

ISSN 0219-3213

2019 no. 11

Trends in Southeast Asia

BETWEEN SOCIAL SERVICES
AND TOLERANCE:
EXPLAINING RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS
IN MUHAMMADIYAH

AHMAD NAJIB BURHANI

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK
INSTITUTE

Trends in Southeast Asia

The **ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute** (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) is an autonomous organization established in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security, and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute's research programmes are grouped under Regional Economic Studies (RES), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS). The Institute is also home to the ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC), the Temasek History Research Centre (THRC) and the Singapore APEC Study Centre.

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued more than 2,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.

2019 no. 11

Trends in
Southeast Asia

BETWEEN SOCIAL SERVICES AND
TOLERANCE: EXPLAINING RELIGIOUS
DYNAMICS IN MUHAMMADIYAH

AHMAD NAJIB BURHANI

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK
INSTITUTE

Published by: ISEAS Publishing
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614
publish@iseas.edu.sg
<http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

© 2019 ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission.

The author is wholly responsible for the views expressed in this book which do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Burhani, Ahmad Najib, 1976–

Title: Between social services and tolerance : explaining religious dynamics in Muhammadiyah / Ahmad Najib Burhani.

Description: Singapore : ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, September 2019. | Series: Trends in Southeast Asia, ISSN 0219-3213 ; TRS11/19 | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: ISBN 9789814881111 (paperback) | ISBN 9789814881128 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Muhammadiyah (Organization). | Human services—Religious aspects—Indonesia. | Islam and politics—Indonesia. | Islam and state—Indonesia. | Islamic fundamentalism—Indonesia.

Classification: LCC DS501 I59T no. 11(2019)

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd

Printed in Singapore by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The **Trends in Southeast Asia** series acts as a platform for serious analyses by selected authors who are experts in their fields. It is aimed at encouraging policymakers and scholars to contemplate the diversity and dynamism of this exciting region.

THE EDITORS

Series Chairman:

Choi Shing Kwok

Series Editor:

Ooi Kee Beng

Editorial Committee:

Su-Ann Oh

Daljit Singh

Francis E. Hutchinson

Benjamin Loh

Between Social Services and Tolerance: Explaining Religious Dynamics in Muhammadiyah

By Ahmad Najib Burhani

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Muhammadiyah, together with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), are seen as the two pillars of moderate Islam in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah is currently often perceived to be the more conservative of the two and to have more affinity with Islamist groups.
- On political issues, for instance, it is steered by Islamist imagery. On cultural issues, Muhammadiyah is often guided by old enmity towards what is called the TBC (*takhayul, bid'ah dan churafat*; delusions, religious innovation without precedence in the Prophetic traditions and the Qur'an, and superstitions or irrational belief). This position has placed Muhammadiyah in an uneasy relationship with both local cultures and traditionalist Islam.
- Three issues that were raised in 2017—the banning of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the recurrent controversy on the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on *Penghayat Kepercayaan*—are issues where Muhammadiyah has been easily drawn towards Islamist and conservative tendencies.
- Be that as it may, Muhammadiyah remains a social movement guided by its long-held theology of *al-Mā'ūn* (kindness) and with a strong emphasis on social services. It is this doctrine that has prevented Muhammadiyah from dwelling on mythical or abstract issues and neutralized it against Islamism, making its members more realistic in viewing the world, more prone to distancing themselves from the utopian vision of a caliphate, from the dream of shariah as

the Messiah that will solve every problem, and from the temptation to create an Islamic state.

- The “pragmatic Islamism” that Muhammadiyah has adopted allows it to handle social dynamics well.

Between Social Services and Tolerance: Explaining Religious Dynamics in Muhammadiyah

By Ahmad Najib Burhani¹

INTRODUCTION

Alongside Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah is often seen as one of the two pillars of moderate Islam in Indonesia. It is commonly believed that these two largest Muslim organizations have contributed much towards stabilizing and balancing democracy after *Reformasi*—the Indonesian Spring of 1998—happened,² and that it is partly because of these two organizations that civil Islam has been flourishing in the country.³

Because of this, the two organizations are often expected to stand together on most issues. In recent times, however, leaders of these two organizations have appeared to be in different camps. Public statements

¹ Ahmad Najib Burhani is Visiting Fellow at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He is the Deputy Director of the Department of Publication and Information (MPI) of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah. The first draft of this article was presented at RSIS Indonesia Programme–NTU Workshop on 31 January–1 February 2018. He wishes to thank Mitsuo Nakamura and Herman Beck for their important comments and suggestions on this article.

² Thomas B. Pepinsky, “Political Islam and the Limits of the Indonesian Model”, *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 1 (2014): 105–21; Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

³ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

by them attest to this, particularly on three issues: The banning of the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),⁴ the recurrent controversy about the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. They even seemed to be pitted against each other during the religious gatherings in Garut, Karanganyar, and Sukoharjo where Ustadz Bachtiar Nasir and Felix Siauw were the main speakers; while the NU tried to stop these speakers, Muhammadiyah was protective of them.

This article analyses Muhammadiyah's response to *Aksi Bela Islam*, and the three abovementioned religious controversies. Why has this organization appeared to be closer to and to have shown more affinity towards Islamist groups than to NU? Has there been any ideological shift or change in Muhammadiyah? Do old designations such as modernist, puritan, and reformist Islam, still reflect its religious position? This article provides an overview of, firstly, the historically undisputed concern of Muhammadiyah with social services, and secondly, the organization's cultural transformation since the Congress in Aceh 1995, and thirdly, Muhammadiyah's responses on religious issues in 2017.

SOCIAL SERVICES AS MUHAMMADIYAH'S IDEOLOGY

Muhammadiyah has been labelled in a variety of ways, the most popular being modernist, reformist, and puritan Islamist.⁵ Be that as it

⁴ HTI is an organization that has consistently promoted a caliphate system, opposed democracy and often mocked and ridiculed the nation-state.

