

INCLUSIVITY IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID; EFFORTS TO BRIDGE THE DUALISM IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

A fundamental dualism still looms over Indonesia's current national education system. The sharp division between the general education sector managed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, on the one hand, and Islamic education, which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, on the other, is not merely a matter of administrative differentiation. More than that, this structural institutional dichotomy creates an epistemological divide between religious and general academic disciplines, which in turn diminishes the quality of the nation's human capital. It is within this context that the concept of religious inclusivism developed by Gus Dur emerges as a paradigmatic alternative worthy of examination. To achieve this objective, a qualitative approach was adopted using a literature review design. The data analysis method employed content analysis adapted from the data processing framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, enabling the researcher not only to describe the text literally but also to interpret the reflective patterns underlying the narratives of Gus Dur's inclusivism. The findings indicate that Gus Dur's Islamic educational inclusivism rests upon five pillars: Islam as a mercy to all creation, the indigenisation of Islam, universal humanism, substantive democracy, and national brotherhood. These five pillars are integrative in nature and directly address the three levels of dualism: paradigmatic, institutional, and curricular. Gus Dur's thought offers not merely theological discourse, but an operational and relevant educational paradigm to address the fragmentation of the national education system.

Keywords: *Inclusivism; Islamic Education; Dualism in the Education System; K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid; Integration of Knowledge*

A. Introduction

Indonesia's national education system continues to face a rather fundamental problem of dualism. On the one hand, there is general education under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, whilst on the other, there is Islamic education managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This dichotomy is not merely structural and institutional in nature, but also reflects a sharp separation between religious and general knowledge, and between spiritual values and modern science. The reality on the ground shows that students from Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs and pesantren still frequently face stigmatisation as 'second-class' graduates, perceived as lacking

competence in science and technology. Conversely, graduates of general education are often perceived as a generation with limited understanding of religion and spiritual values (Zuhdi, 2017).

This dualism in the education system has serious consequences for the quality of Indonesia's human resources. Data from the Central Statistics Agency and various research findings indicate a disparity in the quality of graduates between the two systems, which in turn affects competitiveness and opportunities to pursue higher education (Jauhari, n.d.) . This fragmentation also contributes to social and religious polarisation within society, where exclusive and insular religious understandings within one group are pitted against secularism that disregards the spiritual dimension within another group. This phenomenon is increasingly worrying amidst global challenges that demand integration between academic competence, technical skills, and moral-spiritual maturity (Wahid, 2006) .

Ideally, the national education system should be able to harmoniously integrate scientific and spiritual dimensions without having to separate them into distinct institutional structures. Quality education is education that not only produces graduates who are intellectually intelligent and technically skilled, but also possess strong character, noble ethics, and the ability to appreciate diversity. In the context of Indonesia as a nation with a diverse society, education should ideally serve as a unifying force for the nation, instilling values of tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for pluralism. An integrative education system will produce a generation that not only masters science and technology, but also possesses spiritual wisdom and social sensitivity to use their knowledge for the benefit of humanity (Tilaar, 2002) .

The gap between this ideal state and the existing reality highlights the urgency of formulating a new paradigm within the national education system. Although the government has undertaken various efforts to reduce this dichotomy such as through curriculum integration policies and the recognition of qualifications the root of the problem, which is paradigmatic and philosophical in nature, has not yet been addressed in depth. This division is not merely a technical-administrative issue, but reflects an epistemological crisis in the way we view the relationship between religion and science, between spirituality and rationality. Without a comprehensive reformulation of the paradigm, the dualism within the education system will continue to perpetuate a counterproductive dichotomy of thought that hinders the development of a holistic and inclusive national character (Sternbrink, 1986) .

The urgency of this discussion is increasingly evident in the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024), which prioritises the Pancasila learner profile: one who is faithful, devout to God the Almighty, and of noble character, whilst also embracing global diversity and critical thinking. This profile implicitly demands the integration of religious and general academic dimensions—an ideal that is, in fact, hindered by the dualistic structure that remains in place. On the other hand, madrasahs under the Ministry of Religious Affairs () are also implementing the Madrasah Merdeka Curriculum; however, without a strong conceptual bridge between the two systems, this curriculum risks

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becoming merely a procedural reform without altering the underlying dichotomous paradigm. It is here that Gus Dur's inclusive thinking becomes highly strategic; it offers both a philosophical and operational foundation to bridge these two systems.

