



## ABDURRAHMAN WAHID'S PRIBUMISASI ISLAM, DEMOCRACY, and RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE of HABERMAS' COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY

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### Abstract

#### Keywords:

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The aim of this study is to analyse Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur)'s idea of Pribumisasi Islam in the perspective of Habermas' Communicative Action theory. By using hermeneutic method the research tried to interpret Gus Dur's idea of Islam and its relationship with democracy. The texts chosen for this research were the writings of Gus Dur related idea of Pribumisasi Islam and democracy. From the texts were found that Pribumisasi Islam initiated by Gus Dur offers Islam in its ethical dimension as public religion which respects to democracy. It is line with what Habermas writes that religion should contribute its ethical value in plural public sphere. In this context, Gus Dur with his Pribumisasi Islam tries to presents the face of Islam which is in line with democracy. Gus Dur brings Islam as religion of humanity which respects to plurality of religions and cultures. Gus Dur believes that Pribumisasi Islam is the way of religious moderation in islam which is compatible with democracy. In Pribumisasi Islam all elements of society, the global and the local, can involve participatorily in public sphere.

### Abstrak

#### Kata Kunci

pribumisasi  
Islam, etika  
keagamaan,  
moderasi  
beragama,  
demokrasi,  
tindakan  
komunikatif

Tujuan studi ini adalah menganalisa gagasan Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) dalam perspektif teori Tindakan Komunikatif Habermas. Dengan menggunakan method hermeneutika penelitian ini mencoba menafsirkan gagasan Gus Dur tentang Pribumisasi Islam dan kaitannya dengan demokrasi. Teks-teks yang dipilih dalam penelitian ini adalah karya-karya Gus Dur yang terkait dengan Pribumisasi Islam dan demokrasi. Dari teks-teks tersebut ditemukan bahwa Pribumisasi Islam yang digagas Gus Dur menawarkan Islam dalam dimensi etisnya sebagai agama publik yang menghargai demokrasi. Hal tersebut sejalan dengan yang ditulis Habermas bahwa agama harus mampu menawarkan nilai-nilai etis dalam ruang publik yang plural. Dalam konteks ini, Gus Dur, dengan Pribumisasi Islamnya, mencoba untuk menghadirkan wajah Islam yang demokratis. Gus Dur membawa Islam sebagai agama kemanusiaan yang respek terhadap pluralitas agama dan budaya. Gus Dur meyakini bahwa Pribumisasi Islam



*merupakan cara beragama yang moderat dalam Islam yang kompatibel dengan demokrasi. Dalam Pribumisasi Islam seluruh elemen masyarakat, baik yang global maupun yang lokal dapat terlibat secara partisipatoris dalam ruang publik.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of religious problems faced by Indonesian society today is the emergence of religio-spiritual violence and identity politics in the name of religion. These religious tensions tended to be serious, particularly after Reformation 1998 which were manifested in religious violence (Bagir *et.al*, 2011: 12). Reformation era became strategic moment, particularly for various Islamic hardline movements to show up their identity in public sphere when in the New Order era they were underground movements. The condition Islamic movements was illustrated by Meulemen:

“The collapse of the New Order system in 1998 contributed to the intensification of competition between various Islamic movements. New Order authoritarianism had repressed all types of conflict among the Indonesian population. Its breakdown led to open conflicts throughout the country. On frequent occasions, tensions between different ethnic and religious communities have led to large-scale violence. During the same period, polemics between movements representing different interpretations of Islam, through periodicals, books, and public discussions, have become a conspicuous feature of contemporary Indonesian Islam. (Meuleman, 2011)

The illustration above can help to see that Islamic movements happened in Indonesia are not monolithic but complex historically and culturally. The phenomenon of Tarbiyah movement represented by PKS (formerly Justice Party) is one of examples that this kind of hardline party accepts democracy. Motives of religious ideology are manifested as political struggle through democracy system emerged in reformation era. Even though, Islamic hardline movements accept democracy system but they are strange with values of democracy because of their ideological tendency in understanding Islam. They are trapped by captive mind that Islam is not compatible with democracy. Therefore, this captive mind is potential for an Islamic believer to be extreme in understanding Islam. Basam Tibi (2016) categorizes this extreme tendency in Islamic movements as the character of Islamism in ideological and political sense to differentiate with Islam as moral and spiritual religion.

