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Examining Muhammadiyah Neutrality in the Practical Politics: The Case of the 2017 Mayoral Election in Yogyakarta Municipality

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the neutral status of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's largest modernist-Islamic organization, dealing with the election as the arena of practical politics. Since in the middle of 1970s until present, Muhammadiyah is consistent to declare that it will not involve actively in the practical politics particularly election so that the neutral position is always embedded to religious organization. Nevertheless, current political circumstances are enabling to Muhammadiyah to have a wide chance in taking executive power. Utilising in-depth interview and documentary analysis, the paper analyses the case of the 2017 mayoral election in Yogyakarta Municipality. The paper question is that is Muhammadiyah still in the neutral position coping with such election? The finding depicts that the configuration of Muhammadiyah neutrality in the electoral arena can be figured as what so-called "pseudo-neutrality". It can be indicated by a threefold factor: *First*, it actively supports to one of the mayoral candidates, *second*, it takes a part as the Success Team of the candidate, *third*, it has political interests during and after election. In sum, Muhammadiyah is no longer in the neutral status so that this paper proposes to Muhammadiyah to revise its position in the practical politics.

KEYWORDS: Neutrality, Muhammadiyah, mayoral election, Yogyakarta

INTRODUCTION

Discussing the relationship between religion and politics is one of the fascinated discourses among scholarly debates. As the largest Muslim state of the world, Indonesia has various Muslim organizations across the country, two are influencing and leading among others namely Muhammadiyah and Nadhatul Ulama'. The former is as the largest moderate Muslim organisation and tending to focus on urban society while the latter is as the largest traditionalist Muslim organisation and concerning to influence rural society.

This paper concentrates to examine Muhammadiyah rather than others because since its establishment in 1912, it has had a commitment to do not take a part actively in the practical politics whether changing itself into a political party or as the partisan organization to a certain political party. This commitment is based on the official decision of Muhammadiyah as stated in "Khittah Ujung Pandang 1971" which states that it will not involve in the practical politics and has a neutral position in the life of practical politics.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that Muhammadiyah is anti-politics, but it denotes to the fact that Muhammadiyah has no organizational relationship with any political parties and still takes a part in certain circumstances across the country.

Such decision is strengthened by the latter decision so-called as the “Khittah Denpasar 2002” which confirms the similar decision with the “Khittah Ujung Pandang 1971”. Therefore, Nashir (2008: 35-39) suggests to Muhammadiyah followers to could deliver their aspirations to any political parties. The emergence of Amien Rais, the the former chairperson of Muhammadiyah and the founder of the National Mandate Party (PAN), who was running as the presidential candidate in the 2004 election, had debatable perspectives among Muhammadiyah elites, cadres and devotees, whether is it part of the practical politics or strategic situation which should be dealt by Muhammadiyah? Muhammadiyah then officially suggests to its followers to support Amin Rais as the presidential candidate because he is one of the best cadres of Muhammadiyah.

The relationship between Muhammadiyah and politics, as a matter of fact, is always dynamics and changeable. The direct elections of regional heads across the country affect to unpredictable positions of the followers and elites in Muhammadiyah, whether to take a part within such election or run away from it. In the Sleman Regency election 2005, Muhammadiyah issued the official decision to actively support the candidate couple with Muhammadiyah background, Ibnu Subiyanto and Sri Purnomo, and, in turn, won the competition. In 2010, Muhammadiyah obviously still supported Sri Purnomo with other partner, Yuni Satia, and defeated other candidates.

In the Maros Regency election 2010, Muhammadiyah implicitly suggested its believers to vote the candidate couple with Muhammadiyah background, Hatta Rahman and Andi Hamril Mattotorang. The couple, finally, succeeded the election. Likewise, in the Banyuwangi Regency election 2010, Muhammadiyah’s elites involved actively to influence their supporters at the village and sub-district levels to vote the candidate from Muhammadiyah (Mukhlis, 2015: 23). In Yogyakarta Municipality, Muhammadiyah has a fundamental role in each mayoral election. Since the direct mayoral election in 2006, Muhammadiyah always encourages the candidate with Muhammadiyah background. When all candidates are from Muhammadiyah, the most potential is the candidate who has a nearest cultural relationship with Muhammadiyah elites.

