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The Reflection of Moral Ethics in Public Policy: An Analysis of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's Thought on the Asta Cita Pillars

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Abstrak
Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN) 2025–2029 yang diatur dalam Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 memuat Asta Cita sebagai delapan agenda prioritas pembangunan nasional. Agenda ini mencakup penguatan ideologi Pancasila, peningkatan kualitas manusia, reformasi birokrasi, hingga penegakan hukum dan hak asasi manusia. Artikel ini mengkaji relevansi gagasan Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) dalam implementasi kebijakan Asta Cita dengan menggunakan kerangka teori kebijakan publik yang menekankan dimensi normatif dan praktis. Pemikiran Gus Dur yang tertuang dalam karya Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita (2006) dan Prisma Pemikiran Gus Dur (Maarif Institute, 2021) menegaskan pentingnya inklusivitas, toleransi, keadilan sosial, dan penghormatan hak asasi manusia sebagai dasar pembangunan yang berkeadaban. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai moral Gus Dur dalam kebijakan Asta Cita dapat memperkuat legitimasi dan efektivitas kebijakan nasional di Indonesia. Dengan demikian, pemikiran Gus Dur menjadi pijakan strategis untuk memastikan pembangunan nasional tidak hanya bertumpu pada aspek teknokratis, tetapi juga nilai kemanusiaan yang menjunjung pluralisme dan demokrasi.
Kata kunci: *Asta Cita, Gus Dur, Kebijakan Publik, Pluralisme,*

Abstract
The National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 12 of 2025, includes the Asta Cita as the eight priority agendas for national development. These priorities include strengthening the Pancasila ideology, improving human quality, bureaucratic reform, and enforcing the law and human rights. This article examines the relevance of Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) ideas in the implementation of the Asta Cita policy using a public policy theory framework that emphasises normative and practical dimensions. Gus Dur's thoughts, as outlined in his works Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita (2006) and Prisma Pemikiran Gus Dur (Maarif Institute, 2021), emphasise the importance of inclusivity, tolerance, social justice, and respect for human rights as the foundation for civilised development. This study shows that the integration of Gus Dur's moral values into the Asta Cita policy can strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of national policies in Indonesia. Thus, Gus Dur's thoughts become a strategic foundation to ensure that national development is not only based on technocratic aspects but also on human values that uphold pluralism and democracy.
Keywords: Asta Cita, Gus Dur, Public Policy, Pluralism

Introduction

President Prabowo Subianto, who took office in 2024, launched eight strategic national agendas known as Asta Cita (Eight Ideals). This inauguration forms part of his administration's vision, "Advancing Indonesia Together Towards Golden Indonesia 2045" (Bersama Indonesia Maju Menuju Indonesia Emas 2045). The core of these eight ideals encompasses a broad spectrum of development, ranging from strengthening the ideological foundations of Pancasila and democracy, enhancing national defense and security capabilities, accelerating the development of superior human resources supported by gender equality, to promoting downstream industrialization to create economic added value and quality employment. Furthermore, Asta Cita emphasizes the importance of bureaucratic reform, law enforcement, corruption eradication, as well as a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and the overall achievement of a just and prosperous society (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025).

The foundation and rationale for the Asta Cita inauguration are thoroughly documented in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional – RPJMN) 2025–2029. The initial section details the evaluation and challenges of development. The successes and problems encountered during the previous administration's period are presented with comprehensive statistical and descriptive data. Based on this data, development opportunities are subsequently organized and mapped. The results of this mapping and organization ultimately form the basis for constructing the strategic plan outlined in Asta Cita.

The formulation of public policies, such as the RPJMN 2025-2029, based on problem analysis, is a common practice in the contemporary era. William N. Dunn (2018) refers to this as Evidence-Based Policy. This model of public policy formulation is characterized by an emphasis on the use of scientific evidence, supported by expanded chapters on the role of field experiments, systematic reviews, meta-analysis, and the utilization of big data in public decision-making. This reflects the increasing demand from policymakers for robust causal evidence regarding "what works" (Dunn, 2018).

The Evidence-Based Policy model appears highly logical for achieving the highest level of success in public policy formulation. Policy drafting based on the evaluation of past problems will minimize the recurrence of errors (Dunn, 2018). However, this hypothesis requires re-examination when linked to how broadly and deeply a public policy is deemed successful. This is a crucial consideration within the Indonesian context, where every public policy formulated confronts a highly pluralistic, diverse, and conflict-prone society (Fishkin, 1979).