By smuggling through the developing democracy climate in Indonesia they use all media to socialize their religious ideology and as arena of religious discourse contestation



in public sphere. They also use mass media and social media as communication strategy to spread their ideological doctrines and propagandas. Voices of their ideology are not far from truth-claims as always emerge in Islamic theological disputes. In public sphere, they try to force their dogmatic interpretation as single religious interpretation in public sphere through rejecting all religious and belief interpretations which are different from them. A such kind of banal religious understanding is more complicated when religion is politicized (Zainuddin, 2021: 6) in the name of identity politics of religion. These tendencies are challenges that must be responded by religious leaders to offer alternative solutions.

This problem, actually, was predicted and responded by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), one of outstanding Indonesian muslim intellectual through his writings besides his active advocacy to socialize religious moderation. Gus Dur realized that besides intrinsic aspect of monolithic and dogmatic interpretation and understanding of religion, religious violence, extremism and terrorism are the result of extrinsic aspect of global injustice of the West to Muslim community (Wahid in Bamualim et.al (ed)., 2003: 197). Internally, monolithic and dogmatic understanding of Islam, in the eye of Gus Dur, results intolerant acts in the life as a nation (Wahid, 2007: 136). Indonesia today needs transformative religion embracers who universally create ethical dimension of religion in the face of “friendly religion” or agama yang menyejukkan (Zainuddin, 2021: 6). Therefore, Gus Dur’s effort to reinterpret Islam contextually cannot be separated from this problem. He believes that understanding Islam should be approached from living culture where Islam lives.. By approaching Islam through culture Indonesian Muslims can transform Islamic teaching without rejecting the variety of local wisdom of Indonesian culture. Indonesian Muslims can live harmoniously with other believers because they have consciousness of pluralism.

The previous researches concerning Gus Dur and his ideas can be found from Rosidi (2013), entitled *Dakwah Multikultural di Indonesia: Studi Pada Pemikiran dan Gerakan Dakwah Abdurrahman Wahid*, Meanwhile Listiyono (2004) wrote a book entitled *Teologi Politik Gus Dur*. In line with Listiyono, Umaruddin (1999) wrote a book entitled “Membaca Pikiran Gus Dur dan Amien Rais tentang Demokrasi”. Umaruddin’s writing tried to compare Gus Dur’s idea of democracy with Amien Rais’ idea of democracy.



## METHOD

This study used hermeneutic method by explaining the interpretation or meaning of Gus Dur's idea of Islam and democracy in Habermas' perspective of communicative action. This study is library research by tracing Gus Dur's works in the form of books and written sources related to Gus Dur's thought.

To interpret the texts concerning Gus Dur's idea of Pribumisasi Islam social hermeneutic method was used as developed by Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur, as quoted by, Sumaryono (1993: 108-109), mention that every text has its autonomy involving three aspects: the intention of author, cultural situation, and socio-political condition. Then, Ricoeur, as explained by Haryatmoko (2016: 92) offers four processes to interpret a text: The first, to objectify the text through analyzing the text structure. The second, to take a distance from the text to keep it autonomous. The third, to seek a discourse or the text world by unveiling structure in the text. The fourth, to take appropriation or self understanding between the world of text and the empirical world of interpreter.

## Literature Review

Etymologically, pluralism can be defined as: "a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pluralism>). From the definition it implies that pluralism consciousness is not something given but achieved by involving all elements of society participatorily. By this way pluralism consciousness can produce tolerant as well as inclusive religious groups and communities. At the same time, it can reduce extreme and exclusive tendency of religious interpretation.

In Habermas' view, as explained by Rosenfield (2006: 167), the rise of fundamentalism does not only relate with internal problems of religion itself but also with external factors. One of the factors is that religious fundamentalism and extremism as reaction over unjust globalization mainly in new economic order. This capitalistic economic order creates marginalization of some Muslim countries who loose in global socio-economic contestation (Fatlolon, 2016). But, this writing limits the description on Habermas' view of religion intrinsically to offer its contribution in ethical realm of public sphere.



