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Peradaban seeks to show the significant role of the modernization of Islam in the twentieth century toward the contemporary collective Islamic entity in Indonesia. The modernization of Islam is a central key to understand the transformation of Islamic thought in Indonesia. However, such a modernization occurs in several religions. Talal Asad (1993), an anthropologist of religious studies, claims that religions are essentially trans-historical and trans-

cultural phenomena hence it is impossible to detach them from the social processes and the discursive realms that form the discourse of it, except through the domain of Power as proposed by Foucault. Ethics is an essential concept for understanding the bridge between ideas and systems as affected by religion and the impacts on social processes. Initially, ethics must be perceived as symbols that incorporate relations between objects or phenomena, and bring intellectual, instrumental, and emotional impacts.

The contemporary ideas of modern Islam are mostly acceptable to any type of religious culture. Islam is inexorably linked to the cultural, political, and economic processes within society. Assorted researches have been conducted to modernize Islam through the institutionalization of Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, it will be a lit bit strange to divide Islamic studies based on Geertz' classification of *abangan*, *santri*, and *priyayi* (Asad, 1993). It is important to recall that the modern variant of Islam is also strongly affected by the discourse of religious studies during the developmentalism era in the 1970s as commenced by the MIT group. Thus, it is interesting that *Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Peradaban* attempts to reveal how discourses work in the development of social-religious movement. It is done, among others, by divulging the idea of "kemadjoen" as proposed by Ahmad Dahlan in which it seems to re-emerge its symbolic context in the current development of Muhammadiyah. The ethics of "Islam Berkemajuan" have been popularized as modeling of "Modern Islam," "Inclusive Islam" and "Progressive Islam" is the body of long-preserved discourse, which provides a continuous orientation to Muhammadiyah.

Muhammadiyah Ethics and the Process

It is noteworthy that *Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Peradaban* is an attempt to extract the essence of Muhammadiyah Ethics. It provides answers and also questions that seem to be ignored, particularly in the context of anthropological study. Yet it is obvious that Muhammadiyah ethics are inherent in the development of the movement. The expansion of Charity and Services (*Amal Usaha*) throughout Indonesia is an evidence of the socio-economic growth and technological revolution, as well as the presence of discourses embedded in the religious consciousness of Muhammadiyah's activists in particular and Muslim society in general. Such social piety is driven by Muhammadiyah ethics that always encourages social participation. Historically, the ethics of

“Kemadjoen” had been innate in the religious consciousness of Muslim entrepreneurs, and gradually accepted as the religious consciousness of the mainstream due to the rise of capitalism in Indonesia.

The sources of “Kemadjoen” ethics are Surah al-Ma’un and Surah al-’Asr. The first surah contains the command to conduct charity, extend the social security of the poor, and explain the inescapable relation between prosperity and probability of being a pious person. It conveys an important message for Muslim merchants to promote solidarity in balance with the colonial trade, by employing a directed capitalistic system. In the early 20th century, Muslim merchants were connected by the discourse on the importance of religious-based solidarity to respond to the modern world, particularly the impact of colonial globalization. At that time, Muslim merchants were included as the groups who realized that modernization was inevitable since the relentless trade circulation had changed the social and political structures. Muslim merchants had enabled science to acquire intercession. The early Muslim merchants or middle-class Muslims in Indonesia were the most likely groups to obtain updates about the development of Islam in various places in Asia, Africa, and parts of Europe. They commenced literacy works by publishing books and organizing discussions, encouraging the establishment of a modern Islamic public (Casanova, 1994). Surah Al-Ma’un is entrenched in modern Islamic society as promoted by Ahmad Dahlan and his disciples. Through modern Islamic publications (magazine, national conferences, correspondence, and sermons), Islamic teachings and social transformation are starting to play a significant role.

Surah Al-Asr is different from Surah Al-Ma’un—which shows the consequences of individual welfare on social welfare. Surah Al-Asr explains the role of consciousness and the response toward the change of the era, which is closely related to the level of piety. It is the theological base of Muhammadiyah ethics that emphasizes the consciousness of the age, where religious discourse must be a part of the new social discourse that has been formed so rapidly by trade intentions, the Dutch East Indies regime, and the union of merchants-ulamas-intellectuals. It is fundamental for the Muslim groups that seek to respond to socio-economic developments of the 20th century. Ahmad Dahlan succeeded to make it a public discussion through his community. Religious ethics and piety gain new meaning through Islamic public space.

A key concept in the discussion of modern Islamic public space is the transformation of Islam, from a religious discourse governed

by religious authority into a daily discourse in which every adherent is given the opportunity to extend its meaning. Ahmad Dahlan has a central role in the development of modern Islamic discourse since he had the ability to create modern Islamic public space. Through Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Dahlan initiated the publication of the magazine and regular meetings for Muhammadiyah members, as well as the institutionalization of charity in the form of schools and hospitals. Muhammadiyah ethics is indirectly constructed from the opportunity to expand the meaning of Islam in a volatile world.