The success of public policy formulation in Indonesia is highly dependent on a strong emphasis on moral ethics, especially amidst the complexities of current governmental and societal dynamics. Ethics becomes increasingly vital as it functions not only as a moral foundation but also as a primary guide in the public decision-making process. Along with social transformation and increasing public demands, the understanding and integration of ethics in policy are imperative. This ensures that every

decision made transcends mere fulfillment of functional needs; decisions must consistently reflect and uphold moral values (Wirata, 2024).

Asta Cita, as a public policy product, inherently considers moral ethics in its formulation. Nonetheless, discussions concerning Asta Cita have primarily revolved around economic and political aspects (Taufikurahman et al., 2025). In reality, the direction of public policy is inseparable from the influence of ideological values, historical narratives, and the thoughts of key figures who have shaped the foundation of Indonesian nationhood within the context of national development. Policy is not merely a technocratic product but also a manifestation of the ideas and ideals ingrained in the nation's history of thought (Dunn, 2018).

One figure who provided a profound contribution to shaping national consciousness is K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, better known as Gus Dur. As a ulama (Islamic scholar), intellectual, cultural observer, and statesman, Gus Dur has left a legacy of thought highly relevant to building an inclusive, just, and democratic nation. Gus Dur's thought is widely recognized not only for its progressive, humanist, and pluralist nature. More significantly, Gus Dur also sought to ground the values of Archipelago Islam (Islam Nusantara) while remaining open to the principles of modernity and universality (Wahid, 2006; Barton, 2019).

Gus Dur was a multidimensional figure who cannot be reduced to a single role. He was a great thinker, a defender of minority rights, and a driver of social transformation who consistently prioritized ethical principles in decision-making. His ideas on universal humanism, religious and cultural pluralism, and the liberalization of Islamic thought became critical pillars in the development of an inclusive and democratic civil society (Aizid, 2024; Taufani, 2018). In Gus Dur's view, the state must be present for all citizens without discrimination, and public policy must be based on the values of substantive justice, not merely formal legality (Wahid, 1999).

Moreover, Gus Dur's thinking has strong implications for the formulation and implementation of public policy. He encouraged a democracy that was substantive, not

just procedural, providing space for citizen involvement in decision-making and oversight of power (Ma'ruf, 2019; Wahid, 2006). Gus Dur rejected elitist and exclusive development approaches. He held the view that civil society must be actively involved in the policy formulation process as part of the democratization of public space. Within this framework, citizens are positioned as subjects of development possessing critical awareness and active participation, particularly concerning social justice and the fulfillment of human rights (Siregar, 2009; Alisha & Ahmala, 2021).

Gus Dur articulated the values of humanity, diversity, and freedom of thought and religion as essential elements of national life (Narendra et al., 2022). These values were not merely moral slogans but were translated by Gus Dur into political practice and public policy, both during his time as a public figure and while serving as the President of the Republic of Indonesia (Nasoha et al., 2024). Some of his administration's monumental policies included the recognition of local religions, the revocation of the ban on Chinese culture, and the opening of space for freedom of the press and expression (Alvia, 2015; Yani, 2020). Gus Dur also emphasized that education is not merely a tool for the reproduction of technical knowledge but a means to liberate humanity from backwardness, ignorance, and oppression (Asiyah, 2021; Husni & Rozi, 2022). He believed that education must encourage character building, tolerance, and the critical reasoning of society.

Asta Cita and the intellectual legacy of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) demonstrate a strong coherence of values, particularly in their commitment to vulnerable groups, the advancement of democracy, and the protection of religious freedom (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). Gus Dur's moral and philosophical basis regarding humanity and diversity is alleged to be the foundation for the formulation of Asta Cita. Therefore, a re-examination of Gus Dur's thought is a strategic step to ensure the continuity of progressive national values, rather than mere romanticism of the figure. This commitment aligns with Asta Cita's points, which demand

political courage for diversity and inclusion, such as development from the periphery and social justice, bureaucratic reform and strengthening the legal system, and reinforcing state institutions to be more accountable and responsive to fair public service.

