

Demitologization of Local Culture as a Queue to Religious Radicalism: Nurcholish Madjid's Thoughts on Local Culture in Indonesia

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Abstract

Nurcholis Madjid's thoughts on local culture rarely become the concentration of researchers. Researchers are trapped in the general assumption that Nurcholish Madjid is a thinker of Islamic modernism in the grand flow of refinement of teachings as he admires Ibn Taymiyah. Therefore, his views on local culture that are critically appreciative are forgotten in their working papers. Nurcholis Madjid's view of the local culture can be used as a bridge for the deradicalization of one's religious understanding. This article, therefore, aims at first, finding Nurcholish Madjid's views on local culture; secondly, looking for factors that affect Nurcholis Madjid's thoughts about local culture and thirdly, finding the relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts about local culture to the current condition of Indonesia. Through the critical analytical descriptive method, this article concluded three findings; First, local culture for Nurcholish Madjid is the cultural richness of a nation that gives colour to religious thought. For him, local culture must be demitologized. Second, Nurcholis Madjid's thoughts about local culture are influenced by multi ideological education factors and a pluralist social environment. Third, the thought of Nurcholish Madjid provides a new perspective for radical understanding which is connected with the problem of religious and cultural relations.

Keywords: Demythologization, Local Culture, Radicalism, Indonesia

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Introduction

Nurcholish Madjid is an Indonesian Muslim thinker who has had a major influence on Indonesian intellectuals recently. The thought of Nurcholish Madjid is still interesting to discuss and become an object of study. This is because Nurcholish Madjid tries to analyze in detail the two often contested aspects, namely Islam and Indonesian. (Ulfa, 2013; Abidin, 2014). Islam is related to religious beliefs and doctrines, while Indonesianness is related to the locality, where Indonesian Muslims carry out the doctrines they believe in. So that conflicts do not occur between Islam and Indonesia, religion is interpreted by its adherents and the locality is modified to suit religious teachings. This is how the propagators of Islam in the archipelago did it at the beginning of its existence. This method is referred to as *penetration pacifique*, namely peaceful penetration through the acceptance of local traditions that do not conflict with Islamic teachings (Iswahyudi, 2016).

Among the discussions on Nurcholish Madjid, there is a focus of study that many researchers have forgotten, namely about Nurcholish Madjid's views on local culture. So far, written works about Nurcholish Madjid can be categorized into three, namely first, papers that focus on the study of Islamic inclusivism Nurcholish Madjid. (Fikri Zuhriyah, 2012; Sunaryo, 2012; Abidin, 2014). Second, a paper that discusses the thinking of the civil society of Nurcholish Madjid (Fazillah, 2017; Syahrir Ibnu et al., 2019). Third, a discussion of Nurcholish Madjid's state thinking (Undang Hidayat, 2015; Rahman et al., 2018). From the three categories of studies on Nurcholish Madjid above, it can be seen that specific studies on local culture have not received the attention of researchers. Nurcholish Madjid's study on local culture is one of the important themes concerning the Nurcholish Madjid Islamic reform project.

This paper, therefore, wants to complement the shortcomings of Nurcholis Madjid's study on Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts in local cultural studies. In particular, this paper will answer three main questions, namely; First, what is Nurcholish Madjid's view on local culture? Second, what factors influenced Nurcholish Madjid's thinking about the local culture? and Third, how is the relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's thinking about local culture in the context of the Indonesian state.

This paper is based on three arguments. First, a person's thoughts are usually categorized based on a person's attitude about their religion when faced with the socio-cultural problems faced. Barton, for example, calls Nurcholish Madjid a Neo-Modernist group (Barton, 1999). Second, a person's thinking is influenced by internal and external factors including family environment, education and life experiences. Heidegger calls this influence a structure that affects a person's understanding of something (Palmer, 1969). Third, the relevance of a person's thoughts to regional conditions is determined by the suitability of these thoughts with the facts of the area and the mindset that can be applied in their socio-cultural environment.