In the recent election of Yogyakarta Municipality in 2017, Muhammadiyah still has power and being a contested party by all mayoral candidates. Both Haryadi Suyuti (the incumbent mayor) and Imam Priyono (the incumbent vice mayor), each of them is running to be the mayoral candidate. Each of them also attempts to approach Muhammadiyah linkages in order to gain its support.

It is indeed interesting to be analyzed further, where although the Muhammadiyah regulation obviously states that it has to keep a neutral position to any practical politics, but actually it intentionally takes a part actively in the election as the arena of practical politics. This paper will prove is Muhammadiyah still has a neutral status in the practical politics or not by answering a threefold question: Is Muhammadiyah actively supporting to one of the mayoral candidates? Is Muhammadiyah part of the *Success Team* for one of the mayoral candidates? Does Muhammadiyah has no interests during and after election?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are various studies related to Muhammadiyah and politics. Some of them will be presented here. Studies on Islam, Muhammadiyah, and politics can be seen in representative researches already conducted by Hamka (1956) on the relationship between Muhammadiyah and Masyumi, Nakamura (1983) on the influence of Muhammadiyah to Javanese society in Yogyakarta, Alfian (2010) on the politics of modernist group in Muhammadiyah, Syamsuddin (1991) on the relationship between religion and politics in Islam, Syaifullah (1997) on the political movement of Muhammadiyah inside Masyumi, Nashir (2000) on the dynamics of politics in Muhammadiyah, Suwarno (2001) on the reality of Muhammadiyah as an opposition movement, Jaenuri (2001) on Muhammadiyah as the ideology of reformist group, and Jurdi (2010) who explains the role of Muhammadiyah in Indonesian politics particularly between 1966 and 2006. Generally speaking, these studies portray the response of Muhammadiyah to political dynamics in Indonesia.

Moreover, Al-Hamdi (2012: 194-196) classifies four political thoughts of Muhammadiyah elites in Indonesia's post-New Order regime dealing with Islam and political issues. The four thoughts are transformativ-idealistic, moderate-idealistic, realistic-critical and realistic-critical. This classification is based on the response of Muhammadiyah elites to three different issues: the people desire of to insert the Jakarta Charter in the amendment of the 1945 Constitution during the annual sessions of Indonesia's parliament 1999-2002, the emergence of various Islam-based parties with their different features and the debatable concept between jihad and terrorism.

Other researches investigate issues related to politics and elites in Muhammadiyah. Nashir (2000) analyses the political behavior of elites in Muhammadiyah in the Pekajangan Sub-District, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, during New Order period. The finding theorizes that elites in Muhammadiyah adopt the moderate-accommodative behavior as their political behaviour in the practical politics. Furthermore, Jurdi (2005) scrutinizes the dynamics of political behavior of elites in Muhammadiyah in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, during New Order era in responding local issues of government and political parties.

In electoral issues, Efendi (2010) examines the political fragmentation of elites in Muhammadiyah dealing with the 2009 national election. Efendi portrays the modality which used by each elite in Muhammadiyah in legitimizing their own political motives. Furthermore, Nurmandi, Prianto, & Efendi (2015) explain the fact that Muhammadiyah in recent situations takes a lot of roles particularly in local elections. Therefore, there are at least three different motives of the political behaviour of Muhammadiyah in the election. Firstly, the involvement of Muhammadiyah in the election is caused by the intention of maintaining the existing religious identity and values. Secondly, Muhammadiyah elites want to have their representations in the executive wing so that the government policies are friendly to Muhammadiyah interests. Thirdly, election is as the way for Muhammadiyah to consolidate its agendas to society through bureaucracy.