This article aims to analyze the relevance of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) thought within the framework of President Prabowo Subianto's Asta Cita implementation, specifically concerning justice, democracy, and human rights. The approach utilized is descriptive-analytical with a qualitative normative method, emphasizing the interconnectedness between public policy theory and the moral-ethical values inherited from Gus Dur. This study proceeds from the theory that the success of a public policy like Asta Cita is largely determined by the congruence between the underlying moral values and principles of the policy and the character of the Indonesian nation, which is diverse, democratic, and civilized (Wirata, 2024).

By understanding the relevance of Gus Dur's thought in the context of public policy, this article is expected to provide a critical analytical contribution regarding the values of justice, democracy, and human rights in national development policy. Furthermore, this study seeks to address the gap in discussions concerning the ethics and morality of Asta Cita. This is crucial because research on Asta Cita has so far been confined to political, economic, and social aspects. Philosophical moral discussion within public policy remains very rare in Indonesia.

This study also endeavors to assert that Gus Dur's thought holds not only historical significance but also strategic value for the nation's future. A critical analysis of moral ethics within government policy, particularly in Asta Cita, will strengthen the political legitimacy and effectiveness of development programs that widely benefit the populace. The hope is that the level of success achieved is not only about the majority or every individual (Fishkin, 1979) but also reaches a standard of welfare consistent with Indonesian moral ethics.

Theoretical Framework

This study analyzes the philosophical and moral-ethical coherence of Asta Cita—President Prabowo Subianto's strategic agenda—through the lens of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) thought. Technocratically, Asta Cita (RPJMN 2025–2029) is formulated using the Evidence-Based Policy (EBP) model, grounded in the evaluation and analysis of previous issues (Dunn, 2018). While this approach is logical, the success of public policy in a diverse and plural Indonesia cannot be solely measured by technical metrics. Policy formulation must also emphasize the critical role of moral ethics as a fundamental basis and guiding principle for decision-making to fully uphold principles of justice, democracy, and comprehensive human rights (Wirata, 2024).

Theoretically, the classifications of moral ethics in public policy are varied. Fishkin (1979) delineates three types of moral ethics: procedural, structural, and absolute rights. Concurrently, Michael J. Sandel (2009), in Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?, posits three moral ethics underpinning public policy decisions: maximizing welfare, respecting freedom, and cultivating virtue. Intriguingly, both scholars critique their own classifications. Fishkin (1979) critiques his three moral ethics due to the inherent risk of deprivation associated with each category, arguing that their systematic failure necessitates the creation of new, more complex moral principles for public policy that are not purely derived from any single category.

Sandel (2009), meanwhile, deems utilitarianism (maximizing welfare) a flawed moral ethic as it disregards individual rights and human dignity. Conversely, liberalism (freedom) provides a strong foundation for human rights and equality but fails in two crucial aspects: it cannot be entirely neutral toward conceptions of the good, and it is insufficient in generating adequate civic obligation and solidarity. Sandel thus leans towards his third moral ethic: cultivating virtue. He asserts that public policy must incorporate reasoning about virtue and the common good. Moral ethics in public policy, therefore, must not only focus on the correct distribution of rights (the right) but also

on the distribution of honor and how society shapes the character of its citizens (Sandel, 2009).

The critiques advanced by Sandel and Fishkin raise questions regarding the most ideal moral ethic for public policy, especially within the Indonesian context—a nation characterized by pluralism, diversity, and conflict vulnerability. Consequently, it is necessary to explore Indonesian values as a foundational moral ethic for domestic policy. K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's thought is a viable standard. His core philosophy—which is humanist, pluralist, and biased toward vulnerable groups—can serve as the moral-ethical foundation for policy to achieve substantive justice, moving beyond mere formal legality (Wahid, 1999). Furthermore, his advocacy for substantive democracy through active civil society participation (Ma'ruf, 2019; Siregar, 2009) aligns with the moral ethic of cultivating virtue in Sandel's classification (2009).

Every public policy decision carries inherent moral ethics that must be considered from the formulation to the implementation stage. This holds true for Asta Cita, which encompasses: (1) enhancing the quality of Indonesian human capital, (2) strengthening the national economy, (3) development from villages and the periphery, (4) law enforcement and human rights, (5) social protection, (6) cultural preservation and national education, (7) bureaucratic reform and governance, and (8) strengthening national defense and security. Asta Cita is highly likely to exhibit strong value coherence with the moral ethics derived from Gus Dur's thinking, particularly concerning social justice, democracy, and human rights. Thus, this theoretical framework integrates a normative understanding of Asta Cita as a national development agenda, Gus Dur's thought as a moral and philosophical basis, and a policy analysis approach oriented toward values and ethics. This approach facilitates a study that is not only descriptive but also critically evaluates the direction of Indonesian development policy from the perspective of justice and humanity.

