Political Articulation:

The Intellectuality of Ahmad Mustofa Bisri in Struggling for the Contest of Truth

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Abstract

This study examined intellectual politics, which seek to reveal the significance of the political acts of an intellectual. These actions are often surprising, but in the end, they provide references for the general public. The significant political actions here meant to provide a point of reference, when people are trapped in controversies and instrumentalist reasoning. There are hard to understand politics, but the results are clear: the general public gets references to judge and determine judgment. Politics takes place at the level of meaning, more than just a struggle of interests. It is a manifest in the articulation of ideas or values, not in the expertise in organizing, structuring authority, or struggling for positions. The results of this study found that the way out of rational-instrumental reasoning that dominates (mainstream) is communicative-rationality reasoning through communicative acts in public spaces. This intellectual study is expected to have an important contribution in developing a sub-study: articulatory politics.

Keywords: communicative action, discourse, intellectual, politics of articulation, rational communicative

1. Introduction

The articulation of ideas or values takes place through discourse. Discourse has a broad meaning, namely a general area of all statements, a group of statements that can be individualized, and a regular practice that occurs in a few statements (Foucault, 1972). In that discourse, there is power, truth, knowledge, etc. When examined carefully, politics of articulation opens our eyes to the power of discourse because of the inevitability of discursive politics. Due to the crisscrossing of ideas and values that are to be put forward and upheld, a discourse exists as a frame of mind, if not a discursive design. The main question of this study is what a discourse is, if not a frame of discourse, carried by an intellectual which defines intellectuality itself. For example, in the obituary of the Catholic intellectual, Hartoko (1980) who initiated the issue of intellectuality, he is identified as 'the giver of words and meaning'.

1.1 Study Specifications

Due to several considerations, Ahmad Mustofa Bisri, who is more familiarly called Gus Mus, was chosen in this study. As a point of reference for the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) community, he meets the cultural qualifications to be called a *kiai* (a religious leader), but because of his close relationship to the general public, he is called 'Gus': the son of a *kiai*. In line with a few other Gus, for example Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid, the third president of the Republic of Indonesia, Gus Nadir (Professor Nadirsyah Hosen, Professor at Monash University, and Rois Syuriah PCINU Australia and Nahdlatul Ulama 2015-2020) etc., his intellectual articulation established his title simply as the son of *kiai*. In discourse studies, there is an event or phenomenon: the death of the subject, besides the opposite: the making of subject. Subjects and objects can move and even switch positions.

Religionists get a reputation as religious people precisely because they have succeeded in emptying their ego in order to ensure that what is articulated is religion itself.

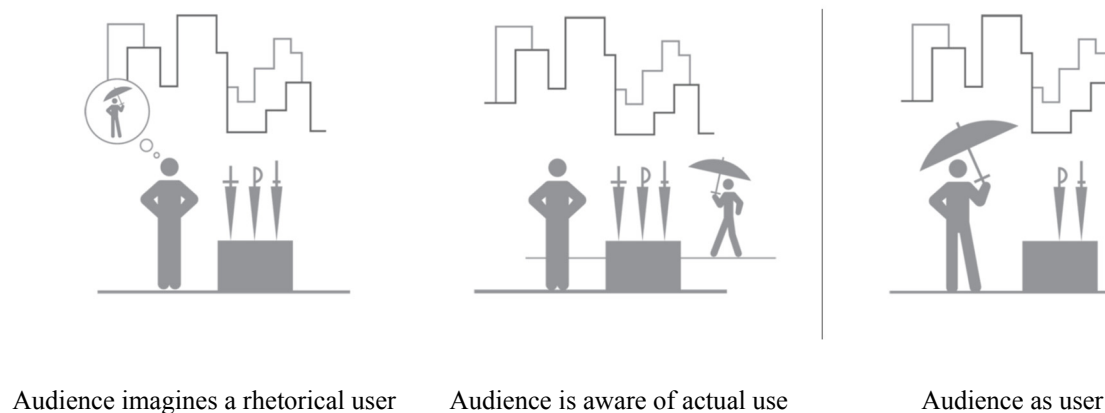Audience imagines a rhetorical user   Audience is aware of actual use   Audience as user
Figure 1. Visualization of religious people by Tharp & Tharp (2018)

There is a discourse that is carried, not only for being a discourse but also for being a living. This is visualized in an interesting way by Tharp & Tharp (2018), in their book *Discursive Design: Critical, Speculative, and Alternative Things*. This book discusses not specifically about intellectuals, nor about clergy. What is discussed is the relationship between discourse and behavior, presented in figure 1, The concept was borrowed to explain the workings of discursive politics. Religious people, in the picture are termed as audience, and in their daily lives they use religion [described as 3 unique umbrellas] as rhetoric. The audience may understand the usefulness of [middle image] religious teachings, but [umbrella] religion is useful when it truly covers them. It is in this context that religious people cancel themselves as subjects, because in fact they have changed their roles to become objects of religious truth. Clearly, the audience do not control religion, because they are controlled by religion.

