



**INDONESIAN ISLAMIC THEOLOGY:
Understanding Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism
in the Context of Religious Plurality**

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, religious issues have emerged as a subject of intense debate and polemic. Conflicting religious claims often incite debates and hostilities purportedly in the name of faith. In certain instances, the emergence of inter-religious conflicts in Indonesia is exacerbated by exclusionary perspectives on religion. This study aims to critically examine the concept of Islamic theology within the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, characterized by its rich religious diversity. Employing a qualitative research methodology with a descriptive-analytical approach, this research utilizes library research to gather a variety of thematic literature. The findings indicate that Indonesia is a nation marked by significant religious plurality. In this context, Islam, as an inherently open faith, embraces inclusivism and pluralism, which serve as essential frameworks for mitigating interfaith conflicts arising from competing religious truth claims. Consequently, the promotion of inclusivist and pluralist perspectives in religion fosters a culture of tolerance, thereby facilitating a harmonious coexistence among adherents of diverse faiths.

Keywords: *Exclusivism; Inclusivism; Pluralism; Religion; Indonesia.*

ABSTRAK

Di Indonesia, isu-isu agama telah muncul sebagai subjek perdebatan dan polemik yang intens. Klaim-klaim agama yang saling bertentangan sering

kali memicu perdebatan dan permusuhan yang mengatasnamakan agama. Dalam beberapa kasus, munculnya konflik antar-agama di Indonesia diperparah oleh perspektif yang eksklusif terhadap agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis konsep teologi Islam dalam konteks masyarakat Indonesia yang majemuk, yang ditandai dengan keragaman agama yang kaya. Menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis, penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan untuk mengumpulkan berbagai literatur tematik. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia merupakan negara yang ditandai dengan kemajemukan agama yang signifikan. Dalam konteks ini, Islam, sebagai agama yang secara inheren terbuka, merangkul inklusivisme dan pluralisme, yang berfungsi sebagai kerangka kerja penting untuk mengurangi konflik antar agama yang timbul dari klaim kebenaran agama yang bersaing. Oleh karena itu, promosi perspektif inklusif dan pluralis dalam agama menumbuhkan budaya toleransi, sehingga memfasilitasi koeksistensi yang harmonis di antara para pemeluk agama yang beragama.

Kata kunci: Eksklusivisme; Inklusivisme; Pluralisme; Agama; Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, interfaith relations have been a significant concern across various dimensions, including social, political, and cultural behaviors. Religious perspectives serve as a critical framework for navigating these interfaith interactions, primarily due to the country's rich tapestry of religious diversity. This diversity has led to societal segmentation into distinct religious identities, encompassing Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and various local belief systems that collectively shape the social fabric of Indonesian society.¹

Historically, interfaith relations have been fostered through local traditions and cultural practices, which represent invaluable assets in promoting societal harmony and coexistence. The practice of living together peacefully has deep roots in Indonesian communities, where conflict is not typically regarded as an inherent aspect of interfaith relations. Rather, any arising conflicts tend to be localized and limited in scope. While religion may not serve as the primary catalyst for social discord, it undeniably plays a role in exacerbating tensions. Additionally, religious and political traditions are frequently underpinned by exclusive interpretations

¹ Rumadi Ahmad, *Fatwa Hubungan Antaragama di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2016), hal. 1-2.

of religious teachings, which can further complicate interfaith dynamics. This paper aims to explore the complexities of interfaith relations in Indonesia, emphasizing the interplay between religious diversity, cultural practices, and the potential for conflict.²

Among the religions in Indonesia, the position of Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism has received extensive attention in the political, social and economic sectors. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and other local religions also have competence in their strong political, social and economic sectors. In this case, the struggle for position does not only occur in the political, social and economic fields, but also on religious bases. In religious differences, each religion has a theological basis in addressing them.³

Today, political, social, economic and religious issues in Indonesia are seen as developments that endanger the building of the nation. In terms of religion, people are often infuriated by the endless development of cults. From the various phenomena that emerge, the maturity of looking at it is an obligation considering that this nation is very plural in belief. From the angle of the event, there is often a suspicion about the existence of another religious conspiracy. Of course it should not happen, because as a large unit of pluralistic state society, Indonesia has a tough job to manage the *existing religions and faiths* that exist and transform them into an effective driving energy to organize society to avoid the occurrence of gaps that are based on disputes over truth claims between one religion and another religion.⁴