⁵ Hyung-Jun Kim, *Reformist Muslims in Yogyakarta Village: The Islamic Transformation of Contemporary Socio-Religious Life* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2007); Sukidi, "Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17, no. 2 (2006): 195–205; Sally Jane White, "Reformist Islam, Gender and Marriage in Late Colonial Dutch East Indies, 1900–1942", PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2004; James L. Peacock, *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Menlo Park: Benjamin/Cummings, 1978); Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973).

may, the organization is fundamentally a social movement, with social services activities having been one of its most important aspects since its establishment in 1912. The social services provided by most of its branches throughout Indonesia are mostly in education, in helping orphans, and in health matters.

The theological foundation for providing social services was laid by its founding father, Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923), and has been well maintained throughout its history. It is famously called the theology of *al-Mā`ūn* (kindness), based on the teaching of the Qur'an in *surah al-Mā`ūn* (Q. 107: 1–7). The story about the construction of this theology has become a legend and is not only found in academic histories about Muhammadiyah, but also in movies, novels, comics, and other genres of literature. It is said that KH Ahmad Dahlan repetitively taught the same verses to his students in his religious class. Getting bored, his students asked him why he taught the same verses every day. Responding to this question, Dahlan said rhetorically, “Have you understood these verses?”. He said that although they might think that they had understood the meaning of these verses, they actually had not because they had not implemented them. To understand these verses, the students must, according to Dahlan, at least seek out the poorest people in Yogyakarta, help them to take a bath and then feed them.

These verses have become the most popular ones in Muhammadiyah. Since the time of Ahmad Dahlan, this theology has been translated into three main activities, famously called: feeding, schooling and healing/curing. Feeding is implemented by establishing houses for the needy, giving them food, and also establishing orphanages. Schooling is done through providing education and publishing books or magazines. Healing or curing is realized by establishing hospitals, clinics, and institutions aimed at making society healthy.

The theology of *al-Mā`ūn* has become a habitus in Muhammadiyah throughout its history. However, some insiders of Muhammadiyah at the turn of the century, particularly Moeslim Abdurrahman, introduced a new interpretation to this theology. Abdurrahman believed that the organization's social activities faced new challenges. He reasoned that charity is not enough because poverty does not come merely from laziness. There are many who work 24 hours per day and seven days per

week, but are still poor. The cause of this impoverishment is the existence of the system of poverty. The contemporary problem of poverty is not due to colonialization, but to global capitalism.⁶ Therefore, the way to deal with it has to be different from those used during colonial times. This was why Muhammadiyah under the leadership of Ahmad Syafii Maarif established a new department called LBTN (Lembaga Buruh, Tani, dan Nelayan, or Department of Labourer, Peasant, and Fisherman) after the 44th Congress of Muhammadiyah that was held in Jakarta in 2000.

NEW CULTURAL, INTER-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Muhammadiyah's cultural and political position has often experienced shifts. Unlike its position on social services, which has been well established and ideologically strong, its cultural stance is more diverse or even fragmented. Based on his study of the Muhammadiyah community in Jember, for instance, Abdul Munir Mulkhan⁷ identified four categories of Muhammadiyah members: Al-Ikhlās, Kiai Dahlan, MuNU (Muhammadiyah-NU) and MarMud (Marheinis-Muhammadiyah). Based on their study of Muhammadiyah in eastern Indonesia, Mu'ti and Riza Ul Haq⁸ later added another category, namely Krismuha (Kristen Muhammadiyah or Muhammadiyah Christian). In daily interaction with Muhammadiyah members, further additions are mentioned, such as MuSyi (Muhammadiyah Syiah), Munas (Muhammadiyah Nasionalis), Marmud (Marhaenis Muhammadiyah), and Musa (Muhammadiyah Salafy).

⁶ Pradana ZTF Boy, M. Hilmi Faiq, and Zulfan Barron, *Era Baru Gerakan Muhammadiyah* (Malang: Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang Press, 2008).

⁷ Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Islam Murni Dalam Masyarakat Petani* (Yogyakarta: Benteng, 2000).

⁸ Abdul Mu'ti and Fajar Riza Ul Haq, *Kristen Muhammadiyah: Konvergensi Muslim dan Kristen dalam Pendidikan* (Ciputat, Jakarta: Al-Wasat Publishing House, 2009).

These labels show Muhammadiyah, typically considered a modernist and reformist movement, as having a rather sophisticated following. Hajriyanto Thohari, during the launching of the Indonesian version of Mitsuo Nakamura's book, *The Crescent Arises Over the Banyan Tree*, in Menteng on 6 October 2017, argued against the wish to characterize the organization under a single label, and stated that this organization is *dzul wujuh* or "multifaceted". It cannot be simplified because of the diversity of its members and regions. Although there are several, sometimes conflicting cultural labels for members of Muhammadiyah, the greatest common denominator holding members together, as emphasized by AR Fachruddin (the longest serving chairman of Muhammadiyah, from 1968 to 1990) and narrated by Mitsuo Nakamura, is that "*Muhammadiyah itu, organisasi*" (Muhammadiyah is after all an organization). Those who have different orientations can and do live together in one organization.⁹

Muhammadiyah was famously known for its long-held perspective on the TBC (*takhayul, bid'ah dan churafat*; Ar. *takhayyul, bid'a, khurāfa*; delusions, religious innovation without precedence in the Prophetic traditions and the Qur'an, and superstitions or irrational belief). As a result, this organization is often seen as being strict on religious principles. In practice, this doctrine has made some members intolerant towards or uneasy about, various local cultures. It is this strict religiosity that once saw Muhammadiyah being compared to Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia.¹⁰

At the same time, modernism, translated as rationalization, fitted in with the effort to eradicate the TBC. Muhammadiyah's sense of reformism was in line with modernism, especially in the early twentieth century, as exemplified by its stance against *taqlid* or following blindly a certain religious position, and the introduction of *ijtihad*. However, there have

⁹ The source of this information is a letter from Mitsuo Nakamura, the most authoritative scholar on Muhammadiyah, to the author on 4 August 2018. I reproduce his points on AR Fachruddin and the role of Muhammadiyah as an organization.