It is equivalent to the use of 'umbrella' as a metaphor to describe religion and how it has been understood and facilitated his work, Gus Mus carried the 'Religion of Grace' discourse. This discourse is conveyed on various occasions, including being used to title the book he wrote: *Agama Anugerah, Agama Manusia* (*Religion of Grace, Religion of Mankind*). This study was conducted from the belief that there is a certain design that makes the phrase 'Religion of Grace' so important. So far, no religionists have accurately used that phrase to frame it. Gus Mus' intellectuality, in this context, grows with his diversity. Unavoidably, research on intellectuals must be carried out by living up to the epistemological practices that Gus Mus underwent; it is just that the emphasis is not on whether religion is true or not but on the articulation of religious teachings in such a way that he becomes a point of reference for the general public. What needs to be put forward is the discursive design that he articulated in various ways.

Before settling down the problem, there are several things that need to be emphasized. First, what was presented in this study was not a biography. What was examined was not the persona but the charm from acts that had a certain political significance (political acts) of Gus Mus. Second, the political act was not in the context of gaining power, accumulating, and using it: who gets what and how. Politics, in this context refers more to the issue of 'right-wrong' than 'win-lose.' Intellectuality, therefore, is discussed in the context of right-wrong, precisely in the contestation of two or more regimes of truth. In the contestation within the truth regime, power relations are intertwined, and therefore are political in nature. It is important to reveal the intellectuality that is implied behind the political acts that he undertook, precisely because of the implied power relations that were forged.

Once again, what is contesting is the ideal/regime of truth, not interests. If we discuss about winning and losing, the discussion is not about who won but what was won. In this context, politics takes place more in the domain of discourse than in the struggle for strategic positions. The dynamics in power relations can be traced from the operation of regimes of truth, which are often contested. Intellectuals produce and reproduce established ideas or teachings that are referred to by the public, and on the other hand, they offer truth alternatives to refer to. The power relations that take place do not only involve important ideas which often stem from certain ideological affiliations. There is a certain system of knowledge that makes contest of ideas incessantly. There are ideas that are contested and obsessively adopted and practiced, and intellectuals in their way win the contest of truth. The contest of truth takes place in the regime of truth. This unique way of upholding the truth is interesting. There is a uniqueness that marks the operation of power. It is a study of power relations that produce a fascinating reality.

This study was inspired by Foucault, a figure who taught to talk about politics and knowledge in one breath:

power/knowledge. Politics is inherent in relationships. In that way, politics is everywhere, embedded in our every move. More than that, he emphasized: 'where there is power, there is resistance'. Again, this is not a study of the resistance of those who are political actors in power, but rather a study of the charm of the involved persona. There is a dazzling political act, carried out by an intellectual. The acts taken by an intellectual frankly inspired this study. He is Ahmad Mustofa Bisri, who openly rejected the highest position in Nadlatul Ulama (NU), namely *Ra'is Aam*. As an enterprise, the owner of NU is an Ulama or Kiai, and in the 33rd *Muktamar* (Congress) in Jombang he refused to hold that position; besides the position was highly wanted. At that time, the closing of the congress had to be postponed three times because the *Muktamirin* (the attendees) wanted him to agree to chair the organization. In this context, power exists and operates behind the presence of charm, not the other way around.

It should be emphasized early that this study did not argue for truth as truth itself. This study was not conducted to justify or ensure that what is right is right, but to understand the power relations behind claims or assumptions that are true or counters to these claims. What is of concern to this study is the politics implied behind the articulation of ideas/values, without having to be burdened with the definition of those ideas/values. This study fell into the genre of articulatory politics studies. Intellectuality, in this study, it can be simplified as skill in articulating ideas and value commitment in navigating discourse.

In examining Gus Mus' intellectuality, this study necessitated the existence of certain discourses that allowed the ongoing discourse controversies to be treated coolly, while remaining true to their own regime of truth. It is in the flow of discourse that intellectuality is articulated. More than that, there is a series of ongoing political acts that make the ideas or values that are to be upheld enforced.

1.2 Intellectuality as a Matter of Articulation of Values/Ideas

This is a study of Gus Mus' intellectuality through a Foucauldian perspective. From this point of view, Gus Mus did not make himself a subject: an intellectual. It is the discourse process that has been going on that has made Gus Mus an intellectual. The narration and flow of the discourse that has been going on all this time has made him extraordinary, precisely because he was presented as a representative of *kiai*. It is the knowledge of religion that is ingrained in him that makes the *kiai*-ness also intellectuality.

Intellectuality takes place in a certain political context, and the continuation of the practice of power that risks the truth it promotes is what this study focused on. Thus, the focus of this study is not to explain what an intellectual is, but how the practice of controlling power takes place. This study traces the arrival of a person at a point that he believes is the truth, and that truth becomes a public reference. Subjectively, that person is called an intellectual, and that recognition is at a level that is not easy to understand, and because it is so difficult to understand, it requires a certain way. Those who do not immediately understand, harass, or put up a fight. Therefore, what is meant to be revealed is the relationship between the practice of power and control, which takes place secretly in the process of communication between intellectuals, general public, and certain authorities. In the communication they establish, intellectuals agree or negotiate what they believe is the truth behind a set of rules, values, socio-cultures, and so on. Unlike what is believed by positivists who imagine communication as a message-transmission process, this study examined the construction or deconstruction of truth which has the potential to be dislocative. It is in this dislocative process that the practice of contestation and sharing of truth takes place. It is precisely in the occurrence of dislocation that an intellectual show the truth; truth in his own version; the truth beyond the truth adopted by average people. In this context, power relations take place, and this study aimed to explore them.