In addressing religious diversity, Nurcholish Madjid mentions three attitudes of religious dialog. *First*, an exclusive attitude in seeing other religions, religions other than his religion as the wrong way, which misleads the people. *Second*, an inclusive attitude that other religions are an implicit form of the religion that is adhered to. *Third*, a pluralist attitude, which can be expressed in various formulations, for example that other religions are equally valid ways to reach the same truth.⁵

Religious pluralism constitutes a fundamental social reality that has historically been embedded within various religious traditions. In addressing and engaging with the contemporary landscape of religious plurality, it is essential to recognize that no religious community is monolithic. Within this context, there exist factions that advocate for

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., hal. 2-3.

⁴ Abu Bakar MS, "Argumen Al-Qur'an tentang Eksklusivisme, Inklusivisme dan Pluralisme," *Toleransi: Media Komunikasi Umat Beragama*, Vol 8, No. 1 (Januari-Juni 2016), hal. 52.

⁵ Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, "Pluralisme dalam Perspektif Islam," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Maret 2012), hal. 7.

religious pluralism, while others contest its validity, with both sides presenting arguments grounded in the Qur'an and hadith.⁶

This paper seeks to explore Islamic theology in relation to the framework of religious diversity in Indonesia. The issue of religious diversity in Indonesia presents significant challenges, often resulting in ongoing disputes regarding the truth claims associated with different faiths. Consequently, this study will investigate the theological perspectives within Islam that pertain to the coexistence of diverse religious communities. By examining these views, the paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Islamic theology can inform and enhance interfaith dialogue and coexistence in a pluralistic society.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative methodology, specifically utilizing a library research approach. The literature study involves the systematic collection of diverse reference materials pertinent to the research theme. The primary focus of this investigation is to examine the patterns of religious diversity in Indonesia through a historical lens, tracing the evolution and dynamics of interfaith relations over time.

Data collection is conducted using a documentation method, which entails gathering literature that reflects the perspectives of Indonesian Islamic figures and groups regarding religious diversity. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the theological and sociocultural contexts that shape these views. In terms of data analysis, the research employs descriptive analysis, systematically organizing the collected data to facilitate a clear and coherent presentation of findings.

By analyzing the theological perspectives on religious diversity articulated by various Islamic scholars and communities, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on interfaith relations in Indonesia. The insights gained from this research are intended to enhance our understanding of how religious diversity is perceived and navigated within the Indonesian context, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Exclusivity, Inclusivity and Plurality

The term “exclusive” originates from the English word “exclusive,” which denotes a sense of separation, implying that something is singular,

⁶ Gustia Tahir, “Pluralisme Agama dalam Perspektif Islam,” *Jurnal Adabiyah*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (2011), hal. 142.

not accompanied by others, and stands alone.⁷ According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, “exclusive” signifies a distinction from others, indicating a special status. When applied to theology, it gives rise to the concept of “exclusive theology.” As articulated by Alwi Shihab, exclusive theology—particularly within the Christian context—suggests that eternal salvation can only be attained through belief in Jesus Christ, implying that those outside this belief system are excluded from salvation.⁸

An exclusive religious attitude fosters the notion that one’s beliefs are absolute and final, viewing alternative perspectives as heretical.⁹ This mindset often leads to a self-imposed isolation from external groups and is characterized by extremism, conservatism, fundamentalism, apologetics, intolerance, and dogmatism. Adherents of exclusivism may struggle to adapt to dynamic societal changes and diverse geographical contexts, ultimately constraining the potential for interreligious dialogue, mutual interaction, and tolerance among different faith communities.

Conversely, the term “inclusive” derives from the English word “inclusive,” meaning “up to or including.” The Indonesian Dictionary defines “inclusive” as encompassing or counting various elements. In a religious context, an inclusive attitude promotes openness to external views and beliefs, recognizing that truth may be found beyond one’s own faith.¹⁰ Azyumardi Azra describes inclusive theology as a “theology of religious harmony,” emphasizing the need for understanding and coexistence both within a single religion and among different faiths.¹¹ The central theme of inclusive theology is the cultivation of religious understanding that embodies flexibility, tolerance, and respect for pluralism. This perspective encourages adherents of various religious traditions to coexist peacefully, prioritizing an open, accepting attitude towards the truths found in diverse belief systems.¹²

The term “pluralist” linguistically derives from the English word “plural” (adjective), which signifies a multitude, evolving into the abstract noun “plurality” that denotes a considerable amount, whether in terms of quantity or majority.¹³ According to the Indonesian Dictionary, “pluralist” refers to a category representing more than one or two entities, particularly

⁷ Ahmad Fuadi, “Studi Islam (Islam Eksklusif dan Inklusif),” *Wahana Inovasi*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Juli-Desember 2018), hal. 49.

