

ETHICAL PLURALISM IN ACTION: TRANSLATING GUS DUR'S VISIONS INTO INTERFAITH CIVIC PRAXIS

Nanda Khairiyah & Siti Nabilah

Abstract: *This article examines how Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) ethical vision of religious pluralism is translated from a normative framework into lived civic praxis within contemporary interfaith contexts. While existing scholarship has primarily focused on Gus Dur's intellectual, theological, and political contributions, the practical enactment of his pluralist vision at the grassroots level remains insufficiently explored. To address this gap, the study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach to investigate how the core principles of equality (musāwah), justice ('adl), and freedom of belief (hurriyyah al-i'iqād) are enacted in everyday interfaith interactions. Fieldwork was conducted among interfaith communities that explicitly draw on Gus Dur's legacy, with the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) in Jakarta serving as the principal empirical site. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The findings demonstrate a significant shift of pluralism from abstract discourse into a lived civic ethic, manifested in interfaith rituals, conflict mediation, inclusive education, and digital activism. These practices are sustained through dialogical, collaborative, and affective relational patterns among interfaith actors, which enable the continuous negotiation of difference within a shared social space. This study argues that Gus Dur's pluralism should be understood not merely as a theological doctrine, but as a dynamic framework of civic engagement rooted in local wisdom and socially embedded practices. By foregrounding ethnographic insights, the article contributes to broader discussions on religious pluralism by showing how ethical values can be operationalized as context-sensitive and socially grounded modes of coexistence in plural societies.*

Keywords: *Gus Dur; Pluralism; Interfaith Ethics; FKUB.*

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana visi etis pluralisme keagamaan Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) ditransformasikan dari kerangka normatif menjadi praksis kewargaan yang hidup dalam konteks lintas agama kontemporer. Meskipun kajian-kajian sebelumnya banyak berfokus pada kontribusi intelektual, teologis, dan politik Gus Dur, implementasi praktis dari visi pluralismenya pada tingkat akar rumput masih belum banyak dieksplorasi. Untuk mengisi kesenjangan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif etnografis guna menelusuri bagaimana prinsip-prinsip dasar kesetaraan (*musāwah*), keadilan (*'adl*), dan kebebasan berkeyakinan (*ḥurriyyah al-i'tiqād*) diwujudkan dalam interaksi lintas agama sehari-hari. Kerja lapangan dilakukan pada komunitas lintas iman yang secara eksplisit merujuk pada warisan pemikiran Gus Dur, dengan Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) di Jakarta sebagai lokasi empiris utama. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya pergeseran signifikan dari pluralisme sebagai wacana abstrak menjadi etika kewargaan yang hidup, yang termanifestasi dalam praktik-praktik seperti ritual lintas agama, mediasi konflik, pendidikan inklusif, dan aktivisme digital. Praktik-praktik ini ditopang oleh pola relasi dialogis, kolaboratif, dan afektif di antara para aktor lintas iman, yang memungkinkan negosiasi perbedaan secara berkelanjutan dalam ruang sosial yang sama. Studi ini berargumen bahwa pluralisme Gus Dur tidak seharusnya dipahami semata sebagai doktrin teologis, melainkan sebagai kerangka dinamis keterlibatan kewargaan yang berakar pada kearifan lokal dan praktik sosial yang menginternalisasi nilai-nilai tersebut. Dengan menonjolkan temuan-temuan etnografis, artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus yang lebih luas tentang pluralisme agama dengan menunjukkan bagaimana nilai-nilai etik dapat dioperasionalkan sebagai praktik sosial yang kontekstual dan berakar dalam masyarakat plural.

Kata kunci: *Gus Dur; Pluralisme Agama; Kerukunan Lintas Iman; FKUB.*

Introduction

In the Indonesian national landscape, characterized by ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity, the challenge of maintaining social cohesion and cultivating peaceful coexistence remains a nationally relevant agenda. Amidst these dynamics, Abdurrahman Wahid, widely known as Gus Dur, offered a vision and praxis of religious pluralism that extends beyond conceptual discourse and manifests in tangible actions at the community level.¹ As both a thinker and a socio-political practitioner, Gus Dur integrated the intellectual traditions of Indonesian Islam, the cultural experience of *pesantren*, and active engagement in Indonesian democracy to articulate pluralism as the foundation of public ethics.²

Ahmad Suaedy emphasizes the role of Gus Dur's pluralism in bridging Indonesia's diversity with global peacebuilding efforts. Suaedy highlights that Gus Dur's pluralism, unlike Western models that often promote a homogenized view of religions, insists on the richness of theological differences, seeing them not as obstacles, but as opportunities for intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Suaedy's exploration underscores Gus Dur's influence in fostering religious harmony, not just within Indonesia, but as a model for global pluralism.³ His framework resonates with the growing need for inclusive policies in the face of religious intolerance and identity-based conflict globally.