These practices involving dislocation of understanding or meaning have been identified in studies on Gus Dur's intellectuality (Munawar 2007; Subaidi 2009; Suaedy 2018). What this study explored further was how a regime of truth has been dislocated through contestation of discourse, through a more contextual study undertaken by Gus Mus. It should be emphasized from the start that as a figure, Gus Mus has extraordinary qualifications and is therefore not easily contested, but this is not an autobiographical study. What became the focus of the study was the power relations that he forged with the general public. Intellectuality is a form of political acts.

1.3 Articulation in a Series of Political Acts

Political acts undertaken by intellectuals are not easy to understand if they are not discussed in context. One ideal example is how Gus Mus appeared in his modesty in the reform era. Entering the 21st century, there had been an explosion of social, political, and religious events which had brought society to a deficit in the sense of Indonesia and nationality. At the beginning of the reform era, various acts of violence and terrorism occurred in various districts in Indonesia. This was allegedly a form of distrust of some Indonesian people in the government; moreover, cases of corruption, collusion, and nepotism including the politicization of identity (religion, ethnicity, race, and culture) increased, and state institutions were not able to properly resolve them. In that situation, the role and involvement of figures or intellectuals including Gus Mus became important. In fact, in the historical records of

Indonesia, the upheaval of the political revolution for independence is evidence of the role and involvement of intellectuals in the struggle for independence. What was being done was fighting for, promoting, and selling ideas (Leo & Hitchock, 2016), not chasing and finding the idea itself.

Therefore, what is important and urgent here is Gus Mus' determination and expertise in managing intellectuality in politics of intellectuals which has been carried out consistently, eccentrically, and sometimes also controversially. This is because intellectuals operate at three levels; as an analyst to seek the truth; as a moral person to seek goodness, and as a political person to reconcile truth with goodness.

1.4 Literature Review

In the realm of social theory, it has been commonly explained, for example by the Marxist such as Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), that an intellectual is explained by identifying his character. There are organic intellectual and traditional intellectuals. Intellectual theorization, in the Gramscian view, is quite helpful in explaining how intellectuals emerge, are formed, and work amid industrial society. The context of intellectual theorization and the dichotomy of organic-traditional intellectuals refers to the industrial context. Still in the industrial context, it is also explained that organic intellectuals emerge from a certain social group (Gottlieb, 1989 and Kurzman & Owens, 2002) created by each class besides themselves; they can elaborate socially because of the ability that has been specialized to in a certain field. Because of this, it appears in Marxian terminology: certain classes in the world of economic production (Choudhary, 1990). In industrial society, still in Gramsci's view: capitalist entrepreneurs create, beside themselves, industrial technicians, political economy specialists, administrators of a new culture, and a new legal system (Gottlieb, 1989). In this context, capitalist entrepreneurs have shown that they are part of the intellectuals because of their technical abilities, as well as being the organizers of production activities. Intellectuals are born from a unique order: capitalism.

If the narrative is reversed, if the industrial society does not produce intellectuals, at least there is an elite among them who must have the required capacity, whose aim is not only in the processes of production and organizing the masses, but more in the expansion of the intellectual class. Organic intellectuals struggle not only regarding production, but also participating in socio-political struggles amid a hegemonic regime (Jones, 2006), where to reach this stage, organic intellectuals must be able to elaborate their special knowledge into knowledge that works in the political dimension. In fact, this group (organic intellectuals) try not only to produce or create ideas that rationalize and justify the interests of their own social group, but also to dominate (King, 1978).

In contrast to 'organic intellectuals' who were born from certain social groups or political-economic orders which are industrial-capitalistic, another category known as 'traditional intellectuals' emerged and worked in the scientific filed or scientists. Gus Mus, in this frame of mind, certainly falls into the category of traditional intellectuals. As opposed to an organic intellectual character, they really perform the complexity of social and political life. Traditional intellectuals are even characterized by their withdrawal from complexities that exist (Jones, 2006). Antonio Gramsci with his dichotomous analysis explained intellectuals based on ongoing social practices, carrying out professional roles. By this way, traditional intellectuals are understood more as 'a person' who works in a particular knowledge field (Carreño, 2010). Those who work in scientific fields such as teachers, humanists, and others can be categorized into traditional intellectuals.

Not too far different from Gramsci, Max Weber also understood that intellectuals are formed from strata or classes (Sadri, 1985) which aim to produce ideas and bring ideology to both themselves and other classes. Therefore, in the view of the Marxist group, in this case they are Gramscian and Weberian, intellectuals emerge from social groups where they work within the framework of class struggles that do not only strive in the production process, but also escape hegemony in the capitalism flow. Like the Marxists, the Weberian explained intellectuals as a function of social order, a function of industrial practice. Explanations in the style of Marxists and Weberian do not help understand the symptoms articulated by figures whose existence does not necessitate industrial setting.

