

# Islam Nusantara: Social Engineering Da'wah Perspective Wali Songo

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## ABSTRACT

*This research aims to describe the social engineering of da'wah practised by Wali Songo and the scholars afterwards. The research approach used is qualitative with a descriptive type of literature study. This is important to do considering that until now the process of da'wah by bringing together religion and culture in the social system of Wali Songo remains a beautiful trend in introducing religious values in the community. It is not uncommon for the familiar encounter of religion and culture in the realm of da'wah to give birth to a unique expression that later became known as Islam Nusantara. Islam Nusantara in a very broad sense can be interpreted as a fermentation of religion and culture that institutionalizes in the format of religious social reality and becomes a characteristic made in the original archipelago which is nothing but a product of social engineering of the scholars of the archipelago itself.*

*Keywords : Islam Nusantara, Social Engineering, and Wali Songo Da'wah.*

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan rekayasa sosial dakwah yang dipraktikkan oleh Wali Songo dan ulama-ulama sesudahnya. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan jenis deskriptif studi pustaka. Hal ini penting dilakukan mengingat sampai saat ini proses dakwah dengan mempertemukan agama dan budaya dalam sistem sosial ala Wali Songo tetap menjadi tren cantik dalam mengintroduksi nilai-nilai agama di tengah masyarakat. Bahkan tidak jarang perjumpaan akrab agama dan budaya dalam ranah dakwah ini melahirkan ekspresi unik yang kemudian dikenal dengan Islam Nusantara. Islam Nusantara dalam arti yang amat luas bisa dimaknai sebagai fermentasi dari agama dan budaya yang menginstitutional dalam format realitas sosial keagamaan dan menjadi karakteristik made in asli nusantara yang tak lain adalah produk dari rekayasa sosial para ulama nusantara itu sendiri.*

*Kata Kunci : Islam Nusantara, Rekayasa Sosial, dan Dakwah Wali Songo.*

## INTRODUCTION

The exposition of the term engineering is usually always associated with the exact sciences because indeed genetically this concept is practised in the natural sciences. Call it for example, in the biological sciences the practice of genetic engineering in plants. In plants seen a variety of citrus fruits, mangoes, watermelons, corn, apples are partly evidence of the role of genetic engineering carried out thanks to the advancement of science today. In our environment, trees bear fruit according to the usual seasons and circulation of time, and will not bear fruit on other occasions on other seasons. On the contrary, thanks to the genetic engineering of the fruits they will always bear fruit according to the will of the owner and does not

depend on the proper season. With genetic engineering, the fruit can and continues to bear fruit following the stimulus from the outside so that the tree is conditioned by human engineering is no longer on natural environmental factors.

Just like social engineering is a discussion, society is engineered by stakeholders to be better without feeling they are changed and disturbed by their cultural existence. This is where the role of social engineering correlated with da'wah, especially carried out by Wali Songo in the process of Islamization in the archipelago. The success of this engineering method becomes a valuable lesson for the current generation, especially for the *nahdliyin* to maintain the socio-cultural psychology of the community in the maintenance of social da'wah. Because after all, the system and social structure of society must remain the main reference in efforts to do social engineering da'wah where the dai will be in their midst (Suryanto 2017, 43-62).

A smart understanding of the real conditions of society becomes the main prerequisite in diving into the real world of society where one will plunge into it, and this becomes an absolute competence for dai before actually carrying out his mission in the spread of Islam in the archipelago. That way, it is quite reasonable that Islam Nusantara is a "product" of social engineering da'wah that was once run by Wali Songo at the beginning of the entry of Islam into the archipelago. Unlike genetic engineering inexact science, Wali Songo's da'wah social engineering also demonstrates the same thing in carrying out the mission in the spread of Islam in the archipelago with the format of not changing the cultural formation that has been instituted, but Wali Songo da'wah revises the contents or containers of the culture with Islamic religious values. Therefore, it is in this field that Wali Songo's role in preaching in the archipelago can be categorized as social engineering in reconstructing his da'wah targets.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

It has become historical factuality that debates and disputes regarding the path and entry of Islam into the archipelago until now have not been completed. Inter-theorized resistance with their respective claims still surfaces from each proponent of the theory. So as not to close the possibility of conflict between the categories is difficult to meet in the practical realm of discussion with the power of verification data owned by each. But at the very least, the debate provides a common thread for our generation that there is a lot of evidence of the history of Islam Nusantara that can still be discussed scientifically according to the version and point of view of each glasses.