Habermas realizes that religion has long tradition in the history of humankind. Therefore, he insists religious tradition contribute its values to synergize with non-religious values in public sphere. In this way religious values can revise or solve some pathological problems of modern secular culture: "Adequately differentiated possibilities of expression and ...sensitivities with regard to lives that have gone astray, with regard to societal pathologies, with regard to the failure of individual plans for their lives, and with regard to the deformation and disfigurement of the lives that people share with one another." (Habermas, 2006: 43-44). Here, Habermas sees that in formal public sphere belongs to all communities, religious as well as non-religious communities who can communicate and share their public interests with the language understood by all communities. But, in informal public sphere the unique religious expressions can be used (Sunarko in Hardiman (ed.) (2010: 231). At the same time, non-religious or secular community should also open their respect to let unique religious expression live in public sphere.

In the process of communication Habermas hopes that religious and secular communities do not force and claim their single and closed authority. Public sphere can be used as an arena to humanistically learn together for all traditions. Concerning religious traditions Habermas calls for articulation of moral intuitions in the light of egalitarian or equal action and also universal moral principles: "Religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life." (Habermas, 2008: 131). The parameter used is that the expressions should be conveyed rationally. In this context, Habermas suggests religious community is able to express their values in the light of secular argumentation. He wants religious traditions can be discursively justified by public based on secular knowledge as a way to defend the religious truth claims (Habermas, Kleden and Sunarko (ed.) (2010: 219).

In addition to the importance of discursive justification Habermas requires that the arguable communication process is free from repression based on three criteria: truth, rightness, and sincerity (Habermas, 1987: 120). Truth, rightness, and sincerity become guidance to view if an expression in public sphere is comprehensive enough or not. In the context of religious community the criteria is hoped to create inclusive way of thinking for religious believers in its relation with postsecular society. In the words of Habermas religion the position of religion in postsecular society is "not only for functional reasons, but also ... for substantial reasons." (Habermas, 2006: 44). It means that religious



community should be able to present their ethical discourse and action that producing universal values.

Religious ethics in public sphere is possible to develop if religion is separated from state. The separation is fundamental in order to keep moral spirit of religion not reduced to become ideology. By avoiding religion to be ideological so societal individuals: "...have to reach an understanding with one another about what they are morality obligated to do, and they have to obey intersubjectively recognized norms together." (Habermas, 2005: 45). Therefore, a religious morality should be ready to be justified by public for public interests. Justification from public is needed to seek law order based on universal principles to live together in public sphere.: "The principles of separation of church and state obliges politicians and officials within political institutions to formulate and justify laws, court rulings, decrees, and measures exclusively in a language that is equally accessible to all citizens." (Habermas, 2008: 122). It can be said that what Habermas means with law order in a modern state is law order in which all individuals can participate through communicative paradigm (Hardiman, 2009: 20). The process of communicative action done by each citizen integrates society and state through relating ratio, morality, and democracy (Hardiman, 2009: 24). The success of relating ratio, morality, and democracy creates discursive communication concerning public interest without repression.

## FINDING and DISCUSSION

In this context, the discourse of Pribumisasi Islam is Gus Dur's effort to offer a counter culture against textual interpretation of Islam that potentially brings it into the extreme and permissive actions to violence in the name of religion. Gus Dur's Pribumisasi Islam contributes to flourish Moslem generation who can contextualize Islam with the spirit of the emergence of civil society in Indonesia. Through socio-religious organization, like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) religious moderation of Gus Dur's Pribumisasi Islam contributes the emergence what Hefner calls as civil Islam in Indonesia (Hefner, 2001). Civil Islam developed by Gus Dur is a kind of Islamic face which is compatible with local wisdoms emerged in Nusantara. Islam as universal value substance is able to absorb local values therefore Islam can be differentiated from Arabism.