Studies in a Marxist perspective, for example: Abdulla (1981), which is like an intellectual biography, shows how intellectuals grew out of the student class: Al-Afghani and Abduh. They carried out political movements that aimed to liberate European hegemony against the world's Muslim community. The manifestation of this intellectual political movement is the discourse of 'Pan-Islamism'. Indeed, in the end of the 19th century, it has become the starting point for the movement of the world's Muslim intellectuals amid European hegemony. While studies in a Weberian perspective: although based on classes, studies in this frame are also related to individual agents, so they tend to focus on actors. Koshul's study (1994) shows an intellectual Fazlur Rahman criticizing the political movement of 'Pan-Islamism' which was discussed by Al-Afghani and Abduh. Thus, the implications of Weberian-style studies focus more on certain actors, agents, and entities, rather than on the processes of discourse articulation they carry.

Therefore, this study borrowed Foucault's (1980) 'regime of truth' theoretical framework to understand the phenomena articulated by the intellectual figure Gus Mus, in relation to them as 'specific intellectuals'. From Foucault's reading, intellectuals are not those who fight for a universal truth, even though they believe in it. However, what becomes his struggle is the ability to articulate values in a certain context, and at a certain time, because truth is at stake.

As a start, intellectual studies have at least been pioneered by Sparingga (1997), Dakhidae (2003), Latif (2012), and Kusman (2015) regarding general intellectuals and Muslims. Sparingga's study (1997) can be said to be a complete study because it is rich in material from hundreds of interviews with intellectuals related to the process of democratization amid the New Order era regime. Dhakidae's study (2003), entitled *Kekuasaan dan Cendekiawan dalam Negara Orde Baru* (*Power and Intellectuals in the New Order State*) attempted to examine the role of Indonesian intellectuals in relation to power, capital, and culture. Although he also focused on the emergence of modern intellectuals during the New Order era as the influence of Dutch ethical policies, he did not consider the characteristics and development of education as the cultural basis for the emergence of modern intellectuals at that time.

Latif's study (2012), entitled *Inteligensia Muslim Indonesia dan Kuasa; Genealogi Intelegensia Muslim Indonesia Abad ke-20* (Indonesian Muslim Intelligence and Power; Genealogy of Indonesian Muslim Intelligence in the 20th Century). In this study, Latif used a long-time orientation or 'longue duree' by considering characteristics and education as the cultural basis for the emergence of modern intellectuals. However, Latif did not elaborate on how to articulate values or ideas in a unique, quirky, and controversial way like Gus Mus. Finally, Kusman's study (2015) in *The Politics of Good Governance in Post-authoritarian East Java: Intellectuals and Local Power in Indonesia* considered that the intellectual class works at the level of practical politics, sometimes even influencing policies for the sake of political and economic interests. From here, Kusman also ignored expertise and shrewdness in articulation of values and ideas like Gus Mus. Based on the literature review, the intellectual practice did not give sufficient attention, and tent to ignore the practice of articulation amid the contestation of truth through rational communicative action as Gus Mus has worked on and articulated so far.

1.5 Urgency of Identifying Discursive Design

In contrast to Gramscian and Weberian who so far understand the emergence of class-based intellectuals and agents, Foucault placed intelligence because of discourse. In Foucault's reading, intellectuals are not based on class (Orelus & Chomsky, 2014), because their emergence is based on strategic subject positions in certain power relations. Foucault said, 'it's the person occupying a specific position-but whose specificity is linked, in a society like ours, to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth' (Foucault, 1980). Intellectuality includes struggles at the level of 'the specificity of the politics of truth in our societies' (Foucault; 1980). In other words, because of their closeness to that knowledge, intellectuals struggle in the politics of truth.

Intellectual theorization, both Gramscian and Weberian, does not presuppose the emergence of intellectuals in the class structure in the background of industrial society. More than that, power is reduced only to certain classes or social institutions, so it does not spread to all levels of society. At that level, the political struggles that Gramscian and Weberian intellectuals undergo are nothing more than replicating politics. On the other hand, in Foucault's reading, the more essential field of political struggle for intellectuals is '...that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth' (Foucault, 1980). In a sense, the intellectual fields of political struggle are offering new truths through the political practice of discursive design of certain discourse articulations. From here, power is articulated in knowledge or discourse, and the practice of discourse will have power effect.

Therefore, the main question of this study is how the discourse or regime of truth was articulated by Gus Mus amid the contestation of rational-instrumental reasoning that framed intellectuality. To make it operationally easier, the main questions were broken down into two derivative questions, including: (1) How can the articulation of discourse/truth regime emerge from rational-instrumental reasoning? and (2) How is the discursive design of the Religion of Grace structured?