Literature review

Islam and Local Culture: Between Flexibility and Radicalism

Culture comes from the Latin word *colere* which means culture, namely processing or working (Ismail, 1998). This means that culture is the result of human creation. As a result of creation, every culture has different levels and qualities. Culture is created from the processes of the work of human reason, senses and intuition. Intellect, senses and intuition are human characteristics that are not shared by other creatures. Culture, therefore, is purely human. If the man is temporal, so are the results he creates. For Kuntowijoyo, this is what distinguishes between culture and religion. Religion is final, unchanging and universal, while culture is the opposite. Even so, culture and religion sometimes have symbols that can be equated (Kuntowijoyo, 2001). For example, these symbols can be seen from the architectural models of mosques, prayer beads, clothes covering the genitals and others. If religion is given by God, then culture is the result of human creativity. Religion has parallels from the beginning, since Prophet Adam and Prophet Muhammad, while culture is often disjointed and has no coherence between one culture and another.

Like Kuntowijoyo, who said there were the same aspects of religion and culture, Kroeber said there were three important aspects of culture that could be equated with religion. These three things are *eidos*, ethos and material culture (A.L. Kroeber, 1948). *Eidos* are ideas or concepts and norms regarding important things in life such as the idea of God, heaven, hell, good, bad and others. Meanwhile, ethos is a concrete

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action of the ideas that are believed to be in the form of rituals to avoid hell and to be close to the transcendent world. The material culture is a means used by humans in carrying out these rituals such as prayer beads, turbans, mosques, crosses, churches, incense, and others. Kroeber's statement has similarities with Tylor's statement that among the cultural elements are aspects of knowledge, beliefs, morals, art, law, habits and others that are produced by humans.(Tylor, 1958).

Islam is not present in a vacuum. Islam comes in a cultured society(Madjid, 2009;Madjid, 2000). Both the presence of Islam for the first time in Mecca and its presence in other areas, such as in Indonesia. Both have dialectic. This dialectic is not only in the area of religious rituals as Geertz calls it the term *selamatan*(Geertz, 1981)on the events of the human life cycle (birth, marriage and death), but also the symbols used such as the Ganesha statue and the Garuda bird.

Islamic dialectics and culture, as indicated by Khalil Abdul Karim, can occur in three forms, namely reception, modification and formation.(Karim, 2003). Receptions are like the tradition of cutting hands-off; modifications such as slaughtering animals for newborns or '*aqi>qah*'. Meanwhile, formation is like prayer, zakat and others. Therefore, as stated by Abu Zayd, Islam is in the position of the producer of culture as well as a cultural product. As a producer, Islam offers new things that did not exist before, while as a cultural product, Islam perceives and modifies the culture that was previously prevailing. (Zayd, 1994).

In dealing with culture, there are at least two groups of thought, namely the exclusive group and an inclusive group. The exclusive group is a group that clings to the sound of religious texts (al-Qur'an and Hadith). As long as there is no religious text that explains the practice of the local culture, the practice is a heretic (*bid'ah*) and a driving force for shirk behaviour. Exclusive character is closed and rigid (Fuadi, 2018).Organizations that can be classified in this group are Muhammadiyah, PKS, MMI and others. Meanwhile, the inclusive group is a group that appreciates local culture as long as the local culture is considered not to damage the faith and still has normative or textual arguments from religion (al-Qur'an and hadith). It's just that this inclusive group understands text messages not only based on specific texts but general texts. These

general religious texts are considered to be able to serve as an umbrella for particular practices. Organizations that can be included in this inclusive group are such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Nahdlatul Wahan (NW), Tarbiyah Islamiyah Association (PERTI) and others.

Differences in views on local culture are caused by differences in the surrounding social situations and differences in paradigms in seeing the sources of religious law. In determining the law, it is known that there are models, namely textual models and contextualist models (Solahudin, 2016; AW, 2011). The textual model is a model of law formulation by looking at the implicit text from legal sources (al-Qur'an and Hadith), while the contextualist model is a model of seeing the explicit meaning (the meaning behind the text). The contextualist model tends to be rigid in seeing local culture, while the contextualist model tends to be open and appreciative. For Yusuf Rahman, the textualist group is in the hands of the Neo-Traditional Salafi while the contextualist group is in the hands of Progressive Muslims (Y. Rahman, 2012). This textualist or literalist group encourages the rejection of things that are sociological and historical in religion. For Marty, this attitude is a sign of radicalism (Marty, 1992).

