

# The Concept of Progressive Islam and the Pribumization of Islam in the Locality of Islam in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Indonesia, with its abundant cultural and religious wealth, faces challenges from radical Islamic groups that are incompatible with local values and pluralism. These groups which tend to hold exclusive and intolerant. The two main approaches that have emerged for interpreting Islam in this context are progressive Islam and Islamic indigenization. Progressive Islam, pioneered by Farish A. Noor encourages the adaptation of Islamic teachings to the values of modernity such as democracy, human rights, and pluralism. Meanwhile, the indigenization of Islam developed by Abdurrahman Wahid emphasizes the importance of integrating Islam with Indonesia's local culture. Both approaches reject radicalism and support an inclusive and tolerant form of Islam. However, they differ in focus and implementation, Farish is more global and theoretical, while Gus Dur is more local and practical. Both approaches are visible in social practices, Farish and Gus Dur support pluralism and human rights, although Gus Dur also emphasizes the importance of local cultural adaptation in daily religious practice. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method through a literature review of the works of Farish and Gus Dur, analyzing the main themes of each approach. The results show that despite their differences, these two approaches can complement each other in promoting relevant and contextualized Islam, contributing to social harmony and inclusive policies in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Progressive Islam, Indigenization of Islam, Multicultural, Inclusive

## Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has abundant wealth, not only in terms of its natural resources but also in terms of its ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Based on the 2020 BPS census, Indonesia's population exceeds 270 million. According to Presidential Decree Number 1 of 1965 and Law Number 5 of 1969, there are six recognized religions in Indonesia, namely Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism.<sup>1</sup>

Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in Southeast Asia, has an important history of practicing and interpreting the teachings of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Islam is here to bring mercy to all nature with its teachings that contain the values of truth and a culture of peace.<sup>3</sup> However, in reality, the distinctively peaceful nature of Islam appears to be fading today, with the emergence of exclusive and intolerant attitudes, even among Muslims themselves. For instance, the presence of hardliners or radical groups, whose preaching methods are incompatible with the cultural and religious diversity of Indonesia.

The rise of hardliners is rooted in two main reasons. First, they feel disillusioned and alienated because they believe that Muslims are lagging behind Western civilization, which drives them toward violence. Second, there is a shallow understanding of religion among Muslims, especially the younger generation, many of whom come from a background of secular education and economics. This makes them less immersed in Islam and reliant on literal interpretations of religion, resulting in a lack of substantial understanding of Islamic teachings.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Damirah Et Al., "Internalisasi Konsep Cycle Relation Model pada Komunitas Agama Lokal di Indonesia: (Perspektif Sosial, Ekonomi dan Politik pada Kepercayaan Towani Tolotang, Aluk Todolo dan Patuntung di Sulawesi Selatan)," *Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya* 24, No. 2 (September 21, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.55981/Jmb.2022.1486>.

<sup>2</sup> Zezen Zainul Ali And Mega Puspita, *Pembaharuan Hukum Keluarga di Asia Tenggara: Dari Negara Mayoritas Sampai Minoritas Muslim - Jejak Pustaka* (Jejak Pustaka, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Lukman Hakim, "Moderasi Beragama: Refleksi Dialog Modernitas Multikultural," Vol. 1 (Jakarta Selatan: Damera Press, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Abdul Basid Et Al., "Genealogy Of Al-Qurtubi's Interpretation In Countering Radicalism Through Moderate Religious Verses: A Case Study Of Tribunews.Com's Youtube Channel," *Al Quds: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 8, No. 1 (May 7, 2024): 91–110, <https://doi.org/10.29240/Alquds.V8i1.7025>.