⁸ Rofiq Nurhadi, ddk, “Dialektika Inklusivisme dan Eksklusivisme Islam Kajian Semantik terhadap Tafsir Al-Quran tentang Hubungan Antaragama,” *Jurnal Kawistara*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 2013), hal. 59-60.

⁹ Eman Surachman, “Dimensi Teologis dan Sosiologis dalam Relasi Antar Umat Beragama,” *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur’an*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Januari 2010), hal. 24.

¹⁰ Surachman, “Dimensi Teologis,” hal. 24.

¹¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Konteks Berteologi di Indonesia Pengalaman Islam* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999); Zain Abidin, “Islam Inklusif: Telaah Atas Doktrin Dan Sejarah,” *Jurnal Humaniora*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2013), hal. 1278.

¹² Abidin, “Islam Inklusif.”

¹³ J. Milton Cowan, Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written* (London: Macdonald & Evan Ltd, 1974), hal. 982; Tahir, “Pluralisme Agama,” hal. 138.

in languages with dual forms. Pluralism, in this context, describes an understanding of a pluralistic society that acknowledges the coexistence of diverse cultures within its socio-political framework.¹⁴ Generally, pluralism encapsulates an ethos that respects societal differences and allows various groups to preserve their unique cultural identities. It is also frequently defined as a belief in the validity of all religions.¹⁵ Religious pluralism specifically refers to the recognition of plurality, diversity, or the existence of multiple ideologies and beliefs within a society.¹⁶

The distinctions among exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism are significant. Exclusivism represents an extreme stance, positing that truth is exclusively confined to one's own belief system. In contrast, inclusivism suggests that salvation is not the sole possession of a particular faith, but rather that other religions may also hold paths to salvation. Pluralism, on the other hand, asserts that all religions possess truth in their own right.¹⁷

Exclusive, Inclusive and Pluralist Theology in Islam

According to Cobb, a distinguished theologian, nearly all religions exhibit three distinct theological perspectives in their interactions with others: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.¹⁸ These frameworks not only shape the internal dynamics of religious communities but also influence their engagements with differing belief systems. In the context of Islam, similar theological paradigms can be identified that guide the interactions with other faiths and interpretations. Specifically, these frameworks encompass exclusivist views that assert the sole truth of Islamic teachings, inclusivist perspectives that recognize the validity of other faiths while maintaining a central Islamic truth, and pluralist approaches that advocate for a more comprehensive acceptance of diverse religious expressions. By understanding these theological constructs, one can gain deeper insights into the complexities of interfaith dialogues and the multifaceted nature of religious coexistence in contemporary society.

The exclusivist stance within Islam asserts that truth and salvation are exclusively reserved for its adherents, dismissing the validity of other religious traditions.¹⁹ This position is grounded in a truth claim that is intrinsic to each religion, emphasizing the necessity for believers to internalize and adhere to the teachings found within their sacred texts. The implication of this perspective is that the practice of religious teachings is

¹⁴ M. Syaiful Rahman, "Islam dan Pluralisme," *Jurnal Fikrah*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Juni 2014), hal. 405.

¹⁵ Muktafi Sahal, *Berteologi dalam Bingkai Kemanusiaan* (Surabaya: t.p, 2023), hal. 14.

¹⁶ Abd. Moqsih Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama* (Jakarta: Kata Kita, 2009), xiii; Tahir, "Pluralisme Agama," hal. 139.

¹⁷ Amir Gufron, "Inklusifisme Islam di Indonesia," *Jurnal Al-A'raf*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Januari-Juni 2014), hal. 12.