Method

This study employs a qualitative normative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. This approach is chosen because the primary focus of the research is to explore the correlation and coherence between the thought of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as a source of moral ethics and the implementation of the Asta Cita program within the presidential administration of Prabowo Subianto for the 2024–2029 period. The term 'qualitative normative' signifies that the analysis is not based on the collection of empirical field data but is conducted through an in-depth review of official documents, academic literature, and seminal works of key figures that possess normative, philosophical, and policy value.

The main material utilized in this research is the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2025 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, which outlines the eight strategic national development agendas, collectively known as Asta Cita. This document serves as the core policy blueprint analyzed in this study, particularly in relation to the values of pluralism, democracy, human rights (HAM), and social justice, which exhibit coherence with Gus Dur's thought.

Gus Dur's thought in this research is referenced through three primary works: Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita (Wahid, 2006), Prisma Pemikiran Gus Dur (Wahid, 1999), and the biography of Gus Dur by Greg Barton (2019). These three sources represent the spectrum of Gus Dur’s thinking on nationalism, religion, and social justice. Furthermore, the study leverages numerous scientific articles from relevant journals to reinforce the interpretive dimension of Gus Dur's thought, such as on democracy and freedom (Asiyah, 2021; Husni & Rozi, 2022), human rights (Alisha & Ahmala, 2021; Siregar, 2009), and pluralism (Taufani, 2018; Santalia, 2015).

For the analytical process, the research refers to the public policy theory developed by William N. Dunn in his book Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach (2018). Dunn views public policy as an integrated analytical process, encompassing

problem identification, formulation of alternative solutions, policy determination, implementation, and evaluation of its public impact. In the context of this study, Dunn's theory provides a framework for understanding how Asta Cita was designed and the extent to which the policy reflects substantive values in state governance.

In addition, the policy analysis in this research is reviewed from the perspective of policy ethics, as articulated by Gede Wirata in Etika dalam Kebijakan: Memahami Implikasi Moral dari Keputusan Publik (2024). Wirata asserts that every public policy possesses an inherent moral dimension because it invariably impacts the welfare and rights of citizens. Therefore, the analysis of Asta Cita is conducted not merely structurally or administratively, but also by considering the substantive ethics embedded within it, including the values of partiality, justice, and respect for diversity, which are central to Gus Dur's philosophy.

The analysis is executed using content analysis of the relevant policy documents and intellectual works. This analysis is directed at identifying the points of convergence between the principles of Gus Dur's thought and the aspects of the Asta Cita program, particularly focusing on three main areas: justice, democracy, law enforcement and human rights (HAM), and development from villages and the periphery. This focus is selected due to its direct coherence with Gus Dur's key themes concerning emancipatory education, the protection of minority and vulnerable groups, and a commitment to people-centered economics.

The validity of the analysis is maintained through triangulation of theory and sources, by examining Gus Dur's thought across various works and analyzing Asta Cita through state documents and critical scholarly publications. Through this approach, the research aims to illustrate how the moral and philosophical values inherited from Gus Dur remain relevant and can be operationalized within the ongoing practice of national development policy.

Result and Discussion

Result

A comparative analysis reveals a significant convergence between the pillars of Gus Dur's substantive ethics—which rest upon unconditional humanism and active pluralism—and the National Priorities (PN) stipulated in Presidential Regulation No. 12 of 2025 (*Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025*). This convergence reflects a crucial process in which values that were previously critical (oppositional) and cultural have been mainstreamed and institutionalized into the technocratic-legalistic language of state policy (Dunn, 2018). This mapping identifies specific components of the Asta Cita (Eight Aspirations) that are ethically influenced by or strategically aligned with Gus Dur's thought trajectory.

Gus Dur was known for his consistent rejection of discrimination, sectarianism, and the formalization of religion within the state domain, grounded in the theological principles of *Rahmatallil'alamin* (Mercy for all creations) and the indigenization of Islam (*Pribumisasi Islam*) (Taufani, 2018; Wahid, 2006). This rejection was a determined effort to prevent non-Muslim citizens from becoming second-class citizens (Wahid, 2006) and to ensure that pluralism was not merely passive tolerance but a full recognition of the existence and contribution of minority groups (Taufani, 2018; Hamsina, 2023).