One thing that cannot be denied in the discussion of the path and spread of Islam in the archipelago are the four theories of the origin of Islam to the archipelago. The four theories are as follows: *First*, the Gujarat theory; Islam came to the archipelago in the 13th century AD through the Gujarat route brought by traders from the country. *Second*, the theory of Mecca; It is revealed that Islam came to the archipelago in the 7th century AD. brought by traders directly from the centre of its emergence, Arabia. *Third*, the Persian theory; It is stated that Islam came to the archipelago through Persia in the 13th century AD. *Fourth*, Chinese theory; Islam came to the archipelago in the 7th century AD through the Chinese route brought by nomads from the opposite country (Aizid 2016, 16-24).

Even the latest academic debate mentioned that the presence of Islam in the archipelago is no longer as described above. However, new facts reveal the activeness of the people of Nusantara themselves in spreading Islam in their respective regions after they returned from visiting Mecca. In a sense, the people of Nusantara have previously been accustomed to travelling to various other regions with various interests.

Of the four theories of the entry of Islam into the archipelago, one thing that cannot be unactioned in seeing this fact, namely between the

spreader of Islam and the local population. Spreaders of Islam and the population who are the target of the spread of Islam certainly in many sides have their paradigms and cultural concepts that are arguably not the same, or even contrary at all. While on the other hand, the mission of da'wah as teaching that must be reached to the community must also be through the local culture.

In such a realm, the dialectic between the outside culture brought by the spreader of Islam and the local culture at the end must meet at the same point. That is, bringing together two different cultures becomes an inevitability that must be done by the spreader of Islam so that the mission it carries can be easily accepted by the culture and local population. Thus, the process of da'wah by the spreader of Islam will be more easily accepted by the community because there is no conflict between two different cultures.

With a simpler language, the religious mission brought by the spreader of Islam must be able to meet and intercede with the culture and local wisdom of the people who became the shot of Islam. In a sense, the meeting of religion and tradition or culture becomes a condition for the smoothness and success of the da'wah mission itself.

An in-depth study of religion and tradition (Hanafi 2004, 5) must contain the dialectical value of symbiotic mutualism. Religion that starts from sacred territory in its inevitability must meet the profane zone (Durkheim 2006, 72). Religion will become an integral part of the realm of human life if it can be present amid the historicity of the human life journey. This is what is called the contextualization of religion. In short, Islam as a religion then requires itself to be interpreted according to the actual needs of the people of its adherents and the society in which the teachings of Islam are practised (Mulkhan 2002, 48). If the transcendent power of religion can be interpreted by society and the ending of God's word is plundered in the form of culture, then the relevance of religion is no

longer a problem among the society, it has become part of the inseparable and inseparable practice of daily life.

But in practice, between the sacred and the profane can always meet and unite. Again, religion as a path of submission, peace, harmony and *rahmatan lil' alamin* must be present with the traditions and culture of the local community to provide a shady green colour for its adherents. It is in this part that the substance of heaven and earth meet intimately in a whole unity into a part of the history that institutionalizes between two different regions. Religion is not reserved for the inhabitants of heaven and God's creation other than man, but religion is a piece of information that is essentially addressed to mankind who want security and peace (Weber 2002, 18).

For the sake of also, Islam came and developed in Indonesia which was then referred to as Islam Nusantara did not come out of the corridors of structure and constitution of Indonesian society from time to time. Call it, for example, the process of Islamization carried out by Wali Songo in the past few centuries also does not conflict between sacred and profane areas. Both concepts in the spread of da'wah are conditioned together in an adaptive-constructive form and do not disturb the colourful culture and traditions that existed before the arrival of Islam to this multicultural country. Precisely in the process of his da'wah, Wali Songo adapts, brings together, and compromises among the sacred and profane, with the record as long as the culture and traditions do not deviate and are not contrary to the basic values of Islam. This is the wise path carried out by the guardians in spreading Islam in the archipelago, which was then discussed by Dr Abdul Muqsih Ghazali as the methodology of Islam Nusantara ([Ed] 2016, 107-114).