Within this framework, two important approaches have emerged that attempt to interpret Islam within Indonesia's unique cultural, social, and political context: Progressive Islam and Islamic indigenization. Both approaches have a rich and significant background in the development of Islamic thought in contemporary Indonesia

Progressive Islamic thought, pioneered by scholars such as Farish A. Noor, offers a dynamic view of how Islam can adapt to the changing times and values of modernity. Within this framework, Islam is perceived as a religion that is flexible and open to reinterpretation in accordance with the evolving social and cultural context.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the indigenization of Islam, developed mainly by figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur, highlights the importance of integrating Islam with local Indonesian culture. This concept acknowledges the diversity of Islamic culture and traditions within the context of local Indonesian culture. It recognizes the various cultures and traditions present in Indonesia and emphasizes that Islam must be capable of adapting to the social and cultural context in which it is embedded.<sup>6</sup>

Previous research on the concept of Islamic indigenization initiated by Abdurrahman Wahid has been carried out by various academics such as Syabibi<sup>7</sup>, who examines the idea of Islamic indigenization as Gus Dur's cultural da'wah, and by Islami et al<sup>8</sup> who discuss the idea of Islamic indigenization and its relationship with religious relations and national culture in Indonesia. While research on Farish A. Noor's Progressive Islam is still rare, the author found a

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<sup>5</sup> Fahmi Mubarak, "Islam Progresif Farish A. Noor: Telaah atas Karya Islam Progresif: Peluang, Tantangan, dan Masa Depan di Asia Tenggara," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat* 5, No. 2 (2021): 249–74, <https://doi.org/10.14421/Panangkaran.V5i2.2638>.

<sup>6</sup> Imam Mustofa, Ahmad Syarifudin, and Dri Santoso, "Pemikiran Hukum Islam Abdurrahman Wahid: Harmonisasi Islam dan Budaya," *Undang: Jurnal Hukum* 4, No. 2 (November 21, 2021): 507–35, <https://doi.org/10.22437/Ujh.4.2.507-535>.

<sup>7</sup> M. Ridho Syabibi, "Diskursus Pribumisasi Islam dalam Dakwah Kultural Abdurrahman Wahid: Perspektif Tindakan Jurgen Habermas" (Jakarta, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Faza Islami, Busthomi Ibrahim, and Azmi Islami, "Relasi Agama dan Budaya Bangsa dalam Gagasan Abdurrahman Wahid tentang Pribumisasi Islam," *Ulumuddin: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 13, no. 2 (July 11, 2023): 183–98, <https://doi.org/10.47200/ulumuddin.v13i2.1771>.

writing from Mubarok<sup>9</sup> that introduces the concept of progressive Islam from the perspective of international figures such as Farish A. Noor by highlighting his innovative thoughts on progressive Islam in the book "Progressive Islam: Opportunities, Challenges, and Its Future in Southeast Asia". From the previous research that the author found, it is only limited to discussing Abdurrahman Wahid's concept of indigenization Islam, and Farish A. Noor's concept of Progressive Islam. None of the above studies have examined the comparison of Abdurrahman Wahid's Islamic indigenization and Farish A. Noor's Progressive Islam. This research is conducted to compare the concepts of Abdurrahman Wahid's Islamic indigenization and Farish A. Noor's Progressive Islam which are then interpreted in the locality of Islam in Indonesia.

Indonesia's multicultural and pluralist social and political context places these theories in a unique position. It necessitates an understanding of Islam that can harmonize this diversity with national unity. In the context of a changing and evolving Indonesia, an exploration of progressive Islam and Islamic indigenization is a crucial step in comprehending the role and contribution of Islam in society. Through a thorough understanding, we can create room for greater renewal and transformation in Islamic thought and practice in Indonesia.

In this study, the method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to explore and interpret the progressive Islamic approach of Farish A. Noor and Abdurrahman Wahid's Islamic indigenization. Data is collected through several written works, such as books and articles that discuss Farish A. Noor's progressive Islam and Abdurrahman Wahid's indigenization of Islam.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Farish A. Noor's Progressive Islamic Theory Approach**

Farish A. Noor, born on May 15, 1967, is the eldest child of a cosmopolitan family with mixed Javanese Crossbreed, Indian, and Arab heritage. His formal education began in 1971 at St. John's Institution in Kuala Lumpur, followed by La Salle Institution in Kota

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<sup>9</sup> Mubarok, "Islam Progresif Farish A. Noor."

