



## **Communicative Cultural *Dakwah* of Abdurrahman Wahid in Pluralistic Society**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the background of the life and thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid or known as Gus Dur in the context of *dakwah* and communication using a social hermeneutic approach. Critical thinking, history, context of religious issues and Gus Dur's missionary movement are identified in his various works and socio-religious roles. This type of research is qualitative factual history and literature study, namely research that uses library materials as the main data source. The research approach used is a hermeneutic and historical-sociological approach. The research methods are historical descriptive methods and biographical reconstructions. The data collected from the two approaches were analyzed by descriptive analysis presented inductively based on the framework of Habermas' communication theory. The results of this



study shows: Gus Dur emphasized that Islam is as social ethics based on historical-critical, and normative-theological, that reality epistemologically is plural, and the dialogue is necessary.

[Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji latar belakang kehidupan dan pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid atau yang dikenal dengan Gus Dur dalam konteks dakwah dan komunikasi dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutika sosial. Pemikiran kritis, sejarah, konteks isu keagamaan dan gerakan misionaris Gus Dur diidentifikasi dalam berbagai karya dan peran sosial-keagamaannya. Jenis penelitian ini merupakan kualitatif sejarah faktual dan studi kepustakaannya yaitu penelitian yang menjadikan bahan pustaka sebagai sumber data utama. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan yaitu pendekatan hermeneutik dan historis-sosiologis. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu metode deskriptif sejarah dan rekonstruksi biografi. Data terkumpul dari kedua pendekatan tersebut dianalisis dengan deskriptif analisis yang disajikan dengan induktif berdasar pada kerangka teori komunikasi Habermas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan: Gus Dur menekankan bahwa Islam sebagai etika sosial etis secara historis-kritik dan normatif-teologis, realitas merupakan plural secara epistemologis, dan dialog menjadi sebuah kebutuhan.]

Keywords: communicative; *dakwah*; plural society; Gus Dur

## Introduction

The multidimensional crisis in modern civilization has resulted in alienation among individuals that they lose the true meaning of life. One of those crises of contemporary society is a spiritual crisis. On the other hand, the religion embraced by its adherents has not provided a solution, resulting from a superficial appreciation and comprehension of religion. The appreciation of religion is trapped in symbolic-ceremonial rites so that religion loses its function as a source of human values. The primary value of culture can improve the morale of the nation.<sup>1</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Abrar Parinduri, Abdul Karim, and Hana Lestari, "Main Values of Toba Muslim Batak Culture in Moral Education Perspective," *Karsa: Journal of Social and*



political contestation, religion is often even used as a means of legitimacy or justification for the political motives and actions of those in power. Religion can turn into a tool of spiritual and even physical violence on a more massive scale.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Indonesia's historical records show that communal and political conflicts in the public sphere often use the issue of religious identity politics as a political tool so that the escalation of competition in the name of religion in Indonesia is still a severe problem.<sup>3</sup>

According to Habermas, the language conveyed by a communicator must be directed to form a transformative and empowering society through open communication and free from the interests of domination and ideology. Furthermore, through rational argumentation, the language of communication must present a universal principle that can be tested pragmatically by all elements of society in the public sphere. The goal is to have a common understanding of the claims discussed in the public sphere.

The critical communication initiated by Habermas generates a key concept called discourse.<sup>4</sup> Habermas interpreted discourse as a particular type of communication requiring the speaker statement in touch must be open to challenge and test the public. Therefore when delivering a message, a speaker must be able to justify his statement demonstratively in the form of rational arguments.<sup>5</sup> This is needed as proof of the validity of a person's claim on his statement in public as well as a space to get rebuttals from other people who disagree with the idea. In the context of the presence of various parties in communication, those who agree and disagree with one discourse (discourse), it appears that the discourse idea has contributed to the importance of an

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<sup>2</sup> C. Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> B.M. Rachman, *Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Grasindo, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> K.A. Foss and S.W. Littlejohn, *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory* (London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Habermas, *Op.cit.*



emancipatory communication process.<sup>6</sup> In the communication process, every citizen is required to commit several ways: (1) All citizens use the same language expressions consistently; (2) Voices not in line should not be isolated in the interaction process; (3) There must be no sovereignty. Apart from being based on rational arguments (not because of threats, promises, etc.); (4) All citizens are motivated to seek a consensus and agreement through dialogue; and (5) There are no truth claims that are considered valid without first being questioned by participants.<sup>7</sup>

Habermas' main thought emphasizes all elements involved in the discourse process in the public sphere. Such public space is needed as a place for every citizen to share meanings and ideas openly and build communicative relationships in ideal speech act situations.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the importance of all elements involved in the discourse process;<sup>9</sup> therefore, his theory of communicative action is relevant for reading the practice of *dakwah* in plural societies, such as in Indonesia. The plurality in the religion and culture requires a model of *dakwah* with a cultural approach involving various elements that respect local wisdom and traditions so that society accepts it openly. The nature of preaching should still maintain a distinct community identity. Community identity is kept, not changed but enriched. The characteristics of cultural preaching that emphasize the substance of values can ultimately show a universal attitude, where various identities will be accepted gracefully. In cultural preaching, different traditions continue to grow and even enrich so that there is no tension between religion and culture because culture is an essential element in religion.

More specifically, *dakwah* is a process of religious interaction with a good mission. The word *dakwah* origin is etymologically derived from the *mashdar* form. It comes from the verb *dā'a*, *yad'ū*, *da'watan*,

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<sup>6</sup> Habermas, Op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> C.J. Hoch, "Pragmatic Communicative Action Theory," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26, no. 3 (2007): 272–83.

<sup>8</sup> S.R. Stroud, "Toward a Deweyan Theory of Communicative Mindfulness," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 30, no. 1 (2010): 57–75.

<sup>9</sup> Habermas, Op.cit.



which calls or invites.<sup>10</sup> It refers to the meaning of Islam, a religion that brings peace to all humanity.<sup>11</sup> In essence, *dakwah* as a verb contains messages about efforts for change or restoration for both individuals and communities. Individual and social changes are needed to improve the quality of religious understanding and reach a broader target of preaching in various aspects of life.<sup>12</sup> In the context of an act of communication, *dakwah* can occur both in culture and structure.<sup>13</sup> The *dakwah* cannot be separated from propaganda, predominantly black and hate speech. Structural *dakwah* is an activity that makes power, bureaucracy, and political power tools to fight for Islam. Structural *dakwah* can also be said to be a process of preaching that puts forward the axis and structural functions in society.