More specifically, Sholikin (2015: 158-161) is attempting to analyse the pattern of Muhammadiyah neutrality in the electoral arena and why any different policies between central and regional boards of Muhammadiyah. The finding demonstrates that although Muhammadiyah is consistent to have a neutral position in the electoral arena, its elites in the central board have different political perspectives. The factionalism inside the central board of Muhammadiyah causes the deviation of Muhammadiyah neutrality in the local election. Sleman Regency and Maros Regency are cases in this research in where Muhammadiyah in these two regencies took a part in the election and supported to one of the can-

didates. When the Muhammadiyah inside the regencies decided to support its cadres, they earned a powerful support from one of the elites in the central board of Muhammadiyah. It shows the ambiguous position of Muhammadiyah neutrality in the practical politics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICAL NEUTRALITY OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The term of “movement” terminologically means social activities conducted by an informal group whether a big or small group in where it focuses on certain social, cultural and political issues. Such groups usually campaign, fight or reject an issue for social change (Widyanta, 2002: 12). In sociological perspective, the movement could be classified as a collective behavior so-called as social movement. According to Thoha (1995: 63), as a collective action, the age of social movements is similar with the development of human civilization. The transformation of a civilization to further civilizations not merely through a peaceful way but also should be handled through collective movements, namely social movements. In the same way, Suharko (2006: 3) said that the social movement is a collective deed for a similar objective despite from distinctive social movements.

Furthermore, Winardi (2000: 47) defines the movement as the capacity in influencing various strategies and groups in order to identify and develop organizational culture. By the group, refers to Budiardjo (2008: 382-383), the interests will be received easily by the decision maker so that such group can influence public policies. In this paper, Muhammadiyah can be represented as a religious social movement which involve in the electoral arena. The election in this context will be placed as the practical politics.

As the religious movement, political neutrality in Muhammadiyah has a problem. Some people said that Muhammadiyah still has a neutral position in the practical politics while others protest that right now Muhammadiyah is no longer neutral. This paper is attempting to define the concept of neutral or neutrality. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2008), the word of “neutral” means not saying or doing anything that would encourage or help any of the groups involved in an argument or war while “neutrality” demonstrate a neutral position. According to Falakh (2001: 172), the neutrality can be defined as an attitude which is inactively support to a certain group or political party particularly in the election.

Moreover, Oppenheim (in Wiranto, 1989: 30) describes the neutrality as the attitude of impartiality made by the Third World countries towards belligerent countries. Such attitude creates rights and duties between the impartial states and the belligerents. Furthermore, Abdulgani (1979; 81) conceptualizes the neutrality as a way to stem a dis-integrative power from outside parties and strengthens an integrative power from inside. Therefore, self-confidence to own power and independence particularly in national and regional defenses should be fulfilled by a nation. Additionally, Starke (1984: 549) defines the neutrality as an attitude of the state which is not at war with belligerents and does not participate in the hostilities.

In the meantime, Kusumohamidjojo (1985: 34-36) postulates that the term of “neutrality” denotes to the concept of non-block politics introduced by Asian countries to show that themselves are not in one of the ideological blocks between Uni-Soviet communists and non-communist states. After World War II, the concept of neutrality is not only for a war situation but also for the circumstance is not war. In recent situation, Kusumohamidjojo (1985: 36) stresses the concept of neutrality as the impartial position to one of

the interests in gaining a power in a state.

More specifically, Oppenheim (in Wiranto, 1989: 31) provides some features of neutrality. First, the neutrality as an impartial attitude which not allow to help one of the two belligerent parties and harm one of them. Second, neutral parties should stop belligerent parties in order to no use their land and sources of wealth. It aims to create a peaceful circumstance. Third, the impartial attitude can be received by both conflicting parties such as humanitarian mission: sending doctors, ners, medicines and emergency hospitals for particularly victims. Fourth, although the war happens, the relationship between conflicting parties and neutral parties are still robust among of them.

In the context of Muhammadiyah, Nashir (2015) emphasizes that the non-partisan position has no political affiliation to one of the political parties or certain political power. Therefore, neutrality is disengagement which means taking the same distance to do not approach all political parties. Nevertheless, although Muhammadiyah is far from the practical politics, it doesn't mean that it is anti-politics and vice versa. Thus, the intelligence, honesty and wisdom are still needed by Muhammadiyah elites in making strategic decisions for the benefits of people. Recently, there is a term of "active neutrality" as an anti-thesis to "passive- neutrality" which labeled to Muhammadiyah's values in the political stage (Nashir, 2008: 3).