¹⁰ Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), *Moehammadijah Melaloei Tiga Zaman* (Soematera Barat: Markaz Idarah Moehammadijah, 1946).

been shifts in society's perspective on culture and inter-religious relation, for example, from modernism to post-modernism and "comparative religion" to "studies and cooperation among religions". These have had negative implications for the way people see Muhammadiyah.

There have been several programmes introduced which are reflective of Muhammadiyah's more recent cultural, inter-religious, and political position. Among them are the publication of *Tafsir Tematik Al-Qur'an Tentang Hubungan Sosial Antarumat Beragama* (thematic exegesis of the Qur'an on interfaith relations), the introduction of *dakwah kultural* (cultural propagation), and the adoption of the concept of *darul 'ahdi wa al-syahadah* (Ar. *dār al-'ahd wa al-shahāda*, the abode of covenant and the space of testimony). The first two are related to culture and inter-religious relation, while the third one is strongly related to politics or state-religion relationship.

It was during its 43rd Congress held in 1995 in Banda Aceh that Muhammadiyah discussed the problem of the arts (*seni*) in Islam. One of its decisions was to declare art *mubah* (permitted, allowed)—revising the previous decision which regarded arts as *haram* (forbidden, prohibited)—and that significant attention is to be paid to them.¹¹ Though apparently minor, this decision holds significant ramifications for Muhammadiyah's attitude towards cultural issues. In the 2000s, Muhammadiyah followed up with two significant programmes related to cultural and interreligious relations, namely the acceptance of *dakwah kultural* and the publication of *Tafsir Tematik Al-Qur'an*. These two moves were revolutionary, and shocking to some members of the organization.

With Muhammadiyah having accepted the doctrine on the TBC for so long, *dakwah kultural* has often been seen to be a theological inconsistency.¹² It has therefore been interpreted and implemented in

¹¹ Ahmad Najib Burhani, *Muhammadiyah Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2016).

¹² It is this TBC that is often regarded as the cause of "backwardness" in the Muslim community. To overcome this, Muhammadiyah promotes the use of reason, the introduction of secular education and modern medicine.

varied fashion among members. This is illustrated by Mitsuo Nakamura¹³ through his research in Kotagede. Although Muhammadiyah people in Kotagede accepted *dakwah kultural*, when it came to cultural issues, they still gave negative responses. As with the case of Festival Kotagede (FK), Nakamura stated: “Many of them only focused their attention on the matter of ‘TBC’, i.e. *jaelangkung* [spirit-basket divination¹⁴ or Indonesia’s ouija] and *jathilan* [trance ritual], while the matter of overall societal significance of the FK was not appreciated.”¹⁵ This programme, which was accepted during the leadership of Ahmad Syafii Maarif, now seems forgotten, if not neglected completely.

If Muhammadiyah’s attitude on culture is guided by its doctrine on the TBC, its relationship with people from different religions should be strongly influenced by the concept of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn* (unto you your religion, and unto me my religion). Scholars often assume that the guiding principle of Muhammadiyah’s relationship with non-Muslims is *fastabiq al khairāt* (compete with each other in good works).

My study on this issue,¹⁶ however, shows that this latter doctrine is mostly applied by Muhammadiyah members for competition among members of the organization. For non-Muslims, the doctrine of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn* is more often applied. As mentioned by Alwi Shihab,¹⁷

¹³ Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town, c. 1910–2010* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012).

¹⁴ For an elaboration on *jaelangkung*, see Margaret Chan, “Jailangkung: Indonesian Spirit-Basket Divination”, *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 10 September 2018, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-69> (accessed 23 February 2019).

¹⁵ Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree*, p. 368.

¹⁶ Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Lakum dīnukum wa-liya dīnī: The Muhammadiyah’s Stance towards Interfaith Relations”, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, no. 3 (2011): 329–42.

¹⁷ Alwi Shihab, “The Muhammadiyah Movement and Its Controversy with Christian Mission in Indonesia”, PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1995.

the establishment of Muhammadiyah was in response to the Christian mission, and this was done through imitating Christian activities, such as in education and health services. Socially, Muhammadiyah enjoys good relationship with the Christians and both have not interfered with each other's beliefs through the principle of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn*. Theologically, however, they do compete with each other. It can be said that socially, Muhammadiyah is inclusive of non-Muslims, but theologically, it is exclusive of them.

Some studies have tried to highlight the inclusive and even pluralist characteristics of this organization through the conditions of Muhammadiyah schools and universities in Muslim minority districts and provinces such as Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, and Moluccas.¹⁸ In these areas, 80 per cent of students and teachers or lecturers are non-Muslims, and the schools and universities regularly organized Christmas and non-Muslim rituals. Some non-Muslim students often take part in the choir, singing the anthem of Muhammadiyah and Islamic songs which contain, among other things, the two declarations of Islamic faith or *shahādātāin*. It is debatable whether Muhammadiyah institutions actually hold an inclusive and pluralist belief, or whether they are trying to be accepted in a non-Muslim area and to get enough students. Having non-Muslims singing Islamic songs containing the declaration of faith is hardly proof of tolerance, and can conversely, be seen as an intolerant attitude towards non-Muslim students and employees. The litmus test for tolerance is not in how one acts when one is a minority but how one acts when one is the majority.