Method

Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on local culture are interesting to study for four reasons. First, Nurcholish Madjid is a representation of Muslim thinkers in the category of reformers who on the one hand are often opposed to traditionalist groups (the NU group). The reformist group has an antipathy attitude towards local culture. Nurcholish Madjid is often referred to as Nasir Muda and belongs to the reformist wing of the organization, HMI (AF, 2010). Second, Nurcholish Madjid provides rational and textual religious arguments that make sense so that they can be understood by people who often call local traditions a heretical act. Third, Nurcholis Madjid contributed how to be religious in conditions of a different locality from the areas of origin of Islam, namely Mecca and Medina. Fourth, discussing local culture Nurcholish Madjid can ward off the notion of religious radicalism in local cultural issues through the spirit of purification of religious teachings.

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This paper is classified as literary qualitative writing that will explain Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on local culture. Nurcholis Madjid's various writings in the form of books, articles and other writings in the mass media are used as the main source of reference. Meanwhile, other people's books or writings, as well as colleagues' confessions about Nurcholish Madjid regarding local culture, will be secondary sources.

The data of this paper are Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts, comments and statements which are directly related to local culture. This will be the primary data. Meanwhile, other things that have a correlation with local cultural thinking will be used as secondary data. The data is compiled using a descriptive-critical method, which describes all Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts about local culture and then analyzes them critically. The critical analysis involves three things, namely the basic arguments both normatively and rationally about local culture; the factors that influence Nurcholish Madjid's thinking about local culture and the relevance of this thought to the current condition of Indonesia.

The critical analysis tool used is a critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is carried out based on the following five steps. First, looking for Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts and actions about local culture from primary and secondary sources. These thoughts and actions are important because they have become a purposeful discourse. Second, finding the context of Nurcholish Madjid's discourse. Context is something that surrounds discourse production. Third, to find the historical context of Nurcholish Madjid's discourse on local culture as part of his other discourses. Fourth, finding the power relation from the local cultural discourse of Nurcholish Madjid. The power relation in question is the dominant knowledge relationship in the same discourse. Fifth, to find the ideology of the discourse produced by Nurcholish Madjid about local culture.

Result

Nurcholish Madjid's Thought on Local Culture

1. Basic Arguments

Discussing the thoughts of Nurcholish Madjid must depart from the meaning of

Islam he made. This is the most important basis for all of his ideas. Islam according to him is "surrender", "peace" and "safe or prosperous". This meaning is taken from the generic inner meaning of Islam Q.S. Luqman, 31: 22; Q.S. Al-Nisa, 4: 125; Q.S. Al-Imran, 3:19; Q.S. Al-Imran, 3:85, and others (Madjid, 2000). This generic meaning has implications for several things. First, there is the recognition of Nurcholish Madjid towards the common ground (*kalimatsawa*) for all divine religions. Second, following Rasyid Ridho's interpretation, Nurcholish Madjid admits that various religions are indicated to have originated from the One God so that they are referred to as People of the Book such as Magi, Chinese, Japanese, Hindu and Buddhist. Religious propagators such as Buddha Gautama, Zoroaster, Kung Fu Tzu and Lao Tze, are therefore prophets who are interpreted as teachers of truth or teachers of morality. (Madjid, 2000; Hakim, 1995; Sukidi, 2001). Culture is a societal construction initiated by qualified people as wisdom advocates. The proponents of that could be the prophets, who are mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad, the number is 124,000 people. Of these, 135 were apostles.