K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur's) thinking on the inclusiveness of Islamic education specifically addresses the roots of dualism at three levels simultaneously. *Firstly*, at the paradigmatic level, Gus Dur rejects the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge through the concept of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin, which affirms that all knowledge originates from Allah and therefore cannot be hierarchically separated. *Secondly*, at the institutional level, Gus Dur actively championed the transformation of pesantren and IAINs into State Islamic Universities (UINs) as a concrete step towards the integration of the education system. *Thirdly*, at the curricular level, the concept of the 'indigenisation of Islam' developed by Gus Dur offers a methodology for integrating Islamic values with modern knowledge in a contextual and responsive manner, so that the curriculum is no longer divided between 'Religious Studies' and 'General Studies'. These three levels ensure that Gus Dur's inclusivism is not merely a theological discourse, but an operational and relevant educational paradigm for comprehensively addressing dualism.

It is in this context that the ideas of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) on inclusivity in Islamic education are particularly relevant for in-depth study. Gus Dur is known as an Indonesian Muslim intellectual who possessed a progressive vision of Islamic education that is inclusive, pluralist and humanist. His ideas on the integration of Islamic values with the spirit of nationalism, respect for pluralism, and the importance of dialogue between civilisations offer a conceptual framework with the potential to bridge the dualism within the national education system. Through concepts such as the indigenisation of Islam, the contextualisation of religious teachings, and an emphasis on the substance of universal Islamic values, Gus Dur developed an educational paradigm that does not separate the religious dimension from Indonesian identity, tradition from modernity, or Islamic identity from openness to diversity (Rahardjo, 2010) .

The significance of this research lies in several strategic aspects. *Firstly*, this research will make a theoretical contribution to the development of an inclusive Islamic educational paradigm that is relevant to contemporary challenges. *Secondly*, from a practical perspective, this research is expected to provide policy recommendations for stakeholders in efforts to reform the national education system to make it more integrative. *Thirdly*, amidst rising signs of religious intolerance and exclusivism in the world of education, this research can offer an alternative educational model that strengthens religious moderation and respect for diversity. *Fourthly*, Gus Dur's rich and multidimensional thought has not yet been systematically explored in the context of solutions to the dualism in the national education system; thus, this research will fill this gap in the body of Islamic educational scholarship in Indonesia (Fadjar, 2010) .

Thus, this study on Islamic educational inclusivism in the thought of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid is not merely a historical-biographical study, but an intellectual endeavour to find a way out of the crisis of educational dualism that has long been

entrenched in Indonesia's national education system. Through an in-depth exploration of Gus Dur's thought, this study seeks to formulate concepts and strategies for Islamic education capable of bridging existing dichotomies, whilst simultaneously building an inclusive, integrative education system that makes a tangible contribution to strengthening national unity and the progress of the Indonesian nation (Nata, 2000) .

Eva Sofia Sari found that educational pluralism in Gus Dur's view constitutes an effort to instil national and humanitarian values that must be pursued collectively within the family, community, and educational institutions, whilst emphasising that the prevailing paradigm of Islamic education has tended to be exclusive, closed-off, and oriented towards personal piety; thus, a paradigm shift has become imperative (Sari, 2021). In line with this, Fathor Rachman (2021) found that the concept of inclusive Islamic education and anti-radicalism from Gus Dur's perspective is based on multicultural education that encourages living amidst diversity, fostering mutual trust, and open-mindedness, with a development model through the indigenisation of Islam as a process of integrating Islam with local culture, implemented through political, cultural, and social strategies. Meanwhile, M. Syaifudin (2025) concludes that Gus Dur's thinking on multiculturalism is highly relevant as a foundation for the development of Islamic religious education that is more adaptive, peaceful, and in line with national and humanitarian values.