Kinabalu, Sabah, until 1978. He then returned to Peninsular Malaysia for secondary education at his primary school alma mater, before relocating to the UK at the age of 19. There, he pursued his interest in philosophy at the University of Sussex, graduating with a degree in Philosophy and Literature in 1989. A year later, he completed his master's program in the same department at the same university. Driven by his passion for learning, he furthered his studies with a focus on Southeast Asian Politics at SOAS, University of London. He lived in Europe for 23 years.<sup>10</sup>

Progressive Islam is one of the new movement terms in the dynamics of the contemporary Islamic Movement.<sup>11</sup> Islamic reformers have diverse interpretations of "progressive Islam." Notable figures in the Progressive Islam movement include Farish A. Noor, Ebrahim Moosa, Omid Safi, and others. This movement arose in response to the social realities faced by Muslims within the capitalist social system.<sup>12</sup> When viewed etymologically, "progressive" means advancing and developing. According to Brubacher, "progress" or "progressive" denotes change towards improvement. This change embodies a "new" significance and signifies genuine progress, rather than merely comprehending the current reality.<sup>13</sup> Safi suggests that individuals who identify as Muslim can engage with Islam in progressive or non-progressive ways, depending on how they interpret and articulate Islamic teachings based on their level of ability and knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mubarak.

<sup>11</sup> Aufa Ulil Abshar Abdalla, "Gerakan Front Nahdliyin untuk Kedaulatan Sumber Daya Alam (Fnksda): Melawan Ekstraksi Emas di Banyuwangi dengan Semangat Islam Progresif," *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam* 33, No. 1 (January 28, 2024): 37–60, <https://doi.org/10.30762/Empirisma.V33i1.1587>.

<sup>12</sup> Tohis Reza Adeputra, "Islam Progresif, Marxisme, dan Tan Malaka (Analisis Relasi Eksternalitas)," *Jinsa: Jurnal Interdisipliner Sosiologi Agama* 3, No. 2 (2023): 1–10.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Nur Effendi And Muhammad Yusuf, "Titik Temu Aliran Filsafat Progressive dan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam," *Al-Manba Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* 9, No. 1 (February 7, 2024): 18–31.

<sup>14</sup> Syamsul Arifin, Syafiq A. Mughni, And Moh Nurhakim, "The Idea Of Progress: Meaning And Implications Of Islam Berkemajuan In Muhammadiyah," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal Of Islamic Studies* 60, No. 2 (December 19, 2022): 547–84, <https://doi.org/10.14421/Ajis.2022.602.547-584>.

Farish A. Noor employs the term "progressive" to underscore the agenda of Islamic concepts and movements. According to him, the perspectives, critical attitudes, and actions of progressive Islam should be directed toward advancement and improvement.<sup>15</sup> He seeks to categorize the understanding and actions of Muslims who strive to uphold humanist values such as the advancement of civil society, democracy, justice, gender equality, advocacy for the oppressed, and pluralism.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, according to Amin Abdullah, progressive Islam exhibits its own flexibility compared to Liberal Islam. Progressive Islam emphasizes an orientation towards the future, rather than merely exploiting liberalization, although it may overlap in some areas. Hence, the key criterion is the forward-looking "progressiveness" of its orientation towards the future.<sup>17</sup>

In his book 'Progressive Islam: Opportunities, Challenges, and its Future in Southeast Asia,' Farish A. Noor states that the progressive label is given to those who encourage social evolution in society. They do not blindly follow old doctrines or ideas but rather prioritize the tradition and practices of *ijtihad* with an open mind to new ideas and realities. In Islam, there is no concept of race, ethnicity, or nation; there is only an equal and uniform humanity. The progressive Islamic movement today must focus on opposing, criticizing, and abolishing sectarianism.<sup>18</sup>

Based on his writings, Farish A. Noor advocates for Islam to adapt to modern values to maintain relevance. Modernity encompasses democracy, human rights, and pluralism. Noor argues that many Islamic concepts align with modern values but are often hindered by rigid orthodox interpretations. For instance, the Islamic principle of consultation can underpin democratic political systems in Muslim-

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<sup>15</sup> Rohinah Rohinah, "The Figure Of Omid Safi: Progressive Muslim, Gender Mainstreaming, And Islamic Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, No. 2 (December 26, 2020): 217–34, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2020.92.217-234>.

<sup>16</sup> Arifin, Mughni, And Nurhakim, "The Idea Of Progress."