2. Method

The data collection was conducted by text analysis and documentation analysis. In accordance with the discourse analysis study model, this text analysis technique was used to collect, sort, and categorize data including text-based discourse analysis. The data were taken from various media sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, tabloids, or electronic social media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other audio visuals. More specifically, this technique was used to collect textual data, especially textual discourse related to the three cases, i.e., Inul Daratista (2003), the NU Congress (2015), and the Jakarta Regional Election (2017). This study also used documentation and literature analysis techniques to provide supplements obtained from the media, books, journals,

and others.

To analyze the data, the discourse analysis by Michel Foucault and Teun A. van. Dijk or commonly known as text and context/social cognition Through this method, discourse is understood not only as a text or a reality in a certain context, but also as offered ideas, values, and ideals of truth.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Tracking Framework: Dialogical Commucative Acts

Discussions about Gus Mus' intellectuality in this study are placed in the practice of deliberative democracy, where contestation of truth is a necessity, and a certain set of discourses is promoted by Gus Mus. Discourse tracking, thus, is tracking discursive design that exists as something latent in every day's conversation. In this design, the articulation of the discourse promoted by Gus Mus contains a lawsuit against the operation of the rationality that holds it together. In Dryzek's terminology (1990), Gus Mus' discursive design does not only focus on issues that the public deals with: general elections, public services, freedoms, and so on. Democracy dwells on fundamental issues; democratize rationalism.

As explained by Dryzek (1990), the rationality that colors the chaos in democracy is instrumental rationality which contains a kind of moral hazard, among others as follows:

1) Instrumental rationality destroys the more congenial, spontaneous, egalitarian, and intrinsically meaningful aspects of human association.

2) Instrumental rationality in antidemocratic.

3) Instrumental rationality represses individuals.

4) Instrumental rationality and the political intuitions in which it manifested are ineffective when confronted with complex social problems.

5) Instrumental rationality makes effective and appropriate policy analysis impossible.

6) Instrumental rationality informs inappropriate and unfruitful social science instruments and methods. (Dryzek, 1990)

The epistemological foundation of instrumental rationality is objectivism, which carries a series of innate defects:

1) Objectivism is inspired by a false account of the science it idolizes.

2) Objectivism is repressive.

3) Objectivism inhibits the progress of political science and politics. … (Dryzek, 1990)

The basis for getting out of objectivism and instrumental rationality is communicative rationality. That is, the hand of this study is to understand social practices that are built on communicative rationality.

> Communicative rationality is rooted in the interaction of social life. Communicative action is oriented toward intersubjective understanding, the coordination of members of the community. … Communicative rationality is the extent to which this action is characterized by the reflective understanding of competent actors. This situation should be free from deception, self-deception, strategic behavior, and domination through the exercise of power. Communicative rationality is the property of intersubjective discourse, not individual maximization, and can be maintained to the generation of normative judgments and action principles rather than just to the selection of means to ends. However, communication is concerned in part with the coordination of actions, so communicative rationality cannot totally replace institutional rationality; rather it can only restrict the latter of subordinate domains. (Dryzek, 1990)

The prevention to the application of instrumental rationality is celebrated by narrating the death of subject or the death of man. People do not automatically appear as sovereign subjects, who just deal with circumstances. Subject is a product of discourse, and in this context, Gus Mus is a product of discourse on the service of God. The knowledge of religion and diversity that has been embodied in him, requires that he himself is an object of God's power. There is a genealogy of knowledge which makes himself a meaningless subject. The scientific treasures of the Islamic boarding school that have embodied within him discipline him to have to deal with God who, in Gus Mus' own language, is as omnipotent as He want.

In the discourse contestation driven by instrumental rationality, God is often treated as an instrument, going head over heels, which one is 'means' and which one is 'ends'. This is where Gus Mus' intellectuality is at stake, and sophistication in articulating discourse is crucial. Gus Mus undoubtedly promotes discursive design in contesting

with the public discourses. Whatever discourse he is involved in, there is a necessity to articulate it contextually. The communicative acts undertaken by Gus Mus are undoubtedly contextual. In the communicative acts that were carried out, the substance of religion appeared without a religious label. On the contrary, behind the many religious rites undertaken, the main message is not the rites, but the values to be upheld as stated by Goodin and Tilly (2006) that context does matter.

As a regime of truth, when the power relation that is intertwined behind it was examined, this study suggested that the practice of articulation of religious knowledge is very close with a discursive dimension, and the expertise or submission of the regime of truth that embodies it makes practices that dislocate reality, political. There is an interaction in which regimes of truth operate, dislocating one another. In occupying the position of the subject (intellectual), he is also a political agent who fights for values and ideas dislocatively through what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) called articulation in offering truth amid discourse discursiveness by delegitimizing and negate other discourses. In that position, this study borrowed the concept of 'articulation' by Laclau and Mouffe which still leaves problems for Foucault when explaining the positions of the subject of knowledge in political struggles. When dealing with discourse contestation, Foucauldian debates the implications and contestation. The contestation in the truth that is claimed individually by the contestants can lead to fragmentation, if not culminating in fundamentalism. This study agrees with the proposal of Falzon (2006), which offered another route called social dialogue.