The prophets constructed a specific culture, according to situations and conditions and different from other regions. Although cultures are different, their goal is one, namely to affirm God. Nurcholish Madjid calls these differences a "practical way", that is, paths that differ from one another but have the same goal. For Nurcholish Madjid, this same aspect is called the "path of principle". The "practical path" and the "path of principle" do not contradict each other, but complement each other for good and benefits purposes (Madjid, 2002). They, the followers of the prophets, are categorized by Nurcholish Madjid as *ahl al-kita*. The teachings of Muhammad SAW, are not hostile to *ahl al-kita*. The enemies of Muhammad SAW's teachings are the polytheists. The practice of Rasulullah SAW, the practice of 'Umar bin al-Khatib against Christians when conquering Palestine, the practice of Muhammad bin Qasim against Hindus in 711 AD when conquering the Indus Valley are the best examples of Islamic leaders appreciate *ahl al-kita* (Madjid, 2008; Madjid, 1999; Madjid, 2000).

2. Local Culture and The Problem of Myths

Based on the basic argument that the goal of Islam is to destroy the behaviour of shirk or the *mushrik*, then Nurcholish Madjid explains that the biggest cause for shirk is

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the mythology found in the culture. Therefore, local culture that contains elements of mythology must be opposed. However, if the local culture has been removed from the mythological element, it is acceptable. Nurcholish Madjid translates myth as anything that is believed but cannot be proven from two elements, namely the element of truth and the element of reality. Myths are usually abstract and transcendent and are used to answer life's problems (Madjid, 2007). The concept of myth generates beliefs such as *Danyang* (the supernatural figure of the village guard; Javanese belief), Dewa (such as Dewi Sri, the goddess of plant fertility) and others. This belief has implications for certain rituals such as offerings (giving various kinds of food and flowers to places believed to be the home of *Danyang* and the Gods such as large trees, large stones, etc. One of the mythologies that continue to be used today is mythology, days as a reflection of the amount the Greeks worshipped God (Madjid, 2000).

Islam, according to Nurcholish Madjid, eliminates mythology by shifting the view that everything that happens is from Allah SWT and is determined by Allah SWT. The mention of days in Islam (Ah} ad, Isnaini, Thulasa> ', Arbi'a>', Khami> s, Friday and Saturday) is God's way of eliminating this mythology. (Madjid, 2000). It appears that resistance to mythology is not by eliminating the symbolic aspect, but by changing the belief in that symbol. This means that belief in the meaning of symbols has changed to a new meaning. In Indonesia, for example, the use of the Ganesha statue (God of Knowledge) which is used by the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) and the Garuda Bird (the vehicle of Dewa Wisnu), according to Nurcholish Madjid is allowed because it has been removed from its mythological elements and is only as an ornament and decorative element. (Madjid, 2009a). Nurcholish Madjid concluded that local culture can be appreciated and continued if it meets several conditions. The first requirement, there is no cult or follow actions without. The second condition, there is no mythological belief (Madjid, 2008; Madjid, 2009a; Madjid, 2009c).

Nurcholish Madjid admitted that the actions of the propagator of Islam, Sunan Kalijaga (one of the appreciative walisanga for Javanese tradition) were very good. Islam did not come "disruptive" or cut the previous traditions. Nurcholish Madjid appreciates life cycle rituals such as death rituals (7, 40, 100, and 1000 days of death) as Islamicized rituals. The mention of *selamatan*, for him, is the Islamization of the Arabic

word *sala>mah* or *Isla>m*. On the other hand, *selametan* is also called *tahli>lan*, a monotheistic word from the sentence *la>ila> ha illa> Alla>h* (there is no god but Allah). Nurcholish Madjid even views *tahlilan* as a ritual full of a sentiment because it results in Islamic teachings nuanced "feeling" and full of suggestive atmosphere, a feeling that can cause a person to follow Islamic teachings (Madjid, 2000; Madjid, 2009d). Local culture can also be a mere element of art.