¹⁸ Sahal, *Berteologi dalam Bingkai Kemanusiaan*, hal. 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, hal. 18.

contingent upon a comprehensive understanding and compliance with the doctrines outlined in these texts. At this level, exclusivism reflects an inherent context within religious traditions. However, historical experiences suggest that exclusivism can engender adverse consequences, as it often becomes entangled with significant political struggles. Consequently, this theological viewpoint may restrict engagement with other religious beliefs and practices, creating a formidable barrier that undermines the potential for interfaith dialogue. Ultimately, this exclusivist perspective can lead to a monistic understanding, which posits that there is a singular path to truth, rendering all alternative beliefs as invalid.²⁰

The proliferation of this exclusivist viewpoint among Muslims has evolved over centuries, though the precise moment when it became predominant remains unclear. Notably, the inclusive perspective within Islam began to wane approximately during the first four centuries of the Islamic era, coinciding with the consolidation of the Ottoman tradition, which was supported by political authorities.²¹ Historical records indicate that this exclusivist stance has left a legacy marked by conflict and warfare,²² suggesting that religion has often deviated from its potential for enlightenment and liberation, instead manifesting as a source of strife and violence.²³

Several defining characteristics of the exclusivist perspective in Islam can be identified. First, it is dogmatic; the entrenched nature of Islamic doctrines fosters a passive acceptance of beliefs and inhibits critical engagement with Islamic teachings, often relying on the interpretations of respected scholars. Second, it is totalistic; adherents view Islam as a comprehensive system (*kaāffah*) that encompasses all aspects of life, embedding insights and values that are regarded as absolute. Third, fanaticism is prevalent, as exclusivist Muslims may hold the conviction that Islam is the sole truth, categorizing other faiths as erroneous. Fourth, this perspective is ideological; exclusivism frames Islam as an overarching ideology that justifies personal and communal objectives. Lastly, it exhibits a formalistic tendency, emphasizing strict adherence to Islamic practices and often placing significant importance on the use of religious symbols in various aspects of life.²⁴

At a fundamental level, the exclusivist perspective presents several challenges. This viewpoint fosters a religious understanding that hinders the

²⁰ Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Oasis, 2010), hal. 176-177.

²¹ Taufik Adnan Amal, "Alquran dan Keanekaragaman Agama," dalam Elza Peldi Taher (ed.), *Merayakan Kebebasan Beragama* (Jakarta: ICRP, 2009), hal. 230.

²² Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab*, hal. 177.

²³ Ibid., hal. 198; Maria Ulfa, "Mencermati Inkusivisme Agama Nurcholish Madjid," *Jurnal Kalimah*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (September 2013), hal. 239.

²⁴ Lestari, "Keyakinan, Pemahaman, dan Pengamalan Eksklusivis Islam Perspektif Inklusivis Islam," *EL-Hikam: Journal of Education and Religious Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Januari-Juni 2016), hal. 150-154.

development of a culture of dialogue and tolerance, not only in inter-religious contexts but also within intra-religious dynamics. Consequently, exclusivism has contributed to unrest and anxiety in the pursuit of a peaceful and tolerant religious existence.²⁵ Several verses from the Qur'an, such as Surah Ali Imran [3]: 19 and 85, and Surah Al-Maidah [5]: 3, which emphasize Islam's unique status as the religion favored by God, serve as foundational texts that reinforce Islamic exclusivism. Moreover, exclusive interpretations of Islam have been further extended by mufassirs to encompass certain inclusive verses.²⁶

Islamic exclusivism is generally categorized into two subsets: inward exclusivism and outward exclusivism. Outward exclusivism perceives Islam as the sole true religion, deeming all other faiths as heretical. This perspective is primarily based on Surah Ali Imran [3]: 19, which asserts that the term "Islam" refers specifically to the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad, which is deemed pleasing to God, while other religions are considered misguided. In contrast, inward exclusivism encompasses attitudes and perceptions that acknowledge only the truth of exclusivist interpretations of Islam, while dismissing all alternative views as erroneous.²⁷

On the other hand, inclusive Islam embodies an open approach that recognizes the value of truth in other teachings for the benefit of humanity.²⁸ This inclusive stance does not imply a blending of ideologies or beliefs with Islam; rather, it seeks to embody the universality of Islam as a religion of mercy and to implement this in daily life.²⁹ From the perspective of inclusivism, truth is not confined to one's own religious group but is also present in other traditions, grounded in the belief that each religion carries teachings aimed at salvation.³⁰ This inclusive attitude reflects a progressive outlook towards other faiths, suggesting that truth and salvation are not monopolized by any single belief system, though other religions may still be regarded as secondary.³¹

Islamic inclusivism, in its various manifestations, can be categorized into two primary forms: outward inclusivism and inward inclusivism. Outward inclusivism refers to an acknowledgment and acceptance of differences that extend beyond one's own belief system, emphasizing the recognition of moral and ethical messages that are present in various religious traditions. This perspective fosters a spirit of mutual respect and

²⁵ Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab*, hal. 177.