> …that the proper alternative to foundationalism is not fragmentation but dialogue; and moreover, that such a dialogical picture can be found in the work of one of the most important recent critics of foundationalism, the French philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault, it is true, is not usually seen as a philosopher of dialogue, but reading him in these terms proves to be surprisingly illuminating. Indeed, it allows the ethical and political position implicit in his work to be clearly identified. And it makes it possible to see precisely how his work contributes to the larger debate concerning the death of Man. (Falzon, 2006)

This social practice known as social dialogue must be traced as a support for the articulation of ideas/values lived by Gus Mus. He simplified his discursive design with the diction of the Religion of Grace. This study was conducted to explain the discourse and discursive design it carries.

3.2 Articulation of Discourse of Grace as a Social Dialogue

The discourse of Religion of Grace promoted by Gus Mus is a religious meaning which is implicated in pious attitudes and behavior, ritually and socially. In this context, the problem of belief can be identified in the study of religious knowledge, namely the science of *kalam* or monotheism, which later in the academic world is known as theology. In short, theology is a science that discusses the basic elements of religion (Nasution, 1995). Therefore, below are traces of the articulation of the Religion of Grace, precisely the articulation of the basic elements of spirituality as a 'social dialogue' which has become a discursive design to bring out the instrumentalist reasoning of the religious practices of religious people so far.

3.2.1 Shahadah

At least in the last 20 years, the dynamics of socio-political life often show a fundamental problem, namely that many people try to create counter-Gods. The counter-Gods can be in the form of deifying positions, wealth, and women. We can see how politicians are willing to pay high just for the sake of position. We can see how in various places there are disputes between siblings related to inheritance (property), to the extent of killing their own siblings. We can also see how acts of harassment, violence, and murder are only a matter of fighting over women or something else and so on. Seeing this phenomenon, Gus Mus reminded again through the articulation of Shahadah as a pledge of a servant to God. Gus Mus said;

> '...often in every day's life, Allah the true God is defeated by allied gods, such as wealth, women, position, position, etc. And among the allied gods who are often worshiped and followed, the most critical, and rarely realized, is God who is human himself.' (Bisri, 2013)

Various cases of violence and acts of terrorism are rooted in intolerance. An attitude that only justifies what is right according to their personal and group interests. From here, humans have positioned themselves as God, by not accepting other truths outside of their interests. Intolerance begins with a loss of empathy for fellow human beings, because of a difference in what they believe. Gus Mus said, '…we can easily see how many people, including those who have taken Shahadah, who in order to pursue their interests temporarily ignore the boundaries set by God and His messengers. How many people, by their momentary interests, are drawn into inhumane behavior. Disrespect brotherhood. Take away the rights of others. Damaging the environment. And so on, and so on…' (Bisri,

2013).

In this life, there are differences such as differences in skin color, culture, and religion. In fact, the political practice in a democratic country like Indonesia necessitates differences in their political preferences. Thus, every difference must be addressed in the form of positioning them as fellow human beings. This was confirmed by Gus Mus, '…that Shahadah that is pledged by the tongue and at the same time is believed by the heart, will make humans as real servants and at the same time His independent caliphs...' (Bisri, 2013) only free humans can be expected to think clearly, have broad insight, and high creativity...'. From here, humans will become true servants because they see all humans as God's fellow creatures. When a person has made an oath (Shahadah), then at that time he is a Muslim. Gus Mus said, '...the Shahadah is validation of one's entry into Islam. As soon as a person converts, then since then he converts to Islam. Become a Muslim…' (Bisri, 2013). Thus, there is no longer any labeling of Islam by identity, indigenous Islam, and other labels.

3.2.2 Salat

After declaring that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of truth, a person has become a Muslim. As a manifestation of Shahadah and surrender, a Muslim must carry out all of God's commands, and one of them is the command to salat. Salat in a simple sense is the practice of bodily articulation of servitude to God. The physical articulation of servitude is a manifestation of Shahadah. Thus, coherence between what has been said (Shahadah) and acts of servitude and surrender. Therefore, after a person utters Shahadah, what does a Muslim then do to become a good Muslim? Gus Mus' answer is of course rooted in the basic elements of religion, namely prayer.

> '…for the servant who has vowed there is no God but Allah, nothing proves his pledge more than prayer. Bow down to Him. Especially in salat, Shahadah is repeated every *tahiyat*. In fact, in salat the servant emphasized his oath by saying '*Iyyaka na'budu, waiyyaka nasta'iin*. Only to You, we worship and only to You, we ask for help...' (Bisri, 2013).

From here, servitude or submission coherently through prayer is the most real form or evidence that a Muslim is ritually good or pious. However, if we look at the phenomenon of religious life and socio-politics that have developed so far, most people view salat as a daily routine. In fact, salat has become a commodity in both capitalism and politics. We can see how products such as sarongs, *koko* shirts, *mukenas*, and others are more concerned with taste, rather than the substance of salat. Gus Mus said;

> '...unfortunately, the prayer for most of us is more of a rote. We memorize our prayers once, by rote. Or in Arabic '*an zhahril qolbi*, outside the heart. Whereas, for dhikr, salat should be in the head or in the heart. Not outside...' (Bisri, 2013).