While the changing of attitude towards culture still needs time to be ingrained in Muhammadiyah, the introduction of new political perspectives has received a more positive response. The concept of *darul 'ahdi wa al-syahādah*, which was introduced in the 2015 Congress, is an effort to build a new political perspective among members of Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah is showing its strong commitment

¹⁸ Abdul Mu'ti and Fajar Riza Ul Haq, *Kristen Muhammadiyah*.

to Indonesia and its unwavering acceptance of the nation-state. It is indirectly refuting the utopian vision of a caliphate as continuously promoted by the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrīr al-Islāmī, or HTI), and the temptation to create an Islamic state in Indonesia. Although accepted, this perspective will also need time to become a new habitus in Muhammadiyah.¹⁹ The response of Muhammadiyah to the banning of the HTI and the Perppu No. 2/2017, as discussed in the next section of this article, is the first test for this political-theological position.

PKI, HTI AND *PENGHAYAT KEPERCAYAAN*: RESPONSES FROM MUHAMMADIYAH

As famously known, there are disagreements between the NU and Muhammadiyah on how the beginning of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitri is to be determined.²⁰ Muhammadiyah prefers to use the method of *hisab*,

¹⁹ The meaning of “habitus” here refers to “socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking”. See Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff and Kate Kirk, “Unemployed Female Skilled Migrants from India in the Netherlands: The Entrepreneurial Self Under Structural Dependency”, in *Women in the Indian Diaspora: Historical Narratives and Contemporary Challenges*, edited by Amba Pande (Singapore: Springer, 2018), p. 135. Pierre Bourdieu explains habitus as follows: “The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes”. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 170. As described by Suaedy, the full acceptance of *kebangsaan* and *Pancasila* was just introduced to the NU in the 1980s. Interestingly, this has become a new habitus in the NU. The attitude and response of the NU to Pancasila and NKRI was an implementation of that new habitus. See Ahmad Suaedy, “Kematian Gus Dur dan Lahirnya Habitus Baru Kebinekaan Indonesia”, *Jurnal Maarif* 11, no. 2 (2016): 156–67.

²⁰ Nadirsyah Hosen, “Hilal and Halal: How to Manage Islamic Pluralism in Indonesia?”, *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 7 (2012): 1–18.

whereas the NU has preferred to use the method of *ru'yah*.²¹ This difference is tolerated by both parties. Under the Jokowi regime, the difference between these two organizations became public over a non-ritual issue—the decision of the government to have Hari Santri (Santri Day) on 22 October. This caused controversy because the public holiday is seen as an important NU day, or exclusively belonging to the NU, or limiting of the meaning of *santri* to NU *santri*.²² Also, in the Jakarta gubernatorial election, more leaders and members of the NU supported Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known as Ahok, than in Muhammadiyah, where more members seemed supportive of Ahok's competitor, Anies Baswedan.

Even after victory went to Anies Baswedan, a few leaders of the NU and Muhammadiyah continued airing their differences, particularly on the recurrent controversy of the PKI, the banning of the HTI, and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. When the government issued the regulation in lieu of law (Perppu) No. 2/2017 and then followed it up with the banning of the HTI, some influential figures in Muhammadiyah opposed the Perppu, particularly on the mechanism for banning a social organization without a proper hearing.²³ Certain branches of Muhammadiyah even moved further by inviting former HTI activists, such as Felix Siauw, to preach in their

²¹ These two organizations have some differences in religious rituals, commonly called *khilafiyah*, such as on small details on prayer; *iftitah*, *qunut*, *basmalah* before *fatihah*, *tahiyat*, etc. Both groups have tolerated each other on these differences and considered the way used by the other group as acceptable.

²² Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Geertz's Trichotomy of *Abangan*, *Santri*, and *Priyayi*: Controversy and Continuity". *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 2 (2017): 329–50.

²³ Muhammadiyah's view on this Perppu can be read at its Statement of Principle, namely: Pernyataan Sikap Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah No. 364/PER/I.0/A/2017 tentang "Pro-Kontra Seputar Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang (Perppu) Nomor 2 Tahun 2017 dan Masalah Keberadaan Negara Pancasila", signed by Haedar Nashir, chairman of Muhammadiyah, and Abdul Mu'ti, general secretary, on 2 August 2017.

mosques. This happened, for example, in Masjid Kauman Yogyakarta. Kokam Pemuda Muhammadiyah even provided protection and security assistants for Siauw in districts or areas where certain mass organizations threatened to disband their preaching or religious gathering (*pengajian*), like in Sukoharjo on 17 July 2017, in Garut on 11 November 2017, and in Karanganyar on 19 November 2017.

The position taken by some members of Muhammadiyah on the issue of the HTI seems to contradict the official decisions issued during the last Congress in 2015, held in Makassar. During the Congress, Muhammadiyah tried to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the Indonesian nation-state by issuing the document named *Negara Pancasila sebagai Dār al-'Ahdī wa al-Syahādah* (Pancasila state as the abode of covenant and the space of testimony). This document declares the strong commitment of Muhammadiyah to Indonesia and its unwavering acceptance of the nation-state. This was indirectly also a refutation of the utopian vision of a caliphate as continuously promoted by the HTI and of the temptation to create an Islamic state in Indonesia.

In contrast to Muhammadiyah, some influential figures in the NU strongly supported the banning of the HTI. In his statements, Said Agil Siradj, chairman of the NU, even indicated that it was the NU that recommended to President Joko Widodo to ban the HTI. Similarly, the response of the NU to the Perppu No. 2/2017 was also positive and affirmative. After the issuance of the Perppu, the NU paramilitary group, Banser (Barisan Ansor Serbaguna), even acted as the vanguard and guardian of Pancasila. Also notable in this support are people such as Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, the chairman of Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, the youth wing of the NU. Banser, for instance, threatened to halt Felix Siauw from preaching in several places because of his ideological association with the HTI.