Conventional notions of religious pluralism, particularly in the Western theological context, have often emphasized metaphysical convergence among religions. John Hick, for instance, proposed that all major religious traditions ultimately refer to the same transcendent reality, albeit through culturally conditioned symbols and doctrines. His theory, as elaborated in *God Has Many Names*, seeks to explain religious diversity through a single, universal metaphysical core, suggesting that all religious responses are valid paths to the same Real.⁴ While this model has been influential in promoting interfaith tolerance, it has also drawn criticism for its tendency to homogenize religious experiences and undermine theological distinctiveness.⁵

This article offers a counter-perspective by highlighting Gus Dur's model of ethical pluralism, which resists metaphysical reductionism and instead grounds pluralism in theological, juridical, and spiritual diversity within the Islamic tradition. Drawing on three foundational pillars, equality (*musāwāh*), justice (*'adl*), and freedom (*hurriyyah al-i'tiqād*), Gus Dur's approach to pluralism is firmly rooted in Islamic sources. Equality is anchored in QS. al-Hujurāt [49]:13 as a principle of human dignity across religious differences; justice is actualized through *fiqh al-ikhtilāf* as a way to ethically manage disagreement; and freedom is cultivated through a Sufi-informed ethic of belief autonomy as a dialogical space between faiths.⁶

For Gus Dur, pluralism was not a passive form of tolerance that merely accepts difference, but an active commitment to justice, equality, and full participation in the public sphere regardless of one's religious, ethnic, or socio-economic background.⁷ In his writings, Gus Dur emphasized that religion should serve as a moral foundation for national life, functioning as a source of ethical reflection and public responsibility.⁸ This position aligns with the notion of *substantive pluralism*, where diversity is viewed not as a problem to be solved, but as a divine gift to be cultivated through civic ethics and inclusive action.⁹

Gus Dur's pluralism is conceptually grounded in classical Islamic thought, including al-Ghazālī's *Fayṣal al-Tafrīqah*, which provides space for theological diversity within ethical limits,¹⁰ and the contemporary *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework articulated by Jasser Auda, which promotes justice, welfare, and diversity as central objectives of Islamic law.¹¹ On a practical level, Gus Dur's pluralism was expressed through his consistent support for interfaith dialogue, his defense of minority rights, and his trust in civil society's role in promoting inclusive social norms.¹²

Nevertheless, existing studies tend to emphasize Gus Dur's biographical, intellectual, or political contributions, while the actual translation of his pluralist values into social practices at the community level remains understudied.¹³ As Geertz reminds us, the meaning of values and symbols is best understood through their enactment in lived, everyday experience.¹⁴ Therefore, this study adopts an ethnographic approach to investigate how Gus Dur's vision of pluralism is lived out in contemporary interfaith interactions, particularly among grassroots actors.

The research aims to bridge the gap between Gus Dur's normative framework and real-world applications by documenting pluralist practices such as interreligious rituals, civic education, digital activism, and conflict mediation. These practices are not only evidence of pluralist ideals in motion but also serve as ethical spaces where civic engagement is cultivated and religious difference is negotiated.¹⁵ This article draws on the concept of civic engagement as its theoretical lens, defined as active and inclusive participation in shaping a democratic and plural public sphere.¹⁶ Unlike liberal models that confine religion to the private domain, Gus Dur promoted a model of spirituality-informed public life rooted in Indonesian culture and pesantren wisdom.¹⁷ Amid global trends of religious polarization and identity-based conflict, Gus Dur's ethical pluralism offers an alternative paradigm that privileges coexistence, mutual respect, and human dignity. By foregrounding local narratives grounded in ethnographic observation, this article affirms the continuing relevance of Gus Dur's pluralism—not as an abstract idea, but as a civic praxis with global implications.¹⁸