Structural *dakwah* does not originate from agency inspiration, in sociological terms, but rather from the power of the system created to govern society. Meanwhile, cultural *dakwah* is preaching that uses social and cultural aspects to build people's morals through their culture. It is explained that cultural *dakwah* superiority is its approach that prioritizes physical and rites compared to the conceptual matter that will be indoctrinated in society.<sup>14</sup> Community culture becomes an entry point to explain the universalism of Islamic teachings offered to the public (since 2009). The cultural *dakwah* approach carried out by

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<sup>10</sup> F.B. An-Nabiry, *Meniti Jalan Dakwah* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> A.F. Bakti, "Raising Public Consciousness About the Importance of Freedom of Expression In Democratic Society and On Enhancing the Quality of Life of the Ordinary Citizen: the Case of Indonesia," *The Journal of Development Communication* 24, no. 1 (2013): 1–14. <http://jdc.journals.unisel.edu.my/ojs/index.php/jdc/article/view/115>.

<sup>12</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Logika Agama* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Lentera Hati, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> F. Farhan, "Bahasa Dakwah Struktural Dan Kultural Da'i Dalam Perspektif Dramatiurgi," *At-Turas: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 1, no. 2 (2014): 1–15.

<sup>14</sup> Abdul Karim and Firdaus Wajdi, "Propaganda and Dakwah in Digital Era (A Case of Hoax Cyber-Bullying against Ulama)," *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman* 27, no. 1 (2019): 171–202, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v27i1.1921>.



Walisongo is one example that emphasizes the harmonious and synergistic relationship between Islam and local culture.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, *dakwah* with a cultural approach emphasizes the importance of communication in the public space by making local, national, and global culture an instrument of *dakwah*. For example, is the character of communication in a traditional ceremony.<sup>16</sup> Cultural *dakwah* accommodates specific cultural values innovatively and creatively without eliminating the substantial aspects of religion and emphasizing the importance of wisdom in understanding the culture of a particular community as the target of *dakwah*. Thus cultural *dakwah* will be identical and focus on the empowerment domain of the values prevailing in the society. The form of cultural *dakwah* accommodates local wisdom by considering the uniqueness of each individual and society where *dakwah* is conducted. With a cultural approach, Islamic values exist and merge with regional identities.<sup>17</sup> So, suppose the structure is related to political contributions to power or the state. In that case, culture is related to matters of religious contributions to individual behavior and attitudes in practicing their religious teachings. In this case, that the relationship between religion and state in preaching needs to be in synergy because religion and state are more appropriate when they are in an intersection position. They are neither fully integrated nor separate. The intention is so that the state does not intervene in the community's religious life, which can cause discrimination and tension in the community.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kees van Dijk, "Dakwah and Indigenous Culture; The Dissemination of Islam," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 154, no. 2 (1998): 218–35.

<sup>16</sup> Pandu Bimantara et al., "Lengser Character Communication in Mapag Panganten Ceremony: A Comparative Study," *Elementary Education Online* 20, no. 4 (2021): 529–39, <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.04.57>.

<sup>17</sup> A.F. Bakti, "Kita Harus Menghormati Local Value," *Khazanah Islam Nusantara: Rekam Jejak Dialektika Islam dan Local Value. Jurnal Bimas Islam* 2, no. 2 (2009): 30–55. [https://www.academia.edu/35657549/Kita\\_Harus\\_Menghormati\\_Local\\_Values\\_pdf](https://www.academia.edu/35657549/Kita_Harus_Menghormati_Local_Values_pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Abdullah Sahin, "The Future of Islamic Education : A Case for Reform" (Markfield, UK: Islamic Studies and Education, 2014).



Such a phenomenon of violence in the name of religion results in the loss of public morality or social piety so that piety stops at individual piety.<sup>19</sup> The Islamic moral revolution taught by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), which succeeded in carrying out social change, has now experienced a distortion. The manipulation of religious symbols for the sake of political and economic interests is a dark portrait of history that adds to the deterioration of the image of Islam. A such religious manipulation is a form of justification in the name of religion and not religious truth, too many deviations, and even moral crimes committed in the name of God. It is none other than the actions of people who abuse the name of God for their temporary pleasure of wrongdoings without feeling sin and regret.<sup>20</sup>

In reality, such a religious movement is prevalent in Indonesian society, which indicates a massive spiritual-religious crisis. Therefore, the banality of modern culture requires the contribution of religion as an alternative morality in the public sphere. The critical role of religion in the public sphere becomes an urgent matter with the emergence of hyper-realities of contemporary culture due to global capitalism. As it has become a phenomenon in society, we can say that the popular culture industry, through global media networks, has led to the role of sacred religion to become profane because it reduces the meaning of religiosity. Furthermore, some people used religion as an extension of capitalism. The materialistic orientation of capitalism directs religion into a single commodity, a situation called the commodification of religion. The impact of treating religion as a commodity creates a crisis of values; therefore, religion fails to act as an ethic of emancipation.<sup>21</sup> This condition causes the failure of religion to guide human beings to the culture and civilization that end up in a decrease in the quality of social life and the increase of suffering in life.<sup>22</sup> The commodification of religion has become a global phenomenon,

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<sup>19</sup> M. Sobary, *Kesalehan Sosial* (Yogyakarta: LKIS Pelangi Aksara, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> A.S. Maarif, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan Dan Kemanusiaan: Refleksi Sejarah* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> M. Abdurrahman, *Islam Yang Memihak* (Yogyakarta: LKIS Pelangi Aksara, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> D. Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Post-Modern* (USA: Routledge, 2003).



including in Indonesia.<sup>23</sup> It was triggered by the strengthening of the expansion of global capitalism entering all dimensions of life, including religion, so that: “The deepest crisis in industrial capitalism is a cultural crisis that is a spiritual crisis.”<sup>24</sup>

The condition where religious communities and traditions still exist to participate in public life (politics) after experiencing a process of secularization is called “post-secular society.”<sup>25</sup> In this post-secular society, such phenomena cannot be understood as merely a disturbance to democracy. The religious community wants to participate in the political-public sphere because of these various sociological tendencies. Furthermore, there is a desire from religious groups to make their comprehensive doctrine the basis for the legitimacy of the order of life in society. Finally, religion is universally considered to be very relevant in managing the political life of society. Habermas’s optimism regarding the central role of religion in the public sphere needs to be viewed from a critical point. What approach to religion is relevant and can play a role in the public sphere? The appreciation of religious doctrine trapped into blind dogmatism, escapist-spiritualism, and politicization of religion is certainly not what Habermas dreamed.