The most important case related to the contrast between the NU and Muhammadiyah was the religious gathering in Garut where Ustadz Bachtiar Nasir (UBN) was to be the main preacher. Banser allegedly threatened to disband this gathering and forbid Nasir from preaching there. However, Kokam, the paramilitary group of Muhammadiyah, and other Islamic paramilitary groups protected the event and even became Nasir's guards.

Similar to the issue of the HTI, which shows Muhammadiyah as being closely associated to the Islamist group, Muhammadiyah also holds a similar position on the issue of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). This issue, which became one of the recurrent topics in September each year, seem to be a retaliation for the banning of the HTI. TVMU, the official television of Muhammadiyah, and other Islamist-inclined TV stations broadcasted several programmes related to the PKI. On 30 September, TVMU and other private televisions such as TVONE, also aired the movie *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI*, which has not been aired on Indonesian national TV, TVRI, since 1998.²⁴ A *nobar* (*nonton bareng*), loosely translated as “watching together in a public venue”, such as a mosque, school or office, was organized by several branches of Muhammadiyah such as SMA Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Although the PKI no longer exists in Indonesia, the imagined threat of its revival was repeated several times. Communism may have ceased to operate, including in countries where they were once implemented, but can clearly still be used as a bogeyman.

It is interesting to see how Muhammadiyah treats the issue of the PKI by looking at the response to the article written by Wahyudi Akmaliah²⁵ entitled “Keterlibatan Muhammadiyah dalam Pembantaian 1965” (the involvement of Muhammadiyah in the 1965 massacre). According to the author, this article was rejected by several publishers, print and online, until it was finally published by *Tirto.id*.²⁶ The reason for rejecting this article, as stated by the author, was for fear of anger from Muhammadiyah people. What was surprising was that some people in Muhammadiyah were proud of the involvement of this organization in the crushing of the

²⁴ Prior to that year, it was mandatory for TVRI to broadcast this movie on 30 September each year.

²⁵ Wahyudi Akmaliah, “Keterlibatan Muhammadiyah dalam Pembantaian 1965”, *Tirto.id*, 14 November 2017, <https://tirto.id/keterlibatan-muhammadiyah-dalam-pembantaian-1965-cz3m> (accessed 14 April 2018).

²⁶ *Ibid*.

PKI. This is despite the fact that the involvement of Muhammadiyah in the killing of PKI members and sympathizers was not as strong as among members of the NU. Clearly, there has been a reversal in the status of participation in that tragedy and reliving of that memory is now to be repeated every year.

Another important outlet for observing the response of people to this issue, mostly from Muhammadiyah, is by looking at the reactions to three articles on the PKI written by Ahmad Syafii Maarif, former chairman of Muhammadiyah, in *Republika*, entitled “Isu Kebangkitan PKI Jadi Ritual Tahunan” (The issue of the revival of the PKI becoming an annual ritual) (26 September 2017), “PKI dan Kuburan Sejarah (1)” (PKI and historical graves (1)) (11 July 2017), and “PKI dan Kuburan Sejarah (2)” (PKI and historical graves (2)) (18 July 2017). These articles did not receive much attention when they were first published. But then, a statement from Maarif on PKI went viral when it was used as a meme and distributed through social media, initially by Twitter page @biografly and then the Facebook fanpage @Muhammadiyahstudies: Maarif was ridiculed, humiliated, mocked and abused by a number of people for his comment on the need to read the issue of the PKI proportionally and to avoid the misuse of this issue for political interest.²⁷ The PKI has become a kind of bogeyman, and people did not care to listen to Maarif’s warning that the issue of the PKI is being used for the defamation of religion and in the anti-Chinese movement.

Comparing the response of Muhammadiyah to the issue of the PKI with the one from the NU is intriguing. NU was strongly involved in the killing of PKI members and sympathizers. Ansor, the youth wing of the NU, was among the executors used and backed by the military in Java. The NU has admitted and apologized for their involvement, and sought national reconciliation with the victims of the 1965 massacre.

²⁷ Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Milad ke-105 Muhammadiyah dan Beban Islam Berkemajuan”, *Kompas*, 20 November 2017.

On 7 November 2017, the Indonesian Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK) demanded the government to add *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, literally meaning “believers of faith”, as the seventh category of religion in Indonesia. This allows for followers of native or indigenous religions, theosophical and spiritual movements, and new religious movements outside the six recognized religions, to state their beliefs on their national identity cards, or KTP.²⁸ This judicial review on the 2013 Civil Administration Law had been filed by four religious groups, namely: Marapu, Parmalim, Ugamo Bangso Batak, and Sapto Darmo.²⁹

Immediately after the ruling, there were two different responses from Muhammadiyah. Abdul Mu'ti, secretary general of Muhammadiyah, supported it while the chairman of the movement was critical of the decision and even accused the Constitutional Court of having more power than God, referring to the power it has in the Indonesian judiciary system.³⁰ The former chairman of Muhammadiyah, Din Syamsuddin, was very active in demanding that the Court review its decision and even revoke it.³¹ He also lobbied and ordered MUI and Muhammadiyah to

²⁸ The followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* decreased dramatically after the 1965 tragedy because of their alleged association with the PKI.

²⁹ <https://tirto.id/pembakuan-definisi-agama-yang-penuh-pro-dan-kontra-czVV> (accessed 14 April 2018).