This study employs a qualitative research design with ethnographic methods to explore how Gus Dur's ethical vision of pluralism is translated into lived civic praxis. Ethnography is well-suited for investigating values, symbols, and social interactions as understood by community members themselves. Guided by Geertz's interpretive anthropology, the approach allows for "thick description" of socially meaningful practices in interfaith communities.¹⁹ The design emphasizes immersion in the field to capture

grassroots perspectives beyond elite or institutional narratives.²⁰ It focuses on understanding pluralism not merely as philosophical discourse, but as an ethical ideal embedded in everyday life. The approach is particularly relevant for revealing the moral negotiations and relational practices that sustain interfaith cooperation.

The primary data sources include interfaith forums, progressive pesantren networks, and youth organizations that explicitly affirm Gus Dur's legacy. These communities were purposively selected for their openness to researcher participation, ongoing activities, and representational diversity. They demonstrate theological inclusivity and sustained engagement in dialogue, advocacy, and social action. Informants consist of community leaders, youth actors, and religious figures actively involved in promoting pluralism. Supplementary sources include organizational documents, event materials, and digital content that reflect community engagement. Together, these sources provide a rich and multi-layered context for examining pluralist values in practice.

Three main techniques were employed for data collection: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.²¹ Participant observation involved active engagement in pluralism-based programs, such as interfaith discussions and shared rituals. In-depth interviews with selected actors were conducted using semi-structured formats to encourage narrative depth and spontaneous insights. Documentation included field notes, audio recordings, and photographs that captured contextual details of interactions. Informants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling, ensuring their relevance to the study's focus. Data collection was iterative, allowing emerging themes to shape subsequent interactions in the field.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach to identify patterns in behaviors, discourses, and symbolic practices that operationalize pluralist values. The process involved repeated readings of transcripts, coding of emerging themes, and alignment with the theoretical framework of ethical pluralism. Analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, enabling reflexive adaptation to new insights. Triangulation was applied by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance interpretive accuracy. Thematic patterns were examined both within and across cases to capture diversity and consistency in pluralism practices.²² This approach allowed for a grounded understanding of how pluralist ideals are enacted in daily life.

Credibility was ensured through methodological triangulation, combining multiple data collection techniques to cross-check findings.

Member checking was conducted with key informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Prolonged engagement in the field strengthened familiarity with community contexts, reducing the risk of superficial observations. Reflexivity was maintained throughout, with the researcher critically examining their positionality and potential biases. Ethical considerations were observed by obtaining informed consent and using pseudonyms to protect participant's identities. These measures ensured both the trustworthiness and ethical integrity of the research process.

Investigating Gus Dur's Vision on Pluralism

This study investigates how the ethical vision of religious pluralism envisioned by Gus Dur has been translated into real-world social practices within pluralistic communities. Drawing on the theoretical foundations of substantive pluralism, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and civic engagement, the research reveals that Gus Dur's legacy is not confined to theological discourse or political narrative, but is actively embodied through grassroots initiatives that promote justice, equality, and interfaith solidarity. Rather than treating pluralism as an abstract ideal, the findings demonstrate that it operates as a civic ethic—a lived framework that guides how communities engage across religious and cultural boundaries. To illustrate this transition from vision to praxis, the Jakarta Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB Jakarta) is presented as an empirical lens through which the enactment of Gus Dur's pluralist principles can be observed and analyzed. The following sections discuss key patterns, practices, and relational structures that reflect the operationalization of Gus Dur's values in everyday interfaith contexts.

This study finds that the *Forum for Religious Harmony (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* or FKUB) in the Province of DKI Jakarta plays a central role in translating the values of pluralism championed by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) into concrete and systemic social practices. Through an ethnographic approach involving participant observation, in-depth interviews, and engagement in interfaith activities, this research documents how Gus Dur's vision of pluralism is practiced as a collective ethic of life—not merely as a theological discourse or formal policy.

Institutionally, the FKUB structure in DKI Jakarta consists of a provincial-level FKUB with 21 members, as well as city or regency-level FKUBs in five administrative cities and one regency (Kepulauan Seribu), each composed of a maximum of 17 members. The membership composition reflects representation from Indonesia's six officially recognized religions (Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), alongside interfaith youth leaders and community figures.

