



## PLURALISM IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF KH ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: AN INTRODUCTION TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Khoirun Nisa Nur <sup>1</sup>, Aini <sup>1</sup>, Abid Nurhuda <sup>2</sup>, Ali Anhar Syi'bul Huda <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Pascasarjana Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta

<sup>3</sup> Pascasarjana Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

[aiiniakbar91195@gmail.com](mailto:aiiniakbar91195@gmail.com) <sup>1</sup>; [abidnurhuda123@gmail.com](mailto:abidnurhuda123@gmail.com) <sup>2</sup>; [alianhar99@upi.edu](mailto:alianhar99@upi.edu) <sup>3</sup>

### Abstrak

Indonesia merupakan negara yang kaya akan keberagaman sehingga muncullah salah satu tokoh pemikir demokrasi dan pluralisme yakni KH. Abdurrahman Wahid yang lahir di Jombang, Jawa Timur dan biasa disebut dengan Gus Dur. Ia merupakan pemikir pembaharu dalam bidang tersebut bahkan menanamkan konsep pribumisasi Islam di Indonesia sehingga ia dijuluki sebagai Bapak Pluralisme di Dunia. Maka tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan terkait Pluralisme Dalam Perspektif KH Abdurrahman Wahid. Metode penelitian ini adalah studi pustaka dengan pendekatan sosio histories dan factual histories untuk mengungkap peristiwa-peristiwa masa lalu secara nyata. Adapun hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pluralisme dalam Perspektif KH Abdurrahman Wahid adalah memandang bahwa setiap agama memiliki perbedaan, ciri khas dan keunikan masing-masing, serta bukan menyamakan semua agama dengan tujuan memupuk semangat toleransi antar umat manusia sehingga terciptalah kedamaian dalam kehidupan.

**Kata kunci:** Pluralisme, Perspektif, KH Abdurrahman Wahid.

### Abstract

*Indonesia is a country that is rich in diversity so one of the leading thinkers of democracy and pluralism emerged, namely KH. Abdurrahman Wahid was born in Jombang, East Java, and is usually called Gus Dur. He is a reform thinker in this field and even instilled the concept of indigenous Islam in Indonesia so he is called the Father of Pluralism in the World. So the purpose of this study is to describe pluralism from the perspective of KH Abdurrahman Wahid. This research method is a literature study with a socio-historical and factual historical approach to reveal real past events. The results of the study show that Pluralism in KH Abdurrahman Wahid's Perspective is the view that every religion has differences, characteristics, and uniqueness of each, and not equate all religions to foster a spirit of tolerance among human beings to create peace in life.*

**Keywords:** Pluralism, Perspective, KH Abdurrahman Wahid

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a very large population and a variety of races,

ethnicities, customs, cultures, and languages, hundreds of languages are used throughout the archipelago. Geographically, Indonesia is located between the continents of Asia and the continents of Australia. In terms of islands, Indonesia has 13,000 islands that are inhabited by Indonesian people whose background is dozens of old tribal royal systems that influence the social system and customs that apply to this day. If we look at it from a religious perspective, in Indonesia there are several major world religions and local beliefs that are spread throughout Indonesia (Bauto, 2016).

Indonesia is a unitary state with a republican government based on a valid constitution. The national motto of the State of Indonesia is *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which is diverse but still one, meaning that the diversity of social, cultural, religion, race, ethnicity, customs and language forms a unified country. In addition, he also has a strong principle or basis, namely the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila as the ideology that guides their lives in the nation and state (Nurhuda, 2023b).

If we look closely, the plurality of the Indonesian nation is a *sunnatullah* as stated in the Al-Qur'an QS. Al-Hujarat verse 13 means that pluralism in this world is the will of the Almighty, and Indonesia itself has realized and knows about the insights of pluralism (multiculturalism and pluralism) in the national motto, namely *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* which was created by Mpu Tantular (Fakhri, 2009).

The post-New Order era was marked by understandings and attitudes that led to forms of religious radicalism, cases of banning the establishment of houses of worship, and persecution of minorities such as Ahmadiyah and Shia. So the existence of religious radicalism certainly cannot be separated from the persistence in translating the meaning of freedom and the mental unpreparedness of society in accepting differences (Nurhuda & Aini, 2021).

With the fact that there are increasingly strong facts about radicalism, Gus Dur's ideas are relevant for further exploration of Indonesian pluralism, where in his life he passionately fought for the values of diversity, equality of citizens' rights, and human rights. This article is here to discuss the process behind the idea of pluralism from Gus Dur's perspective.