This principle is clearly reflected in Asta Cita 8: Strengthening the harmonious alignment of life with the environment, nature, and culture, and enhancing inter-religious tolerance (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). This priority provides a formal space for the state to institutionalize tolerance, supported by the focus of Asta Cita 1: Strengthening the ideology of Pancasila, democracy, and human rights (HAM), which specifically mandates the objective of eliminating discriminatory practices and strengthening the equality of civil society (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan

Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). This affirmation for the elimination of discrimination is a continuation of Gus Dur's monumental action while in office, such as the revocation of the anti-Chinese Presidential Instruction (*Inpres*), demonstrating the transformation of values from the highest political level (Alvia, 2015; Yani, 2020).

Furthermore, Asta Cita 4: Strengthening human resource development (SDM)... gender equality, as well as strengthening the role of women... and persons with disabilities (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), reinforces the dimension of social inclusion. This program includes the Fulfillment of Civil and Legal Rights, and Affirmation for Vulnerable Families (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), which constitutes a structural implementation of Gus Dur's commitment to defending victims and vulnerable groups (unconditional humanism), in line with the principle of human rights protection (Alisha & Ahmala, 2021; Siregar, 2009).

Gus Dur's pillar of Structural Social Justice demands a firm separation between the interests of the capitalist elite and the state's fundamental responsibility to guarantee the minimal needs of its citizens (Wahid, 1999). This critique was aimed squarely at elitist and exclusive development, specifically rejecting a purely charitable approach that only offers material handouts without addressing underlying causes (Barton, 2019; Wahid, 1999). This vision strongly resonates in Asta Cita 6: Building from the village and from below for economic growth, economic equity, and poverty eradication (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025).

The National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) institutionalizes Gus Dur's structural approach through three main strategies: (1) Affirmative Business Cards for the empowerment of the poor and vulnerable, aiming to accelerate their graduation towards welfare (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025); (2) Agrarian

Reform to reduce land ownership inequality and strengthen the independence of recipients of Agrarian Reform Objects (TORA) (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025); and (3) a Territorial Strategy focused on 10 priority provinces and 3T (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged) regions for the provision of basic services and infrastructure (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). These programs reflect Gus Dur's popular economy (*ekonomi kerakyatan*) vision, which sides strongly with villages and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (Barton, 2019). Furthermore, the allocation of the Special Autonomy Fund for Papua is directed towards supporting development and improving the welfare of the Indigenous Papuan People down to the village level (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), which is an ethical affirmation rooted in the principle of distributive justice.

Gus Dur's thought on Substantive Democracy demands the rule of law, freedom of expression, and the decisive rejection of authoritarianism that restricts criticism of those in power (Wahid, 1999). Gus Dur was deeply critical of the practices of Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN) and the idiosyncrasies (personalistic tendencies) of rulers that disregard the interests of the people (Wahid, 1999). This ethical principle is reflected in Asta Cita 7: Strengthening political, legal, and bureaucratic reform, and strengthening the prevention and eradication of corruption (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025).

Asta Cita 7 responds to this challenge through: (1) The application of meritocracy principles and the reform of the Civil Apparatus (ASN) management, aimed at eliminating KKN practices and the idiosyncrasies of rulers through a performance-based total reward mechanism (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025);

and (2) evidence-based policy and the transformation of public service governance (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). Evidence-based policy, which is also emphasized in development control and evaluation (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), is an institutional mechanism that shifts decision-making from the basis of assumptions and personal interests (idiosyncrasies) towards integrated rationality (Dunn, 2018).

Furthermore, the enforcement of Human Rights (HAM) in Asta Cita 1 and Asta Cita 4, which includes the internalisation of human rights for humanist, inclusive, and gender-sensitive policies (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), is the state's effort to implement human dignity as emphasized by Gus Dur. For Immanuel Kant, this human dignity is the core of the capacity for autonomous action, fundamentally distinguishing humans from objects (Sandel, 2009). Similarly, Gus Dur viewed education as a means of emancipation to create free-thinking individuals who are critically minded, socially sensitive, and liberated from structural oppression (Asiyah, 2021; Husni & Rozi, 2022). This perspective serves as a relevant and strategic ethical foundation for curriculum development in the agenda for the Improvement of the quality of Indonesian human resources (Asta Cita 4), which is oriented not only towards the job market but also towards the formation of national character.