³⁰ Mu'ti's statement can be found at: <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/17/11/07/oz1sqt354-muhammadiyah-dukung-putusan-mk-terkait-kolom-agama-di-ktpel> (accessed 14 April 2018). Nashir's statement can be found at: <http://www.voaislam.com/read/politik-indonesia/2017/11/11/54300/kepercayaan-masuk-ke-kolom-ktp-muhammadiyah-otoritas-mk-seperti-tuhan/#sthash.aJ0RFgDm.dpbs> and <https://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/nasional/read/2017/11/12/127826/ketua-umum-muhammadiyah-menyual-otoritas-mk.html> (accessed 14 April 2018).

³¹ https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3738186/wantim-mui-sesalkan-putusan-mk-yang-anggap-kepercayaan-setara-agama?utm_medium=oa&utm_campaign=detikcomsocmed&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=detikcom (accessed 14 April 2018).

reject this ruling. Finally, as stated by Professor Dr Yunahar Ilyas on TVMU, Muhammadiyah appeared unanimous in opposing this ruling: “Without having any meeting, I think we agree to reject the ruling of MK on indigenous religions”. The NU did not issue a strong rejection to this ruling. One statement from Said Agil Siradj stated that this ruling of the MK is final.³² KH Ma’ruf Amin, Rois Syuriah of PBNU, who has often provided statements on behalf of the MUI where he is the chairman, tried, for instance, to find a way out of implementing the decision of the Constitutional Court by recommending a different KTP for *Penghayat Kepercayaan*.³³

FOUR POPULAR EXPLANATIONS

Many therefore believe that Muhammadiyah in recent times has taken a “conservative turn”, to use Martin van Bruinessen’s term.³⁴ This article, however, does not agree with this conclusion. Looking back on Muhammadiyah’s religious position on the issue of interfaith relations, on the state-religion relationship, and on other cultural issues since its establishment, what has been happening now does not deviate much from Muhammadiyah’s religious practices from previous periods. There is a move away from Muhammadiyah’s position under the leadership of Ahmad Syafii Maarif, but it is not significantly different from its position

³² <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3725331/penghayat-masuk-kolom-ktp-pbnu-harus-akui-eksistensi-mereka> and <https://tirto.id/nu-dukung-kolom-kepercayaan-dicantumkan-di-ktp-cvkH> (accessed 14 April 2018).

³³ <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/11/13/18151261/maruf-amin-putusan-mk-final-dan-mengikat-tetapi-> and <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1038232/mui-rekomendasikan-ktp-khusus-untuk-aliran-kepercayaan> and <https://geotimes.co.id/opini/masih-ada-problem-pasca-pengakuan-agama-adat-oleh-mk-ri/> (accessed 14 April 2018).

³⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn”* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).

in the decades prior to that. It can even be said that the efforts of Maarif during his leadership in Muhammadiyah in 2000–5 was an attempt to introduce a new culture or new habitus into Muhammadiyah which was not highly appreciated or not warmly welcomed by some of its members. It was felt to be alien to the organization.

Besides the apparent “conservatism turn”, the response and position of Muhammadiyah on the abovementioned issues and also the controversy of Ahok can be explained in three different ways: rivalry in a handicapped situation; a show of solidarity, and pragmatic Islamism based on rational choice theory. The last perspective is the one taken by this author.

The first sees the position of Muhammadiyah on the three mentioned issues as an indication of its political rivalry with the NU. Although these two organizations have been sharing Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia and are often understood to be representing two wings of Islam in Indonesia, it cannot be denied that they have been competing with each other since their establishment. The difference is often determined by political expediency more than by ideology or theology. Theologically, these two organizations have more commonalities than differences.

The two have been competing and critiquing each other on many issues. During the Jokowi period, they have criticized each other on Hari Santri, Full-Day School,³⁵ and the professorship of a few dignitaries from the NU such as Ma’ruf Amin and Muhaimin Iskandar. These two organizations adopted different policies regarding the activities of the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) and special counterterrorism squad or Special Detachment 88 (Detasemen Khusus, Densus 88).³⁶ While the

³⁵ A system of education that “obliges all elementary and secondary schools in Indonesia to carry out teaching and learning activities full-day from Monday to Friday ... eight hours a day, five days a week at school”. See <http://www.globalindonesianvoices.com/30523/whats-wrong-with-a-full-day-of-school/> (accessed 24 February 2019).

³⁶ Saefudin Zuhri, *Deradikalisasi Terorisme: Menimbang Perlawanan Muhammadiyah dan Loyalitas Nahdlatul Ulama* (Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2017).

leaders of the NU supported the BNPT and Densus 88 in fighting against terrorism, Pemuda Muhammadiyah gave advocacy to Siyono who was killed by Densus 88 for allegedly taking part in terrorist network and activities. During the presidential election in 2014, PAN, the party strongly associated with Muhammadiyah, supported Prabowo, while PKB, the party of NU, supported Joko Widodo. These are examples of the antagonism between NU and Muhammadiyah.

The NU has also successfully captured the discourse on nationalism, strengthened its representation of Nusantara identity, its role as protector of minorities and guardian of Pancasila, and as the face of friendly and tolerant Islam. The NU, as explained by Suaedy,³⁷ has created a new habitus since 1980s when nationalism, nation-statehood and other issues were translated into Islamic terminology, encouraged by Abdurrahman Wahid. Muhammadiyah has generally lagged behind a game where the terms are set by the NU. As the largest modernist movement, this has put Muhammadiyah in an uneasy situation.

The two slogans promoted by these two organizations, Islam Nusantara vs. Islam Berkemajuan, seems to have two different directions and orientation, with Islam Nusantara being capable of seizing the identity of Islam in Indonesia and representing the distinctive Islam of Indonesia to the world. Various names used by the NU, such as Garda Bangsa, Pagar Nusa, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, the anthem *Syair Cinta Tanah Air (Hubbul Wathan)*³⁸ show the nationalistic character of NU and its strong nationalism. In short, it can be said that NU has successfully showed that this community is an undeniable part of this nation or even the backbone of this nation. In simple words, without the NU, this country would not exist or would perish. The success of the NU in co-opting and controlling the discourse of nationalism and patriotism has a side impact in putting Muhammadiyah in second place.