Ethics and Spirit of Civilization

What links ethics as the principle of social piety and the spirit of civilization as Muhammadiyah social doctrine? The question is responded by the achievement of the renewal agenda of Muhammadiyah, a structural and systemic condition that inspires the development of the movement (Darban & Pasha, 2000; Nashir, 2010; Mulkhan, 2010). The answer to such question is rarely explored as a modern religious consciousness of Islam that has become a central part of the development of the economic infrastructure of Muslim countries. Kuntowijoyo (1985) posed the notion that the integration between faith (individual piety) and the impetus of modernization (the spirit of civilization) became the structural discourse of Muhammadiyah. It is highly emphasized that this structural role is explicated in *Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Berkemajuan*, which discloses the role of discourse and agent in Muhammadiyah. Thus, the spirit of civilization serves as Muhammadiyah's social doctrine that directly contributes to social developments in which the idea of modern social charity is accepted as a manifestation of religiosity. It verifies Max Weber that certain practices of piety have supported the development of economic infrastructure, creating an inseparable relation between them.

Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Berkemajuan argues Muhammadiyah as a modern religious movement that was able to survive in the Colonial period through mutual relationships between the "Muhammadiyah ethic" (the perpetuation of "kemadjoen" or progressive Islam) and "the spirit of civilization" (the direction of global development, politics, economic growth, the development of science). Essentially, the members of Muhammadiyah succeed in continuing this centuries-old organizational baton, since they perceive working and practicing are the most appropriate implementation of Islam. Physical behavior is the key to religious practice, instead of solely ritual behavior

(of individual religious obligations, i.e., prayers and fasting). This presumption challenges the basic social theory about religion as a mere fictitious belief to rationalize a determined life practice (e.g., Frazer and Geertz). Religion does not necessarily maintain the power and industry as declared by Weber. There is a void in the definitions of religion as proposed by Geertz and Weber. In fact, religion is embraced as a self-training process or as explained in this book, as the pedagogical process of the establishment of “Muhammadiyah ethics.”

At the outset, there are two central terms in this book. *First*, the term ethics defined as the values that shape a person’s or group’s behavior. It provides a reference to whether an option is “good” or “evil”. Muhammadiyah ethics is a set of values that shape the world view, behavior, and imagination of Muhammadiyah’s members about how Muhammadiyah should respond to the era. *Second*, the spirit of civilization means a set of values and the work ethos possessed by Muhammadiyah members to establish a civilization.

Based on this book, Muhammadiyah ethics is built from two theological bases, namely the ethos of Al-Ma’un and the ethos of Al-Asr. They inspire the implementation of the concepts “becoming a group calling for good deeds and abandoning bad ones” (Al-Ma’un) and “the time” (Al-Asr). Surah Al-Ma’un encourages the “compassion” (affection) or philanthropy while Al-Asr recalls the awareness of time or the consciousness to contribute in the development of the era. Al-Ma’un provides the foundation for asceticism or intellectual piety, while Al-Asr provides the foundation for the institutionalization of piety. In reality, Al-Ma’un inspires the Muhammadiyah’s world view about the religious practices that relate spiritual practice and social practice. Furthermore, Al-Asr inspires the members of Muhammadiyah in realizing social practices in accordance to the context of the era.

The spirit of civilization is explained through a concept widely used to analyze social movements, namely the concept of institutionalization. It is a sort of hidden transcript behind the establishment of schools, hospitals, universities and other movements. Through this book, both authors state that the idea of progressive Islam always finds its form due to its capability to adjust to the development of Muslim community in Indonesia. Modern is defined as the nature of the Muhammadiyah’s movement, which lies not in the way this organization transforms traditional social institutions into modern ones, but rather in the way of living from Muslim groups in transforming social situations. This book succeeds in depicting the efforts of Muhammadiyah through its

structural aspects and agency.

The achievement of Muhammadiyah in building the collective piety is linked to its ability to facilitate and contribute in bridging social developments with the discourse of Islamic principles and doctrines. Ahmad Dahlan, for instance, managed to connect between *tawhid* (the teaching of the One and Only God) and its manifestation in the ever-changing social structure. *Etika Muhammadiyah dan Spirit Peradaban* may be significantly influenced by Giddens' structurization theory model (1984) in which ethics and spirit of civilization are a consequence of the establishment of self-expression means for Muhammadiyah's members. The self-expression of "kemadjoen" or progressive Islam of the members is articulated through social charity and social actions in the context of Islamic discourse reconstruction.