Discussion

This study thoroughly examines how the moral ethical thought of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) has become a philosophical foundation and an inevitable cultural prerequisite in the formulation of the national strategic development plan, specifically the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, manifested in the Asta Cita program. Although this research is documentary in nature and does not aim to

prove a linear causality, the argument presented focuses instead on the strength of the diffused moral ethical influence across the policy sphere. This pervasive influence is supported robustly by the established public policy ethics framework (Wirata, 2024), suggesting a deep-seated acceptance of these values. Gus Dur's influence is a true diffusion of values that has successfully created the necessary cultural and political preconditions, thus making the adoption of these ethical principles a mandatory prerequisite for the RPJMN 2025–2029. Gus Dur, functioning adeptly as an intellectual entrepreneur, provided a critical stock of available knowledge that facilitated the simultaneous convergence between profound social aspirations for justice and the official mechanisms of state policy (Dunn, 2018).

The core of Gus Dur's humanist and pluralist thought functions fundamentally as a critical lens against policies solely based on the maximization of welfare or Utilitarianism. This particular approach to policymaking, often focused on aggregate benefit, frequently disregards the intrinsic worth of individual rights and human dignity (Sandel, 2009). In a deeply pluralistic country like Indonesia, a policy that prioritizes only technocratic efficiency will inevitably encounter significant structural obstacles. This failure stems from the policy's inability to be responsive to acute issues of social injustice and societal diversity, a systematic shortcoming that Fishkin (1979) criticized regarding the failure of simple moral principles when faced with social complexity. Gus Dur's legacy thus compels the state to consider more than just optimal economic output.

Gus Dur provided a robust philosophical foundation that decisively transcends the standard Utilitarian framework. This foundation is an ethic centered profoundly on unconditional humanism (Hamsina, 2023), asserting the value of every individual regardless of external categorization. This ethic is highly consistent with Sandel's (2009) concept of Virtue Ethics, which elevates the discussion of justice beyond mere rules and calculations. Virtue Ethics asserts that justice must be actively cultivated through the ongoing formation of citizen character and the pursuit of the common good. The

essence of this philosophical position demands that policymaking is inherently a moral act, not just an economic one.

In Asta Cita, the recognition of this deep ethic is clearly demonstrated through a crucial dual emphasis that balances competing priorities. The RPJMN sets ambitious economic growth targets, aiming from 5.3% toward 8% by 2029, which naturally prioritizes efficiency and large-scale development. Critically, however, the plan also explicitly includes mandatory targets for the reduction of poverty and inequality (equity) (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). This dual emphasis directly reflects Gus Dur's consistent ethical demand that successful national development must simultaneously integrate the criteria of efficiency, equity, and appropriateness (Dunn, 2018).

One of the most concrete and impactful manifestations of Gus Dur's influence is the strategic shift in the approach to poverty alleviation within Asta Cita 6. There is a decisive change in philosophy, moving away from a charitable approach based on handouts towards an empowering structural approach focused on correcting systemic disadvantages. This fundamental shift is highly aligned with the people's economy (*ekonomi kerakyatan*) perspective consistently championed by Gus Dur himself (Barton, 2019; Wahid, 1999). It reframes the poor not as passive aid recipients, but as active participants in the economy who require structural support.

Programs such as the Affirmative Business Card and Agrarian Reform are concrete, institutional actualizations of this structural justice effort. These initiatives are deliberately designed to ensure equity and adequacy in access to resources for the productive poor group (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). This specific policy affirmation is thoroughly consistent with Rawls's Difference Principle (2009), which demands the maximization of welfare for the most vulnerable groups in society. Gus Dur provided the powerful moral legitimacy for this entire policy direction

by unequivocally asserting that the state must fundamentally bear the responsibility for providing a minimum social guarantee for all its citizens (Wahid, 1999).

Culturally and theologically, Gus Dur consistently and vigorously rejected the formalization of religion in the state as the primary or necessary mechanism for protecting minority groups (Wahid, 2006). This stance was rooted in the conviction that state-sanctioned religion often leads to discrimination rather than protection. Asta Cita institutionally adopts this profound principle through the explicit promise of eliminating discriminatory practices (Asta Cita 1) and actively enhancing religious and ethnic tolerance (Asta Cita 8) (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). This institutional adoption marks a significant victory for the values of inclusion.