Through the literature review, there have been various scientific works in the form of journals, theses, and theses which discuss pluralism and its relation to the

figure of Gus Dur. Among them is Ahmad Muzakkil Anam's work in the form of a journal entitled "Abdurrahman Wahid's Concept of Pluralism Education" which discusses Gus Dur's policies in pluralism education in Indonesia. And one of the main books that can be used as a reference is a book entitled "GUS GERR: The Father of Pluralism and the Nation's Teacher" a book that tells the socio-historical story of Gusdur during his life and the fruits of his pluralism thoughts. But this time the author wants to examine Gus Dur's idea of pluralism from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education.

What is the concept of pluralism according to Abdurrahman Wahid? And why is it that until this moment pluralism is still something that is always discussed? And how is the relevance of Gusdur's pluralism thinking in the perspective of Islamic Religious Education can respond to the various upheavals that still frequently arise and divide our nation and state?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This type of research is a type of library research, which relies on reference studies and literature text reviews with a descriptive and philosophical approach. This library research means library research in which the data is taken from written materials, either in the form of books or others related to the topic/theme of this research discussion (Nurhuda et al., 2023). The research approach used is the study of renewal and the thoughts of figures with a socio-historical and factual historical approach. The socio-historical approach is research that seeks to critically examine an event, the past and interpret information sources. As for factual history, namely the approach of presenting historical facts about figures (Bekker & Zubair, 1990). The systematic discussion in this article begins with a brief biography of Gus Dur, then continues with the understanding of the concept of pluralism and pluralism according to Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Gusdur's short biography**

Gus Dur is the nickname for the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia,

namely KH. Abdurrahman Wahid was born on September 7, 1940, in Jombang, East Java. Gus Dur was the first son of the couple KH. Wahid Hasyim and Hj Sholehah. This couple is the grandson of two elders who have contributed greatly to establishing a religious organization, namely Nahdhotul Ulama. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari is Gus Dur's grandfather from his father KH. Wahid Hasyim, while his mother is the daughter of KH Bisyri Syamsuri who became Rois Aam Nahdhotul Ulama after KH Abdul Wahab (Nata, 2005).

His educational background, he studied at Elementary School (SD) in Jakarta, then continued to study to the next level at the Junior Economics Middle School (SMEP), but Gus Dur did not go to class, so his mother sent Gus Dur to Yogyakarta to continue his education while studying at the Al-Munawwir boarding school, Krapyak, Yogyakarta.

After graduating from SMEP, he continued to study at the Tegalrejo Islamic boarding school, Magelang, where he studied with Kyai Khudori, one of the NU leaders. Gus Dur continued his education in Cairo, Egypt in November 1963 at Al-Azhar University after receiving a scholarship from the Ministry of Religion, but the system at Al-Azhar University had to have a diploma that was much from Indonesia and Gus Dur did not have it, so he had to follow Darul lughoh first to find out his talent in Arabic (Fakhri, 2009).

During Gus Dur's time in Egypt, he felt he had freedom of expression and received protection from his government. At that time Egypt was under the leadership of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, a nationalist and at that time Cairo was becoming a golden era of intellectuals. Gus Dur continued his journey to seek knowledge in Iraq in 1966, at which time Iraq became a modern civilization that dominated modern Islamic culture. He took his master's degree at the Department of Religion, University of Baghdad in 1970. After completing his studies, he had the desire to continue his doctoral degree in Europe, but due to the language barrier, he spent time traveling around Europe to study so he could master French, English, and German from 1970-1971 (Tualek, 2015).

Gus Dur returned to his homeland in 1971 and joined the Ushuluddin Faculty of Hasyim Asy'ari University, and became dean until 1974. In 1973 Gus Dur served as secretary of the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school and he began to

actively write (Asripa et al., 2021). He actively expresses his ideas and thoughts through his writings and is a regular columnist for several magazines such as Kompas, Tempo, Jurnal Prisma, and Pelita. In 1984 he served as chairman of PBNU where previously he was chairman of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKI). In 1989 and 1994 he was elected as General Chair of the PBNU until he became the fourth President of the Republic of Indonesia in October 1999 (Taufani, 2018).

### **The Meaning of Pluralism**

Pluralism embodied in the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* means that Indonesia has diversity in terms of ethnicity, islands, language, religion, and race, but still one, namely Indonesia. When viewed from a philosophical point of view, pluralism is a view that accepts and acknowledges that the nature of this world contains many elements. This is contrary to monism and dualism (Ramadan, 2018).