Factors Influencing Nurcholish Madjid's Thought on Local Culture

1. Family and Education

The family factor is the first factor in Nurcholish Madjid. Nurcholish Madjid was born in Mojoanyar area, Jombang Regency, East Java on March 17, 1939 (Madjid, 2008b). He was born into the NU family. His father was a student of the founder of NU, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Nurcholish Madjid was educated in the NU tradition (Barton, 1999). The Jombang area, including the birthplace of Nurcholish Madjid, is an area with a strong Nahdlatul Ulama community. Even so, the Jombang area is a plural area. Violence in the name of religion is rare. In Jombang there are various religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. As the name suggests, Jombang comes from two words, namely "ijo (green)" and "abang (red)", a name that reflects religious groups and nationalist groups. (AF, 2010). Nurcholish Living in the NU tradition, which for purificative groups such as Muhammadiyah are considered heretics. NU rituals are considered syncretic, namely mixing Islamic teachings with local traditions such as life cycle rituals (rituals of birth, marriage and death). The NU ritual, for its followers, is a ritual that still has the transmission of knowledge from the salaf tradition as seen in their works (Iswahyudi, 2019). The environment of Nurcholish Madjid which is close to local traditions gives perspective to the next knowledge.

Nurcholish Madjid's knowledge has matured with a pluralistic education. First, he studied at a school led by his father in the NU ritual tradition, then continued at the Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, which is also affiliated with NU. Nurcholish then continued his studies at a pesantren which claimed not to be affiliated with any organization (although in practice many disagreed with NU's practices), Pesantren Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo. After completing Gontor, he continued his studies at

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IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. After completing IAIN Jakarta, he continued his studies at the University of Chicago America with a scholarship from the Ford Foundation from 1978 to 1984. At this campus, Nurcholish Madjid met figures known as critical and liberal thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman, Marshall G. Hodgson, Leonard Binders and others. Previously, Nurcholish Madjid's critical attitude was sharpened with the meetings of these figures (Ibrahim, 1998). Fazlur Rahman is an intellectual who claims to be a neo-modernist thinker, that is, a thinker who criticizes neo revivalism thinkers such as Abu A'la al-Maududi. No wonder, if Barton calls Nurcholish a Neo Modernist Indonesian Islamic thinker (Barton, 1999).

2. Organization and Social Experience

The organization that formed Nurcholish Madjid was the Islamic Student Association (HMI). He even served as the highest leader of this organization for two periods, namely the years between 1966-1968 and 1968-1970 (Ibrahim, 1998). Nurcholish Madjid experienced the dialectic of thought at HMI. At first, he was worried about the Islamic problem in the HMI cadre process. He then reconstructed HMI's Basic Value of Struggle (NDP) as the basis for the HMI movement. At that time, he rejected the Islamic movement as ideological. He called the Islamic ideological movement bombastic and apologetic. It is called bombastic and apologetic because Islamic ideology is only wishful thinking that cannot be realized and is only a tool for fighting other ideologies such as communism (Ibrahim, 1998). Nurcholish Madjid's thought was widely known after he delivered a scientific oration on January 3, 1970, at the *h}ala>l bi h}ala>l* event which was attended by the Indonesian Islamic Student Organization (PII), HMI, the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (PERSAMI) and the Islamic Youth Movement. (GPI). In this oration, he rejected the idea of an Islamic party and promoted Islam only as a spiritual movement. The term became known as "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No?". The idea was later strengthened by a speech afterwards on February 5, 1970, at the 3rd Anniversary of HMI. These ideas of Nurcholish Madjid are for the bearers of Indonesian Islamic ideology, as ideas that have been influenced by the West (Munawar-Rahman, 2001).

Life experiences also influenced Nurcholish Madjid's thinking. His experience

as an active NU child in Masyumi (Nurcholish Madjid's parents were NU people but Masyumi activists) caused him to be isolated from the majority of NU in Jombang. This is what caused him to move from Pesantren Rejoso to Gontor (Thaha, 2005). His trips to America and some of the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt, Pakistan and Iraq) and the implementation of the haj pilgrimage in 1969 also resulted in a change in his view of Islamic society. Nurcholish Madjid said, "America is more religious than Islamic countries." (Anwar, 1995; Ibrahim, 1998).