So it is not impossible in the future if the arrival of Islam that is peaceful, harmonious, full of harmony, meekness, compassion, wisdom, accommodative, and tolerant is quickly accepted by the people of the

archipelago which at that time was still dominated by Hindu-Buddhist religious beliefs along with animism and dynamism. The tenderness, compassion and other varieties of positive values of Islam are easily spread and accepted by society without resistance and pejorative attitude. So that then, based values of Islam quickly contrasted and became a solid part of the historic behaviour (Khaldun 2013, 52-53) of the Muslim community of the archipelago to penetrate the trajectory of present history.

Acculturation of religion and culture is analogous to water; Religion is like water that can adapt according to the place where it is. When the water is in a sunken glass, then the shape and formation of water will be like the glass. Similarly, when the water is in the gallon, it will automatically be shaped according to the indents of the gallon. Note that what needs to be considered here is that although water can adjust its shape and flexibility to the place or container that surrounds it, the substance of water will not be able to change all the time.

The parable of the encounter between water and other objects as mentioned above is analogous logic like dialectics like religion and culture. Religion is described as water that can enter adapt to all kinds of traditions and cultures of the society in which it is located, while culture is painted like glass, coffee, milk or tea that is ready to be part of the religion itself. Without the functionality between the two, the acute problem will become a deadly virus two. Religion will have difficulty entering certain cultural community areas if religion cannot dim in it.

With the narrative and explanation above, it is reasonable if the social engineering of Islamic Nusantara da'wah is constructed so far from the sheets of social history where Wali Songo as its promoter becomes its trend that reflects the existence of the face of Islam that can combine the cultural dimension with the religious dimension. The first dimension is a profane territory because of the work and *karsa* of man, the second dimension as an absolute revelation of God Almighty that already seems

holy. To borrow the term Ulil Abshar Abdalla, but the two always do the bargaining process ([edit] 2002, 76) to achieve the sentence of *kalimatun sawa*' in the realm of the social construction of the local community, and at the end of the religion becomes the social reality of the community that exist with each other. Religion needs society as a guide in common life, and similarly, society needs religion — according to Robert N. Bellah — as a condition of the way man understands his world (ZTF 2005, 220).

So how does Wali Songo in this context as a genealogical symbol of Islam Nusantara engineer society in its proselytizing process? For this explanation, the author will present some evidence of the social engineering of Wali Songo's da'wah in dealing with society and its culture. So first, for example, Sunan Kalijaga engineered the social Azimat kingdom of Amarta which has the power to defeat the gods called *Jimat Kalimosodo* interpreted as *Layang Kalima-Sahada* (Sunyoto 2017, 178).

*Second*, the celebration of the Prophet's Maulid in the foyer of Demak Mosque enlivened with tambourines, gamelan, and puppet performances. People also come to flock through the Gate guarded by the guardians, with the condition of reading the shahada as the ticket (Aizid 2016, 38). *Third*, Sunan Kudus prohibited the slaughter of cows and replaced them with Buffalo (Sunyoto 2017, 343) as well as a strategy to positively deceive the social psychology of Hindu-Buddhist society at the time. *Fourth*, Sunan Ampel's da'wah strategy by forming a kinship network through marriage with the daughters of Majapahit subordinate rulers (Sunyoto 2017, 197). *Fifth*, Sunan Muria changed from a *bancakan* tradition with tumpeng for offerings in haunted places, to a sagging, i.e. ceremony delivery of prayers to ancestors (Sunyoto 2017, 372).

*Sixth*, the decree of Sultan Demak with Wali Songo is an attempt to prepare a story that is not contrary to tawhid. For example, a polyandry story involving the character of Drupadi as the fifth wife of the Pandava brothers was changed into a monogamous story by depicting the character



of Drupati as Yudhistira's wife. The gods of godly figures who live in *kahyangan*, contrived genealogy as descendants of Prophet Adam from the strains of the Prophet Syit (Sunyoto 2017, 178).

The description of Wali Songo's social engineering is archaeological evidence of the peaceful-dialectical intimacy between Islam and culture in the archipelago. Islam is present amid Nusantara culture in a cultural way as a bridge to the spread of Islam to the community at that time, and until now it turns out that the path of the Sunan still exists until our time in modern Indonesia.

The latest application of this engineering method is also seen in today's da'wah in Madura especially related to the culture of cow neatness. The old version in the tradition of cow neatness since it was in Madura is to use nails that are pierced on the buttocks of the cow by the jockey so that the speed of running the cow is maximum.