FKUB functions as a mediating body, a facilitator of dialogue, and a recommending authority for the establishment of houses of worship. It also serves as a vital channel for citizen participation in sustaining interreligious harmony at the local level.²³

Findings from interviews with board members across the six administrative areas reveal a consistent emphasis that FKUB not only fulfills administrative mandates, but also internalizes the moral and social spirit of pluralism promoted by Gus Dur. As one respondent from the East Jakarta FKUB stated: “*We are not just managing a formal institution—we are nurturing a shared life. Gus Dur taught us that religion must never be a tool to divide, but rather a path toward encounter.*”²⁴

Table 1. The Profile of FKUB DKI Jakarta

Main Theme	Before Islamization
Institution Name	Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) of DKI Jakarta Province and Administrative Cities/Regency
Research Area Level	1 Province + 5 Administrative Cities (Central, North, South, East, and West Jakarta) + 1 Regency (Kepulauan Seribu)
Number of Members	– Province: 21 members – Cities/Regency: Maximum of 17 members per area
Member Composition	Representatives from six official religions (Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism) + Community figures
Membership Structure	Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Members; selected through interfaith deliberation
Main Functions	a) Promote interreligious dialogue b) Mediate religion-based horizontal conflicts c) Provide recommendations for the establishment of worship places
Examples of Field Programs	– Interfaith prayer gatherings – Interfaith student and youth forums – Mediation for house of worship establishment – Post-conflict interfaith dialogue
Geographical Coverage	Entire DKI Jakarta: Central Jakarta, North Jakarta, West Jakarta, South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and Kepulauan Seribu
Strategic Collaborations	Local Government (Provincial & City), Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious mass organizations, schools, and social institutions
Core Values Promoted	Equal rights, interreligious justice, social solidarity, respect for religious freedom

Various practices documented through field observations illustrate how the ethics of pluralism are situationally enacted and rooted in local community contexts. First, interfaith rituals serve as a vital means of fostering

collective awareness and spiritual solidarity among religious groups. These events are not merely ceremonial but also reflective and participatory. In several instances—such as national disaster commemorations or in response to acts of intolerance—FKUB initiated interfaith prayer gatherings attended by religious leaders and local residents. This reflects Gus Dur’s approach, which viewed spirituality as a unifying social force rather than a divisive one.

Second, FKUB has been active in mediating horizontal conflicts, particularly those related to sensitive issues such as the construction of places of worship, religious activities in densely populated neighborhoods, or interreligious tensions after elections. For example, the West Jakarta FKUB successfully mediated a neighborhood conflict involving the construction of a non-Muslim house of worship through persuasive engagement and open dialogue. This mediation strategy is grounded in the principle of equality, not in dominant compromise. One of FKUB’s member that represent the Christian community stated, “*FKUB must be neutral, but not passively neutral. We stand for justice, just as Gus Dur always did.*”²⁵

Third, interfaith education initiatives have become crucial mediums for instilling pluralist values in younger generations. FKUB in Central and South Jakarta has developed interfaith student forums that organize school-based discussions on themes such as “religion and tolerance” in both public and private institutions. These programs invite students from diverse religious backgrounds to engage in dialogue, share personal stories, and reflect on their role in preserving social harmony. This approach aligns with Gus Dur’s belief that pluralism must be taught from an early age through liberatory education that shapes civic character.

Fourth, FKUB has begun entering digital spaces through social media activism. Younger members in North and East Jakarta actively produce content that promotes peace, diversity, and religious anti-hoax education. These posts often open with Gus Dur’s famous quotes such as “God does not need to be defended” or “Humanity is more important than religion.” This activism is vital, as digital platforms have become key arenas of discourse, and FKUB has demonstrated its adaptive capacity to engage in this space progressively.