Debate on the idea of Islamic ideology with well-known figures such as Prof. Dr Rasjidi, Muhammad Kamal Hasan, Endang Saifuddin Anshari and others are other formers of maturity. Facing the attacks of these figures, Nurcholish Madjid responded calmly and slowly with a tactic of slow penetration (Munawar-Rahman, 2011). The dialectic of Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts crystallized in the foundation he founded, namely the Paramadina Foundation in 1986 until he died Monday, August 29, 2005, due to infection due to a liver transplant at the age of 69. Nurcholish Madjid has produced many works. His ideological pupil, Budhy Munawar-Rachman, has gathered these ideas in the Nurcholish Madjid Encyclopedia. The Encyclopedia is very thick with a total of 3735 pages in the form of four volumes and was published by the Abad Demokrasi Foundation in 2011 and 2012.

The Relevance of Nurcholish Madjid's Thought on Local Culture to Indonesian Conditions

Indonesia, according to Nurcholish Madjid, cannot be separated from the following three facts. First, Indonesia is a country with a very plural culture. According to data, Indonesia consists of 17,000 islands both large and small, both inhabited and uninhabited. Indonesia is also rich in ethnicity and language. It is estimated that the number is about 400 ethnic and linguistic groups (Madjid, 1998). Second, Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim population. However, its position has two gaps, namely intellectual and cultural gaps. The intellectual divide was marked by the presence of Islam in the archipelago at times of Islamic decline. On the other hand, culturally, Indonesia is far from the spiritual heart of Islam (Makkah and Medina) and far from the cultural heart of Islam Nil-Amudarya (Egypt-Bukhara). (Madjid, 2008c). Third,

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Indonesia was formed from civilization and the long history of the archipelago. Indonesia, in the past, was known as the centre of Hindu and Buddhist culture with the appearance of its former glory in the form of Borobudur Temple (Buddha) and Prambanan Temple (Hindu). These cultures were eventually used by Indonesia as national characteristics such as the national emblem, Garuda Bird, civil servant batik motifs, university symbols (Ganesha statue symbol of Bandung Institute of Technology) and other ritual practices. (Madjid, 2008c).

This entrenched Islam (with local traditions), despite experiencing intellectual and cultural gaps, can still be a source of ideological substance in the form of Pancasila. Pancasila is a unique model in the Islamic world that can nurture diversity. Pancasila must be recognized as having a mythological element during the heyday of Majapahit (the vehicle of Lord Vishnu) as well as the acculturation of Hindu Buddhism in the spirit of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. Javanese Islamic tradition can work, so the spirit of purification does not stop being voiced. The nation's founders tied up differences in the Islamicized Pancasila. Not only can a local culture survive as the cultural spirit of society, but even religious differences can be also protected in Indonesia. This fact, according to Nurcholish, has two consequences to survive. First, the great spirit of Indonesian Muslims in caring for diversity must receive attention. The aspirations of Muslims must be considered. Second, Indonesian Muslims have a big responsibility in translating Islam in the context of space and time according to modern Indonesia (Madjid, 2008c).

Discussion

Rejecting Radicalism through Demitologization of Local Culture Nurcholish Madjid's appreciation for local culture reflects his position as a figure who is still attached to purification groups such as Ibn Taimiyah, Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridho. It appears that the issue it raises does not change from the spirit of *tawhid*. Local culture in its perspective is one of the reasons for the decline of Islam. This is because local cultural practices are considered animistic and non-rational practices (Madjid, 2008a; Munawar-Rahman, 2011). Nurcholish Madjid still sees that in the local culture there are positive values that can be appreciated if it is removed from the