Through his Pribumisasi Islam Gus Dur seems to bring back religion to its spiritual and ethical function in society. Here, Gus Dur shows his moderate interpretation





of Islam that this religion should be seen its substantial values. One of the factors that Gus Dur or NU scholars in general becomes moderate, according to Barton, was rooted from long open tradition of NU to accept and learn from other religious beliefs and traditions (Barton, 2002: 63). It was continued by Gus Dur as intellectual principle through accepting all truths inspired from any religious sources (Wahid, 2000: 201-202). Even though, Gus Dur is well-known as multidimensional man with many callings and awards toward him (Choirie *et.al* (2010), his origin as a traditionalist Moslem makes him able to express Islamic values by using local wisdoms and traditions (Barton, 2002:133). This is also makes him different from many modern Muslim scholars who tend to resist with local traditions as expressed by, for an example, Wahabist movement.

Gus Dur also claims that the substance of Islam is not contradictory with the spirit of democracy. Principally, Gus Dur believes that Islam is closed to democracy. The urgency, according to Gus Dur, is that internal Islamic religious community should be able to contextualize Islam with the spirit of democracy. The spirit of musyawarah in Islam shows that it is compatible with modern democracy. Gus Dur treats man is equal before the law therefore he rejects all forms of discrimination. Strictly Gus Dur rejects the tendency to discriminate religious community based on majority versus minority (Wahid, 2007: 288). His rejection is reasonable because this majority versus minority policy in seeing religious community can produce the minority as the second class citizens. The effort against this sectarian tendency was initiated by Gus Dur by rejecting to join with ICMI (Indonesia Moslem Scholars Association) and, at the same time he and some activists of cross-elements initiated Forum Demokrasi (Democracy Forum). This forum aimed to develop more inclusive and critical intellectuals (Kerstens, 2018: 5) which was unsuccessfully roled by ICMI, MUI or other structural socio-religious institutions.

Gus Dur (2007: 287) believes that religious interpretation is entry point in order to make religion responsive to modern development, including democracy. A closed-minded thinking moslem who is not responsive to modernity will be left behind and marginalized: "Orang-orang lain, termasuk mereka dari "garis kekerasan", adalah orang yang ditinggalkan oleh perkembangan Islam, dan akan pudar dengan sendirinya ditelan masa." (Wahid, 2007: 138). The existence of "hardline" groups in Islam tend to use identity politics of Islam. In other words, these group try to struggle for manifestation of Islam as ideology of state or political Islam which reduces the universality of Islam. Gus Dur's criticism to reject Islam as instrument of politics means to defend the ethical



character of Islam as religion of “rahmatan li al-‘amin”. Therefore, Gus Dur believes that internal transformation of religion should be done first: ...Transformasi ekstern yang tidak bertumpu pada transformasi intern dilingkungan lembaga atau kelompok keagamaan itu hanyalah merupakan sesuatu yang dangkal dan temporer saja, seperti dengan “demokrasi” Pakistan sebagai Negara di tahun-tahun 1950-an. Therefore, Gus Dur insists to understand the strategy of Islamic struggle in the past, now and future in order to have the right struggle of Islam in Indonesia (Wahid, 2007: 8).

Two strategies proposed by Gus Dur to understand Islam in Indonesia are cultural and political approaches by strengthening democratization process based on equality before the law (Wahid, 2007: 11). This internal transformation should be chosen by creating a fresh interpretation of religion in the hope that it is relevant to humanization project to answer universal problems of humanity concerning equality and solidarity among religious and non-religious community (Wahid, 2007: 287). In this context, Gus Dur rejects if Islam is formalized as represented by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that also disagrees with the idea of Islam as state ideology (Wahid, 2007: 108). Gus Dur believes that Islam as cultural is more suitable for Indonesian context. Majority of muslim community can contribute to this plural country by cultivating democratic values in public sphere is as also taught by Islam. By this a democratic muslim always positions to be a moderate muslim who opens to accept the plurality of views and beliefs in public sphere. Any different values that contested in public sphere can be easier to solve by prioritizing consensus (2010:33). To create consensus, Gus Dur hopes that every Muslim should have a consciousness that Islam is one of mosaics of plural Indonesia.