²⁶ Taher, *Merayakan Kebebasan*.

²⁷ Fuadi, "Studi Islam," hal. 50-51.

²⁸ Aden Wijdan, dkk, *Pemikiran dan Peradaban Islam* (Yogyakarta: Safiria Insania Press, 2007), hal. 138; Zulkifli, dkk, *Pemikiran Modern Islam* (Padang: PT Global Eksekutif Teknologi, 2023), hal. 74.

²⁹ Moh. Mizan Habibi, "Corak Pendidikan Islam Inklusif," *Jurnal eL-Tarbawi*, Vol. 10, No 1 (2017), hal. 35-48.

³⁰ Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab*, hal. 177.

³¹ Zuhdi, "Pluralisme," hal. 7.

dialogue among diverse faith communities. Conversely, inward inclusivism highlights a commitment to coexistence among the numerous sects and interpretations within Islam itself. The religion is characterized by a rich tapestry of theological schools of thought, each offering unique interpretations of Islamic teachings. This diversity leads to a wide range of understandings and practices, underscoring the importance of embracing intra-faith dialogue as well as interfaith engagement. By exploring these dimensions of inclusivism, one can better appreciate the complexities and pluralistic nature of Islamic thought in contemporary society.³²

The promotion of an inclusive attitude within the Islamic social tradition is integral to community life. This attitude manifests through a willingness to engage in social interactions, encompassing friendships, collaborative work, and joint activities with individuals of other faiths. From an inclusive perspective, individuals are more likely to embrace differences, even when they may not agree with the beliefs of others, while maintaining a tolerant stance towards these differences.³³ The further evolution of inclusivism leads to the concept of religious pluralism, which acknowledges the existence of equal truths across various religious traditions.³⁴

In theological discourse, pluralism within Islam is fundamentally characterized by a commitment to mutual respect and tolerance toward other religious traditions. However, it is crucial to clarify that this pluralistic stance does not entail the assertion that all religions are equivalent or that the conception of God in one religion is identical to that in another. Instead, Islam recognizes and affirms the reality of religious pluralism by honoring the unique identities and doctrinal differences inherent in each faith. In this framework, pluralism serves a dual purpose: it endeavors to alleviate potential conflicts arising from religious diversity and simultaneously seeks to celebrate and uphold the rich variety of existing religious identities.³⁵ By fostering an environment of understanding and acceptance, pluralism within Islam contributes to the broader discourse on interfaith relations and coexistence in an increasingly multicultural world.

Theological Dynamics in Indonesia's Pluralistic Landscape

From both sociological and anthropological perspectives, the Indonesian population can be characterized as a plural society, distinguished by its rich of ethnicities, cultures, and religious beliefs. This

³² Mukhammad Zamzami, "Hikmah dalam Al-Qur'an dan Implementasinya dalam Membangun Pemikiran Islam yang Inklusif," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Desember 2016), hal. 373-374.

³³ Ahmad, *Fatwa Hubungan*, hal. 3.

³⁴ Ahmad Khoiril Fata, "Menguak Islam Eksklusif yang Toleran," *Jurnal Islamica*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (September 2011), hal. 15.

³⁵ Lorens Bagus, *Kamus Filsafat* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2006), hal. 853; Rahman, *Islam*, hal. 406-407.

diversity is not only a hallmark of Indonesia's identity but also a source of its strength. However, the presence of exclusivism—defined as the belief that one's own religion is the sole path to truth—poses a significant challenge to social cohesion.³⁶ Exclusivist attitudes can foster an environment of intolerance and division, complicating efforts to establish a robust foundation for peaceful coexistence and harmony within such a varied nation. For instance, communities may become entrenched in their beliefs, leading to the marginalization of others and creating an atmosphere of hostility rather than cooperation.