Through participatory observation, the researcher also noted that FKUB’s interfaith interactions are neither hierarchical nor overly formal but are instead grounded in personal friendships. Relations among members are characterized by mutual respect, social humor, and cultural solidarity that transcend religious symbolism. Many respondents shared

that they “feel like family” within FKUB forums. This is important, as it affirms that pluralism is not only embedded in structural mechanisms but also lives in egalitarian interpersonal relationships.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that Gus Dur’s pluralism lives on through institutions like FKUB, which actively interpret and implement those values within the complex urban realities of Jakarta. Pluralism here is not a top-down elite narrative but a lived social practice carried out by interfaith actors committed to justice, equality, and humanity. This model of pluralism is inclusive, participatory, and dynamic—responding to the needs of Jakarta’s diverse society while also serving as an inspiring model in the global context.

Conceptually, FKUB’s practices reflect three layers of Gus Dur’s thought: inclusive theology, social ethics, and democracy grounded in cultural values. As one FKUB chairperson stated in an interview, “*We’re not selling tolerance as a slogan; we’re trying to make it a way of life. All of us here have learned from Gus Dur, who showed that diversity is not a problem but a social asset.*”²⁶ This statement affirms that Gus Dur’s legacy is not confined to intellectual discourse but is actively translated into lived and evolving social practices.

Thus, this study concludes that FKUB at the provincial level—along with the five administrative cities and one regency—has become a concrete manifestation of Gus Dur’s pluralism in institutional practice. FKUB does not merely maintain harmony; it builds dialogue, bridges differences, and strengthens interfaith solidarity amidst the social fragmentation of multicultural urban society.

Relational Patterns of Actors and FKUB’s Practices

One of the key findings of this study is the emergence of a dynamic and cooperative relational pattern among interfaith actors within FKUB, enabling the sustainable implementation of pluralist values at the local level. FKUB is not merely a formal consultative forum but has evolved into a social space where interaction, cooperation, and value exchange among religious communities occur in an atmosphere of mutual respect. This relational model reflects what Gus Dur described as *civic ethics*—a practice of coexistence that is grounded in justice, empathy, and humanitarian solidarity.

The membership structure of FKUB, which represents the six officially recognized religions in Indonesia, makes the forum a miniature of Indonesia’s diversity at the institutional level. However, in practice, relationships among members are not merely symbolic. Observations and

interviews reveal that each member brings a unique role and contribution based on their religious background, yet they also construct a collective identity as “guardians of harmony” that transcends sectarian boundaries. A representative from Central Jakarta’s FKUB stated, “*Here, we don’t just represent religions—we represent the spirit of living together. That’s what Gus Dur taught us.*”²⁷

The relational patterns within FKUB are characterized by several core dimensions. First, the dialogical dimension, referring to the habit of exchanging views in an open and equal atmosphere. FKUB’s internal discussion forums do not merely address administrative agendas but serve as spaces to share faith experiences and social reflections. In this setting, pluralism emerges as a product of continuous dialogue rather than a bureaucratic decision.

Second, the collaborative dimension, referring to interfaith cooperation in designing and executing social programs. For example, in an interfaith youth training program in East Jakarta, actors from different religions actively contributed to curriculum development, facilitation of sessions, and the building of inter-organizational networks. Such practices demonstrate that pluralism extends beyond elite religious relations and reaches broader social structures through collective efforts.

Third, the affective dimension refers to the personal relationships built outside the formal institutional context. Many FKUB actors stated that their interfaith friendships are maintained beyond official meetings. They visit each other during religious holidays, support one another in times of grief, or simply share updates through online communication groups. This emotional bonding fosters solidarity that cannot be constructed solely through regulation but through repeated shared experiences.

The diagram of FKUB’s actor relations and pluralism practices can be visualized as a dynamic and interconnected social network. At the center lies FKUB as a facilitator and guardian of pluralism values. From this core radiate nodes of actors: senior religious leaders (kiai, pastors, priests, monks, Confucian clerics), community leaders, and interfaith youth. Each node is linked to various pluralism practices such as interfaith rituals, conflict mediation, diversity education, and digital activism. The relationships among actors are non-hierarchical, fluid, and participatory—reflecting a social structure that values collective contributions over sectoral dominance.

One compelling aspect of this relational pattern is the emergence of value brokers or dialogue bridges among actors, particularly those with hybrid backgrounds—for instance, religious leaders also active in human

rights NGOs, or clergy who have studied across traditions. They play a crucial role in translating different religious languages into mutual understanding while connecting FKUB with grassroots communities. This role aligns with Gus Dur's concept of the organic intellectual—those capable of linking religious ethics with social realities.