Pluralism as an understanding as well as a way of life recognizes the existence of diversity in terms of religion, race, ethnicity, and customs within a community group. Then this is what ultimately becomes the basis for the formation of small group diversity which has a characteristic that distinguishes it from other groups (Rozi, 2017).

### **Pluralism in Gus Dur's Perspective**

Life's journey brought Gus Dur to meet various kinds of people with very different backgrounds. Both in terms of culture, interests, social strata, ideology, and thoughts. He once lived in Eastern customs that were polite, closed, and friendly, as well as in an environment of open, modern, and liberal Western civilization. He is also often in touch and closely associated with conservative, orthodox thinkers as well as radical and liberal thinkers. That's why Gus Dur looks very dynamic and unpredictable. The freedom and breadth of his way of thinking transcend the boundaries of the traditionalism of his community (Azzuhri, 2012).

Gus Dur has a special view of religion called cosmopolitan Islam, according to which Muslims must be able to make cosmopolitan Islam a way of life, namely as a way to show Islamic inclusiveness. Islamic universalism includes five general

principles to regulate life (al kulliyat al khums) which are well-known in the classical literature used by NU. Islamic totalitarianism emphasizes the teachings of humanism which provide basic guarantees for humanity, namely physical integrity, family, faith, lineage, property, and profession. These are the essential elements of humanity that must be emphasized in Islamic inclusivity and must be balanced with wisdom that comes from the openness of Islamic civilization (Nurhuda, 2023a).

For Gus Dur, Islamic Universalism will become passive and stagnant if it is not manifested in a cosmopolitan attitude to religious life. History records that Islam has always had a cosmopolitan nature, this illustrates that Islam is dynamic, inclusive, and respects pluralism (Bakri & Abdullah, 2004).

Gus Dur's appreciation of pluralism is one of his views on Cosmopolitan Islam. Where pluralism is a very prominent matter in today's modern era. This is not without reason, because the diversity of world society is increasingly emerging in various aspects of life. From these socio-historical facts, people are required to want to make pluralism a way to maintain their existence.

Instilling pluralism towards the nation and state, according to Gus Dur, is not only reflected in a scheme of living in peace side by side because this is still prone to giving rise to misunderstandings and disputes between individuals and between groups of people and continues to the emergence of disintegration. In implementing pluralism, there needs to be awareness to have a dialogue with each other and know each other well so that it creates take and give between components of society (Hanipudin & Alhaq, 2017).

Harmonizing Indonesian society is the main goal in Gus Dur's ideas about pluralism, this is because the Indonesian nation is very diverse. However, the negative effects of Gus Dur's thinking made him have to deal with those who wanted to harm the diversity of this country. For him diversity is sunnatullah and no one is allowed to change it. If diversity can be managed properly, mutual respect and respect will emerge, as well as harmonization can be realized among the nation's children. Gus Dur was very respectful of followers of other religions and remained firm in his belief in the teachings brought by Rasulullah SAW, he fully respected the beliefs of other people and easily got along with followers of

other religions in this country, because Gus Dur is a figure who is open to intellectual development (Nurhuda, 2022).

Gus Dur pays great attention to pluralism as a basis that inspires tolerance and respect for differences. However, in several ways, Gus Dur showed intolerance towards several groups of people. The case of his feud with ICMI and the groups he often refers to as agents who have an agenda for Islamizing society. Likewise, his feud with adherents of the formalization of Islam is an indication that shows Gus Dur's intolerance. So that the pluralism promoted by Gus Dur did not fully apply to the attitude of tolerance towards groups that he considered intolerant and exclusive (Bakri & Abdullah, 2004).

Gus Dur has not been able to democratically appreciate those who are anti-pluralists. So that towards groups that are considered exclusive, he seems unable to tolerate them and does not show his pluralist spirit.

Regardless of the attitude and model that Gus Dur chooses, for him, it is clear that pluralism is a mandatory condition for the continued existence of the diversity of the archipelago and the realization of Cosmopolitan Islam. Furthermore, Gus Dur also argues that functioning Islam as the only scale of truth at the same time other religions must follow is exclusivism that does not respect pluralism (Princess & Nurhuda, 2023).

From this pattern and way of thinking, Gus Dur wanted to convey that Islam is very appropriate to contribute to the nation without having to say unilaterally that the only true contribution is from Islam. Gus Dur had the intention to maintain authentic Islam without having to be interfering with efforts to formalize religion.