The greatest hope of this nail-piercing system is none other than for the cow to go "crazy" and run as fast as possible due to the pain it experiences with nails stuck in the buttocks of cows. Automatically in this way the neat cow that competes repeatedly and even entered the final, it is certain that his buttocks will look bloody with crushed nail puncture marks repeatedly in the fight with other cows.

With this condition, Madura leaders and scholars initiated gradually without offending the socio-cultural psychological system of society by trying to engineer through reconstruction of cow-neatness style techniques that do not leave an element of torture in the animal. Therefore, made a form of cow neatness that is slightly different from the neatness of conventional cows that are popular all this time. The new form of cow neatness is to no longer use nails as a driving tool in the race system. However, this new style of neatness by using *pakkopak* is made of wood and does not at all injure and torture the cow itself.

The change in the form of cow neatness from the old style to the new style as described above is partly the inspiration of the style of da'wah and the engineering of the guardians in carrying out their da'wah in the archipelago while maintaining the old culture without disturbing the existing social structure while remaining oriented to the change in the content of the culture that institutionalizes amid society.

This proves that Wali Songo's da'wah tested its existence across space and time and set a precedent until the da'wah journey was carried out by Nusantara scholars today and even the future. The keyword, Islam Nusantara takes the basic spirit of Islamic sharia with morality, ethics, compassion and face-to-face as exemplified by the guardians. Not the other way around in the form of regulations and formal regulations that are now starting to spread in the era of regional autonomy (Siroj 2006, 28).

This fact is certainly different at least in the eyes of Yahya Cholil Staquf with the style of the spread of Islam in the Middle East, Persia, Spain, Africa and others who at the same time Islam is present amid that society as a "judge" who seeks to change the culture of the society following the Islamic values of Arabia ([Ed] 2016, 195). But on the contrary, cases like this do not apply in the archipelago, and precisely what happens is that Islam comes to the archipelago as a flowery-faced guest of honour who is very different from elsewhere. He is only a guest who always respects the host where you meet. This kind of existence can be seen from the compromising attitude of Islam with the local culture in the process of spreading its mission. Until it is not wrong if it is said that Islam Nusantara is spirited *rahmatan lil' alamiin* which in the theory of the construction of sociological religion Peter L. Berger concluded religion as a social reality (Berger 1994, 4).

It is undeniable that the history of Islam by Wali Songo is finally the best trend incomparably in the process of spreading Islam that conflicts with current developments. Again this concerns the collaborative method

between Islam and culture. The point, Islam Nusantara is a moderate, balanced, tolerant, radiant religiousness and full of coolness concerning the surrounding environment, both at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels though. These values become the consensus of the Qur'an which is essentially a document of religious ethics whose practical purpose is to build a just and civilized society, which is god-fearing, which commands virtue and forbids impermissibility (Rahman 2017, 121).

Religious style Islam Nusantara that, save writers who become the style of today to jointly form religious values in a society that is so complex and full of challenges. Of course, this is a record in itself and cannot be identified with the style of Islamic religiousness elsewhere than Arabization. Arabization is an example that appears from the cross between religion and culture in areas other than Nusantara. But not so with the real conditions in the archipelago based on compound communities (Trubus 2004, 45) that until now have never experienced Arabization.

This is the best answer in the efforts of social engineering da'wah today that draws inspiration from the social engineering of da'wah ala Wali Songo. Therefore, Wali Songo's da'wah is very following the social conditions of the plural society, that is plural in various aspects, otherwise, say this da'wah strategy is a manifestation of multicultural proselytizing approach (Hotman 2011, 263-264). In that, of course, the method of da'wah is not the same as other places where Islam is anchored. It is important to note, however, that Islam's adaptive breath with local culture is a form of extraordinary flexibility not found in other religions. The keyword that could explain all this is the symbiotic paradigm of mutualism between religion and culture. Religion consciously takes place by utilizing the rapid flow of culture as a vehicle in the spread of Islamic values in the archipelago, and this becomes a success for Islam compared to other regions that both have a culture in the social system.

The dialogical meeting of religious and cultural values that produce such religious styles, as we have witnessed so far in Indonesia is a fermentation of the esoteric meaning of religion and culture. The existence of these, pure Nusantara products that are not found anywhere else has also been visited by Islam. This condition is a pride in itself because however, this is the best result that is adaptive to the development of an increasingly plural, plural and transnational society. Logical consequences in the future, Islam Nusantara is expected to be better able to deal with all the problems of an increasingly complex and uncertain era. That is, if Islam Nusantara makes culture a true partner in the process of spreading its da'wah, it does not rule out the possibility of new adaptations and new records to culture is an inevitability that can no longer be inevitable.