The ramifications of exclusivism are evident in the recurring instances of religious conflicts across various regions of the Indonesian archipelago. These conflicts often arise from rigid, exclusive religious viewpoints that fail to acknowledge the legitimacy of differing beliefs, leading to a cycle of misunderstanding and violence. Historical examples, such as the riots in Ambon and Poso in the late 1990s and early 2000s, illustrate how sectarian strife can erupt in plural societies when exclusivist ideologies take root. Moreover, the prevalence of such conflicts underscores the urgent need for inclusive dialogue that embraces and respects diversity. Fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding can mitigate tensions and promote social cohesion, thereby enabling Indonesia to harness its pluralism as a source of unity rather than division.

In addressing the complexities of religious diversity in Indonesia, several prominent Islamic scholars have contributed their insights, demonstrating a profound engagement with issues of interfaith relations and dialogue. Notable figures such as Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and Kuntowijoyo have articulated their thoughts on these matters. Madjid, in particular, has proposed the concept of a 'common platform' for religions, which some observers refer to as inclusive theology, closely linked to the phenomenon of religious pluralism.³⁷ An inclusive attitude necessitates the existence of pluralism, while pluralism, in turn, demands an inclusive approach. In the Indonesian context, religious pluralism is an established reality, and theological frameworks that advocate for inclusivism and pluralism can play a crucial role in mitigating conflict and tension among different faiths.³⁸

Nurcholish Madjid's interpretation of inclusivism emphasizes a religious understanding that critically examines specific doctrines without making unilateral truth claims, thereby avoiding a monopoly on religious

³⁶ Samsi Pomalingo, *Membumikan Dialog Liberatif* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2016), hal. 40.

³⁷ Tasman, "Islam Inklusif: Konstruksi Pemikiran untuk Dialog Umat Beragama di Indonesia," *Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Kemasyarakatan*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2017), hal. 140.

³⁸ Abdul Halim, "Konstruksi Pluralisme Agama dalam Islam," *Jurnal Tajdid*, Vol. XIV, No. 2 (Juli-Desember 2015), hal. 372-373.

truth.³⁹ He asserts that recognizing other religions as valid paths to God does not diminish the essence of Islam; rather, it enriches the understanding of divine light. This inclusive stance promotes dialogue that transcends mere debate over doctrinal differences, focusing instead on cultural exchanges that highlight shared human values.⁴⁰

Madjid further posits that Islam, as an inclusive religion, should embody openness. He advocates for Muslims to adopt a posture of confidence and care towards other groups, rejecting absolutism in favor of a dynamic ethos that embraces growth and development within Islamic teachings. He frequently reminds his audience that plurality is a divine will, as articulated in Surah Al-Hujurat [49]: 13. It is essential for Muslims to cultivate a dimension of plurality that fosters a positive and optimistic view of diversity, accepting it as a reality and striving to engage constructively with it.⁴¹

In Madjid's perspective, the relationship between Islam and pluralism is grounded in the principles of humanity and universality inherent in Islamic teachings. He argues that Islam is fundamentally a religion of humanity (*fitrah*), aligning its ideals with those of humanity at large. The universality of Islam, theologically, can be traced back to the very meaning of the term "Islam," which signifies submission to God. Thus, all true religions must embody this principle of submission.⁴²

Madjid contends that acknowledging the pluralistic nature of society requires more than mere acceptance; it necessitates a sincere embrace of plurality as a positive value and a divine blessing. This acceptance enriches cultural growth through dynamic interactions and cross-cultural exchanges. Pluralism should not be viewed solely as a means to eliminate bigotry; rather, it should be understood as a genuine bond that unites diverse civilizations. Ultimately, this pluralism is essential for the salvation of humanity, fostering a system of checks and balances that promotes coexistence and mutual respect.⁴³

According to Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), an inclusive perspective on Islam fosters tolerance and cooperation, serving as a

³⁹ Noercholis Madjid, *Teologi Inklusif Cak Nur* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2001), 34; Zamzami, "Hikmah dalam," hal. 373.

⁴⁰ Budhy Munawar-Rachman, *Pemikiran Islam Nurcholis Madjid* (Bandung: Prodi S2 Studi Agama-Agama UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, 2022), hal. 264.