Considering previous explanations on the concept of neutrality, this paper categorizes three different patterns of neutrality in political activities conducted by Muslim organizations.

1. Active-neutrality. It can be defined as the impartial attitude, but people still can use their rights to vote in the political arena such as election. People then actively support other voters to use their rights in voting the candidate.
2. Pseudo-neutrality. It denotes to the fact that the attitude looks like the original but actually not original. In the political context, the attitude seems not stand to one of the two parties, but in actually the attitude is standing to one of them.
3. Passive-neutrality. It is inactive attitudes and no effort. In the political stage, it is an impartial attitude to any parties, disengagement in anything, silent movements, and running away from the political life. Parsons (1991) has other term namely "effective neutrality" meaning indifference and no care to something which has no effects to their interests.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper applies the qualitative research method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3-4; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992: 6; Silverman, 2001: 32; Devine, 2002: 197-215; Patton, 2002: 14). Among five kinds of the qualitative research, namely narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study, this paper prefers to adopt the case study due to its relevance (Creswell, 2013: 69-107; Gerring, 2004: 352; Yin, 1994: 1-12; Flyvbjerg, 2011: 301-02; Berg & Lune, 2012: 342).

Thus, this paper selects Yogyakarta Municipality as the case study to examine the neutrality of Muhammadiyah because this city is well-known as the hometown of Muhammadiyah. Covering an area of 32.50 square kilometres, in 2016 the total popula-

tion in Yogyakarta Municipality is 417,744 inhabitants with 82.84 percent are Muslims (BPS-Statistics of Yogyakarta Municipality, 2017: 70-1, 197). In the meantime, Javanese is still dominating than other ethnics. Nonetheless, because of marriage and occupational motives, non-Javanese society has been entering, even a few foreign people are available within (Al-Hamdi, 2017: 92). As one of Indonesia's leading cities, Yogyakarta envisages itself for 2005-2025 as the city with a qualified education, a culture-based tourism and an environment-oriented service centre (Yogyakarta Municipality Government, 2008: 6).

The in-depth interview and documentary were employed as data-gathering techniques (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992: 63; Patton, 2002: 4, 293, 343-44; Manheim & Rich, 1986: 132-38; Silverman, 2001: 83-114; Yin, 1994: 96). For the in-depth interview, it was conducted approximately three months between February and April 2018. Even, one informant can be interviewed twice. Meanwhile, documentary was carried out before, during and after the field research. Supporting documents coming from Muhammadiyah and municipal government institutions and appropriate scholarly references will be utilised also in this research.

The given data will be analyzed into a fourfold step. First is reducing data. The data which appear in written field notes will be selected, simplified and, in turn, transformed into the data display. As the second step, displaying data is compressing a set of information which allows depicting concluding remarks. Third is drawing and verification. Since the commencement, the researcher should make a decision what things mean – noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions. Final concluding remarks may not appear until data collecting is done, although the analyst argues to have been proceeding “inductively”. The concluding remark is also validated as the researcher proceeds (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10-2; Creswell, 2013: 179-80).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the neutral position of Muhammadiyah in the practical politics, this paper will assess it with three integrated questions: Is Muhammadiyah actively supporting to one of the candidates? Is Muhammadiyah part of the Success Team for one of the candidates? Does Muhammadiyah has no interests during and after election? From these three vital questions, this paper will find out to what extent does the political neutrality of Muhammadiyah.

Is Muhammadiyah actively supporting to one of the candidates?

The neutrality, according to the chairperson of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta Municipality, Akhid Widi Rahmanto, has two dimensions. In the social perspective, the neutral is impartiality while, in the political view, the neutrality is providing a position for the people benefit. If the neutrality in the political context is understood as the impartial attitude, it is a mistake concept and will harm the Muhammadiyah position.