In research entitled *Modern Religious Missions*, Laurel stated two implications of the message the spreaders of religious teachings conveyed. First, people are involved in a conflict in a clash of civilizations, as Huntington describes. However, Huntington tends to simplify that religious and cultural differences cause a competitive conflict situation. Second, Huntington fails to see that various parties of different religions and cultures have hopes of increasing understanding, agreement, and accepting the strengths and weaknesses of each to be able to coexist and work together in a dialogical manner. In this context, Habermas offers a theory of communicative action with his

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<sup>23</sup> P. Kitiarsa, *Religious Commodifications in Asia: Marketing Gods* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> D.R. Griffin, *Visi-Visi Postmodern: Spiritualitas dan Masyarakat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Habermas, Op.cit.





communicative rationality as the basis for a critical theoretical point of view in examining the problems of modern human life. Habermas' communicative theory became the culmination of his conclusion in correcting the modernity project of modern humans through his critical work. He argues that criticism will only advance based on ratio-communicative that are understood as praxis-communication or act-communicative. He emphasized that society is essentially communicative. What determines social change is not merely the development of the forces of production or technology but a learning process in a practical-ethical dimension.

In the communicative ratio, the objective attitude that makes the subject of knowledge see himself as an entity in the outside world is no longer considered remarkable. The subject's ambivalent relationship to himself (seeing himself as free subjectivity as well as the enslaving self-objectification) is destroyed by inter-subjectivity. The ratio is not assimilated to power. In short, subject-centered proportions, including mix-ups (amalgam) of knowledge and ability, can be destroyed by ratio-communicative inter-subjectivity.<sup>26</sup> Habermas wants to maintain the normative content contained in modernity and cultural enlightenment based on this new paradigm. The normative content of modernity is what he calls the rationalization of the world of life based on the communicative ratio. The life world consists of culture, society, and personality. This life world rationalization is made possible through communicative actions.<sup>27</sup>

Three aspects result from rationalization: *First*, cultural reproduction guarantees the continuity of tradition and sufficient coherence of knowledge for consensus needs in emerging new situations in daily practice. *Second*, social integration ensures coordination of actions maintained using interpersonal relationships that are legally regulated and the constancy of group identities that are supported. Third,

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<sup>26</sup> F.B. Hardiman, *Menuju Masyarakat Komunikatif: Ilmu, Masyarakat, Politik, & Postmodernisme Menurut Jürgen Habermas*, ed. Fitzgerald K. Sitorus (Jakarta, Indonesia: Kanisius, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> G. Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology* (Jakarta: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).



socialization guarantees that the acquisition of general abilities to act for future generations is guaranteed in new situations. Fourth, the alignment of individual life histories and forms of collective life is always maintained.<sup>28</sup> These three aspects ensure that new conditions can be related to the world through communicative action. In that communication, the participants communicate satisfactorily. They intend to make their interlocutors understand his point by trying to reach what he calls “validity of claims.” These claims are seen as rational and will be accepted without coercion due to consensus.

Considering plurality in a multicultural society, *dakwah* is an essential aspect of Gus Dur’s idea to propose the indigenization of Islam in his cultural preaching. Through this concept, Gus Dur tried to generate transformative Islamic ideas in various contexts of human life. Multicultural is an excellent word to say but difficult to realize.<sup>29</sup> Universal nuances of Islam became the features of Gus Dur’s discourses and actions, making it difficult for both exclusive and formalist Muslims to deal with this matter because he derived his ideas from the substantive values of Islamic teachings. Gus Dur used culture as a means of movement to accommodate these notions because the culture is dynamic and widely accepted. In this context, Gus Dur inherited a genealogy of early preaching strategies symbolized by Walisongo’s preaching or cultural preaching.<sup>30</sup> Cultural *dakwah* mobilizes cultural symbols by providing meaning and interpretation of Islamic teachings.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, Gus Dur also emphasized the mobilization and understanding of cultural symbols in preaching. History shows that *dakwah* is normative and must consider the cultural aspects of religious politics and culture.

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<sup>28</sup> F.B. Hardiman, *Seni Memahami: Hermeneutic Dari Schleiermacher Sampai Derida* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Abdul Karim, “Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam Multikulturalis,” *Taklim: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 14, no. 1 (2016): 19–35, <http://jurnal.upi.edu/taklim/view/3880/pembaharuan-pendidikan-islam-multikulturalis-.html>.

<sup>30</sup> R. Gábrišová, “Ecosophy and the New Age Movement in the Transmodern Society,” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 50, no. 3 (2014): 145–57.

<sup>31</sup> P.P. Muhammadiyah, *Dakwah Kultural Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2004).



Coming from a *pesantren* background, Gus Dur raised the idea of cultural Islam as the basis for his social criticism. He was side by side with the concept of Islamic indigenization. What Gus Dur is doing is not only a movement to recreate the Walisongo preaching but paradigmatically transforming it into social-critical reasoning. In this context, Islam is expected to transform into the discourse of modernity. Gus Dur's indigenization of Islam was inherently integrated with his preaching understanding. Habermas' critical theory of communication action becomes relevant because Gus Dur's ideas created a meeting point among the various opposing entities that are not solved by the concept of postmodernism.<sup>32</sup> Thus the communication action theory explores the best sides of modernity and postmodernism to find a new social order.

Through reading the theory of communicative action, the researcher further examines Gus Dur's cultural movement as social criticism in his Islamic discourse reflected in his various writings. This research reveals the cultural resistance of Gus Dur in defending the cultural Islam discourse that has been marginalized by the mainstream of Islamic discourse and its relationship with modernity and postmodernity in Indonesia. Many studies have been conducted on Gus Dur's religious thoughts and movements. In general, as discussed here, they tended to position Gus Dur's religious beliefs and activities as political, social, and theological. However, studies concerning the issue from a communication perspective have not received attention yet.