<sup>17</sup> Nurul Fadzilah And Mahathir Muhammad, "Nalar Islam Progresif dalam Fiqih Umar Bin Khattab," *Mozaic: Islamic Studies Journal* 2, No. 01 (August 21, 2023): 41–48, <https://doi.org/10.35719/Mozaic.V2i01.1866>.

<sup>18</sup> Mubarak, "Islam Progresif Farish A. Noor."

majority countries. Moreover, Islam's emphasis on justice and equality supports the safeguarding of human rights.

This approach emphasizes the need for a more flexible and contextual interpretation of Islamic teachings. Noor encourages Muslims not only to adhere to classical texts literally but also to consider the social, political, and technological developments occurring in today's world. Thus, Islam can continue to positively contribute to the ever-changing global order.

Farish A. Noor also emphasizes the importance of pluralism and tolerance in Islam. He argues that Islam must be able to coexist peacefully with other religions and beliefs in a harmonious atmosphere. Pluralism, according to Noor, involves not only recognizing diversity but also respecting the rights of individuals and groups to practice their respective beliefs. Drawing on his family and upbringing, Noor criticizes groups that use Islam to discriminate against or oppress minorities. He emphasizes that true Islam is inclusive and respects differences. In this context, he advocates for interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural cooperation as means to enhance social harmony and reduce conflict.

One of the distinctive features of Noor's approach is his critique of traditional orthodoxy in Islam. Orthodox interpretations often lack relevance in today's context and can hinder progress. Hence, there is a need for a dynamic social and cultural evolution. He proposes that Muslims adopt a more critical and reflective approach to religious texts, allowing for new interpretations that align better with modern values. According to him, this reformulation of thought is crucial not only for the advancement of Muslims but also for strengthening Islam's relevance and dynamism in the contemporary world.

### **Approach to Abdurrahman Wahid's Concept of Indigenization of Islam**

Abdurrahman Wahid, better known as Gus Dur, was born in Jombang on August 4, 1940. His father, Wahid Hasyim, was the son of NU founder KH. Hasyim Asya'ri. His mother, Hj. Sholehah was the daughter of KH. Bisri Syamsuri is a prominent figure in NU. With

lineage from both sides, Gus Dur belonged to the Santri and priyayi groups, placing him in the highest social strata of society. Since childhood, Gus Dur was encouraged by his father to read various books, including those about other religions, to broaden his horizons. Due to his intelligence and high curiosity, Gus Dur embarked on a very extensive educational journey.<sup>19</sup>

From his intellectual endeavors, we witness his prolific output. Gus Dur authored numerous works, particularly articles and opinions in the media. Published books often compile Gus Dur's writings, analyzed and interpreted by other authors. He stands out in contemporary Indonesian history as a steadfast advocate for humanitarian values above all else. Recognized widely as a cleric, politician, cultural icon, and the 4th President of Indonesia, Gus Dur's legacy is shaped by his concern for the welfare of ordinary people and minorities during the New Order era. He fearlessly opposed oppressive regimes, including challenging President Suharto.

As a humanitarian activist who recognized Indonesia's diverse society, Gus Dur advocated for embracing diversity within a unified state framework. He envisioned Indonesia as a safe and inclusive home where every religious follower could practice freely while respecting others' beliefs. This is especially true for Islam, a religion whose followers are mostly in developing countries.<sup>20</sup>

Islam teaches the principles of peace, harmony, and prosperity for all of humanity and all of God's creatures.<sup>21</sup> This includes

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<sup>19</sup> Metatags Generator, "Pendidikan Perdamaian Perspektif Gus Dur : Kajian Filosofis Pemikiran Pendidikan Gus Dur | Tadris: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam," December 12, 2019, <https://ejournal.iainmadura.ac.id/index.php/tadris/article/view/2759>.

<sup>20</sup> Amanah Nurish, "Muslim-Christian Conflict And The Rise Of Laskar Jihad: Tracing Islamophobia In Central Sulawesi – Indonesia," *Qijis (Qudus International Journal Of Islamic Studies)* 10, No. 2 (December 27, 2022): 479–516, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v10i2.8776>.

