

# The Concept of Multiculturalism in the Progressive Islamic Ideology of Muhammadiyah

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to explore the concept of multiculturalism according to Muhammadiyah, specifically as outlined in the concept of the Progressive Islamic Ideology (*Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*). The research method employed is discourse analysis with a qualitative approach. The primary source of data is the resolutions of the 48th Muhammadiyah Congress in Surakarta, particularly focusing on the section concerning the Progressive Islamic Ideology (RIB). This study affirms that Islam as understood, practiced, advocated, and propagated by the Muhammadiyah organization is highly accommodating to the concept of multiculturalism, including principles that are fundamental such as creed, movement methodology, and preaching understood by Muhammadiyah.

## **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali konsep multikulturalisme menurut Muhammadiyah khususnya yang termaktub dalam konsep Risalah Islam Berkemajuan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis wacana dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Sumber utama datanya adalah Tanfidz Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah ke 48 di Surakarta terutama pada bagian Risalah Islam Berkemajuan (RIB). Penelitian ini menguatkan bahwa Islam sebagaimana yang dipahami, dilaksanakan, diperjuangkan dan didakwahkan oleh persyarikatan Muhammadiyah sangat akomodatif dengan konsep multikulturalisme, termasuk terkait prinsip-prinsip yang sangat mendasar yaitu akidah, manhaj gerakan, dan dakwah yang dipahami oleh Muhammadiyah.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a vast country with a diversity of cultures and customs. This diversity inevitably gives rise to various perceptions that Indonesia is a nation with diverse ethnicities, races, cultures, and religions (Azzahra et al., 2023). Education seeks to appreciate this diversity, which has the potential to create conflicts, disputes, and divisions. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize attitudes of mutual respect, tolerance, and respect for diversity to consistently strengthen the nation's identity, which needs to be preserved, upheld, cherished, and communicated (Saptadi et al., 2023).

Several studies related to multiculturalism have been conducted. According to Firtia et al., Indonesia is recognized as a multi-religious and multicultural society, characterized by diverse religions, beliefs, ethnicities, races, cultures, and social groups ((Fitria et al., 2022). The ancestral ethos of the nation promotes tolerance and peace, facilitating harmonious coexistence among religions. Multiculturalism emphasizes the importance of equality amidst cultural diversity, fostering mutual respect among community groups (Wahdiah et al., 2023). However, the practical implementation of multicultural education faces significant challenges, as it requires the establishment of structures and processes where every culture can freely express itself (Tayyeb, 2017). Globally, multicultural education has become a concern, as demonstrated by South Korea, where educators struggle to integrate multicultural knowledge, values, and skills into teaching practices (Lim & Kester, 2023). Failure to address this issue can lead to prejudice against multicultural students, negatively impacting their educational experiences.

Although several studies have highlighted the concept of multiculturalism, especially in the context of Indonesia, there are still gaps in research that need to be filled. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Fitria et al. (2022) and Wahdiah et al. (2023), indicate that Indonesia is recognized as a multi-religious and multicultural society that promotes tolerance and interfaith harmony. However, these studies have not specifically addressed the concept of multiculturalism in the progressive Islamic ideology according to Muhammadiyah's perspective. Meanwhile, Lim's research (2023) underscores the challenges in integrating multicultural knowledge into teaching practices but has not focused on Muhammadiyah's understanding of multiculturalism. Therefore, there is still a need to fill this gap by exploring the concept of multiculturalism according to Muhammadiyah, especially within the framework of the Progressive Islamic Ideology. This study aims to fill that gap and contribute to a better understanding of Muhammadiyah's views on multiculturalism and its implications for education and Indonesian society.

Muhammadiyah, as one of the organizations identifying itself as an Islamic movement, is a societal entity actively engaged in Indonesian community life, striving to work, serve, and empower within society (Muhammadiyah, 2015). Muhammadiyah believes that living in society is *sunnatullah* (a divine decree) and is part of worship, in line with human nature as social beings (Khoirudin et al., 2020). The concept of living in society is seen as fate, a manifestation of the nature and will of Allah. In this context, Hamdan Hambali explains that human existence in society is part of divine plans to provide true meaning and value to human life.

As of 2019, Muhammadiyah has established representations in all provinces within the unitary state of Indonesia. The organization has leadership representations in 457 cities and regencies known as Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership, as well as leadership representations in 3,730 districts known as Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership. Additionally, there are representations in 14,511 village/urban sub-district levels, as well as congregational groups known as branch leadership (Al-Hamdi, 2020). Muhammadiyah has also established leadership representations abroad, currently spanning 38 countries. These overseas representations are known as Special Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership, abbreviated as PCIM.