Gus Dur's stance in defending the rights of vulnerable minorities (such as Chinese-Indonesians and the Ahmadiyya community) was always based on unconditional humanism that fundamentally transcends narrow sectarian views (Alvia, 2015; Taufani, 2018). This expansive perspective, which demands the absolute protection of everyone's rights solely based on their inherent human dignity, has now been successfully solidified as an institutional pillar. Its inclusion in the RPJMN strengthens socio-cultural resilience, marking a crucial shift from mere passive tolerance to fully institutionalized active pluralism.

Gus Dur's foundational thought on Substantive Democracy demands widespread civil society participation and the resolute rejection of unaccountable power (Ma'ruf, 2019; Siregar, 2009). Gus Dur's sharp critique of KKN (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism) and the harmful idiosyncrasies of arbitrary rulers (Wahid, 1999) is directly addressed by Asta Cita 7. This chapter focuses on comprehensive Bureaucratic Reform based on strict meritocracy and rigorous Evidence-Based Policy (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025). These mechanisms are essential institutional defenses required to uphold the rule of law (Wahid, 1999) and promote

efficient and thoroughly accountable governance. This entire mechanism fulfills Gus Dur's core ethical demand that the state must serve the people, not control them (Hamsina, 2023).

Furthermore, the significant emphasis on education as a tool for liberation (Asiyah, 2021; Husni & Rozi, 2022) in Asta Cita 4 strongly affirms a critical policy objective. It mandates that human resource development must ultimately produce individuals who are free and capable of critical thinking, not mere laborers. This high vision aligns directly with the Kantian ethic that values autonomy and human dignity above all else. Education must therefore produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and socially mature, which is the foundational prerequisite for the establishment of a truly substantive democracy.

The limitation concerning the lack of direct causal data between Gus Dur's general thought and the specific details of the RPJMN is effectively mitigated by the overwhelming evidence that Gus Dur's ethical discourse has become a guiding principle. This powerful moral principle made it fundamentally impossible for Asta Cita to ignore core issues of justice, pluralism, and human rights in its structure. By incorporating these principles as main objectives (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025), the RPJMN has decisively adopted the moral roadmap championed by Gus Dur for decades.

This study firmly affirms that the RPJMN 2025–2029 (Asta Cita) is not merely oriented toward economic-technocratic progress but fundamentally integrates the robust pillars of substantive ethics championed by Gus Dur. The RPJMN 2025–2029 actively absorbs the established cultural narratives concerning structural social justice (Asta Cita 6), substantive democracy (Asta Cita 1 and 7), and active pluralism (Asta Cita 8 and 4), narratives which previously served as powerful critiques of non-inclusive development models. The core argument demonstrates clearly that Gus Dur's true influence lies in the formation of a moral and ethical warrant that provides essential

legitimacy to the Asta Cita policy framework. The success of Asta Cita's implementation now depends entirely on the consistency in executing its inclusive and affirmative programs, thereby ensuring that national development remains consistently human-centered.

Integrating Gus Dur's ethical vision, which is profoundly founded on Maslahah Ammah (public interest) and active pluralism, into the operational framework of Asta Cita can create a sustainable balance between robust economic progress and enduring social justice. This principled integration ensures that Indonesian development remains both morally grounded and comprehensively centered on humanity.

Conclusion

The study concludes that K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) substantive ethics demonstrate profound relevance and value coherence with the national strategic agenda *Asta Cita* (RPJMN 2025–2029). This relevance stems from a diffusion of values—not linear causality—that provides the moral warrant legitimizing *Asta Cita*'s direction. The core values of unconditional humanism, active pluralism, and structural justice have been adopted by the government's policy framework.

This convergence is specific: (1) Active Pluralism (Asta Cita 1 & 8) reflects Gus Dur's rejection of religious formalization and his defense of minority rights; (2) Structural Social Justice (Asta Cita 6) institutionalizes the shift from a charitable to an empowering approach (*ekonomi kerakyatan*); and (3) Substantive Democracy (Asta Cita 7) is enforced through meritocracy and evidence-based policy to curb KKN and authoritarian idiosyncrasies. *Asta Cita* thus integrates Gus Dur's demand for development that combines efficiency, equity, and appropriateness.

The research is limited to normative documentary analysis. Future studies should conduct empirical implementation analysis to verify the consistency of these programs in practice and perform cross-figure comparisons to fully map the policy's moral

foundations. The successful realization of *Asta Cita* depends on moral consistency in executing inclusive and justice-based programs.

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