In this realm, Islam Nusantara becomes a beautiful icon in the development of religiousness that cannot be matched by other traits outside this religion. Islam Nusantara is truly delicious and enjoyable for anyone who wants to have an inclusive, friendly, peaceful, gentle, adaptive religiousness to the local culture and *rahmatan lil' alamien*. Characteristic Islam like this became a megatrend in the era of millennial all virtualism in the face of the challenges of the present that are immeasurable in earlier times. The most visible example of the success of Islam Nusantara for the modern state system in Indonesia is to have an important influence on the strengthening of democratic values and their ideas into the heart of the leaders of the national movement (Latif 2017, 367).

The historical roots of the true encounter between religion and culture in the archipelago are deeply rooted in the basic elements of society in the form of gotong-royong values. The value of gotong-royong in this format of togetherness allows Islam to be easily absorbed in it without resistance and opposition. Even so, when the value of gotong-royong settles into the essence of Pancasila which is the basis of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Gotong-royong is also the characteristic of the

country that we consciously call Indonesia (Baswedan 2015, 229). So it is quite pithy if Ir. Soekarno ever revealed if Pancasila is squeezed into *ekasila*, then the answer gotong-royong.

For this reason, the development of Islam Nusantara that is adaptive to current development must be a grand design if it does not want the existence of this friendly Islam will be eroded by the pace of development of the times that are out of control. Because even so, the challenge ahead of all aspects is an absolute price that cannot be bargained if the existence of Islam Nusantara wants to continue to be enjoyed by the next generation. The current *ijtihad* for Islam Nusantara is a continuation of the application of Wali Songo several centuries earlier. Our task today is to perform contextual *ijtihad* following the times that surround us together today.

The Islamic *ijtihad* Nusantara that we do today will be an example for the next generation, and this is also related to how Islam will be interpreted by the community in the future. Our *ijtihad* is the *ijtihad* of the future because the user of the device is also creative after us. As we now enjoy a cool and beautiful Islam as bright as the bloom of flowers also cannot be separated from the role of Wali Songo and the scholars afterwards who struggled strongly to present an adaptive Islam with the development of times and cultures. The road map, the constant *ijtihad* for a dialogical alliance between Islam and culture is a must that cannot be ignored if the sustainability of Islam Nusantara will be a patron in the present and future, even throughout history. The novelty ongoing process in *ijtihad* Islam Nusantara is a dead price that need not be debated anymore, but let's do it from now on.

In this conception of *ijtihad*, at least concrete steps in the realm of the contribution of thought by KH. Ma'ruf Amin about the characteristics of Islam Nusantara in his futuristic *ijtihad* is the right answer in marking as well as introducing the pillars of Islam Nusantara. The marker of Islam Nusantara in question is reform (*ishlahiyyah*), balanced in all fields

(*tawazuniyyah*), voluntary (*tathawwu'iyah*), polite (*akhlaqiyyah*), being tolerant (*tasamuh*). While for the pillars of Islam Nusantara there are three buffers, namely; moderate way of thinking (*tawassuth*), movement (*jam'iyah*) towards a better stage continuously, *amaliyah* based on jurisprudence and the proposal of jurisprudence sourced the Quran and Hadith and respect the traditions that surround it ([Ed] 2016, 346-347).

## CONCLUSION

Wali Songo's Islamic social history full of tenderness, harmony, compassion, flowery, friendly and adaptive to culture becomes a major trend in the paradigm of Islamic development past, present and future. Then, with this trend also the characteristics of Islam in Indonesia are patented under the name Islam Nusantara. Islam Nusantara as a movement of moderation thought and *amaliah* is the primary foundation and reference for the religiousness of today's people who are full of multicultural rainbows. Our religiousness now and in the future will surely be different from what has passed. This affects the perspective, the development of science and the rapid pace of development of society that is increasingly fast also becomes its colour for our next contemporary theology.

Islam Nusantara as a religious response that is always up to date becomes an alternative in the development of our Islam now-forward. Call it for example the current ethics that need to be maintained is; balance, manners, tolerance and moderation are the main basis in Islamic doctrine. Such values become very important, especially in responding to the rainbow archipelago that is increasingly drab and plural as *sunnatullah* that we cannot possibly oppose its existence.

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