Historically Islam, as implemented and inspired by Prophet Muhammad, was based on principles upon that created Islamic civilization in the form of mutual cooperation and the loving interrelatedness of different cultures. The first foundation is what peace-builders call collaborative actions in the light of solidarity. Ethical values or *akhlak* become output of the deepest understanding of Islam when interacting with other people (Muthahhari, 2004: 40-41). The Islamic ethics view of humanity is under the principles of building harmonious, just and peaceful life.

Gus Dur's efforts were mainly ethical. It can be argued that he loved humanity that passing over identities. These ethical values were implemented by Gus Dur who insists on inter-faith dialogue to respect the other religious believers as manifestation of a divinely inspired love. But, he proposes that a divinely inspired love which is flourished





by religious tradition has to be explored by the need of rationality (Wahid, 2007: 15). Under spirit of democracy every religious believers can respect to others. Gus Dur opens the democratic way to the understanding of moderate Islam by offering religious critical discourse as he did in Indonesia public sphere (Tim INCRoS, 2000: 31).

Pribumisasi Islam is one of Gus Dur's Islamic critical discourses that was inspired by the history of Islam in Nusantara since 13<sup>th</sup> Century until its development and contact with modern culture (Qomar, 2015: 3). But, the idea of Pribumisasi Islam becomes controversial when Gus Dur opens this as public discourse (Kosasih, 2000: 55). Gus Dur questions to the Islamic groups who do not agree with his idea of Pribumisasi Islam then he responds:

"Kesemua kenyataan di atas membawakan tuntutan untuk membalik arus perjalanan Islam di negeri kita, dari formalism berbentuk 'Arabisasi total' menjadi kesadaran akan perlunya dipupuk kembali akar-akar budaya local dan kerangka kesejarahan kita sendiri, dalam mengembangkan kehidupan beragama Islam di negeri ini. Penulis menggunakan 'pribumisasi Islam' karena kesulitan mencari kata lain. 'Domestifikasi Islam' terasa berbau politik, yaitu penjinakan sikap dan pengebirian pendirian.

Yang 'dipribumikan' adalah manifestasi kehidupan Islam belaka. Bukan ajaran yang menyangkut inti keimanan dan peribadatan formalnya. ... Islam tetap Islam, di mana saja berada. Akan tetapi tidak berarti semua harus disamakan 'bentuk luar'nya. Salahkah kalau Islam 'dipribumisasikan', sebagai manifestasi kehidupan?" (Wahid, 2016: 108).

What Gus Dur wants is Islam should absorb local tradition and culture (Kosasih, 2000: 57). Gus Dur believes that spirit of Islamic civilization as found in history is eclectic taken from various world civilizations (Wahid, 2010: 135). Islam can take his expression from local wisdom which enrich Islam itself. The eclectic process is a consequence of intensive interaction between Islam and other culture and civilization. Then, he claims that Islam is a civilization that protects every individual (Wahid, 2010: 136). When Islam is seen and experienced as civilization the face of Islam becomes moderate and tolerant. These characters opens Moslem community respect to learn from others and not claim that Islam is the only one as the owner of single truth (Wahid, 2016: 114). These characters are also reflected by Gus Dur. Concerning Gus Dur's struggle for religious moderation John Esposito gives a long narration:



“Wahid believes that contemporary Muslims are at critical cross-road. Two choices or paths confront them: to pursue a traditional, static legal-formalistic Islam or to reclaim and refashion a more dynamic cosmopolitan, universal, pluralistic worldview. In contrast to many “fundamentalists” today, he rejects the notion that Islam should form the basis for the nation-state’s political or legal system, a nation he characterises as a Middle Eastern tradition, alien to Indonesia. Indonesian Muslims should apply a moderate, tolerant brand of Islam to their daily lives in a society where “a Muslim and a non-Muslim are the same.”, a state in which religion and politics are separate. Rejecting legal-formalism or fundamentalism as an aberration and a major obstacle to Islamic reform and to Islam’s response to global change, Wahid has spent his life promoting the development of a multifaceted Muslim identity and a dynamic Islamic tradition capable of responding to this realities of modern life. Its cornerstones are free will and the right of all Muslims, both laity and religious scholars (*ulama*) to “perpetual reinterpretation” (*ijtihad*) of the Quran and tradition of the Prophet in light of “ever changing human stations.” (Esposito, 2002: 140).