This research aims to uncover the concept of multiculturalism advocated by Muhammadiyah, an Islamic organization with a history of over a century. The focus of this research primarily centers on Muhammadiyah's documented thoughts within the Progressive Islamic Ideology. In this context,

the research will explore Muhammadiyah's perspectives on multiculturalism issues. Thus, a better understanding of Muhammadiyah's response to multiculturalism issues and its contributions to the discourse on cultural and social diversity in Indonesia can be attained.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research focuses on analyzing the Progressive Islamic Ideology (Risalah Islam Berkemajuan/RIB), a work of thought produced by the 48th Muhammadiyah Congress (Herlina & Muhammadiyah, 2022). To examine this text, the most appropriate research method is discourse analysis, commonly used in language studies (Samosir et al., 2023). This method is useful for exploring the relationship between the social context under study and the use of language in the text (Setia & Haq, 2023). Within the context of discourse analysis, there are several methods commonly used, including distributional, pragma-linguistic, content analysis, and descriptive methods (Anastasia, 2023). However, in this research, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach will be employed, which encompasses a set of techniques for analyzing text writing practices and language usage as social and cultural practices (Ibnu, 2010). This approach is expected to reveal Muhammadiyah's direction and purpose in formulating the concept of RIB. This aligns with Paul Ricoeur's view on hermeneutics, which asserts that hermeneutics is used to interpret the objective meaning contained within texts, regardless of the author's intentions and the temporal or spatial context of the reader (Ricoeur, 2007).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the preliminary study, it is revealed that the Progressive Islamic Ideology (RIB) was initiated by Muhammadiyah as an alternative solution to various emerging issues. RIB emerged as a proposition amidst the proliferation of new ideologies, representing a concrete effort by the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah to formulate the concept of Progressive Islam. Despite Islam's exclusive stance on religious pluralism, which tends towards relativism of truth, it has always allowed for the existence of other religions from the beginning, with principles of coexistence, tolerance, and respect for diverse faiths (Syahrul & Hajenang, 2021). Consistency in multicultural education policies and practices is expected to yield significant effects, both broadly and deeply. Multicultural education should not only address surface-level issues but also delve into the underlying roots of the need for diversity (Patras et al., 2022).

Operationally, Muhammadiyah asserts through the Progressive Islamic Ideology (RIB) that Islam, from its inception, embodies values of goodness, promotes well-being, advocates for justice, and fosters prosperity within dynamic life contexts. In RIB, Muhammadiyah articulates its view that Islam is a universal religion that consistently advocates for progress in all aspects of life. Islam, as a religion, demands its followers to actively contribute to realizing such progress in personal, social, national, and humanitarian domains (Suyatno, 2023).

## a. The Concept of Multiculturalism

Scholar Will Kymlicka (1995) is credited with systematizing and popularizing the study of multiculturalism. His monumental work related to the study of Multiculturalism, "Multicultural Citizenship" (1995), integrates the view of minority rights into liberal theory. In this book, he endeavors to answer the question: how are we to understand multiculturalism? According to him, a state may be multicultural in either a multinational sense or a polyethnic sense, or in both senses. "Multi," as commonly used, denotes something that is not singular. "Multi" is used to identify something plural. As for "cultural," it is derived from the English word "culture." In Indonesian, the equivalent word that is considered close to the meaning of "culture" is the word "budaya" (culture). Culture itself, as quoted by Koentjaraningrat (1980), encompasses all forms produced through the

processes of creation, thought, and feeling. Thus, multiculturalism is a concept that emphasizes cultural plurality and recognition of diversity within a society.

The concept of multiculturalism generally leads to the concept of multicultural education. UNESCO articulates multicultural education through recommendations that encompass three main points. First, education is expected to enhance individuals' ability to identify and accept the values inherent in personal, gender, community, and cultural diversity. Second, education is expected to strengthen individual identities and stimulate the creation of converging ideas and solutions that promote peace, brotherhood, and solidarity among individuals and communities. Third, education is expected to enhance the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and without violence (Riza et al., 2022).