animistic element through demythologization (eliminating the mythological element). By following Ibn Taimiyah, Abduh and Rasyid Ridho, Nurcholish Madjid's demythologizing spirit can be categorized as a spirit for Islamic purification. (Hourani, 1991). Following Leonard Binder, Nurcholish Madjid's thinking can be classified as "liberal". This is because Nurcholish Madjid interpreted religious normative texts according to local traditions and their relationship with modern Western thought. (Binder, 1988). With this liberalism, Nurcholish Madjid has an inclusive view of local culture. Nurcholish Madjid's liberalism on local culture can counteract religious radicalism in Indonesia. Radicalism, as stated by Marty, is a concept or act of opposition to things that can threaten religion such as secularism; rejection of intellectualism and hermeneutics; rejection of pluralism and rejection of historical and sociological perspectives in religion (Marty, 1992). Nurcholish Madjid's thought can deconstruct the principle of authenticity of teachings as promoted by radical groups. With soft radicalism, radical groups accuse people who are appreciative of the local culture of being heretics, shirk and kafir. What is even more dangerous is if soft radicalism continues to hard radicalism by doing destruction and destruction of things that are considered bid'ah and shirk. Nurcholish Madjid rests on two legs. The first leg is the normative leg of the text with references to the concept of *tawhidi* promoted by Ibn Taimiyah (a role model for literalist-radical groups), while the other leg is interpreting important religious arguments based on their practical cultural interests. On these two legs, local culture does not interfere with one's *tawhidi* and can be used in life. On the one hand, Nurcholish Madjid rejects local cultural practices that are animistic and contain shirk as the spirit of radical groups, but on the other hand, accepts local culture only as ornamentation, art, social glue and forming a sentimental and suggestive atmosphere.

Life Experience: Seeing Masjumi's Impressions

Nurcholish Madjid's parents are NU people who are active in Masyumi. The view of the Masyumi people was what made him uncomfortable being a *santri* at the Darul Ulum Rejoso Islamic Boarding School and preferred the Gontor pesantren, as the

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pesantren considered by Masyumi at that time. (Munawar-Rahman, 2011). Masyumi's position was strengthened by the involvement of Nurcholish Madjid in the student organization whose embryo was Masyumi, namely HMI. He has also been dubbed the "Young Natsir" (Ibrahim, 1998). Masyumi, as it is known, is dominated by figures who attack *takhayyul*, *bid'ah* and *khurafat*. It is not surprising, then, that NU, as a traditional group of lovers of *bid'ah* practices, left Masyumi, where Natsir was one of the leaders of the Masyumi. (Iswahyudi, 2016). Not surprisingly, Nurcholish Madjid's final project in Chicago is about the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the literal thinkers (Thaha, 2005). Ibn Taymiyyah is a figure who has inspired recent literalist groups such as Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab and other groups that call themselves "salafi". Ibn Taymiyyah is also a figure who rejects the Hellenism Asy'ari model (the school followed by the majority of NU in theology) which is often quoted by Nurcholish Madjid (Madjid, 1994)

Nurcholish Madjid's Masyumi impressions were not black and white. Nurcholish Madjid can contextualize religious texts with local interests. Local culture, for Nurcholish Madjid, can be a social glue. This view means that there is an influence of postmodernism ideas about the loss of great narratives of knowledge and rejecting all kinds of consensus of knowledge. To bridge the spirit of *tawhidi* and the functions of local culture, Nurcholish Madjid found a solution, namely by making local culture only as art or ornamentation as in the Garuda Bird and Ganesha Statue and only as sentimental and suggestive elements such as in circular rituals like a *tahlilan* event, as a ritual after one's death (Madjid, 2000; Madjid, 2009d). These influences have a critical dialectic within Nurcholish Madjid in two spirits, namely the spirit of Islamic renewal as the spirit of the West is not mystical and the spirit of plural Indonesian locality.

Caring for Indonesianness through the Way of Compromise

The two Nurcholish passions listed above are a profitable compromise. Nurcholish Madjid can criticize various actions that come out of these two spirits.

Responding to the two largest religious organizations in Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah, for example, as two different organizations in terms of animistic local culture, Nurcholish Madjid made a compromise by mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of each. The trick is to base the brotherhood on anthropological, cosmological and theological problems. These three problems need to be explored ontologically so that they can be translated into a practical human world (Madjid, 1994). This method can be done if each different group is mutually inclusive. Nurcholish Madjid has reconstructed how the radicalism of the idea of local culture is demythologized. This means that the space for religious inclusiveness has begun to open up. More than that, the radical literalist group must understand that the actions that are accused of being *bid'ah* are only part of the interpretation of the teachings. Those, who were accused of heresy, as shown by Iswahyudi and Udin Safala, still base their ritual practices on the religious arguments of past ulama (Iswahyudi, 2019). With an inclusive attitude, a way of compromise will open up. Religious radicalism can also be minimized.