Following the formulation and limitation of the problems, this study aims to position Gus Dur's cultural concepts and *dakwah* in Habermas's communication theory.<sup>33</sup> However, before arriving at this goal, we shall explore the epistemology and idea of *dakwah* or Islamic preaching by Gus Dur with the cultural approach, especially on the issues of Islamic universalism, tolerance, and multiculturalism in Indonesia. The research statement in this research is that the indigenization of Islam from the view of the theory of communicative

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<sup>32</sup> K.A. Wahid, *Gus Dur Menjawab Perubahan Zaman: Warisan Pemikiran KH Abdurrahman Wahid* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Habermas, Op.cit.



action in *dakwah* or Islamic preaching by Abdurrahman Wahid with the cultural approach has relevance to the modernity and plurality in Indonesia.

## Methods

Following the variables to be analyzed, the type of this research was library research, where the data was taken from written materials, either books or others related to the topic of discussion. Content of library research is in the form of theoretical studies mainly, a debate on information about the problems to be solved through research.<sup>34</sup> This research was categorized as factual historical research related to manuscripts or books based on the subject of study.<sup>35</sup> The manuscripts or books examined in this study were associated with developing the thoughts of a particular figure, in this case, Gus Dur. Therefore, the descriptive-analytical method was used in presenting the data.<sup>36</sup>

This research is a study of manuscripts and books about figures' thoughts in the context of *dakwah* and communication. Therefore, it was relevant to use the social hermeneutic approach, namely the interpretation of the thoughts of specific statistics reflected in the text or book. The hermeneutic approach used in this study is based on Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory.<sup>37</sup> This approach that the text has autonomy involves three elements: the author's intent, the cultural situation, and the socio-political conditions underlying the existence of the text.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, to understand the text, Ricoeur offered three steps: First, understanding deeply the symbols towards "thinking" of the symbols contained in the text. Second, giving meaning to symbols and exploring the meaning carefully. Third, thinking (reflective-

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<sup>34</sup> Sukardi, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan: Kompetensi dan Praktiknya* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> A.C. Bakker, Achmad Charris Zubair, *Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> M. Nazir, *Metode Penelitian, Cetakan Keempat* (Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> E. Sumaryono, *Hermeneutik: Sebuah Metode Filasafat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Sumaryono, *Ibid.*



philosophically) through symbols as a starting point. Furthermore, the process of interpreting the text in Ricoeur's hermeneutics was passed through four methods: first, objectification through text structure analysis to understand (*verstehen*) expressed in the explanation (*erklaren*) about the internal relations of the text.<sup>39</sup> In interpreting the text, the interpreter freed himself from involving the author of the text. Instead, the interpreter only performed a structural-linguistic analysis that utilized interdisciplinary scholarship. Second, making the distance to maintain the autonomy of the text. Third, looking for a vehicle or world of text that the interpreter or reader must have by revealing the structure in the text. Fourth, making the appropriation or self-understanding as the link between the world of text and the interpreter's empirical world.

As previously stated, this research was library research towards the approach used by Gus Dur in *dakwah*, emphasizing his thoughts and concepts of cultural *dakwah*. Therefore, some library materials are used as primary and secondary sources. Preliminary data were the works of Gus Dur related to religious thought written in books, articles, tabloids, and other relevant documents. Meanwhile, secondary data consisted of the works of other parties related to Gus Dur, including research, reports, journal articles, recordings, and other relevant documents.

The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical and hermeneutic methods. Descriptive research involves description, systematic representation, factual and accurate description of the facts, characteristics, and relationships of the phenomena in the study.<sup>40</sup> The analysis was conducted using several techniques: interpretation, coherence, and historically factual. Meanwhile, the hermeneutic method was used to interpret a text as an art of understanding.<sup>41</sup> The performance was carried out by delving into the written works of Gus Dur to capture ideas and nuances that were explicitly intended and interpreted by the researcher in a scientific way.

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<sup>39</sup> Haryatmoko, *Pemikiran Kritis Post-Strukturalis* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Nazir, Op.cit.

<sup>41</sup> Hadirman, Op.cit.



In the initial step, the accumulated energy was recorded in research notes. Then, the data were examined, classified, categorized, and interpreted to answer the questions posed in the study. In selecting all data, it was observed that the data reduction process was then carried out to find the data that could be analyzed and to answer research. These steps were carried out to sharpen, categorize, direct, reduce unnecessary data, and organize data to conclude. After the data was fulfilled, the information was compiled and described descriptively.<sup>42</sup>

## Results

Abdurrahman Wahid's notion of Islamic indigenization is based on the need to transform Islamic teachings that were contextual with the reality that Indonesia is pluralistic. This notion is related to the doctrine of Islam as a religion of humanity that brings mercy to all creatures, which shows that Islam presupposes a pluralistic reality. Concerning its role as a public religion, Gus Dur believed that the discourse of the indigenization of Islam was a reasonable offer when Islamic teaching developed Islam as a social ethic. For Gus Dur, Islamic teachings are not static but dynamic and open to dialogue with various values present in the public sphere. In the concept of Islamic indigenization with its social ethics, Gus Dur offers an inclusive form of Islam that rejects unilateral and exclusive claims of truth. Religious inclusiveness must provide space for other types of facts in the area of communicative action.

Furthermore, Gus Dur believed that the claim to the reality of religious views in the name of a specific identity must open to scientific criticism as a religious discourse that is relatively epistemological. In other words, Gus Dur's emphasis on Islamic discourse has moved from a textual reading to a contextual reading. Gus Dur wanted the interpretation of Islamic teachings is not restricted to the old-fashioned and dogmatic attitudes, as he had said, but Islam had to be presented

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<sup>42</sup> M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif*, trans. Tjetjep Rohendi (Jakarta: UI Press, 2007).



with its rationality side to answer the problems of modernity without being torn from its roots of tradition.

Through the indigenization of Islam, Gus Dur offered a renewal of Islamic thought. His idea became a starting point for the presence of eclectic religious moderation in Indonesia as well as providing a new direction in reviewing the dark historical distortions of Islamic and non-Islamic relations due to the political interests of power that manipulated the politics of religious identity that had occurred, both from Islamic and non-Islamic groups. To be communicated discursively in the public space about his belief that Islam can always coincide with tradition while following modern democracy.<sup>43</sup> Through the indigenization of Islam, Gus Dur also criticized the renewal of thought among Islamic modernists who tended to forget tradition. Gus Dur also criticized modern secular culture, which is devoid of spirituality, so he wanted to answer the ideals of Islam as a religion of peace with universal ethics amid the reality of the Islamic world, which is full of violence and injustice.<sup>44</sup>

Gus Dur's idea of Islam as a social ethic is his attempt to offer a kind of global ethics derived from Islamic teachings as offered by Hans Kung through Protestant ethics and Daisaku Ikeda through his Buddhist teachings. In his book, Gus Dur became the pioneer of frontline dialogue at the national level and at the global level in interfaith dialogue that fights for the role of religion for humanity.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, as a social ethic, Gus Dur initiated Islam, found its articulation in presenting Islamic humanism at local, national, and global levels. The title Father of pluralism pinned by former President Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono is an award on behalf of the state for Gus Dur's attitude and struggle in fighting for religious tolerance and his rejection of all forms of violence in the name of religion.