Multicultural education plays a crucial role in the discourse of global education, reflecting a unique integration of culture, society, and academic dynamics in Indonesia from 2000 to 2022 (Utari, 2023). The significance of this topic is not limited to the Nusantara region but also provides insights into the adaptation and development of education systems worldwide in the context of cultural diversity. In the realm of education, multicultural education provides an opportunity to investigate the relationship between social justice and multicultural education, ranging from literature to classroom practices at the higher education level (Freire & Valdez, 2021). The necessity to build peace in multicultural societies becomes increasingly urgent, and one of the efforts that can be made is through the provision of education or understanding of multicultural dynamics through education (Cathrin & Wikandaru, 2023).

# b. Multiculturalism in the Progressive Islamic Ideology

The 48th Muhammadiyah Congress gave birth to a decision regarding the "Progressive Islamic Ideology," a concept that is not entirely new in Muhammadiyah's history. Substantially and in terms, the concept of "Progressive Islam" has historical roots in the thoughts of Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan and the official ideology of Muhammadiyah, which adopts terms such as "progress," "advancement," and "progressiveness." Furthermore, during the 46th Congress in 2010 in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah systematically formulated the principles of "Progressive Islam" as part of the "Muhammadiyah's Second Century Declaration." In this context, "Progressive Islam" is identified as an "Islamic Perspective," encompassing the idea that Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement aimed at carrying out missionary and renewal missions to realize a truly Islamic society.

Muhammadiyah regards Islam as the primary value that serves as the foundation and main source of inspiration for all its movements. They believe that Islam, as the message delivered by the prophets up to the last Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH), is a complete and perfect religion according to the teachings of Allah. Islam not only contains commands and prohibitions but also provides guidance for the salvation of human beings in this world and the hereafter (Abdullah, 2019). Due to its long and complex historical background in the development of the movement in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah has high credibility in Indonesia. Prakoso (2022) states that Muhammadiyah is not trapped in traumatic political confusion. In the era of liberal democratic politics, Muhammadiyah needs to be actively involved in empowering itself to support and hold various important positions in society (Prakoso et al., 2022).

Multiculturalism issues are found in three out of the five chapters in the book "Progressive Islamic Ideology." Chapters two, three, and four delve into these issues extensively. Chapter one serves as an introduction, providing an overview of term definitions and urgency. Meanwhile, chapter five, the conclusion, only presents the evidence used as the basis for the preceding discussions. Therefore, the multiculturalism issues elucidated in this book can be mapped as follows:

Table 1. Multiculturalism in RIB

| No. | Aspect                | Exposure  | Page | Trend  |
|-----|-----------------------|---|------|--|
| 1   | Tauhid<br>(aqidah)    | Tawheed must be realized in the form of a struggle to free humans from the shackles of injustice and exploitation between humans.   | 8    | Affirming the social dimension of monotheism so that humans are free.  |
|     |                       | Islam which is based on the Qur'an and al-<br>Sunnah is a religion that teaches truth (al-<br>haqq) and also virtue (al-birr)   | 9    | Truth claim: Islam teaches truth & goodness  |
| 2   | Ijtihad and<br>Tajdid | Ijtihad does not stop at the level of<br>thinking about how to understand<br>religion but also continues at how to<br>realize religious teachings in all areas of<br>life, whether individuals, society,<br>ummah, nation or universal humanity.  | 10   | Piety is not only measured ritualistically but also shows the implementation of piety and good deeds.        |
|     |                       | This attitude is based on several principles, namely:  (a) Oriented to the universality of the Islamic religion;  (b) Not oriented towards schools of thought among Muslims;  | 16   | Islam guarantees<br>freedom of expression  |
|     |                       | (c) Open and tolerant of differences of thought  Differences in sects or opinions in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings must be addressed with a spirit of ukhuwah.   | 21   | Disagreements should bring grace   |
| 3   | Wasatiyah             | Wasathiyah is manifested in social attitudes (1) Firm in stance, broad in insight, and flexible in attitude; (2) Respect differences in views or opinions; (3) Rejecting disbelief against fellow Muslims; (4) Promote and encourage society; (5) Understand reality and priorities; (6) Avoid excessive fanaticism towards certain religious groups or ideologies; And (7) Facilitate the implementation of religious teachings. | 11   | Detailing the characteristics and attitudes of believers who develop key attitudes in a pluralistic society. |
| 4   | Da'wah duties         | All problems of human life, such as injustice, hostility, poverty and ignorance, are challenges for the enlightenment missionary movement that must be faced to establish a just, peaceful, prosperous and knowledgeable society  | 26   | The pluralistic life of society is sunnatullah and part of the challenge of da'wah.                          |
|     |                       | Da'wah contains respect for differences without being trapped in political  | 30   | Continuity of da'wah does not mean having  |