As an example of the past elections, especially the presidential election, at least the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, we can see how the candidates, and most people in general, tried to politicize salat in various places, which ended up wanting to build self-image. Salat had turned into their political instrument to accumulate electoral impact. More than that, the articulation of bodily servanthood which should have been assessed in an immaterial dimension, turned into very material-political behavior.

Salat is a form of one's servitude and surrender to the true Almighty Allah. It is also a means of communication media or relationship between the servant and God. We can see how the readings in salat, which contain a lot of dialogue between the servant and God. However, often when we humans want to meet people, whether officials, religious leaders, and others, we must wait for days, maybe even months. There is a story as Gus Mus said, '…when I was young, I wanted to meet the minister. In my innocent mind at that time, it was easiest of course to meet the minister of religious affairs, because at least I understood the *fadilah silaturahmi*. It turned out that I was wrong, only after almost a month, the secretary and aide of the minister willingly allowed me to meet with the disposition; just three minutes...' (Bisri, 2013). On the other hand, through salat we can all easily meet the One who creates this universe, from dawn to night.

In fact, under certain circumstances, we can still meet in the middle of the night through night salat (*qiyamul lail*), without having to wait for the five salat times at that time. Such an articulation of salat shows that God opens the widest possible doors of communication or dialogue without protocol rules and so on. Gus Mus continued, '...even though the President, the President, the President is President Allah, opens the door at least five times a day, opens house, welcomes me and anyone who wants to meet without secretaries, aides, and security guards. In fact, He accepts His servant who wants to meet at any time; not even in *pasowanan*...' (Bisri, 2013). Thus, what we do in the articulation of salat is a process of our communication with the owner of the universe, in which God's power as the King who owns this universe, can be accessed easily by every human being.

3.2.3 Fasting

After carrying out salat, a Muslim is ordered to fast, as proof of the oath and self-servitude. This is based on several arguments or propositions explicitly (*sharih*), in the Qur'an. Like this argument '…O you who believe, fasting is commanded to you as it was commanded to those before you so that you will be pious...' (QS. Al-Baqarah: 183). In simple terms, fasting is a form of worship which is done by refraining from eating and drinking from dawn until it is time for the evening prayer. Based on the argument, the main purpose of fasting is to create obedient and pious servants who carries out all the commandments and prohibitions of God. However, is fasting just to refrain hunger and thirst? Gus Mus said;

> '...fasting as you know is not just refraining from eating and drinking. If only refraining from eating and drinking is already an exercise to control and take care of oneself for the sake of Allah. In fasting, doing and not doing something for Allah is much easier...' (Bisri, 2013).

Thus, fasting is expected not only to be able to refrain hunger and thirst, but also to be able to discipline oneself from desires, lust, and other material interests. Then, by refraining hunger, thirst, and lust, what do you want to create as a Muslim? Gus Mus said, '... in fasting, believers are trained to become strong believers who can control and take care of themselves. The believer whose heart, thoughts up to the lids of his eyes, is the throne of Allah; so that it is not easy to be tempted by momentary lures like animals, not to fall into wild and greedy behavior like animals...' (Bisri, 2013).

The goal of the command to fast is to create a Muslim who can master and control himself. Often, we can see that amid socio-political life, there are events of ordinary people who easily insult people, slander, and other things which, if we trace them, are rooted in a loss of self-control. In fact, they have been controlled by the lust to feel more than others. Gus Mus said, '...the fasting month, because it comes routinely, also has the potential to make us fall into a routine like other routines. It can come and go like the wind...' (Bisri, 2013). From here, we can conclude that the command to fast, which also comes every year, and is routine, means that fasting in the understanding of most people is not different from the command to salat, which is then reduced to just a routine religious ritual. The cycle is from dawn to sunset.

Therefore, when it is reduced to routine religious rituals, the goal of fasting orders turns into actions that show a consumptive and exploitative attitude. We can witness how temporary markets in various streets and fields were opened for the benefit of economic growth. More than that, the form of fasting becoming a routine can be seen on how the media, both printed and electronic, are flooded with religious events and health advertisements. Fasting has become a religious routine, no longer an exercise to master, control, and empty oneself as an object of divine attributes.

3.2.4 Zakat

As mentioned, that the goal of the command to fast is to create a disciplined Muslim (*taqwa*), by carrying out orders and avoiding God's prohibitions. The implication of the disciplined person is that he is aware of fulfilling zakat which is also part of the main teachings of religion. It is just that, is the value of zakat the same as alms that are usually done by most people? In this case, Gus Mus said;

> '...even though zakat is immediately understood as sharing wealth with others. But the dimension of worship, should not be forgotten. Zakat is like salat, an act that is intended to fulfill Allah's commands, is worship…' (Bisri, 2013)

Unlike *sodaqoh* or alms, zakat is an obligatory order. If fasting requires patience in self-restraint, then zakat requires patience to let go of materials. This is relevant when most people are fond of wealth too much, thus forgetting the rights of others. Gus Mus said, '...if salat tests our obedience and requires our patience and willpower, then zakat tests our obedience and requires our sincerity to fight against our tendency to be overly fond of possessions and stinginess...' (Bisri, 2013). In fact, we often see that most people are so in love with wealth, they become stingy towards other people, including relatives or family.