<sup>21</sup> Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, "Menjunjung Tinggi Islam Agama Kasih Sayang dan Cinta Kasih dalam Dimensi Sufisme," *Reflektika* 16, No. 2 (December 24, 2021): 241–67.



Indonesia, a country of pluralism,<sup>22</sup> where the majority of the population is Muslim.

But in reality, diversity is sometimes manipulated to sow discord and disrupt peace. Those seeking uniformity in society often attempt to eradicate differences using various justifications and methods. Such actions, whether viewed from a religious or humanitarian standpoint, are fundamentally flawed and lack legitimate justification; they are driven only by ego and passion. Religion is frequently misused as a pretext for these conflicts, despite the fact that true religious teachings do not endorse such behaviors.<sup>23</sup> It's crucial to steer clear of radical and extremist religious attitudes as they can provoke emotional reactions and intolerance. Such attitudes often spark religious tensions that escalate into inter-religious conflicts. Religion ought to serve as a source of solutions, not problems, addressing both religious and humanitarian challenges.<sup>24</sup>

According to Gus Dur's observations, religion should be manifested in tangible actions, not just intimidating rhetoric. Militant and violent religious attitudes only diminish the beauty of religion. Conversely, when religion is directed towards initiatives and self-improvement efforts, its beauty shines through. This perspective led Gus Dur to criticize the concept of *repelita*, which he believed did not align with the spirit of religion, culture, and local values in Indonesian society.<sup>25</sup>

As a prominent figure in NU, Gus Dur's ideology of multiculturalism was grounded in a profound understanding of Islamic teachings and NU's scholarly tradition. He advocated not only for tolerance and respect towards all beliefs but also for embracing the positive teachings of other religions. Gus Dur's concept, known as the

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<sup>22</sup> Achmad Fuaddin, "Pluralisme Agama, Tafsir Al-Qur'an dan Kontestasi Ideologis Pendakwah Online di Indonesia," *Subuf* 15, No. 2 (December 30, 2022): 355–78, <https://doi.org/10.22548/Shf.V15i2.750>.

<sup>23</sup> Moh Ashif Fuadi Et Al., "Integration Between Islamic Revelation And Local Culture: A Study Of Theology And The Indigenisation Of Islam In Indonesia," *Pharos Journal Of Theology* 105, No. 1 (2023): 1–12.

<sup>24</sup> Lukman Hakim, "Moderasi Beragama."

<sup>25</sup> Miskan And Abdul Gafur, *Gus Dur: Multikulturalisme & Pendidikan Islam* (Cv. Zahir Publishing, N.D.).

"indigenization of Islam," emphasizes the application of Islamic values in everyday life rather than Arabization.<sup>26</sup>

The indigenization of Islam described by Gus Dur is not a process of Jawanization or Syncretism. It began because it rejected the idea of syncretism as promoted by Soekarno and Jawanization efforts.<sup>27</sup> The concept of indigenization considers local needs when formulating religious law, without altering the essence of the law itself. It does not advocate for abandoning norms in favor of culture, but rather proposes that norms should accommodate cultural requirements through varying interpretations of the texts, while adhering to the principles of Ushul fiqh and fiqh rules. Indigenization of Islam addresses historical challenges faced by Muslims, aiming to harmonize culture with the norms of Ushul fiqh. Therefore, the adaptation of Islam to local contexts is a vital aspect of Islamic history, both within its place of origin and in other countries, including Indonesia.

Indigenization of Islam, according to Gus Dur, involves allowing Islam and culture to coexist autonomously, while recognizing areas of intersection between them. Islam originates from revelation and includes norms that are generally enduring, whereas culture is human-made and evolves over time. Despite this distinction, cultural expressions can manifest religious life as long as they do not contradict Islamic principles.

Therefore, achieving Islamic indigenization requires a natural, non-coercive accommodation or reconciliation between Islam and local cultures. Historically, this approach is evident in the development of Islam since the time of Prophet Muhammad, when his companions and subsequent scholars did not wholesale reject pre-Islamic traditions. Instead, they selectively accepted practices that were compatible with Islamic values while discarding those that contradicted them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Shohib Moch, "Substansi Pendidikan Multikultural Perspektif Gus Dur," *Edureligia: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 04, No. 01 (June 2020): 75–87.