|    |   | secularism, religious relativism or creed syncretism.   |    | to sacrifice the sunnatullah of diversity.   |
|----|---|---|----|--|
| 5  | Improving the<br>Quality of the<br>People | Islam strictly prohibits hostility, quarrels, disputes and discrimination.  | 29 | Principles of Islamic teachings in society.  |
|    | ŕ   | Progressive Islam directs its attention to efforts to advance the lives of Muslims as a whole, and to efforts to overcome various challenges, such as fear of Islam (Islamophobia), injustice, discrimination, racism and social separation. segregation)   | 41 | Affirms the principles and identification of progressive Islam.                        |
| 6  | Law<br>enforcement                        | Muhammadiyah carries out constitutional jihad so that the law represents justice, does not conflict with the constitution, and eliminates confusion, multiple interpretations and legal ambiguity   | 51 | Affirmation of Muhammadiyah's stance regarding law enforcement efforts.                |
| 7  | Serve<br>humanity                         | Although compensation in the form of money, food or clothing is important, Muhammadiyah considers that this group deserves political and legal assistance and strengthening to lift them from helplessness.   | 56 | Muhammadiyah's affirmation of solemnity in the realm of humanity.                      |
| 8  | Community<br>Strengthening                | Muhammadiyah also focuses on empowerment actions to reach communities in underdeveloped, remote and outermost areas through skills training and independent entrepreneurship service activities.  | 58 | Community<br>strengthening actions<br>that have been carried<br>out by<br>Muhammadiyah |
| 9  | Women<br>empowerment                      | Therefore, women have the same rights as men in accessing education, meeting economic needs, and working in the public sphere, even becoming leaders.   | 60 | Muhammadiyah's views on the function and role of women.                                |
| 10 | Child<br>protection                       | Muhammadiyah emphasizes the importance of caring for disadvantaged children, such as abandoned children and orphans,  | 61 | Muhammadiyah's attention to child protection.  |
| 11 | Disaster<br>Resilience                    | For Muhammadiyah, disasters can be a medium for introspection regarding human negligence in protecting nature or their nature as creatures created by Allah. Response to natural disasters and conflict is a universal humanitarian action, so Muhammadiyah carries it out for any victim regardless of their background. | 63 | Muhammadiyah's views and preparedness for every possible disaster.                     |
| 12 | Education for all                         | Muhammadiyah's education concept is service for all   | 65 | Confirmation of one of the visions of  |

|    |                       |   |    | Muhammadiyah<br>Education  |
|----|-----------------------|---|----|--|
| 13 | Health services       | This inclusive health service model is also in accordance with the objectives of the Muhammadiyah social movement which seeks the development of superior health and welfare service functions based on Public Distress Support (PKU), a spirit of helping people who are in difficulty.  | 67 | Affirmation of Muhammadiyah's solemnity in the field of health services.                           |
| 14 | Global Service        | In carrying out this mission, Muhammadiyah is expanding its network with sister organizations that have similar views and movements in various countries, institutionalizing Muhammadiyah branches throughout the world, partnerships with international institutions, and Muhammadiyah's participation in strengthening peace. and conflict resolution, all of which are forms of Muhammadiyah internationalization. | 67 | Muhammadiyah's confirmation regarding its attitude in interacting with other organizations/groups. |
| 15 | Upholding<br>Justice  | Justice is a need for everyone, so justice must be upheld both in relationships between individuals, between communities and between nations.   | 69 | Muhammadiyah's<br>attitude towards<br>upholding justice  |
| 16 | Human Rights<br>(HAM) | In the Islamic view, upholding human rights is a universal obligation, because humans are created with dignity.   | 72 | Muhammadiyah's affirmation of Muhammadiyah's human rights.   |

Source: (Herlina & Muhammadiyah, 2022)

Based on the Islamic Progression Treatise, Muhammadiyah offers alternative solutions to various crucial issues. This treatise is presented in response to the emergence of new ideologies (Jinan, 2015). The initiative undertaken by the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah in composing the Islamic Progression Treatise serves as tangible evidence of their efforts in developing a concept or insight into Progressive Islam. Operationally, Muhammadiyah asserts that Islam as a religion has brought goodness since its inception, spreading prosperity, upholding justice, and fostering prosperity in the ever-changing dynamics of life (Santoso et al., 2020). Through the Islamic Progression Treatise, Muhammadiyah also affirms its view that Islam is a universal religion that demands its adherents to achieve progress in all aspects of life, without exception.