These three studies share similarities with this research in terms of positioning Gus Dur's thought as a framework for Islamic education that is inclusive, tolerant, and grounded in humanistic values. However, there are fundamental differences that need to be emphasised: Eva Sofia Sari merely describes pluralism descriptively without linking it to the structural issue of dualism in national education; Fathor Rachman positions inclusivism solely as a response to radicalism, not as an answer to institutional and curricular dichotomies; whilst M. Syaifudin stops at affirming the general conceptual relevance without operationalising Gus Dur's thought into a specific level of analysis. Thus, these three studies have not addressed the structural root of the dualism in the national education system, which is the primary focus of this research.

Ahmad Fauzi also found that inclusive Islamic education in the social practices at the Zainul Hasan Genggong Pesantren is, in essence, a transformation of the pesantren's local wisdom values, which are rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith as *core beliefs* and *core values*, by prioritising mutual respect for differences and maintaining harmony in life as the primary reference and *main controller of the-set* of future Islamic education. This study positions the values of tawhid as the pinnacle that governs the entire orientation of inclusive Islamic education, thereby ultimately realising an education that is *rahmatan lil'alam* and contributes to the creation of world peace (Fauzi, 2017) . Meanwhile, Poppy Rachman found that the Islamisation of knowledge proposed by Al-Faruqi is not merely an intellectual discourse, but requires tangible implications to be beneficial to the wider community, realised through the establishment of Islamic study groups firmly grounded in the principles of monotheism, and has yielded several concrete developments in Indonesia in response to this movement (Rachman, 2020) .

Both of these studies intersect with the research currently being developed in terms of strengthening the value of tawhid and efforts to overcome the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge in Islamic education. However, the difference is quite fundamental: Ahmad Fauzi's research is grounded in the empirical practices of pesantren and local wisdom, rather than directly on Gus Dur's thought as an analytical framework, and thus does not address the issue of structural-systemic dualism in national education, which is the core of this study. Meanwhile, Poppy Rachman's research is grounded in a different figure and approach, namely Al-Faruqi with his *top-down* strategy of the Islamisation of knowledge, in contrast to Gus Dur's approach, which is more organic, contextual, and dialogical in bridging the dualism of national education.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using *library research*. Data were collected through a literature review of primary sources comprising the original works of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, including **Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita** and **Tabayun Gusdur: Pribumisasi Islam, Hak Minoritas, Reformasi Kultural**, as well as the works of figures in inclusive Islamic education such as Azyumardi Azra, Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, Paulo Freire, and James A. Banks. Secondary sources, comprising academic journals, articles, dissertations, theses, and educational policy documents examining the thoughts of these figures, were also utilised as supporting data to reinforce and contextualise findings from the primary sources. The researcher engaged directly with these texts through critical reading, interpretation, and hermeneutic construction of meaning—that is, by understanding Gus Dur's thought holistically within the historical, social, and intellectual contexts that underpin it.

The data analysis technique used was *content analysis*, adopting the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which comprises three stages: data condensation (selection, focusing, summarisation, and coding of data from literature sources), presentation of data in the form of descriptive-analytical narratives, and drawing conclusions and verification. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation by identifying at least three different sources for each key concept and comparing information across sources, as well as theoretical triangulation through the use of various theoretical perspectives (classical Islamic education, modern/contemporary education, and multicultural-inclusive theory) to analyse the data holistically. Furthermore, the inclusion of comprehensive and verifiable reference materials, discussions with the supervising lecturer and peers (*peer debriefing*), and the systematic documentation of the entire research process were carried out to meet the standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as required in qualitative research.

C. Findings and Discussion

The Concept of Islamic Educational Inclusivism from the Perspective of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid as an Alternative Paradigm to Dualism

The Position of the Concept: Three-Dimensional Inclusivism as an Analytical Framework

A review of Gus Dur's primary works indicates that the Islamic educational inclusivism he formulated cannot be understood in a monolithic manner. This inclusivism exists simultaneously across three mutually reinforcing dimensions: theological inclusivism, social inclusivism, and curricular inclusivism. The theological dimension is evident in Gus Dur's recognition of the truth of Islam without closing himself off from a partial recognition of the truth of other traditions. The social dimension is evident in his appreciation of the plurality of ethnic groups, cultures, and backgrounds. The curricular dimension is evident in the openness of the Islamic education system to general knowledge and modern learning methods.