This compromise path is important for Indonesia's current conditions. Religious institutions and adherents of religion in Indonesia today are often involved in conflicts simply because of differences in understanding of religion. Iswahyudi, by looking at several cases, shows how MUI, for example, has not been able to become a good mediator in responding to various religious issues. As a result, violence in the name of religion is based on arguments against the MUI fatwa. The Wahid Institute's report, as shown by Iswahyudi, illustrates how radicalism in the name of religion is still practised (Iswahyudi, 2017). On the other hand, post-reformation, religious sentiments and the emergence of symbols of religious revivalism in the public sphere have also become increasingly apparent. The courage of a veiled student in a religious campus such as STAIN, IAIN and UIN is an example (Iswahyudi; Udin Safala; Umi Kulsum, 2019). Religious issues in the political realm have also become increasingly hard. The terms "Kadrun", "Cebong" and others in social media (youtube, Facebook, WA and others) illustrate the increasingly obvious use of religion for political interests. The compromise of Nurcholish Madjid was useful to help provide solutions to the national problem. The supporters of NKRI (NU in this case) are a group that is often accused of

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heretics and animists, on the one hand, as supporters of the government, while purificative groups on the other hand are the fiercest opposition. If these two groups think ontological-compromise in the three anthropological problems above, of course, the differences in religious discourse and differences in national politics will not tear Indonesia's national structure apart.

Conclusion

It turns out that local culture, which often contains mythological elements, does not always have to be discarded and must be avoided as desired by purificative groups. This article shows that a liberal figure in the Binder category and close to purificative groups, Nurcholish Madjid formulates a contextualization model that can still be appreciated by religious texts. This contextualization was carried out to adapt religious texts to Indonesia's pluralistic conditions and the long journey of Indonesian historicity. Nurcholish Madjid places local culture only as an ornament, art, social glue, a suggestive builder and sentimental feeling in religion. Mythological nuances that are theological have been transferred to merely functional ones. This article also shows that the environment of birth, education and life experience has made Nurcholish Madjid have an eclectic view in seeing pluralistic religions and Indonesians, not only from the ethnicity of the people but from the historical side.

Based on a critical analysis of Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on local culture, it appears that the demythologization of local culture he made is Nurcholish Madjid's eclecticism in formulating the liberalization of religious thought. However, it must be admitted, Nurcholish Madjid is still committed to the spirit of purification. Nurcholish Madjid's action was able to unravel the tension of the purificative groups on the one hand with groups that were considered acculturative actors on the other. More than that, Nurcholish Madjid wants this plurality of nationalities to be preserved. Religious debates should be more focused on *weltanschauung* which touch on basic aspects of religion such as anthropological essence, cosmological essence and theological essence. With this debate, *ukhwahcan* can be intertwined.

This article portrays Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts on local culture and how he

treats local culture. This article, therefore, looks more at the theoretical or conceptual aspects of Nurcholish Madjid. The activities of Nurcholish Madjid in practising his thoughts on local culture do not get an adequate portion of this paper. The activities of Nurcholish Madjid at the Paramadina Waqf Foundation, both at Paramadina University and in other forums are not discussed in this paper. By elaborating on these activities, Nurcholish Madjid's thought about local culture will be more complete. On the other hand, the factors that influenced Nurcholish Madjid's thinking in terms of continuity and change before his departure to America and after or after his studies in Chicago have also not been discussed. The next researchers can complement the sides of this deficiency. However, Nurcholish Madjid is a well-known Indonesian thinker and has many ideological cadres until now. The discussions on Nurcholish Madjid, therefore, are still interesting today in the Indonesian context.

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