As a book with a mission to demonstrate the superiority of Islamic religious treatises, it is appropriate for the book to begin with an assertion regarding the aspect of creed, especially related to the concept of divinity. Tawheed, which is the doctrine of the oneness of Allah SWT, is the core of Islamic teachings, which unequivocally states that there is no god but Allah. The doctrine of Tawheed is continuously taught by all prophets and their successors, including scholars (Al-Hamdi, 2013).

The second important issue discussed in the context of multiculturalism in this book is regarding ijtihad and tajdid. The opportunity for intensive and in-depth studies (istinbath) to produce new laws is very possible, considering that Islamic law comes with general meanings. Various scholarly backgrounds, perspectives, and even emotional factors can lead to differences in opinions, understandings, and even differences in the implementation of religious commandments (Tualeka &

Tsalitsah, 2023). This issue is important to emphasize because such differences can lead to the emergence of dichotomous labels that deepen the gap in relations between groups within one religion, even though they share the same beliefs. The wasatiyyah approach, as explained in this treatise, becomes crucial to hold onto and becomes one of the strong identities in the context of multiculturalism in this Progressive Islam Treatise.

Another important issue that arises in the Progressive Islam Treatise is about da'wah (Islamic propagation) and the improvement of the quality of the Muslim community. In the perspective of the Muhammadiyah organization, any form of guidance aimed at changing human life for the better can be considered as part of da'wah (Hastasari, 2022). Muhammadiyah views that da'wah activities can be directed towards individuals who have embraced Islam (the accepting community), but also towards those who have not embraced Islam, referred to as the da'wah community. Da'wah is considered a noble duty and obligation for every individual (Quran 3:110) that will bring happiness and success (Quran 3:104). However, Muhammadiyah realizes that diversity of beliefs among humanity is something that may occur, as acknowledged by the Quran (Quran 109:6).

Up to this point, Muhammadiyah has proven capable of being present in various communities with diverse backgrounds, even among non-Muslim majority communities. Muhammadiyah always maintains its identity as an Islamic movement carrying out the mission of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, without knowing any boundaries of place or situation. In the eastern regions of Indonesia, an interesting new term has emerged, namely Krismuha, an abbreviation for Christian-Muhammadiyah, reflecting the flexibility of Muhammadiyah in interacting. This is an undeniable fact. Moreover, Muhammadiyah has successfully been present and made positive contributions in the 3T areas (underdeveloped, remote, outer) (Aula et al., 2020; Fithriyyah & Umam, 2018). Muhammadiyah confidently declares itself as a movement that reflects the principles of multiculturalism through various initiatives, such as the Jamaah Dakwah Jamaah Movement (GJDJ), the development of cultural da'wah, and the concept of community da'wah which has been growing lately.

Since its inception and development, Islam has been a representation of the concept of multiculturalism. This is the understanding embraced by Muhammadiyah. Many verses of the Holy Qur'an, as well as statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), serve as exemplary examples, showing that ethnic, linguistic, cultural, ideological, and even religious and belief diversity are part of the eternal and immutable Sunnah. It is impossible for humanity to live in one type, one perspective, one color, or one belief entirely.

# 4. CONCLUSIONS

The intellectual output of the 48th Congress of Muhammadiyah, namely the Islamic Progression Treatise (RIB), further emphasizes that Islam, as understood, practiced, advocated, and propagated by the Muhammadiyah organization, is highly accommodating to the concept of multiculturalism. This applies to various aspects, including fundamental principles such as creed, the movement's methodology, and the understanding of da'wah (Islamic propagation) by Muhammadiyah. The RIB concept issued by Muhammadiyah reminds us that building synergy between religious principles and the demands of the concept of multiculturalism requires at least two fundamental elements. Firstly, there must be a willingness to open up and re-examine doctrines that have hitherto fostered exclusive attitudes. Secondly, there should be opportunities for religion to engage in open dialogue with modern ideas.

The concept of multiculturalism refers to a perspective or approach that acknowledges, respects, and honors cultural diversity within a society. The main principle of this concept is the recognition that society consists of various cultural groups with different values, norms, and traditions. The author acknowledges that the limitations within this scope provide opportunities for further researchers to conduct studies from the cultural perspectives of other legitimate and recognized community organizations in Indonesia. Research methods that solely examine a book or conduct literature reviews

have limitations compared to intensive field research studies. Therefore, the researcher hopes that the limitations of this study serve as positive references for the conduct of further research studies in a broader context.

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