³⁷ Ahmad Suaedy, “Kematian Gus Dur dan Lahirnya Habitus Baru Kebinekaan Indonesia”.

³⁸ The title of this song varies. Besides being called *Syair Cinta Tanah Air (Hubbul Wathan)*, it is also called *Mars Sybbanul Wathon—Ya Lal Wathon*.

Another explanation for Muhammadiyah's recent religious position is that it has been guided more by Islamic solidarity than by politics or ideology. The activities of Muhammadiyah on the issue of *Aksi Bela Islam* (Defending Islam Action) and the subsequent religious events, as explained by Hilman Latief,³⁹ were more guided by Islamic solidarity or affinity than by commitment to the Indonesian state. The beginning of that was the *Aksi Bela Islam*, which can be seen as a protest movement that attracted a huge number of Muslims to join. The proponents of this movement were able to whip up Muslim emotions by showing that Ahok was hurting Muslims. Some members of Muhammadiyah joined these rallies as a show of Muslim solidarity. Although Ahok represented double minorities in Indonesia, i.e. Christian (religious minority) and Chinese (ethnic minority), anti-Ahok protesters did not necessarily represent the anti-Christian or anti-Chinese positions. Instead, it was more a show of social, religious and political protectionism under the perceived threat from Ahok.⁴⁰ They felt that the government needed to favour the Muslim community in order to help them gain confidence and to reduce their sense of inferiority, particularly in the economic sector. Muhammadiyah's present religious attitude is thus seen as a residue of, or as continued solidarity with this sentiment.

PRAGMATIC-ISLAMISM OF MUHAMMADIYAH

In contrast to the above, I argue that the current religiosity in Muhammadiyah can be characterized as pragmatic Islamism.⁴¹ A major

³⁹ Hilman Latief, "Solidaritas Islam dan Gerakan Sosial Pasca 'Aksi Bela Islam' 2016", *Jurnal Maarif* 11, no. 2 (2016): 203–17.

⁴⁰ A good explanation on this issue is Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi's "Ahok's Satisfied Non-Voters: An Anatomy", *New Mandala*, 5 May 2017, <http://www.newmandala.org/ahoks-satisfied-non-voters-anatomy/>.

⁴¹ As a term, Islamism is loaded with reference to the Islamist camp, with an agenda to establish an Islamic State or an exclusive Islamic society. Here,

argument for this perspective stems from the fact that the banning of the HTI, the issue of Communism and the PKI, and the court decision on *Penghayat Kepercayaan* are three different topics and should not be lumped together. The first is related to democracy and nation-statehood; the second is a seasonal issue, fabricated or manipulated for political interest, while the third is an interfaith issue and concerns religious rights. What links them to each other is the perception of the dominance of Islam in Indonesia, something which some Muslim groups wish to propagate further. Muhammadiyah, mostly its politicians,⁴² has been concerned with this dominance and intends to maintain or even strengthen and expand it by accommodating or giving more room to Muslim aspirations, indirectly restricting the growth and development of other religions, let alone *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, and eradicating any ideology that tries to rival religion. That is the reason why Muhammadiyah joined the Islamists in the latest religious controversies. This stance cannot be explained simply through the mentioning of a supposed “conservative turn”.

Statements from Din Syamsuddin on *Penghayat Kepercayaan* can illuminate the imagining of the dominance of Islam in Indonesia. Letting *Penghayat Kepercayaan* hold the status of religion will indicate the defeat of Islam.⁴³ The number of followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* and

the author uses the term to refer to “Islamic religiosity”. Some members of Muhammadiyah believe that it is the duty of this organization to implement the values of Islam in society and to make Indonesia an “Islamic state”. Islamic State is different from the old dichotomy of *dār al-Islām* (the state of Islam) and *dār al-ḥarb* (the state of war). It is closer to the meaning of *dār al-salām* (the state of peace).

⁴² M. Amien Rais, “Menentukan Posisi Politik Muhammadiyah”, paper presented at the Tanwir of Muhammadiyah, Ambon, 25 February 2017.

⁴³ Syamsuddin explains that the ruling gives disadvantage or is detriment to Indonesian Muslims, but he does not explain in detail the meaning of “*merugikan umat Islam*”. http://kbr.id/nasional/11-2017/penghayat_kepercayaan_di_ktp_dewan_pertimbangan_mui_minta_pemerintah_tak_ikuti_putusan_mk/93604.html (accessed 14 April 2018).

indigenous religions in Indonesia assumedly make up 12 per cent of the total population, and accepting their cultures as religions or giving them equal position to religion would exclude millions of potential converts or potential targets of propagation for Islam.⁴⁴ Quantitatively, if 12 per cent of the Indonesian population adopts new religions, the proportion who are Muslims in Indonesia would no longer be 87 per cent. The Muslim Community's quantitative strength would decrease.

A second argument for this perspective is the fact that the cultural or religious tendency in Muhammadiyah is still second to, and overshadowed by, its social service commitment. With the huge number of social entrepreneurs who need to be taken care of, Muhammadiyah cannot dwell for a long time on abstract issues. Furthermore, what is within their responsibility is a huge contribution to Islam which does not necessarily contribute to the establishing of an Islamic state. From here, we can see that the theology of *al-Mā`ūn* in Muhammadiyah has been able to hold back this organization from its Islamist inclination or fundamentalist tendency. It brings the members of Muhammadiyah a more realistic perspective and distances them from the utopian vision of caliphate, the dream of shariah as the Messiah that will solve every problem or the temptation to create an Islamic state.