This three-dimensional typology, when compared with Alan Race's typology of theological pluralism, reveals an interesting position. Race confines inclusivism to the theological realm, defining it as an attitude that acknowledges the truth of one's own religion as the most complete whilst still allowing space for partial truths in other religions (Race, 1984). This finding indicates that Gus Dur's thought does not merely *reinforce* Race's typology but substantively *develops it*. This development occurred because Gus Dur drew the concept of inclusivism from the realm of pure theology into the realm of education by adding two new dimensions—social and curricular—which are not found within Race's framework. Consequently, inclusivism in Gus Dur's thought is more operational, contextual, and multidimensional. This finding is also consistent with the thesis of Bahri et al., who position inclusivism as a new era in Islamic education that demands openness and the integration of knowledge (Bahri, 2022), yet simultaneously transcends it because Gus Dur incorporates a national foundation as the unifying framework for these three dimensions.

The Five Pillars of Gus Dur's Inclusive Thought and Their Position within the Theoretical Landscape

A closer examination of Gus Dur's texts reveals five pillars of thought that form the backbone of his inclusivism paradigm, namely *Islam as a mercy to all creation*, the indigenisation of Islam, universal humanism, substantive democracy, and national brotherhood. These five pillars are interrelated and directly relevant to addressing the problem of dualism at the paradigmatic level. The following section outlines each pillar and its position within the theoretical map of inclusivism.

Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin: Reinforcing Azra's Thesis and Sharpening the Concept of Race

The first pillar, *Islam as a mercy to all creation*, constitutes the most fundamental theological basis of Gus Dur's inclusivism. For Gus Dur, this mercy demands an inclusive attitude, not one of separation; an attitude of providing universal benefit, not one exclusive to a particular group (Wahid, 2006). Its textual foundation is rooted in Surah al-Anbiya' [21]: 107, which affirms the prophethood of Muhammad as a mercy for all creation. Wahbah al-

Zuhaili, in his *Tafsir al-Munir*, also interprets this verse within the framework of Islam's universality, which establishes compassion as a fundamental characteristic of religious teaching (Al-Zuhaili, 2013).

This finding explicitly *reinforces* Azyumardi Azra's thesis on the importance of unifying religion, science, and technology in Islamic education, which states that Islamic education must be *open-minded* in broadening intellectual horizons towards various ideas without losing its Islamic identity (Azra, 2012a). Both Azra's thesis and Gus Dur's pillar are founded on the premise that Islam due to its merciful nature recognises no ontological hierarchy between religious knowledge and general knowledge. This finding also *reinforces* Ramayulis's thesis that Islam recognises no dichotomy of knowledge, such that all knowledge is, in essence, a single unity originating from Allah (Ramayulis, 2007). At the same time, this finding *expands* Race's framework by extending the implications of inclusivism from the realm of interfaith relations to the epistemology of education: if truth is not monopolistic, then there is no theological justification for separating the realms of religious and general knowledge into two closed compartments.

Indigenisation of Islam: Developing al-Faruqi's Approach to Islamisation

The second pillar is *the indigenisation of Islam*. In *Tabayun Gus Dur*, indigenisation is described as an effort to internalise the universal values of Islam into local culture without losing the substance of the teachings of '. Indigenisation is not syncretism, which mixes religion with local traditions, but rather a strategy of contextualisation that makes local culture a *vessel* for Islamic values (Barton, 2003) . In the field of education, indigenisation provides a methodological basis for the formation of an authentic and contextual integrative curriculum.

It is interesting to compare this pillar of indigenisation with Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's thesis on the Islamisation of Science. Al-Faruqi offers a way out of this dualism through a *top-down* epistemological approach: modern sciences are brought into the framework of tawhid as *the Islamic worldview* (Al-Faruqi, 1982) . Gus Dur's approach, by contrast, is more of a *bottom-up* cultural nature: the universal values of Islam are internalised through existing local cultural realities. Thus, Gus Dur's thinking does not *reject* al-Faruqi, but *develops* this framework of Islamisation by adding a cultural-contextual dimension specific to Indonesia. Furthermore, Gus Dur's approach also *reinforces* Azra's integrative-interconnective paradigm, which emphasises constructive dialogue between academic disciplines (Azra, 2012a) , albeit with a different emphasis: whilst Azra emphasises academic epistemological reconstruction, Gus Dur emphasises the praxis of cultural indigenisation at the grassroots level.