Here, Esposito argues strategic position of Gus Dur in understanding the development of moderate Islam in contemporary Indonesia. Substantially, Gus Dur’s moderate view of Islam is in line with the ideas of moderate Islam developed by Nurcholis Madjid (Cak Nur) and Ahmad Syafii Maarif (Buya Syafii). Then, Gus Dur, Cak Nur, and Buya Syafii are well-known as Islamic Neo-Modernists in Indonesia. Their neo-modern view of Islam are identified by Woodward (2001) with the main purpose to give intellectual criticism to established Islamic doctrine interpretation who is dogmatically believed by some Islamic traditionalists as well as modernists.

One of the characteristics of neo-modernist Moslem scholars is their principle to implementation of the substance of Islamic teaching rather than its identity. It is also shown by Gus Dur as reflected to his statement:

“Perjuangan hak asasi manusia, demokrasi dan kedaulatan hukum adalah perjuangan universal. Menyuarakan hal-hal tersebut merupakan otonomi masyarakat terhadap negara. Berarti di sini tidak boleh memakai bendera Islam. Islam layak memberikan sumbangan tetapi tidak lantas mengklaim. Sekarang seolah-olah Islam maju dengan klaim bahwa sumbangan yang benar hanya dari Islam. Seharusnya kita berpikir bahwa masing-masing, termasuk orang sosial-demokrat dan nasionalistik, memberikan sumbangan untuk satu Indonesia” (Wahid, 1999: 196).

### Islam and Democracy

Different essence of Islam and democracy are acknowledged by Gus Dur. Islam is derived from absolute divine source in the form of holy book (Quran) meanwhile democracy is relative manmade system. Gus Dur believes that the both should not be negated and separated. Islam and democracy can mutually function together in facing a



fast-moving society. Therefore, Islamic believers should move on reformulating Islam to answer humanity problems:

“Untuk dapat melakukan transformasi ekstern itu, agama harus merumuskan kembali pandangan-pandangannya mengenai martabat manusia, kesejajaran kedudukan semua manusia di muka undang-undang dan solidaritas hakiki antara sesama manusia” (Wahid, 1994: 273).

Gus Dur calls for the need to reformulate interpretation of religious doctrines. This effort should be done by all religious believers, not only Islam. Reformulation of religious interpretation should create universal values that respect to human dignity based on equality before the law. Gus Dur (1994: 273) hopes that if religion can produce this universal values religion will succeed in giving democratization process in public sphere. Democratization process is needed as a phase when man can respect each other. Here, religion has the same function as other non-religious values to offer its ethical dimension in public sphere. Therefore, Gus Dur says that in its essence religion is ethics not politics (Wahid, 1987: 4). It is reasonable because ethical values taken from religious source has a direct impact to all people without exception. The task of religion, including Islam, according to Gus Dur, is developing social ethics: “Tugas Islam adalah mengembangkan etika sosial yang memungkinkan tercapainya tujuan kesejahteraan kehidupan umat manusia, ...” (Wahid, 1988: 12).

Ethical dimension of Islam becomes a basis of Gus Dur in promoting his Pribumisasi Islam in public sphere. He is ready to have different views from any religious beliefs and ideologies. He is a religious figure who respects to other people, even to the religious communities who strictly reject his idea and action. But on aspect that he keeps strongly up that violence in the name of religion cannot be tolerated and justified. Gus Dur is concerned with non-violence campaign and committed to reject religious violence. For this, Syafii Anwar writes that Gus Dur's commitment to the religious communities who disagree with him (Wahid, 1998: 153-154).