From various discussions on Gus Dur's ideas, especially the indigenization of Islam, it appears that the common thread of his

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<sup>43</sup> Achmad Mufid A.R., *Ada Apa Dengan Gus Dur* (Yogyakarta: Kutub, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> H. Hanafi, "The Revolution of The Transcendence," *Kanz Philosophy: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 1, no. 2 (2011): 23–49.

<sup>45</sup> Mufid A.R., *Op.cit.*



thoughts is relevant to the methods and models developed in social theories, especially post-positivism social sciences or, more precisely what is known as a critical social science. In this context, the Islamic discourse developed by Gus Dur is similar to that initiated by Kuntowijoyo through Islam as a prophetic social science. As a scholar, Kuntowijoyo took one step further in formulating Islam as a prophetic social science inspired by the development of the critical social science of the Frankfurt School, especially Habermas, that criticized wrong modern culture. Through Islam as a prophetic social ethic, Kuntowijoyo integrates three Islamic spirits: humanization, liberation, and transcendence.

Meanwhile, Gus Dur, who was not strictly academically educated, had less formulated thoughts than Kuntowijoyo. Gus Dur's idea of Islam as a social ethic indicates that he was trying to build an epistemology in interpreting Islam following the context of the times but with less elaboration on his vision of "social ethics" as formulated by Kuntowijoyo.<sup>46</sup> While Kuntowijoyo as a Muslim scholar, is positioned as a man of the idea, Gus Dur was both a man of vision and man of action, even though in the end, Gus Dur is more potent as a man of action through the NU socio-religious movement and the civil society movement. According to Ahmad Baso, Gus Dur focused on Islam from a "secular" approach with its "cultural Islam," while in Kuntowijoyo, including Cak Nur and Dawam Rahardjo tends to focus on "political Islam."<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, the Islamic struggle initiated by Cak Nur presented an "ideology" which he calls "the will" or "the will to power" while Gus Dur gave an "ideology" called "the hope" in the form of societal transformation, as shown through the indigenization of Islam and its social ethics.<sup>48</sup> Baso identified that Cak Nur's idea of Islam was based on a wish to repeat the golden age of Islam. It was supported by the

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<sup>46</sup>Ahmad Baso, *Islam Liberal Sebagai Ideologi: Nurcholish Madjid dan Abdurrahman Wahid* (Jakarta: Gerbang, 2000).

<sup>47</sup> Baso, *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Baso, *Ibid.*





evidence that he frequently quoted Ibnu Taymiyah, Robert Bellah, Marshal Hodgson, and Ernest Gellner. In a nutshell, Cak Nur is trapped into the past romantic glory of Islam that he wants to manifest in the present. In contrast to Cak Nur, Gus Dur's patterns of thought and struggle were more future-oriented so that Gus Dur did not refer much to the past victories of Islam and looked ahead (the hope) so that much of it was contextualized with modern secular ideas, such as separation of religion and state, Islamic social ethics, and the indigenization of Islam.<sup>49</sup> For this reason, Gus Dur occasionally referred to some of Ali Abdurraziq's ideas without leaving the richness of Islamic traditionalism at all. In the context of addressing Gus Dur's thoughts, Amin Abdullah's warning seems relevant:<sup>50</sup>

“The religious attitude in this era cannot simply copy the attitude and diversity of the middle century which is pre-scientific. Anomalies must have occurred between these two very different cultures. The existence of these anomalies shows the urgency of reforming religious ethics, not to leave “revelation” or religion, but to formulate more dialogical, pluralistic, challenging, and applicable Islamic religious ethics in contemporary society. The difference in time span is quite inspiring for someone to make modifications as needed.”<sup>51</sup>

Gus Dur compiled this dialogical and critical Islamic religious ethic through building his construction of Islamic thought by positioning the philosophical foundation in religion, including about the state.<sup>52</sup> In Gus Dur's point of view, religion has become a moral force and not a political tool, as is the case with political Islam. However, only a tiny

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<sup>49</sup> Baso, *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Baso, *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> A. Abdullah, *Falsafah Kalam di Era Postmodernisme* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004).

<sup>52</sup> L. Santoso, *Teologi Politik Gus Dur* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz, 2004).



number of Muslim intellectual figures have changed the dogmatic preaching model to the humanist approach. The reality of a pluralistic Indonesian society has long been waiting for the model of dakwah offered by Gus Dur that embraces three aspects: Islam as a religion of humanity, the indigenization of Islam, and Islam as a complement to the nation and state.<sup>53</sup>

Theoretically, the idea of Islamic indigenization based on social ethics is relevant to the modern era of a global society. Gus Dur's concept of social ethics requires Muslims to comprehend Islam not only as normative teaching but also as a historical one related to the sociological dimension. Therefore, Islamic social ethics and the indigenization of Islam initiated by Gus Dur are ideas that require the discipline of moral philosophy or ethics. When talking about ethics, it means talking about the relationship between human actions and other human beings that are sociological.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, it can be argued that Gus Dur intended to reestablish philosophical discourses, especially moral philosophy, to Muslims in the Sunni Islamic tradition. It is shown in his various writings emphasizing the importance of building rationality in Islam. The antithesis of Muslims' intense *Fiqh*-oriented theology is considered one factor for the disappearance of the philosophical tradition in the Sunni Islamic tradition. Through the interpretation of Aswaja (*ahlusunnah wal jama'ah*), Gus Dur made a breakthrough that called "intellectual improvisation" so that the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jamaah (*Aswaja*) doctrine remains relevant to historical changes.<sup>55</sup> The intellectual improvisation is in the form of criticism of NU's religious doctrine by adjusting the position of theology, *Fiqh*, and Sufism in Aswaja to make it dynamic.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> A. Salehuddin, *Abdurrahman Wahid: Keislaman, Kemanusiaan, dan Kebangsaan* (Yogyakarta: BasaBasi, 2019).

<sup>54</sup> Abdullah, Op.cit.

