

ABSTRACT

Title : Continuity and Discontinuity of Religious Thought
in Muhammadiyah (1923-2008): An Intellectual History Perspective
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This dissertation is concerned with the problem of continuity and discontinuity of religious thought in Muhammadiyah from the perspective of intellectual history. This study observes the transformation and shift in the orientation of religious thought within Muhammadiyah after Ahmad Dahlan (d.1923), the socio-intellectual relation of the elite ('ulama) in the formation of religious views, and the continuity and discontinuity of religio-intellectual discourses within contemporary Muhammadiyah. This study aims to reveal the dynamics of religio-intellectual discourses and the factors which contribute to the existence of continuity and discontinuity of religious thought.

To answer the above questions, this dissertation employs intellectual history approach, taking benefits from different textual sources (writings produced and reproduced by the 'ulama or religious thinkers) as materials for reconstructing religio-intellectual dynamics within Muhammadiyah. In this context, this dissertation considers the importance of some theoretical perspectives, such as 'governing elite' and 'non-governing elite' theory as a means for analyzing social relation as one of factors in producing and reproducing religious thought, either formal/official or individual/unofficial. In addition, this dissertation makes use of such a concept as 'epistemic community' to represent the 'ulama as an entity within Muhammadiyah that makes up 'historical bloc,' which develops a particular topic in religious discourses, its types of question, its perspectives and its answers to particular religious issues under debate, such as religious pluralism and politics.

Based on the analysis of available and accessible textual sources, employing the mentioned theoretical perspectives above, this study confirms the prevalence of continuity and discontinuity of religious thought in the intellectual history of Muhammadiyah (from its early phase to the contemporary time). After the period of Ahmad Dahlan, whose religious thought can be regarded as reformist, inclusive, rationalistic, and even mystical, there arouse the tendency towards political radicalism as can be seen in such a figure as Haji Fakhruddin, as well as the tendency towards theological purification (the cleaning of belief from any form of polytheism and innovations) as seen in such a figure as Mas Mansur, although he was also reformist (liberal) in character. It was during this time that the shari'ah mindedness emerged with the foundation of the *Majelis Tarjih*, presided by the 'ulama who are formally authorized to produce religious advices (*fatawā*). During this early phase, continuity and discontinuity of religious discourses have arisen within Muhammadiyah.

The purificationist and shari'ahistic tendencies continued to the following generation with the increasing role of the 'ulama in formulating religious views in

Muhammadiyah. To a certain extent, individual thought could become formalized as the 'ulama who produced their religious thought were comparatively the governing elite in Muhammadiyah. The 'ulama of high rank position constituted an epistemic community which developed a particular theme of religious thought and shared the same religio-intellectual views. This entity then became a historical bloc which produced official religious thought, which was ideological, shari'ahistic and orthodox in nature. This religio-intellectual product is not more than a product of interpretation towards the authentic Islamic sources (the Qur'ān and the Sunnah) as well as the product of reinterpretation towards the religio-intellectual legacies of the founding fathers of Muhammadiyah. Religious thought is therefore productive and reproductive as well in its character, and cannot be separated from the changing socio-political contexts, from about 1942 to the 1980s, a period which can be arbitrarily called "the middle period" of Muhammadiyah.

The prevalence of socio-intellectual shift within Muhammadiyah in the contemporary time (since 1990s) contributed to the significance development in religious discourses within Muhammadiyah. When the 'ulama no longer constituted the dominant epistemic community and historical bloc, due to the emergence of a new intellectual generation as another epistemic community and historical bloc which has different intellectual origins, the proliferation of knowledge production sources within Muhammadiyah cannot be avoided. On the one hand, there still exists an epistemic community or historical bloc, which conserves a scripturalistic or shari'ahistic tendency in its religious views. This bloc can be called 'orthodox-revivalist,' emphasizing on purificationist religious thought. On the other hand, there arises another epistemic community (historical bloc) which regards it necessary and urgent to reinterpret religious texts and to deconstruct various religio-intellectual legacies of the past generation in order to meet contemporary needs, particularly in the field of social matters. This group develops what is regarded as a more relevant approach of interpretation, such as social sciences, philosophical and hermeneutical perspectives, while at the same time offering a new social movement. This bloc can be called 'liberal' and 'liberal-transformative.'

The emergence of different epistemic communities or historical blocs reflects the prevalence of continuity and discontinuity of religious thought in Muhammadiyah. This concept, continuity and discontinuity, cannot simply be understood from a chronological or diachronic perspective, but also in terms of the existence of epistemological break among the 'ulama or religious thinkers who live in contemporary time. This historical reality emerges due to the differences of social origins and intellectual genealogies of the 'ulama or religious thinkers, and the perspectives or approaches they use in interpreting religio-intellectual legacies in the changing socio-political contexts.[]