<sup>27</sup> Yaser Burhani Et Al., "Pendidikan Multikulturalisme Gus Dur," *Jaqfi: Jurnal Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam* 5, No. 2 (December 13, 2020): 237–50, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jaqfi.v5i2.10464>.

<sup>28</sup> Miskan And Gafur, *Gus Dur*.

Similarly, upon Islam's arrival in Indonesia, scholars integrated local wisdom into the dissemination of Islamic teachings. For instance, traditional practices such as communal gatherings during disasters were adapted by incorporating prayers for the deceased. Likewise, local singing traditions, originally intended for spirit worship, were transformed into "shalawatan" (songs praising the Prophet Muhammad).<sup>29</sup> The spread of Islam by the Walisongo was carried out in a straightforward manner: initially, they respected local traditions, adopted a pragmatic and realistic approach, and applied flexibility that resonated with the community. This method exemplifies the uniqueness of the Walisongo as Javanese Sufis who adeptly assimilated local and foreign cultural elements, enabling them to swiftly gain acceptance across diverse societal circles.<sup>30</sup>

As a father of pluralism, during Gus Dur's presidency, history records that Confucianism was officially recognized as a state religion, and Chinese New Year was designated a national holiday. Before this policy, Confucianism lacked recognition as a religion, preventing adherents from indicating their faith on identification cards, thus requiring them to align with a government-sanctioned religion.<sup>31</sup> On another note, Gus Dur also critiqued the modernist approach to Islam for neglecting tradition, advocating instead for the indigenization of Islam. He highlighted the spiritual emptiness in secular modern culture while emphasizing Islam's ideals as a religion of peace rooted in universal ethics. Gus Dur's conception of Islam as a social ethic aimed to establish a global ethical framework derived from Islamic teachings.

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<sup>29</sup> Alif Jabal Kurdi, "Dakwah Berbasis Kebudayaan sebagai Upaya Membangun Masyarakat Madani dalam Surat Al-Nahl: 125," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 19, No. 1 (October 12, 2019): 21–42, <https://doi.org/10.14421/Qh.2018.1901-02>.

<sup>30</sup> Hilmi Ridho, "Membangun Toleransi Beragama Berlandaskan Konsep Moderasi dalam Al-Qur'an dan Pancasila," *An-Natiq Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 1, No. 1 (2021): 75–88, <https://doi.org/10.33474/An-Natiq.V1i1.9069>.

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad Muzakkil Anam, "Konsep Pendidikan Pluralisme Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur)," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan* 17, No. 1 (February 18, 2019): 81–97, <https://doi.org/10.21154/Cendekia.V17i1.1442>.

By prioritizing a cultural approach, Gus Dur spearheaded international dialogue that underscored the role of religion in advancing humanity.<sup>32</sup>

The indigenization of Islam promoted by Gus Dur emphasizes integrating Islamic values with local culture. Gus Dur argued that Islam should adapt to its social and cultural context. In Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity, this approach is particularly relevant. Gus Dur believed that many local traditions harmonize with Islamic teachings and can enhance religious practice. For instance, he supported using local languages in religious education and worship, as well as endorsing local art and culture that embody Islamic values. Through these efforts, Gus Dur aimed to foster a more inclusive form of Islam that embraces Indonesia's cultural diversity.

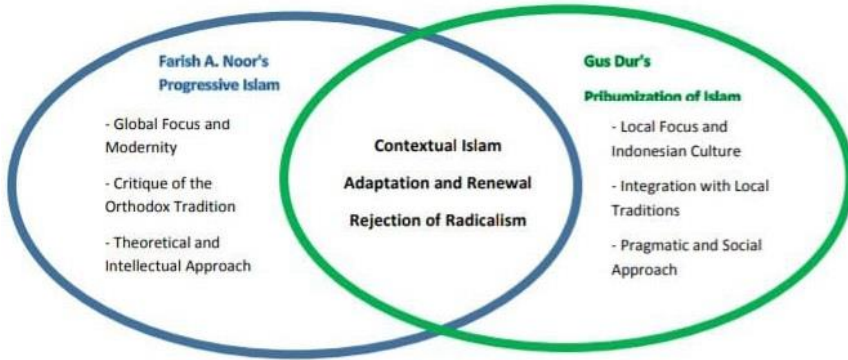
Similar to Farish A. Noor, Gus Dur stressed the significance of tolerance and pluralism within Islam. However, Gus Dur took a more pragmatic and policy-oriented approach. As a leader of NU and President of Indonesia, he actively promoted interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural cooperation. Gus Dur advocated for minority rights and implemented policies supporting pluralism, viewing diversity as a strength rather than a threat. He believed Islam should peacefully coexist with other religions and respect their beliefs, emphasizing that pluralism entails not only accepting differences but also honoring and celebrating diversity.