Gus Dur criticized sectarianism found in some groups who were permissive to violent actions. He saw that the image of Islam becomes bad because of some groups of Moslem acting with anger and violence (Wahid, 2010: 67). He cultivates the face of peaceful Islam in Indonesia. Gus Dur dreams, as quoted by Kosasih (2000: 165):

“..., tidak ada masalah kebencian antaragama, tidak ada khatib yang mengafirkan orang lain. *Ghirah* saya adalah Islam yang berfungsi alami dan wajar, mengayomi semua orang. Inilah Islam yang saya impikan. *Nggak* bisa disekat-sekat dengan lembaga.”



The commitment to non-violence shows Gus Dur's universal view of humanism in praxis not only mere theory that was implemented by advocating minority groups of believers in Indonesia. Based on this efforts, In Gus Dur's hand Islam is interpreted as religion of humanity which commit to foster the dignity of man (Wahid, 2018). Gus Dur is hopeful about future of humanity in Indonesia. He reminds us about the importance of democratic life: "...Masyarakat mengharapkan adanya pertukaran pandangan yang sehat dan jujur. Masyarakat kita nggak takut dengan konroversi. Demokrasi itu kebebasan, keadilan, dan kesamaan di muka hukum. Kami hanya mengingatkan masyarakat agar jangan lupa." (Wahid, 2010: 75).

Douglas E. Ramage (1995) mentions that in one side Gus Dur did not only represent an Islamic leader of the biggest socio-religious organization in Indonesia, NU but another side he was also a nationalist-secular leader who represents Forum Demokrasi (Democracy Forum). Then, the two social institutions were used by Gus Dur to create the atmosphere of democratization and tolerance.

### **Islam as Ethical View**

Gus Dur (2016: 116) is optimistic that his ideas of making dialogue between Islam and other ideologies get positive responses from majority of Moslem community. He insists Islam as one of inspirative strengths to form ideal society. Therefore, ethical view of Islam should be manifested in public sphere of plural Indonesia:

"Agama itu kekuatan inspiratif, kekuatan moral. Jadi agama hanya membentuk etika dari masyarakat. Itu yang penting, menurut saya. Lebih dari itu menimbulkan problem. Ketika kita membentuk etika masyarakat, maka agama itu sendiri merumuskan masa depan masyarakat itu seperti yang diinginkan, dengan menilai situasi masyarakat pada saat itu bagaimana. Karena itu, selalu berangkat dari kenyataan-kenyataan." (Wahid, 1998: 153-154).

The inspiration of Islam should be implemented in the form of ethical values, such respect to humanity, egalitarianism, tolerance, and democracy. Therefore, Gus Dur emphasizes the importance of Islam as ethical view in public sphere:

"..., bahwa Islam berfungsi penuh dalam kehidupan masyarakat bangsa melalui pengembangan nilai-nilai dasarnya sebagai etika masyarakat yang bersangkutan. Islam berfungsi bagi kehidupan masyarakat bangsa tidak sebagai bentuk kenegaraan tertentu, tetapi sebagai etika sosial yang memandu jalan kehidupan bernegara dan bermasyarakat itu sesuai dengan martabat luhur dan kemuliaan derajat manusia, karena pada analisis terakhir, manusialah yang menjadi objek upaya penyejahteraan hidup itu." (Wahid, 1989: 75).



The challenge, when we believe that Gus Dur's religious discourse of Pribumisasi Islam is futuristic is not simple. The rise of politics of identity based on Islam in contemporary Indonesia becomes serious threat to develop moderate Islam. In this context, Suaedy gives a critical note concerning Gus Dur's idea and action:

"Banyak orang mengakui kebenaran pandangan dan gerakan Gus Dur, meskipun banyak yang kuatir dan takut mengikuti ideal Gus Dur, karena dia sering mengabaikan keuntungan material dan politik serta tidak peduli dengan citra diri demi mempertahankan prinsip. Cirri dari kekuatan ini adalah di samping basis intelektual keislaman yang tinggi juga memiliki prinsip keindonesiaan yang sangat kuat. Jika dirunut dari genealogi pemikiran dan gerakan ini, tanpa bermaksud melebihi-lebihkan, mungkin inilah tradisi yang paling otentik dari Islam Indonesia. Ia berbasis pada pandangan tradisi Islam Nusantara, tetapi memiliki genealogi yang kuat pada sejarah Islam paling awal sebagai sebuah tradisi yang terus berkembang dan beradaptasi" (Suaedy, 2009: 101).