Rahmanto further states that one of the important things in selecting the best candidate is identifying their personal background. The candidate who is closer to Muhammadiyah culturally, he/she is potential to be supported powerfully by these organization devotees. Rahmanto's statement is also reinforced by the official letter issued by Muhammadiyah of Yogyakarta Municipality on October, 5th, 2016 on the recommendation related to the 2017 mayoral election. The letter emphasizes the support of Muhammadiyah to the

candidate who has a cultural close with Muhammadiyah. Thus, if Muhammadiyah selects the precise person, it will affect to Muhammadiyah interests. Consequently, Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta Municipality has an understanding that political neutrality is having a similar partnership with all political parties.

According to Abdul Samik Sandhi, the head of the Division of *Hikma* and Public Policy of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta Municipality, Muhammadiyah as an Islamic missionary endeavour movement cannot be separated from the political life. In the context of the 2017 mayoral election in Yogyakarta, Sandhi argues that Muhammadiyah has been keeping a similar relationship with all political parties. Thus, Imam Bayu, secretary of Muhammadiyah at the Jetis Sub-District, stated that Muhammadiyah will fight and support for the candidate who has a comparable vision with Muhammadiyah values. This perspective is underpinned by Ashad Kusumajaya, the vice chair of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta Municipality. He stresses that Islam in the Muhammadiyah perspective never taught to its followers on neutrality, but it taught on values. If we have two terrible options, we should select the best thing among of them. It means that Muhammadiyah has to decide to vote, which one the best candidate.

Although elites and cadres in Muhammadiyah have distinctive understandings to the concept of neutrality, most understandings are denoting to the similar concept: taking a mutual position. They claim that the meaning of neutrality is doing anything not keeping silent. It can be understood as a choice whether Muhammadiyah will vote for this candidate or other candidate.

In terms of the 2017 mayoral election in Yogyakarta, society always asks to Muhammadiyah to decide its preference to which candidate it will support because Muhammadiyah in this municipality has a powerful influence to society. Therefore, the politicians which will run as the mayoral candidate will fight sincerely to gain Muhammadiyah support. Kusumajaya argues that Muhammadiyah in this municipality suggests to its followers to vote for the candidate who has the Muhammadiyah personal background or at least the candidate has a close cultural relation with Muhammadiyah.

The official organizational decision so-called as “Tanfidz Keputusan Musyda” made by Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta Municipality suggests to Muhammadiyah devotees to use their vote in the mayoral election and to vote the candidate who has these features: devout, having capacities, fighting for people welfare, caring with environment as well as having a close relationship with Muhammadiyah so that the candidate will encourage Muhammadiyah activities (PDM Kota Yogyakarta, 2016: 13-14). It denotes to the fact that Muhammadiyah actually wishes to its true believers to vote the candidate who has a close cultural relationship with Muhammadiyah. According to Sugeng Nugroho Hadi, the chair of Muhammadiyah at the Gampingan Village, although Muhammadiyah not state obviously to support any candidates, in fact, Muhammadiyah followers already knew to which candidate they have to vote.

Among two alternative candidates namely the couple of Imam Priyono and Achmad Fadli and the couple of Haryadi Suyuti and Heroe Poerwadi, Muhammadiyah intends to support Haryadi-Heroe as the candidate couple who has a close cultural relationship and a similar vision with Muhammadiyah values. In addition to that, Haryadi and Heroe are also Muhammadiyah cadres where Haryadi was the former functionaries of Muhammadiyah at Yogyakarta Province. Haryadi-Heroe is nominated and proposed by these po-

litical parties: Golkar, PAN, Gerindra, Demokrat, PKS, and PPP under the coalition “Koalisi Yogyakarta Berkemajuan”. This coalition name is related to Muhammadiyah vision inside the municipality i.e. realising Yogyakarta Municipality with values of *berkemajuan* (loosely: progressive).

The support of Muhammadiyah to Haryadi-Heroe is not merely issuing an official statement but also organising intensive coordination among of them to strengthen the campaign strategies. The intensive cultural meetings were also taking place between Haryadi-Heroe and Muhammadiyah communities at the grassroots level. The agenda in such meetings are campaigning and socializing their vision and images. Various people came to these meetings due to their enthusiastic to meet with the candidate.