Gus Dur not only promoted the indigenization of Islam through intellectual discourse but also through practical initiatives in everyday life. He supported cultural activities that integrated Islamic values with local traditions. For example, he encouraged the use of local art and culture during celebrations like the Prophet's birthday to convey religious messages effectively. This pragmatic approach was reflected in his presidential policies, which promoted inclusivity, tolerance, and religious freedom. Gus Dur aimed to create an environment conducive to interfaith and social harmony through these measures.

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<sup>32</sup> M. Ridho Syabibi, "Diskursus Pribumisasi Islam dalam Dakwah Kultural Abdurrahman Wahid: Perspektif Tindakan Jurgen Habermas" (Jakarta, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2020).

## Comparison of Farish A. Noor's Concept of Progressive Islam and Abdurrahman Wahid's indigenization of Islam



The two theories discussed emphasize the importance of contextual Islam, which means Islam that is relevant to local situations and conditions. They both reject a rigid and universal form of Islam that disregards local contexts and diverse social dynamics. Therefore, both advocate for adapting Islamic teachings and practices to suit the realities and needs of people in different places.

Additionally, both theories encourage adaptation and renewal in the practice and understanding of Islam to ensure its relevance in contemporary times. They recognize the necessity for Islam to evolve and accommodate social and cultural changes in order to remain pertinent and provide meaningful guidance in modern life.

Lastly, both Farish A. Noor and Gus Dur oppose radicalism and fundamentalism within Islam. They promote an inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful form of Islam. Through their approach, they aim to portray Islam as capable of harmoniously coexisting in diverse societies, while rejecting all forms of violence and extremism.

There are significant differences in approach and focus between Farish A. Noor and Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) in their understanding and development of Islam. Farish A. Noor, with his progressive Islamic theory, primarily focuses on modernity and how

Islam can adapt to the values of democracy, human rights, and pluralism. Farish's approach critically examines traditional orthodoxy and advocates for reform in Islamic structure and thought. In contrast, Gus Dur's concept of Islam's indigenization emphasizes how Islam can integrate with Indonesia's local culture. Gus Dur stresses the importance of Islam harmonizing with local traditions and wisdom while maintaining its core principles. His approach leans towards accommodating local culture in the practice of Islam.

In terms of implementation and practice, Farish A. Noor emphasizes theoretical and intellectual critique, exploring how Islam can function in a global context and confront the challenges of modernity. Gus Dur, on the other hand, was more practical in implementation, particularly through policies and activities in Indonesia. As the leader of NU and President of Indonesia, Gus Dur actively promoted pluralism, democracy, and religious tolerance in both policy-making and the daily lives of Indonesians.

Furthermore, the social and cultural backgrounds of these two figures differ significantly. Farish A. Noor operates more in global and urban contexts, often engaging in cross-cultural and international dialogues. In contrast, Gus Dur was rooted in rural and traditional Indonesian society. His approach was pragmatic and grounded in the actual conditions of Indonesian society.

## **Conclusion**

This research has revealed the similarities and differences between Farish A. Noor's theory of progressive Islam and Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) theory of Islamic indigenization. Both theories offer distinct yet complementary perspectives in their efforts to promote a relevant and contextualized Islam. Farish A. Noor emphasizes adaptation to global modernity, while Gus Dur focuses on integration with local Indonesian culture. Understanding these differences and similarities demonstrates how these approaches can mutually reinforce each other in fostering a more inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society. Integrating these perspectives can enrich the understanding and practice of Islam in Indonesia, ensuring its

continued relevance and dynamism amidst ongoing social and cultural changes.

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