⁴¹ Nurcholis Madjid, "Universalisme Islam dan Kosmopolitanisme Islam," dalam Nurcholis Madjid (ed.), *Islam, Doktrin dan Peradaban, Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), hal. lxxv; Luluk Fikri Zuhriyah, "Dakwah Inklusif Nurcholis Madjid," *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 02, No. 02 (Desember 2012), hal. 229-230.

⁴² Tasman, "Islam Inklusif," hal. 140.

⁴³ Nurcholis Madjid, *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), hal. 62-63; Suryadi, "Teologi Inklusif Nurcholis Madjid (Pemikiran Tentang Pluralisme dan Liberalisme Agama)," *Jurnal Manthiq*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Mei 2017), hal. 63-64.

cornerstone of moderatism.⁴⁴ His approach to inclusiveness is characterized by an open-mindedness that embraces both Western and Islamic thought, occasionally reflecting a liberal stance influenced by his educational background and interest in modern intellectual discourse. Furthermore, Wahid emphasizes the necessity of personalizing Islamic teachings by interpreting Islam within the context of Indonesian culture, advocating for a peaceful coexistence in religious life marked by mutual respect.⁴⁵

Wahid also contextualizes Islam and pluralism as manifestations of the universalism and cosmopolitanism inherent in Islamic teachings. He observes that contemporary expressions of creative Islam have begun to diminish, often becoming confined to narrow, exclusive, and formalist interpretations. In alignment with the views of Nurcholish Madjid, Wahid advocates for an inclusive Islamic universalism and cosmopolitanism that thrives amidst the cultural plurality and political diversity of society. He posits that, given Indonesia's pluralistic reality, Islam should act as a complementary force that enriches national life, ultimately contributing to the establishment of a strong, democratic, and just Indonesia.⁴⁶ In this discourse, Komaruddin Hidayat asserts that inclusiveness entails recognizing the truths present in other religions, even if they do not achieve the same level of perfection as one's own faith.⁴⁷

In addition to the perspectives of these influential figures, the application of inclusive Islamic ideology is evident in the practices of two prominent organizations within the Indonesian Islamic community: Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. NU actively promotes inclusive Islam as part of its mission to realize a civil society. Its engagement in religious discourse and political *ijtihad* consistently integrates democratic values while upholding the principles of the Republic of Indonesia, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the concept of Unity in Diversity. Politically, NU opposes the establishment of an Indonesian Islamic state, advocating instead for a harmonious relationship between religion and the state. This relationship is crucial, as religion serves as a foundation for state policies and regulations, while the state protects the rights of citizens to practice their respective faiths. By promoting harmonization between religion and state, NU firmly opposes any attempts at coups, rebellions, or the formation of new states that could lead to national disintegration.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-Nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007), hal. 44; Ulfah, "Eksklusivisme Komunitas," hal. 214.

⁴⁵ Rosidi, "Inklusivitas Pemikiran Keagamaan Abdurrahman Wahid," *Jurnal Kalam*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2016), hal. 466.

⁴⁶Tasman, "Islam Inklusif," hal. 141-142.

⁴⁷ T.H. Sumartana, *Dialog, Kritik, Identitas Agama* (Yogyakarta: Dian Interfir, t.t), hal. 222.

⁴⁸ Abdul Rahman, "Reorientasi Islam Inklusif dalam Mewujudkan Masyarakat Madani Indonesia di Era Demokrasi Deliberatif," *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (2022), hal. 3825-3827.

Similarly, Muhammadiyah contributes to the realization of inclusive Islam through its advocacy of progressive Islam, which aims to cultivate a civilized Indonesian society. This movement encompasses efforts in education, economics, and politics, with Muhammadiyah implementing progressive religious education designed to develop morally upright individuals grounded in Islamic teachings.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

Indonesia, as a pluralistic nation characterized by its rich religious diversity, exemplifies the potential for coexistence rather than division. To mitigate conflicts arising from religious differences, the theological frameworks of inclusivism and pluralism are particularly relevant in navigating the complexities of religious life within Indonesia's multifaceted society. Insights from prominent thinkers on inclusivism and pluralism, alongside the perspectives of various Islamic community organizations, serve as critical references for promoting these approaches. By embracing inclusivism and pluralism, we can address conflicts related to competing religious truth claims and foster peaceful interactions among diverse faiths. Furthermore, an inclusive religious attitude can contribute to the development of a civil society and sustain harmonious relationships among followers of different religions.

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