Considering these evidence, Muhammadiyah is actively supporting the candidate couple of Haryadi Suyuti dan Heroe Poerwadi. Various coordinations and consolidations among of them were occurring to discuss campaign strategies. Therefore, in the perspective of neutrality, Muhammadiyah can be positioned as not neutral.

Is Muhammadiyah part of the *Success Team* for one of the candidates?

In addition to actively communication and coordination between Muhammadiyah and the candidate, Muhammadiyah cadres are also part of the Success Team in succeeding Haryadi-Heroe. Creating such team is in order to make Muhammadiyah is easy to coordinate with the candidate because it is not possible for Muhammadiyah to take a part institutionally in whole steps of the mayoral election in order to give an image to public that Muhammadiyah not involve actively in the practical political life. It is important to be noted also that Muhammadiyah principally not prohibit its cadres and followers to be the Success Team for one of the candidates so that the involvement of Muhammadiyah cadres in all candidates is part of supporting the successful agenda of democracy.

As the chair of the Muhammadiyah Youth in Yogyakarta Municipality, Ghifari Yuristiadi puts forward that it does not matter if any cadres and elites of Muhammadiyah involve in the mayoral election 2017, because their involvement in the political life is part of encouraging the government programs. If it is not, Muhammadiyah will not be considered as the influencing party in succeeding the mayoral election inside the city. Due to the great power of Muhammadiyah, youthful cadgers of Muhammadiyah take a part of themselves in this political moment. Ghifari said that there are at least six cadgers of the Muhammadiyah Youth who became the Success Team of Haryadi-Heroe. Nonetheless, Ghifari highlights his principal messages that Muhammadiyah devotees have to keep Islamic missionary endeavour in society although they involve in the practical politics.

“In addition to that, it is not allowed for Muhammadiyah true believers to bring attributes, symbols and emblems related to Muhammadiyah when they are campaigning or in the area of campaign,” Ghifari emphasis.

Even, Ashad Kusumajaya, one of the Muhammadiyah elites in Yogyakarta Municipality, is the chair of the Success Team for the candidate couple of Haryadi-Heroe. In main-taing the team, Kusumajaya professionally operates his responsibilities as good as he can. He also did not use Muhammadiyah symbols in the campaign process.

“My motive to support Haryadi-Heroe is because of my close to them. I really know their personal track records rather than other candidates,” Kusumajaya said.

According to Rifki Rifai, member of the Success Team of Haryadi-Heroe, the involvement of Kusumajaya is already permitted by the Muhammadiyah Board. Rifai's testimony is reinforced by Muhsin Hariyanto, the chair of Muhammadiyah at the Kraton Sub-District, who argues that there are more than two cadres from Kraton who involve themselves as part of the succeeding team of Haryadi-Heroe. Their contribution is individual to support and mobilize society to vote the Haryadi-Heroe.

Furthermore, Sandhi postulates that the existence of Muhammadiyah elites and cadres as part of the Success Team is a consequence of Muhammadiyah support to particularly Haryadi-Heroe. As a result, the cadres who become the Success Team, they should to take off their structural position as the functionaries in Muhammadiyah in order to concentrate to be a good team in winning their candidate.

These facts indicate that although Muhammadiyah as an organizational institution not officially involve itself inside the Success Team, but it delegates its cadres and elites to be the key persons who have significant roles in triumphing the candidate in the mayoral election. The cadres and elites who involve as the Success Team are not merely at the municipal level but also at the grassroots level. Therefore, this paper postulates that Muhammadiyah is not neutral anymore.

Does Muhammadiyah has no interests during and after election?

Gaining power and position is part of the political life where various political parties wish to take it. It is indeed different with the feature of social movements. In the political life, people will find reciprocal transactions such as position, money and the like while, in the social activities, they merely find cultural and voluntary approaches (Qodir, Nurmandi, & Yamin, 2015: 131). In this context, Muhammadiyah supports the candidate couple of Haryadi-Heroe because they have a similar vision with Muhammadiyah values. Consequently, after Haryadi-Heroe won the competition, some cadres of Muhammadiyah are recruited by the elected mayor and vice mayor as the vital team inside the government in operating and implementing municipal programs.