Universal Humanism: Expanding Freire's Thesis with a Theological Foundation

The third pillar, universal humanism, places humanity as the highest value that transcends the barriers of religion, ethnicity, and ideology. For Gus Dur, the ultimate aim of education is the *humanisation* of humanity, not the dichotomisation of knowledge or the standardisation of identity. This line of thought substantially *reinforces* Paulo Freire's thesis

of ' ' in **The Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, which positions dialogue and critical consciousness as the path to human liberation from structural oppression (Freire, 2005). Just as Freire rejected 'banking education' which treats learners as passive vessels, Gus Dur also rejected education that reduces learners to mere objects for the transmission of doctrine without critical consciousness (Freire, 2005).

However, this finding does not stop at reinforcing Freire's ideas; rather, it *develops* Freire's thesis by adding a theological foundation. The humanism developed by Freire is based on sociological and philosophical premises regarding structural oppression, whereas Gus Dur's humanism is grounded in the theological premise of '*rahmatan lil 'alamin*', which makes the exaltation of humanity a direct consequence of Islam's merciful nature. This combination also *reinforces* the four values of tolerance formulated by al-Zuhaili from Surah al-Hujurat, verses 11-13: humanity, plurality, harmony in life, and egalitarianism/equality; for Gus Dur's five pillars place universal humanity as a direct consequence of Islam's egalitarian teachings, as affirmed by al-Zuhaili.

Substantive Democracy: Strengthening Banks' Equity Pedagogy at the Political Level

The fourth pillar, substantive democracy, affirms that democracy is not merely procedural but must produce real justice and equality. In education, substantive democracy means that every model of pesantren, madrasah, and state school is entitled to equal treatment from the state, whether in terms of regulation, funding, or social recognition. This line of thinking directly *reinforces* the concept of Banks' *equity pedagogy*, which emphasises the importance of teaching methods that facilitate equal access to education for all students, although Banks formulates this equality at the level of the classroom and learning practices. Gus Dur *expanded* Banks' framework by extending this demand for equality to the level of state policy a dimension absent from Banks' multiculturalism framework. In other words, for Gus Dur, *equity* is not merely a matter of pedagogy, but also a matter of the politics of educational institutions.

This pillar also *reinforces* the critique by Mahmud Yunus, Abdul Rachman Shaleh, and Azyumardi Azra, who argued that the dual management by two ministries has created disparities in quality and facilities that disadvantage Islamic educational institutions (Shaleh, 2005). The difference is that Yunus, Shaleh, and Azra diagnose this disparity as a consequence of the colonial legacy and regulatory structures, whilst Gus Dur adds a paradigmatic diagnosis that this disparity will not be resolved without substantive democratisation that makes pesantren and madrasahs an equal part of the national system. The historic achievement of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren is a concrete manifestation of this substantive democracy (Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Ukhuwwah Wathaniyyah: Providing a National Framework Absent from Banks and Freire's Framework

The fifth pillar is ukhuwwah wathaniyyah, or national brotherhood. Gus Dur positioned national unity as a social framework that transcends communal divides, so that the education system must foster social cohesion and a national identity, rather than reinforcing communal fragmentation (Wahid, 2007). Gus Dur's unique position as both a

product of and a champion for the pesantren granted him historical legitimacy to define the pesantren as the foundation of an inclusive Indonesian civilisation. Fauzi's research on inclusive educational practices rooted in local wisdom at the Zainul Hasan Genggong Pesantren demonstrates that the pesantren possesses the tradition of *al-muhafazhah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah*, which allows for openness to modernity without losing one's identity (Fauzi, 2017).