But not Gus Dur if giving up from the handicaps and threats. He is the figure who always optimistic in character. Gus Dur always keeps his principle and struggle to actualize a democratic society in Indonesia where Islam can contribute to flourish democratization. Here is long quotations of Gus Dur's statement concerning the importance of struggle for democracy:

"Di negeri kita demokrasi belum lagi tegak dengan kokoh masih lebih berupa hiasan luar bersifat kosmetik daripada sikap yang melandasi pengaturan hidup yang sesungguhnya. Dalam suasana sedemikian ini, unsur-unsur masyarakat yang ingin melestarikan kepincangan social yang ada dewasa ini tentu akan berusaha sekuat tenaga membendung aspirasi demokrasi yang hidup di kalangan mereka yang telah sadar akan perlunya kebebasan ditegakkan di negeri ini.

Kalau tidak ada usaha sungguh-sungguh untuk menegakkan demokrasi yang benar di negeri ini, tentu aspirasi-aspirasi itu akan terbendung oleh kekuatan-kekuatan anti demokrasi itu. .... Karenanya, dari sekarang sebenarnya telah dituntut dari kita kesediaan bersama untuk memperjuangkan kebebasan dan menyempurnakan demokrasi yang hidup di negeri kita. Perjuangan itu haruslah dimulai kesediaan menumbuhkan moralitas baru dalam kehidupan bangsa, yaitu moralitas yang merasa terlibat dengan penderitaan rakyat di bawah." (Wahid, 2016: 224).

It should be noted that Gus Dur's struggle for democracy is in the frame of humanistic values taken from Islam he believes. He always brings a contextual Islam to involve with socio-human problem (Arif, 2016). In one side, Gus Dur is the real humanist



not in secular sense but religious sense. In other side, Gus Dur is also the real democratic figure who respect to all differences of faith and believes:

“..., karena hanya melalui dialog yang bebas dan terbuka, dapat dicapai kebenaran akhir yang diikuti dan diterima orang yang berpikir sehat dan wajar. Inilah arti penting dari sikap jujur, untuk mempertahankan kebenaran, berpikir, berpendapat dan menyatakan pendapat. Ini pula yang merupakan ciri berlangsungnya kehidupan demokratis, ...” (Wahid, 2006: 125).

In the context of modern Indonesia Gus Dur's will to implement the substantial democracy needs a time because what is seen in empirical experience as democracy is a pseudo democracy. The democracy system seen today does not move from procedural democracy. In a such condition, the process of actualizing democracy as voiced and transformed by Gus Dur still face some constraints: socio-political as well as religious factors.

## CONCLUSION

All texts written by Gus Dur illustrate Gus Dur's idea of Pribumisasi Islam which are transformed in the form of religious moderation in Islam. Religious moderation in Islam Gus Dur shows by respecting with plurality of faiths and beliefs. This character becomes feasible if religious community as well as secular community always appreciate democracy. In this respect, they are part of the public who are ready to interact and involve to struggle their public interests communicatively. Pribumisasi Islam is the spirit of Gus Dur who brought Islam as public religion or civil Islam in Indonesia.

However, with regard to the role of religion in public sphere religious community should be open to learn from the advancement of other traditions and cultures. Therefore, project of reinterpretation of all religious faiths is a must in order to contextualize religious doctrine in line with the spirit of modern cultural development. Modern science and technology with its positive and negative impacts need criticizing. In this context, religion can offer its ethical dimension to solve pathological problems of modernity as hoped by Habermas and done by Gus Dur with his Pribumisasi Islam. Besides that as one of the initiators of Forum Democracy which Gus Dur was appointed as the leader of the forum, it is urgent to elaborate how far the forum succeeded in spreading democratic ideas to the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. It is more relevant when Indonesia today is facing deficit of democracy or even in the time of democracy decay.





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