The relational model formed within FKUB DKI Jakarta shows that pluralism does not need to be a top-down or rigidly state-regulated project but can grow organically through a network of actors who trust and share values with each other. FKUB has become a platform where religious identity is not erased but nurtured in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. In this context, pluralism is a result of continuously built and negotiated relationships.

Thus, the findings of this study affirm that the success of pluralism lies not in a singular policy or normative document but in the strength of social relationships genuinely constructed by interfaith actors. Within the relationship patterns cultivated in FKUB, Gus Dur's legacy finds its practical expression—pluralism as a way of life, not merely a slogan.

This study has portrayed the practice of pluralism through Gus Dur's ethical lens via ethnographic research conducted at the FKUB of DKI Jakarta Province, its five administrative cities, and one regency. However, the theoretical and empirical exploration of religious pluralism in Indonesia remains open. Future research is encouraged to develop comparative studies between FKUBs in urban regions like Jakarta and rural or peripheral areas, to examine how geographical, demographic, and political contexts shape the institutional translation of pluralist values.

The second research gap lies in exploring the role of interfaith youth in transforming Gus Dur's legacy of pluralism in the digital age. While this study has documented some social media activities by younger FKUB actors, a more focused and in-depth study on digital pluralism discourse, narrative communication strategies, and resistance to online radicalism would enrich academic discourse on contemporary cultural pluralism.

From a methodological standpoint, future studies could integrate a digital ethnography approach to trace how pluralist values are articulated, disseminated, and negotiated in virtual spaces. This is especially relevant given the growing influence of social media in shaping religious opinions, expanding interfaith movements, and connecting—or dividing—communities along identity lines.

Further, research should delve deeper into the role of women and marginalized communities in grassroots pluralism practices. This study largely reflects the voices of religious elites and formal figures, while

experiences of pluralism from the perspectives of women, survivors of discrimination, or unofficial minority groups remain underrepresented. Such studies would broaden the pluralism discourse into realms of often-hidden or marginalized diversity.

Lastly, there is a need to develop interdisciplinary approaches connecting pluralism studies with strategic global issues such as climate change, urban migration, multicultural education, and urban space transformation. By linking religious pluralism to broader global and transnational challenges, future research can demonstrate that pluralism is not merely a response to identity conflict but also an ethical resource for addressing wider humanitarian crises. Within this framework, Gus Dur's legacy can be reinterpreted as Indonesia's contribution to a more just and humane global civilization.

Conclusion

This study affirms that the legacy of Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur's) pluralism is not confined to theological ideas or political narratives; rather, it has transformed into an ethic of life practiced by interfaith actors within tangible social spaces. Through an ethnographic approach to the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) in DKI Jakarta Province and its six administrative regions, it was found that the values of inclusivity, equality, and solidarity championed by Gus Dur have become embedded in institutional practices and interreligious social relations.

FKUB not only fulfills its formal mandate as a mediating and facilitating body for religious harmony, but also acts as a moral and cultural agent actively shaping an inclusive public sphere. Practices such as interfaith rituals, religious-based conflict mediation, diversity education, and digital activism serve as evidence that pluralism can be lived out in real and context-sensitive ways. More than a coordinating forum, FKUB has evolved into a network of human relationships that transcends sectarian boundaries and cultivates social trust.

In the context of rising intolerance, identity polarization, and shrinking spaces for religious expression, the experience of FKUB Jakarta demonstrates that Gus Dur's model of pluralism remains relevant and applicable. Here, pluralism is not a passive doctrine or normative slogan, but a social praxis enacted collectively by actors who recognize diversity as a foundation for civic ethics and democracy.

Thus, this study not only reaffirms the significance of Gus

Dur's intellectual legacy but also illustrates how that legacy can be institutionalized, passed across generations, and embraced across religious traditions. FKUB stands as evidence that pluralism is not merely an idea, but a way of life—continuously practiced and transmitted—from discourse to action, from principle to praxis.