This pillar *develops* the existing theoretical framework of inclusivism by adding a dimension absent in the thought of earlier figures. Banks formulates the dimension of *an 'empowering school culture'* which emphasises an inclusive school culture, yet does not extend to a national framework. Freire formulates the liberation of universal humanity, yet does not include a national dimension. Even Azra, who pays close attention to the Indonesian context, emphasises the cultural-historical dimension more than the political-national one. Thus, *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah* in Gus Dur's thought constitutes an original contribution that bridges the gap between global multiculturalism theory and the reality of Indonesian education – which is pluralistic yet vulnerable to fragmentation.

Synthesis of the First Sub-chapter: Gus Dur's Inclusivism as a Contextual Theoretical Development

Based on the analysis of these five pillars, it can be analytically formulated that Gus Dur's concept of Islamic educational inclusivism is an alternative paradigm occupying a unique position within the theoretical landscape. This thought *reinforces* the key theses of Race, Azra, al-Zuhaili, Freire, Banks, and Ramayulis regarding openness, the integration of knowledge, equality, dialogue, and the dignity of humanity. At the same time, this thought *develops* these theories through three original contributions: (a) expanding inclusivism from the theological realm into both the social and curricular realms simultaneously; (b) deepening Banks' *concept of equity* by adding an institutional political dimension; and (c) incorporating *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah* as a uniquely Indonesian national framework. Gus Dur's thought also *develops* al-Faruqi's approach to the Islamisation of knowledge by offering a path of cultural indigenisation as a more bottom-up and contextual alternative.

No part of this study found any substantive contradiction between Gus Dur's thought and existing theories of inclusivism. The apparent contradictions are more *methodological* in nature (e.g. indigenisation vs Islamisation) rather than *orientational*. Therefore, Gus Dur's position on inclusivism can be formulated as a contextual theoretical development utilising the wealth of global inclusivism theory, yet providing new emphases and foundations relevant to the problem of dualism in Indonesian education. In Asef Bayat's terminology, Gus Dur's thought can be read as part of the *post-Islamist* current that seeks to translate Islamic values into the language of citizenship, democracy, and modernity (Bayat, 2013).

The Operational Construction of Gus Dur's Inclusive Thought as a Framework for Bridging Religious Education and General Education

Initial Diagnosis: Manifestations of Dualism That Must Be Bridged

Before mapping the operationalisation of Gus Dur's thought, the study found that the dualism of the national education system, as diagnosed in the theoretical study, is not a single problem but a multi-layered one. (, as a pioneer of the modernisation of Islamic education, identified dualism as the root cause of the backwardness of the Muslim community, manifested in curriculum structure, staffing, and funding (Mukhlisin, 2021) . Abdul Rachman Shaleh elaborates on this diagnosis by stating that the implementation of educational duties by the Ministry of Religious Affairs constitutes a structural source of dualism a regulatory *lock-in* rooted in colonial education policy. (Mukhlisin, 2021) He further adds a sociological dimension involving institutional jealousy and budgetary injustice as practical consequences of dualism.

's thinking positions dualism as an "intellectual disaster" for modern Muslims and proposes a radical reform of the madrasah curriculum, which must be Islamised through modern sciences. Meanwhile, ' interprets dualism as a colonial legacy that must be overcome through an integrative-interconnective paradigm (Azra, 2012b) . These views reinforce one another on one point: dualism is a multidimensional problem that demands a multidimensional response as well. It is the findings of this study that form the basis for formulating the operationalisation of Gus Dur's inclusive thinking across three interrelated levels: the macro level (national policy), the meso level (institutional), and the micro level (curriculum and learning). This division into three levels analytically *expands upon* the diagnosis of Yunus, Shaleh, Rahman, and Azra – which generally stops at the institutional level by extending the analysis down to the level of the curriculum and everyday teaching practice.

Operationalisation at the Macro Level: Inclusive and Equitable National Education Policy

At the macro level, this dualism manifests itself in the dual administration by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which creates disparities in regulation and funding. The implementation of Gus Dur's ideas at this level takes the form of advocacy for regulatory and budgetary parity, as well as the recognition of pesantren as an integral part of the national education system. The enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren is a historic achievement that reflects Gus Dur's vision of substantive democracy in education. This finding *reinforces* the criticism by Mukhlisin and Wahab regarding institutional jealousy arising from the imbalance in budget allocation for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (, whilst also addressing that criticism constructively.