“Some programs which proposed by Muhammadiyah are approved by the municipal government to be executed so that there is a mutual cooperation in developing urban areas,” Rahmanto claims.

Although Muhammadiyah never ask a special request or treatment, the elected mayor promises to give “something like a reward” if Muhammadiyah still support him. Providing programmes which can be operated together in governing the municipality and facilitating Muhammadiyah in enhancing its *da'wah* particularly related to education and community empowerment are some kinds of rewards. In addition to that, there are some commitments which delivered by the elected mayor to Muhammadiyah: The municipal government will support Muhammadiyah's *dawah* and activities, Muhammadiyah will be involved in deciding policies, and Muhammadiyah's schools will be encouraged fully by the government.

As member of the Success Team of the candidate couple of Imam-Fadli, Edi Setiawan believes that the Muhammadiyah support to Haryadi-Heroe has indeed a real political transaction among of them. The existence of Ashad Kusumajaya as the expertise staff of Mayor Haryadi is one of the evidence. Moreover, various Muhammadiyah interests are usually accommodated by the municipal government. Even, Muhammadiyah is invited by

the municipal government to deliver its suggestions and programmes in the discussion of the Municipal Middle Term Development Planning or so-called as “RPJMD”.

A reciprocal relationship which be built up by both of them demonstrate to the fact that Muhammadiyah seemingly is no longer in the neutral position. Each of them will gain benefits. Haryadi-Heroe obtains Muhammadiyah support while Muhammadiyah earns various facilitations and programmes from the municipal government. These evidence indicate that Muhammadiyah obviously has a lot of interests whether during or after the election.

From the three questions above which already answered, it can be postulated that Muhammadiyah is not in the neutral position anymore because it cannot fulfill these three aspects: not actively supporting to one of the candidates, not part of the *Success Team* for one of the candidates, and having no interests during and after election. Among three kinds of neutrality, this paper eventually categorizes Muhammadiyah position in the status of “pseudo-neutrality”. It denotes to the reality that although Muhammadiyah perceptibly declared as the neutral organisation and not support to one of the candidates, but in the reality it powerfully encourages the candidate couple of Haryadi-Heroe. It can be seen with some evidence such intensive coordinations among of them in coping with election activities, the involvement of Muhammadiyah elites as the key *Success Team*, and a lot of Muhammadiyah interests are accommodated by the elected mayor and vice mayor.

Nevertheless, the partiality of Muhammadiyah in the 2017 mayoral election in Yogyakarta Municipality does not mean that Muhammadiyah is affiliated to a certain political party. It actually demonstrates its essential role in selecting a leader who has similar values with Muhammadiyah. It is undeniable that Muhammadiyah is the influential power in Yogyakarta so that it has to involve in taking a part who is the right person will govern the city and progress Muhammadiyah activities.

Conclusion: Pseudo-neutrality as the Political Path of Muhammadiyah

To analyse the neutrality of Muhammadiyah in the practical politics, this paper applies a threefold indicator: not actively supporting one of the candidates, not part of the *Success Team* for one of the candidates, and having no interests during and after election. Considering these three indicators, this paper concludes that Muhammadiyah is no longer in the neutral status due to not fulfilling these three indicators. Field data and interview verify that, *first*, Muhammadiyah actively support to Haryadi-Heroe as the candidate couple who has a close culture with Muhammadiyah, *second*, Muhammadiyah delegates its elites and cadres to be critical persons of the *Success Team* for the candidate couple of Haryadi-Heroe, *third*, Muhammadiyah indeed has political interests during and after election whether for positional or programmatic goals.

Among these three kinds of neutrality namely active-neutrality, pseudo-neutrality, passive-neutrality, this paper eventually theorizes that pseudo-neutrality is the political path adopted and performed by Muhammadiyah when it copes with particularly the electoral contestation. It denotes to the fact that although Muhammadiyah officially declared that it has a neutral position, but actually it has a contradicting position with the three indicators. The term of “pseudo” indicates to the behaviour that seems to be real, but it is actually faking.

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List of Respondents

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