<sup>55</sup> B. Effendy and F Ali, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986).

<sup>56</sup> D. Effendi, *Pembaruan Tanpa Membongkar Tradisi: Wacana Keagamaan di Kalangan Generasi Muda NU Masa Kepemimpinan Gus Dur* (Jakarta Kompas, 2010).



During the presidency of Gus Dur, forums for discussion of basic themes received serious attention. As Djohan Effendi explained, in connection with socio-political discourse, the topics covered in *halaqah* were the need for the Development of Social Fiqh, Land Theology, Taxation Jurisprudence, Consultative/Representative Law Fiqh, and Fair Leadership Law. (The term fiqh here is used in a broader sense than in the Islamic scientific tradition; synonymous with the term theology in the Christian religious practice).<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, Gus Dur's insistence on the importance of rationality in Islam also presupposes the importance of studying the philosophy required to develop his ideas about social ethics transformed into Islamic indigenization. Here lies the strategic position of Gus Dur's thoughts in spreading the indigenization of Islam as a communicative act. Gus Dur seemed to realize that communicative action requires a broad range of religious and social insights. The mastery of rationality in religion will pave the way for the project of his ideas about Islam as ethics and the indigenization of Islam.

With thorough knowledge of Islamic ethics, Muslims can open themselves and respond to reality critically and stay away from religious patterns that promote truth claims (assume the most correct while blaming and misleading others). Also, Gus Dur's idea of the indigenization of Islam and Islam as social ethics is the answer to the extreme ahistorical of political Islam, which failed to get a place among most Indonesian Muslims.<sup>58</sup> Historically, Abdullah notes that the struggle for discourses on Islamic ethics has generated an Islamic religious tradition that accepts plurality and dialogue to avoid the domination of the exclusive "mainstream."<sup>59</sup> Statically, the Islamic thought tradition, including ethics, is only possible when political ideology interests interfere with it.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Effendi, Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Effendi, Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Abdullah, Op.cit.

<sup>60</sup> Abdullah, Op.cit.



## Discussion

### *Communicative Freedom as the Media of Pluralism*

Gus Dur successfully integrated discourse and acts of pluralism simultaneously through his defense of the oppressed due to discrimination of religion, ethnicity, and class. Related to pluralism, Gus Dur moved more at the level of praxis than discourse.<sup>61</sup> The ethnic can be transformed into an ethic.<sup>62</sup> Gus Dur carried out the interfaith dialogue by holding various interfaith meetings to be widely known and influential among non-Muslims.<sup>63</sup> This is an effort to build mutual understanding between adherents of religions and beliefs and maintain democratic life. In Gus Dur's view, the position of all citizens is equal before the law without exception. Gus Dur hoped that every citizen always sustains the constitution as a figure who upholds the constitution. Thus the criticism remains on the line of the constitution, which is mutually agreed upon as a consensus.<sup>64</sup>

Through the constitutional platform of free and critical public debate, all citizens can actively question general problems. The efforts of a group of people wishing to undermine them without going through a democratic constitution are acts against the law. To that end, Gus Dur wrote: "It would be naive if we were still busy fabricating a law on the pretext of enforcing the law, even though the truth was only hiding the political interests of a certain group."<sup>65</sup> Gus Dur firmly rejected the views of an exclusive Islamic group that denies pluralism and nationalism by

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<sup>61</sup> K. H Muhammad, *Samudra Kezuhudan Gus Dur: Sang Guru Bangsa, Sang Sufi Dalam Kesehariannya* (Yogyakarta: Diva Press, 2019).

<sup>62</sup> Abdul Karim, Nur Fitri Mardhotillah, and Muhammad Iqbal Samadi, "Ethical Leadership Transforms into Ethnic: Exploring New Leader's Style of Indonesia," *Journal of Leadership in Organizations* 1, no. 2 (2019): 146–57. <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/leadership/article/view/10>.

<sup>63</sup> M. Qomar, *Fajar Baru Islam Indonesia?: Kajian Komprehensif Atas Arah Sejarah Dan Dinamika Intelektual Islam Nusantara* (Bandung, Indonesia: Mizan, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> S. Arif, "Gus Dur Adalah 'Kebudayaan': Sebuah Filsafat Politik," in *Pesantren Ciganjur* (Ciganjur, Jawa Barat, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> K. A. Wahid, Op.cit.



offering a face of Islam that defends the principle: "... the development of universal human values and has very high objectivity in its treatment of all citizens, regardless of origin their religious or ethnic proposal."<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, one of the duties of religious leaders is to ensure that the truth of universal values inspired by religion can be manifested in the sovereignty of the people, the rule of law, freedom, and equal treatment before the law or the constitution.<sup>67</sup> Suseno clearly describes the personality of Gus Dur:<sup>68</sup>

"Gus Dur has an open heart for all minorities, the oppressed, and the victims of human rights violations. Minorities felt safe with him. He made them feel honored, and he acknowledged the dignity of the minorities, the oppressed, the victims. "Gus Dur stated: "Islamic morality is to feel involved with the suffering of fellow human beings, not one that punishes those who suffer it." To be in a position to support those who suffer is a form of morality that must be cultivated in society."<sup>69</sup>

In the case of Papua, Gus Dur, as President of the Republic of Indonesia, had put forward a cultural approach to replace the repressive military process. In its practice, Gus Dur conducted a dialogue that considered the perspective of humanity.<sup>70</sup> One of his policies was to give the locals the freedom to use the name Papua as their identity, which was prohibited during the ORBA regime. It was also in Gus Dur's hands that the people of Papua were allowed to hold a congress that impacted the process of opening up space of democracy in Papua, which reflected

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<sup>66</sup> A Wahid, *Dialog, Kritik Dan Identitas Agama*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Dian/Interfidei, 1993).

<sup>67</sup> K. A. Wahid, Op.cit.

<sup>68</sup> F.M. Suseno, *Etika Dasar; Masalah-Masalah Pokok Filsafat Moral* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1987).

<sup>69</sup> A. Wahid, *Gus Dur: Melawan Melalui Lelucon* (Jakarta: Tempo Publishing, 2000).

<sup>70</sup> A. Suaedy, *Gus Dur: Islam Nusantara & Kewarganegaraan Bineka* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2018).



public participation towards consensus with the formation of the Papua Presidium Council. The discussion in the congress was described by B. Josie Susilo Hardianto, Gus Dur, and Damai for Papua. In the meeting attended by about 5,000 participants from all parts of Papua, they openly discussed the need to resolve the historical distortion of Papua. They also discussed the importance of solving various human rights violations in Papua and the neglect of fundamental rights, especially in the economic, social, and cultural fields of the local society.