Today, we can see how people complain about not wanting to borrow money from relatives or neighbors, or see how most people accumulate wealth just to show success in life. If the people are rich, it is easy to do good (alms etc.), of course it is good, but often what we see is that they become rich beyond their love for God and His Messenger. In fact, Gus Mus said, '... his love for wealth is subdued by his submission to Allah and His Messenger. And as long as one's commitment to the pledge is the human attitude towards wealth...' (Bisri, 2013). From here, self-servitude and self-dedication are measured by one's commitment to prioritize God, because self-surrender and self-emptying are the culmination of true servitude.

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3.2.5 Hajj

If the orders for Shahadah, salat, fasting, and zakat are addressed to every Muslim, this last commandment is more special because it is addressed to those who can afford it, namely, the order for hajj. In this case, the person should be capable of various aspects such as economy, health, and others. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the Indonesian Muslim community must be patient in waiting for the scheduled departure for hajj which could be 10 to 30 years. In fact, in densely populated areas, the waiting can be up to 50 years. A very long time if the average age of prospective pilgrims is around 30-40 years.

Even so, the enthusiasm of the people from year to year has always increased. In fact, those who have already departed will try to go to hajj again. This is because, hajj is not understood by most people. Today we can see how people in a certain area are very proud when they have departed to hajj by the calling '*abah*' and '*ummi*'. It is as if it has become *mabrur* if the calling (*abah-ummi*) is given to people who have departed to hajj. From the phenomenon, what is the actual position of hajj amid other teachings of religion, so that it is wanted by many people? From here, Gus Mus said;

> '... Indeed, hajj is viewed as hard thing, something that those who depart to hajj often do not think about; namely realizing that hajj is to please Allah, to seek the blessing of Allah. Not to please ourselves. Everyone who comes to the holy land wants *mabrur* hajj…' (Bisri, 2013)

Perhaps the human tragedy in Mina that had occurred in the last few years indicated that most people understood the instructions for hajj for personal gain, including to be called '*abah*' or '*ummi*'. Also, we often witness how the hajj companions provide explanations so that each pilgrim becomes a '*mabrur* pilgrim who can kiss *hajar aswad* and so on. However, the companions forget how to get the *mabrur* hajj. Gus Mus said;

> '…and look at the spirit of each pilgrim to achieve *mabrur* hajj! Each seems to suddenly become a selfish human being who does not even know his brothers and sisters who together want *mabrur* hajj then they fight in the holy land, and it becomes normal, as if it is in their homeland…' (Bisri, 2013)

We also often see how most people are too selfish in pursuing their personal interests, forgetting that they are in the holy land, a land where this religion grew and developed. Fulfilling God's commands must also be accompanied by understanding and self-awareness. Gus Mus said '...enthusiasm without that kind of understanding and awareness, presumably in a wider range-religiousness in general, often creates problems in social life…' (Bisri, 2013). That is what often happens in every hajj. The Mina tragedy that killed hundreds of pilgrims was a manifestation of the spirit of pursuing *mabrur*, but instead it was carried out in ways that were not good and right. They only know *mabrur*, but do not understand how to achieve it. Gus Mus said, '...perhaps the passionate desire to achieve *mabrur* without understanding the meaning of *mabrur* itself, can drag pilgrims to selfish attitudes and want to win alone…' (Bisri, 2013). In fact, Gus Mus also said if '...wanting *mabrur* hajj is the same as wanting piety itself, the condition is; maintaining good relations with Allah and with fellow servants of Allah…' (Bisri, 2013).

Thus, the *mabrur* hajj that all pilgrims dream of is quite simple, that is how we can all maintain good relations with Allah and fellow human beings. In short, we return to the original argument that 'ritually pious' is also 'socially pious'. That is, coherence between what we say and what we are involved in and do in the life of the wider community (social/political). From here, it is the true meaning of *mabrur* for the pilgrims.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis, it is found that the way to get out of instrumentalist reasoning is through rational communication actions. In a sense, the discursive design promoted by Gus Mus in the book Agama *Anugerah, Agama Manusia* (*Religion of Grace, Religion of Mankind*) wants to offer the basic values or ideas of spirituality to mankind, through the articulation of the basic elements of religion (spirituality), which should be manifested in the way of life that religious people are engaged in and carry out. More than that, through the articulation of the basic elements of spirituality as a social dialogue, discursive design is structured to offer values and ideas of truth. Through the articulation of the basic elements of religion, the practice of communicative action looks articulative because it is based on rational communication reasoning, namely communication reasoning that aims for consensus or social cohesion amid truth contestation in the public space which often necessitates instrumentalist reasoning. From here, the articulation behind the discourse has an ideal of truth, and truth itself is power.

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