## **CONCLUSION**

Gus Dur is the nickname for the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia, namely KH. Abdurrahman Wahid was born on September 7, 1940, in Jombang, East Java. The idea of pluralism that he promotes is an idea that does not appear instantly and suddenly but is born from a fairly long process, which is based on various thought traditions. Pluralism from Gus Dur's point of view is not a view that intends to equate all religions. Gus Dur realized that every religion has

differences, characteristics, and uniqueness of each. Gus Dur has not been able to democratically appreciate those who are anti-pluralists. So that towards groups that are considered exclusive, he seems unable to be tolerant and does not show his pluralist spirit.

#### DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Asripa, A., Muhammad, D. H., & Susandi, A. (2021). Pluralisme dalam Perspektif Pemikiran Gus Dur dan Nurcholish Majid. *Falasifa: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 12(02), 75–90.
- Azzuhri, M. (2012). Konsep Multikulturalisme dan Pluralisme dalam Pendidikan Agama (Upaya Menguniversalkan Pendidikan Agama dalam Ranah Keindonesiaan). In *Forum Tarbiyah (Vol. 10, No. 1)*.
- Bakri, S., & Abdullah, M. (2004). *Jombang - Kairo, Jombang-Chicago : sintesis pemikiran Gus Dur dan Cak Nur dalam pembaruan Islam di Indonesia*. Tiga Serangkai.
- Bauto, L. M. (2016). Perspektif Agama Dan Kebudayaan Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Indonesia (Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologi Agama). *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial*, 23(2), 11.
- Bekker, A., & Zubair, A. C. (1990). *Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat*. Kanisius.
- Fakhri, M. (2009). Wawasan Kerukunan Beragama Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Toleransi*, 1(2), 141.
- Hanipudin, S., & Alhaq, A. A. (2017). Pemikiran Pendidikan Pluralisme KH. Abdurrahman Wahid: Pemikiran Pendidikan Pluralisme KH. Abdurrahman Wahid. *INSANIA: Jurnal Pemikiran Alternatif Kependidikan*, 22(1), 37–59.
- Nata, A. (2005). *Tokoh-Tokoh Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia*. PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Nurhuda, A. (2022). PERAN DAN KONTRIBUSI ISLAM DALAM DUNIA ILMU PENGETAHUAN. *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 2(2), 222–232.
- Nurhuda, A. (2023a). Obligation to Learn and Search Science from the Perspective of the Prophet's Hadits. *Edunity: Social and Educational Studies*, 2(3), 405–415.
- Nurhuda, A. (2023b). Sufism Values in Pancasila as the Nation's Ideology. *ATHENA: Journal of Social, Culture and Society*, 1(3), 103.



- Nurhuda, A., & Aini, N. (2021). Bergandengan di Tengah Keberagaman (Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia). *Jurnal Sudut Pandang*, 2(9), 24–27.
- Nurhuda, A., Ansori, I. H., & Ab, T. E. S. B. E. (2023). THE URGENCY OF PRAYER IN LIFE BASED ON THE AL-QUR'AN PERSPECTIVE. *LISAN AL-HAL: Jurnal Pengembangan Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan*, 17(1), 52–61.
- Putri, Y., & Nurhuda, A. (2023). *Filsafat Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Lintas Zaman*. PT Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=Zaq0EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=filsafat+pendidikan+islam+lintas+zaman&ots=EG0Wtjp8yd&sig=TX4dGf4hQP56wHEP5FFjc2mb98Y&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=filsafat+pendidikan+islam+lintas+zaman&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=Zaq0EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=filsafat+pendidikan+islam+lintas+zaman&ots=EG0Wtjp8yd&sig=TX4dGf4hQP56wHEP5FFjc2mb98Y&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=filsafat+pendidikan+islam+lintas+zaman&f=false)
- Ramdhan, T. W. (2018). Islam Nusantara:Pribumisasi Islam Ala NU. *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 2(3), 73–91.
- Rozi, M. F. (2017). PLURALISME DAN MULTIKULTURALISME DALAM MEMBANGUN MASYARAKAT MADANI; KAJIAN PARADIGMATIK. *Jurnal Al-Ibrah*, 11(5), 101–111.
- Taufani. (2018). *Pemikiran pluralisme gusdur*. 19(2), 198–217.
- Tualeka, M. W. N. (2015). Gerakan Neomodernisme Islam Di Indonesia. *AL-Hikmah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1(1), 89–99.