### ***Religious Rationality as a Basic Knowledge of Dakwah***

Religious appreciation needs a rational basis for faith. Claims of faith believed to be reasonable must be validated in debates of religious plurality in the public sphere. Gus Dur emphasized this when he said that Muslims must develop religious rationality. The importance of the religious rationality offered by Gus Dur is at the same time a criticism of the strength of the dogmatic preaching attitude that is anti-intellectual, that hinders the development of an inclusive, rational, and respecting difference model. Therefore, the indigenization of Islam that Gus Dur discussed offered Islamic teaching values that were transformed into cultural problems faced by the *ummah* in real life. Apart from that, this discourse offers the public space about one speech among other religious lessons in the general area. In the context of Indonesian society, the transformation of religious discourse is willing to accept diversity and is ready to take different addresses.<sup>71</sup> The substance of Islamic teachings contains transformative values in openness to other lessons that lead to tolerance. However, these Islamic humanist values are distorted by a dogmatic monolithic interpretation of Islam.

Open-mindedness towards plurality is a necessity that is normatively contained in Islamic teachings. In Gus Dur's expression, Islam must be interpreted as social ethics so that Islam can be involved and struggling historically in offering religion with an ethical

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<sup>71</sup> G. A. Menoh, *Agama Dalam Ruang Publik: Hubungan Antara Agama dan Negara Dalam Masyarakat Postsekuler Menurut Jurgen Habermas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015).



dimension. In this context, the discourse on the indigenization of Islam presented by Gus Dur contains a social morality because it carries Islamic values in a pluralistic public space.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, Gus Dur's Islamic indigenization became a way to realize Islam as a social ethic. In other words, the indigenization of Islam and Islam as social ethics offered by Gus Dur offers an ethic called public ethics, which is interpreted as ethics that are transformatively linked with public services. Gus Dur's public ethics are based on religion to distinguish them from non-religious ethics. Public ethics of religion as a service is reflected in Gus Dur's expression that there should be a dialogue between Islam and various views and carry out transformative work in various public matters to show that Islam is flexible towards any transformative ideologies in the world because Islam must also carry out its transformational work. It will create a symbiotic relationship with an anonymous transformative awareness that later embodies itself in understanding environmental preservation, development of self-sufficiency, and upholding democracy without first detailing its systematic form.<sup>73</sup>

Based on Gus Dur's explanation, it appears that the transformation of Islamic ethical values is the goal of his cultural dakwah to engage in a dialogue with various religious thoughts that develop following the context of the times. In the history of thought discourse, no single discourse is free from mutual influence dialectically and dialogically because all developments of thought, including in religious discourse, are relational.<sup>74</sup> Gus Dur's cultural preaching explores the point of civil society. In the internal context of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the discourse of the indigenization of Islam is also an internal criticism of NU regarding the meaning of "returning to the 1926 khittah" that did not take the socio-cultural arena

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<sup>72</sup> Haryatmoko, *Etika Publik Untuk Integritas Pejabat Publik dan Politisi* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2011).

<sup>73</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *Agama, Ideologi dan Pembangunan*, trans. Shanhaji Shaleh (Jakarta, Indonesia: Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M), 1991).

<sup>74</sup> C. Kersten, *Berebut Wacana: Pergulatan Wacana Umat Islam Indonesia Era Reformasi* (Bandung: Mizan, 2018).



seriously.<sup>75</sup> Through the discourse on the indigenization of Islam, Gus Dur also carried out what Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy called “intellectual improvisation,” especially in providing refreshment to the interpretation of Ahlusunnah wal Jama’ah.<sup>76</sup> Abdurrahman reinterpreted Aswaja's doctrine, which tended to be fiqh-oriented, more pro-human aspects<sup>77</sup> or called it “theology of humanity.”<sup>78</sup>

The Islamic indigenization in Gus Dur’s discourse can be called a refresher of Aswaja’s interpretation as “theology of humanity,” which Gus Dur in the 1980s with the spirit of Islam as social ethics. Through this reinterpretation (rethinking), Gus Dur, at the same time, voiced the importance of where Islam stood on the problem of social justice where during the era of the New Order (ORBA) regime, Islam was dismissed from social issues.<sup>79</sup> Besides, Suseno considers that Gus Dur has succeeded in inheriting the young generation of Nahdhotul Ulama with an open, plural, and intelligent religious discourse as a model for the future of Indonesia.<sup>80</sup> In line with that, Abdurrahman emphasized the role of Gus Dur in opening the minds of the younger generation, especially from Nahdhotul Ulama, about the importance of understanding religious life in the era of globalism.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the emergence of a generation of young NU intellectuals who are grappling with a contemporary religious discourse beyond their community studies originating from traditional Muslims cannot be separated from the influence of Islamic discourse raised by Gus Dur they have received positively.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Baso, Op.cit.

<sup>76</sup> Effendy and Ali, Op.cit.

<sup>77</sup> Abdurrahman, Op.cit.

<sup>78</sup> Rumadi, *Post-Tradisionalisme Islam: Wacana Intelektualisme Dalam Komunitas NU* (Cirebon: Fahmina Institut, 2008).

<sup>79</sup> V. R Hadiz and D Dhakidae, *Social Science and Power in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2005).

<sup>80</sup> Magnis, Op.cit.

<sup>81</sup> Abdurrahman, Op.cit.

<sup>82</sup> Rumadi, *Post Tradisionalisme Islam: Wacana Intelektualisme dalam Komunitas NU* (Jakarta: Ditjen Diktis, 2007).