Analytically, the relational patterns that emerge within FKUB Jakarta demonstrate that pluralism has moved beyond its normative status as an ideological construct and has instead become institutionalized as a concrete form of social practice. In this context, FKUB can be understood as an arena of civic engagement grounded in pluralism—namely, a form of interfaith participation that is not merely participatory, but also transformative in fostering social cohesion across religious boundaries.²⁸

Furthermore, the dialogical, collaborative, and affective relationships developed among FKUB actors reflect Gus Dur's paradigm of inclusive theology, in which difference is not positioned as an exclusive boundary, but rather as an ethical field for the pursuit of justice and equality. Within this framework, pluralism is not equivalent to relativism; instead, it constitutes an ethics of difference that promotes recognition, equitable distribution, and participatory inclusion within the public sphere.²⁹

The findings also indicate that FKUB practices operate across three interrelated layers that are central to Gus Dur's intellectual framework: the theological dimension (recognizing plurality as *sunnatullah*), the socio-ethical dimension (commitment to justice and the protection of vulnerable groups), and the civic dimension (active engagement in public life). In this sense, pluralism is no longer understood as passive tolerance, but as a social project that requires active participation within a shared civic space.³⁰

From a theoretical perspective, the relational dynamics within FKUB can also be interpreted as a form of cross-religious social capital, which strengthens networks of trust, reinforces norms of reciprocity, and sustains cooperation among diverse communities. Such relational configurations are crucial for the sustainability of pluralism, as they enable the negotiation of difference to occur in a non-conflictual and productive manner within a shared social environment.³¹

Moreover, the practices of pluralism observed in FKUB illustrate a contextual translation of Gus Dur's intellectual legacy—from elite discourse into embodied, community-based praxis. While Gus Dur's pluralism is theoretically grounded in a synthesis of Islamic values, local wisdom, and universal humanism, in practice it manifests as lived experiences embedded in everyday interfaith interactions, shared rituals, and forms of social solidarity.³²

Therefore, it can be argued that the effectiveness of FKUB does not primarily lie in its formal institutional structure or programmatic outputs, but rather in the quality of the social relationships cultivated within it. These relational configurations function as the primary medium through which values are transmitted, negotiated, and reproduced. In this sense, FKUB should not merely be viewed as a coordinative forum, but as a “social laboratory” in which Gus Dur’s pluralism is continuously enacted, internalized, and transmitted as a lived civic ethic.

Endnotes

1. N. Al-Zastrouw, *Gus Dur, Siapa Sih Sampeyan? Tafsir Teoritik Atas Tindakan Dan Pernyataan Gus Dur* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1999), 23.
2. G. Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal Di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib, Dan Abdurrahman Wahid* (Jakarta: Paramadina & The Ford Foundation, 1999), 35.
3. A. Suaedy, *Pluralisme Gus Dur Dan Perdamaian Global: Perspektif Indonesia* (Mizan, 2018), 17.
4. J. Hick, *God Has Many Names* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 7.
5. Nanda Khairiyah, “Relasi Agama dan Masyarakat dalam Perspektif John Hick dan Gus Dur,” *AL AQIDAH: Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, no. 1 (2022): 33–40.
6. Nanda Khairiyah and Muh. Bukhari, “Analisis Konsep Moderasi Beragama Menurut Pimpinan Majelis Lintas Agama Di Jakarta,” *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 17, no. 1 (January 2024): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v17i1.7722>.
7. A. A. Aziz, *Neo-Modernisme Islam Di Indonesia: Gagasan Sentral Nurcholish Madjid–Abdurrahman Wahid* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999), 11; Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal Di Indonesia*, 42.
8. A. Wahid, “Massa Islam Dan Kehidupan Bernegara Dan Berbangsa,” *Prisma* (Ekstra) (1984): 3–9. A. Wahid, “Politik Sebagai Moral, Bukan Institusi,” *Prisma* 5 (1995): 66–69.
9. Z. A. Bagir, *Pengakuan Negara Atas Keyakinan Keagamaan Di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: CRCS Universitas Gajah Mada, 2013), 58; K. Hidayat and A. F. Gaus, *Passing Over: Melintasi Batas Agama* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Paramadina, 1998), 23.
10. Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal Al-Tafrīqah* (Kairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1999), 11.
11. J. Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: IIIT, 2007), 23.
12. B. Bräuchler, *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace* (London: Routledge, 2009), 55.
13. Al-Zastrouw, *Gus Dur, Siapa Sih Sampeyan?* 27.
14. C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 64.
15. R. Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power Within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 21.
16. R. A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1971), 64; T. Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2000), 52.
17. T. Banchoff, *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 35; R. Boase, *Islam and Global Dialogue: Religious Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace* (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2005), 49.
18. K. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (New York: Anchor Books, 2014), 31; Azumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 16.

19. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 23.
20. Bräuchler, *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace*, 77.
21. John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2013), 63.
22. John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 4th ed (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 44.
23. See: <https://fkubjakpus.or.id/profile/>
24. Interview with Dr. KH. Ma'arif Fuadi, Head of FKUB Jakarta Timur in Jakarta, December 2024.
25. Interview with Rahadi, M.Si, Secretary FKUB Jakarta Selatan in Jakarta November 2024.
26. Interview with Prof. Dr. Dede Rosyada, MA, Head of FKUB DKI Jakarta December 2024.
27. Interview with Pdt. Constanta Wattimuri, member of PGI dan FKUB DKI Jakarta September 2024.
28. Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Thomas Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 2000).
29. Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2006), 45–67
30. Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 178–203; Abdurrahman Wahid, *Pergulatan Negara, Agama, dan Kebudayaan* (Depok: Desantara, 2001).
31. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
32. Azumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Ahmad Suaedy, *Pluralisme Gus Dur dan Perdamaian Global* (Bandung: Mizan, 2018); Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007).

Bibliography

- Al-Ghazālī. *Faysal Al-Tafriqah*. Kairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1999.
- Al-Zastrow, N. *Gus Dur, Siapa Sih Sampeyan? Tafsir Teoritik Atas Tindakan Dan Pernyataan Gus Dur*. Jakarta: Erlangga, 1999.
- Armstrong, K. *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*. New York: Anchor Books, 2014.
- Auda, J. *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. London: IIIT, 2007.
- Aziz, A. A. *Neo-Modernisme Islam di Indonesia: Gagasan Sentral Nurcholish Madjid–Abdurrahman Wahid*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999.
- Azra, Azumardi. *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Bagir, Z. A. *Pengakuan Negara Atas Keyakinan Keagamaan Di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: CRCs Universitas Gajah Mada, 2013.
- Banchoff, T. *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Barton, G. *Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002.
- . *Gagasan Islam Liberal di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish*

- Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib, Dan Abdurrahman Wahid. Jakarta: Paramadina & The Ford Foundation, 1999.
- Boase, R. *Islam and Global Dialogue: Religious Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace*. Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2005.
- Bräuchler, B. *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Bush, R. *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power Within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2009.
- Creswell, John W. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2012.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2013.
- Dahl, R. A. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1971.
- Ehrlich, T. *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2000.
- Geertz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Hefner, Robert W. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Hick, J. *God Has Many Names*. London: Macmillan, 1980.
- Hidayat, K., and A. F. Gaus. *Passing Over: Melintasi Batas Agama*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Paramadina, 1998.
- Khairiyah, Nanda. "Relasi Agama dan Masyarakat dalam Perspektif John Hick dan Gus Dur." *AL AQIDAH: Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, no. 1 (2022): 33–40.
- Khairiyah, Nanda, and Muh. Bukhari. "Analisis Konsep Moderasi Beragama Menurut Pimpinan Majelis Lintas Agama Di Jakarta." *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 17, no. 1 (January 2024): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v17i1.7722>.
- Putnam, Robert D. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Raniasati, Rifani, Zulaikha Fitri Nur Ngaisah, Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha, and Rizie Bin Nasarruddin. "Hubungan Islam Dan Negara Dalam Perspektif Abdurrahman Wahid." *Aqlania* 13, no. 2 (January 2023): 189–202. <https://doi.org/10.32678/aqlania.v13i2.7085>.
- Suaedy, A. *Pluralisme Gus Dur Dan Perdamaian Global: Perspektif Indonesia*. Mizan, 2018.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Wahid, A. "Massa Islam Dan Kehidupan Bernegara Dan Berbangsa." *Prisma* (Ekstra) (1984): 3–9.
- . "Politik Sebagai Moral, Bukan Institusi." *Prisma* 5 (1995): 66–69.

Nanda Khairiyah, Universitas Islam As Syafiyah, Indonesia | nanda.rifani.nr@gmail.com

Siti Nabilah, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia | sitinabila@unusia.ac.id