⁴⁴ In a hearing at the Constitutional Court, Engkus Ruswana from MLKI (Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Indonesia), the organizing body for the followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, claimed that followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* total around 12 million people. This number seems too big, but it is nevertheless what some religious leaders use in rejecting the decision of the Constitutional Court. See <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3494828/mlki-penghayat-kepercayaan-12-juta-orang>; <https://news.detik.com/berita/3720357/ada-187-organisasi-dan-12-juta-penghayat-kepercayaan-di-indonesia>; <https://www.jawapos.com/nasional/humaniora/09/11/2017/data-kemendikbud-jumlah-penghayat-kepercayaan-mencapai-12-juta-jiwa> (accessed 11 November 2018). Different from the above claim, the number of Indonesian citizens who registered as followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in their KTP (Identity Card) by June 2017 was only 138,791 people. See <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/17/11/12/ozb1vf-ditjen-dukcapil-jumlah-wni-penghayat-kepercayaan-138791-orang> (accessed 11 November 2018).

Mass organizations like the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, or Islamic Defenders Front) and the HTI do not have thousands of schools and hospitals that keep its members busy and sway them from organizing rallies or disseminating utopian discourses. The leaders of Muhammadiyah have their own mechanisms of control and they try to avoid being carried into discursive issues that may jeopardize its main activities or even existence. This is the reason why the chairman of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir, despite being occasionally somewhat ambiguous, has been certain on at least one thing, namely establishing *pusat-pusat keunggulan* or centres of excellence as a way to undermine marginalization, economic inferiority, and political defeat.⁴⁵

It is not possible, though, to infer the religious position of Muhammadiyah just by looking at the above three issues. Comparing the response of Muhammadiyah on those issues with the decisions it made during the Congress in Makassar in 2015, some contradictions and inconsistencies become apparent. The recommendation of the Congress, for instance, is to promote tolerance, understanding, dialogue, science, and the protection of minorities. It also introduces *darul 'ahdi wa al-syahadah* as a key concept in the context of nation-statehood and Pancasila. These are among the most important points taken up at the Congress.

I argue here that Muhammadiyah's religious position can be classified as "pragmatic Islamism" based on rational choice theory. Pragmatic Islamism is an ideology of Islamism that has gone down to earth and experienced contextualization, or is guided by pragmatism. It is an Islamism that communicates with society or which experiences social dynamics. What I mean by this process in the context of Muhammadiyah is that Muhammadiyah has social service activities that it needs to take care of. The organization does not live only in the world of discourse and in utopian ideas. People in this organization collaborate with people from various religious and ideological backgrounds, including Islamist

⁴⁵ Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Milad ke-105 Muhammadiyah dan Beban Islam Berkemajuan".

and liberal Muslims, and maintain and fund schools and orphanages. It is such social interactions that make them able to evade Islamist tendencies.

Underlining its provision of social services, Muhammadiyah holds great respect for those who devote themselves to such activities, regardless of his or her religious affiliation, cultural inclination or political affiliation. The spirit of public service is personified in people such as Said Tuhuleley, a Calvinist-Muhammadiyah. He is an action-oriented icon of social services in Muhammadiyah whose name has been used for Muhammadiyah's floating clinics or buildings, and so on. In short, social services can be seen to have been the undisputed identifier for Muhammadiyah since its very beginning. The commitment of this organization to social services has not changed despite cultural and political shifts within this organization. In terms of implementation, this has been modified a few times but has in general been continuously maintained.

CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah is a religious movement that has always placed a strong emphasis on social services or, using the term commonly used by its members, *amal sholih* (Ar. *al-a'māl al-ṣāliha*; good deeds). Members have consistently been instilled with this value to the point that it has become their habitus. It can be said that this is currently the *raison d'être* of the movement. The guiding principle of this habitus is the doctrine of *al-Mā'ūn* (kindness), referring to the Qur'an 107: 1–7, taught multiple times by its founding father, Ahmad Dahlan, to his students. This teaching has been preserved, cherished, and further strengthened by the tradition of high respect and even veneration of activists who have dedicated their life to social service activities in Muhammadiyah, such as the late Said Tuhuleley. Any regular member of Muhammadiyah who has done a lot of social services is similarly respected and is elevated to the level of a legendary person in this organization.

Apart from the provision of social services, Muhammadiyah's cultural activities are still evolving ideologically, experiencing constant shifts and changes. The old guiding principle famously accepted by members in its relation with culture is the enmity held towards what is called the TBC

(*takhayul, bid'ah dan churafat*; delusions, religious innovation without precedence in the Prophetic traditions and the Qur'an, and superstitions or irrational belief). This position has placed Muhammadiyah in an uneasy relationship with local cultures and with traditionalist Islam, and thus with the NU, as well. There has been some efforts made from within Muhammadiyah to soften its cultural attitude to culture, particularly promoted by its progressive leaders, but the impact of this tendency is not clearly visible yet.

The three events that occurred in 2017—the banning of the HTI, the recurrent controversy on the PKI, and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on *Penghayat Kepercayaan*—fall within the cultural spectrum of Muhammadiyah's standing. They are issues where Muhammadiyah is easily drawn into Islamist and conservative paths. It is therefore not surprising to see these issues splitting Muhammadiyah members into two opposing groups. Be that as it may, the official statements from Muhammadiyah exhibit an attempt to understand the dynamics and diversity of its members and to play within the ideal corridors of democracy and Islam.

It is the dominance of *al-Mā'ūn* that has prevented Muhammadiyah from dwelling on mythical or abstract issues and that now seeks to neutralize the organization against its Islamist and fundamentalist tendencies.

ISEAS

PUBLISHING

30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614
<http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

TRS11/19s

ISBN 978-981-4881-11-1



9 789814 881111