### ***The Relevance of the Islamic Indigenization Discourse to the Islamic Discourse in Indonesia***

The practical relevance of the Islamic indigenization initiated by Gus Dur is that the discourse of Islam as normativity can be distinguished from the address of Islam as historicity. The indigenization of Islam requires a transformation of Islam as a dynamic social ethic. In a practical test, in contrast to individual piety that is a part of privacy, the indigenization of Islam is a manifestation of Islamic awareness that is willing to use everyday language in a plural public space as a manifestation of social piety that provides good impacts for all human beings. Gus Dur aspired to the Islamic social piety is the Muslims who are encouraged by creating space for public reasoning. In such a public sphere, that: "... providing a place for citizens of an egalitarian and inclusive forum, a place where citizens have the right to participate, affirming the fact that the state is not to be ruled by a particular group only."<sup>83</sup>

Internally, the non-monolithic Islamic perspective in Indonesia requires a moderate face of Islam that can frame this multicultural Islam in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). The term *Islamiyah* has a profound interpretation that what is emphasized is an Islamic character, not just Islam as a word. This Islamic character has implications not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslims. Externally, the historical Islam in Indonesia is Islam that has been accustomed to interacting with different religions, ideologies, and beliefs for centuries. Therefore, Islam rooted in people's consciousness is featured with a cultural dimension, not politically. Thus, the idea of the indigenization of Islam is a meeting point between Islam and pluralism in Indonesia, with Islam as a substance rather than identity that reflects Islamic morals in the form of humanity, brotherhood, and social justice.

In the perspective of prophetic social ethics by Kuntowijoyo, the preaching of Islam needs to integrate the prophetic message (prophetic) of Muhammad (s.a.w.) with the spirit of humanization, liberation, and

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<sup>83</sup> A.A. An-Na'im, *Islam Dan Negara Sekular: Menegosiasikan Masa Depan Syariah*, trans. Sri Murniati (Bandung: Mizan, 2007).



transcendence of the struggle of *amar maruf nahi munkar*. Gus Dur's aspiration for Islam to be realized in public morality is the answer to Kuntowijoyo's thoughts in the realm of praxis, as well as Habermas's answer to the contribution of religious ethics in the public sphere. Gus Dur's approach to Islam tends to be cultural needs to be strengthened by a structural system so that a synergistic combination occurs by utilizing various existing religious institutions and religious, educational institutions. The strength of Kuntowijoyo's ideas predated Gus Dur and has laid the theoretical basis of the urgency of a social science approach in viewing Islam. Meanwhile, Gus Dur was strong at the practical level through the various Non-Government Organizations he did by bringing Islam, especially the pesantren world, to a broader public sphere. His idea of the importance of the indigenization of Islam and Islam as social ethics shows a common thread between the thoughts of Kuntowijoyo and Gus Dur. These two Muslim figures, incidentally, can represent the two most influential social and religious organizations in Indonesia: Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which can showcase the power of substantive Islamic politics that emphasizes Islamic ethics and morality amid the popularity of symbolic Islam.<sup>84</sup>

Gus Dur's emphasis on viewing Islam as a political value in the public sphere, as stated by Cak Nur, Kuntowijoyo, or Ahmad Syafii Maarif, is a strong warning that the public space should not be controlled by an economic and political system that tends to abandon and leave clarity. Moral and religious guidelines. At this point, morality contributed by religion can work together with various non-religious values to counter the global hegemony of instrumental reason that alienates the world of life (lifeworld) as feared Habermas. Through the indigenization of Islam with his social ethics, Gus Dur built communicative rationality that bridged the universal (Islamic universalism) and the local (local wisdom and tradition) and accepted the constructive elements of democracy and modernity without anyone feeling defeated. The big narrative is the realization of dialogue between

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<sup>84</sup> A Azra, *Menggapai Solidaritas: Tensi Antara Demokrasi, Fundamentalisme, Dan Humanisme* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2002).



cultures, both West and East. Through a conference between universality and plurality, Gus Dur participated in fighting for the local wisdom that exists in each tradition so that traditions can speak out equally and at the same time defend the others who are marginalized by modernism. In addition, Gus Dur tended to reconcile the tensions and conflicts between faith (Islam) and science (modernity), that at some stage there is a deep and dichotomous gap, as experienced by the majority of the *Nahdliyin* (NU) where Gus Dur first started. Take part, grow, and lead society through these institutions. Gus Dur's efforts, in Habermas' expression, were a manifestation of that faith expressed in religion manifests itself in the language of secular science. So, in this case, the writer can understand the reason that Gus Dur rejected Ismail Raji' al-Faruqi's model of Islamization concept.

Moreover, according to the author, Gus Dur's belief towards the importance of rationality in Islam is a criticism addressed specifically to NU's internal institutions rather than externally. Through the rationality that is intrinsically present in every culture, solidarity is believed to be manifested through consensus as a formal procedure to avoid conflict and violence in society. For Gus Dur, true religion will always love humans without limits and without seeing their identity. Therefore, Gus Dur inspired the awareness that loving humans means loving God simultaneously. Likewise, people who hate and insult other humans, let alone disregard other people, are insulting God. In the era of post-secularism, when secularism fails to provide a comprehensive answer to the meaning of life, the role of religion becomes crucial. Various religions are required to play an active role in responding to the spiritual crisis of modern humans by offering their religious ethics as expected by Habermas and the diagnosis by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his book, *Islam and the Plight Modern Man*.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the analysis of the concepts and movements of the indigenous Islamization offered by Gus Dur, there are three main ideas to emphasize: first, through the indigenization of Islam, Gus Dur emphasized communicative action based on a change in the Islamic paradigm from normative-theological to historical-critical that



he named Islam as social ethics. In the indigenization of Islam, Gus Dur included ethical considerations that have so far received little attention in the normative-theological Islamic discourse as also written by Amin Abdullah. Second, Gus Dur interprets the consequence of the first consideration epistemologically that reality is plural so that humans, especially in religion, must be moderate and tolerant in responding to differences in religious views and beliefs. Third, in a plural religious reality, especially in Indonesia, dialogue to reach a common ground or consensus becomes necessary.

Viewed from a broader spectrum, Gus Dur's pluralist Islamic discourse and his criticism towards the rejection of different ideas and opinions in Muslim societies have faced a significant challenge because the speech is only famous in the normative realm but not in the practical setting. This situation makes it more challenging to create a climate of democracy in all fields as what Gus Dur had fought for. The democratic attitude that upholds respect for differences and advocates for justice as taught by Islam requires a long process. In hindsight, the length of colonial rule and the addition of the political system in the New Order regime that enforced the doctrine of uniformity, both in ways of thinking and acting, seemed to have influenced the way of thinking of the majority of people in this country, that is why Gus Dur's Islamic discourse was often misinterpreted and considered "controversial". Therefore, Gus Dur believed that the choice of the majority of the Indonesian people to accept Pancasila democracy was the result of a monumental consensus. Pancasila democracy has summarized religion's ethical and spiritual values so that the language of religion can be translated into the Pancasila democratic system as a representation of "secular" language.

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