Furthermore, the study's findings reveal that Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024, which adopts the Pancasila student profile, essentially provides a conceptual framework for the integration of religious values with modern competencies (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology

Regulation No. 12 of 2024 on the Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education., n.d.). However, without the inclusive framework developed by Gus Dur, such integration risks becoming a mere administrative formality. Gus Dur's thinking *builds upon* al-Faruqi's approach, which places greater emphasis on epistemological reform but touches less upon the realm of regulatory politics. Integrative policies underpinned by the '*rahmatan lil 'alamin*' paradigm are an absolute prerequisite to ensure that curriculum reform does not become trapped in mere changes of nomenclature. This position also *reinforces* Tilaar's thesis (as referenced in the theoretical review), which from the outset asserted that the reconstruction of national education must be based on a democratic and inclusive paradigm.

Operationalisation at the Meso Level: Institutional Transformation Towards an Integrative University

At the meso level, dualism is evident in institutional fragmentation, namely the dichotomy between madrasahs and state schools, IAINs and public universities, as well as the marginalised position of pesantren within the higher education system. The study's findings reveal that Gus Dur historically provided moral and intellectual support for the transformation of some State Islamic Institutes (IAINs) into State Islamic Universities (UINs) as a concrete step towards institutional integration. The transformation of UINs was not merely a change in nomenclature, but an epistemological repositioning that enabled the study of science and Islamic studies to flourish within a single institution.

This finding directly *reinforces* Mahmud Yunus's thesis on the need for an integrated curriculum encompassing religion and general knowledge, whilst also *bolstering* Fazlur Rahman's proposal for fundamental reform of the madrasah curriculum to enable it to thrive in the modern world. The difference is that whilst Yunus and Rahman largely stopped at proposals for curriculum reform, Gus Dur *developed* these proposals into tangible institutional reforms: the transformation of IAINs into UINs, the recognition of pesantren as part of the national system, and the strengthening of madrasahs as laboratories of inclusivity. The operationalisation of this meso-level also *reinforces* Ramayulis's thesis on the principle of balance between the worldly and the otherworldly, and the physical and the spiritual, in Islamic education (Nata, 2018), as UINs and modern pesantren are designed as concrete spaces for the realisation of this balance.

Furthermore, Fauzi's research on the Zainul Hasan Genggong Pesantren demonstrates how inclusive education based on local wisdom has been practised concretely at the grassroots level. These empirical findings *reinforce* Gus Dur's central thesis that the pesantren is not an exclusive, marginalised institution, but rather a cultural asset that already possesses a tradition of inclusivity within it. Therefore, the operationalisation of the meso-level of Gus Dur's thinking does not demand the merging of the pesantren into mainstream schools, but rather the transformation of the pesantren into an institution that is equal and open without losing its distinctiveness.

Micro-Level Operationalisation: An Integrative Curriculum Based on Tawhid and Dialogical Pedagogy

At the micro level, dualism manifests itself in the dichotomy of subject matter, the inability of teachers to integrate science and religion, and the dominance of dogmatic methods. The study's findings formulate three operational actions based on Gus Dur's thinking. First, the development of an integrative curriculum based on tauhid that places religious knowledge and general knowledge within a single epistemological framework. This first action, ' ', reinforces Abuddin Nata's thesis on the integration of knowledge as *a sine qua non* of Islamic education (Nata, 2000) , and also reinforces Azra's integrative-interconnective paradigm.

Secondly, the application of dialogical and critical learning methods that make learners active subjects. This second action directly reinforces Paulo Freire's thesis on *the pedagogy of the oppressed* and *conscientização*, which rejects 'banking education' (Freire, 1974) .Gus Dur developed this approach by positioning dialogue not merely as a teaching method, but as a theological stance rooted in the recognition of plurality as a divine principle – a concept not found within Freire's framework, which is grounded in Marxist critical theory. In other words, Gus Dur enriched Freire's work with the foundation of '*rahmatan lil 'alamin*' (a blessing for all creation).

Thirdly, the instilling of pluralistic values from an early age through a multicultural approach à la James A. Banks. This third action reinforces the five dimensions of Banks' multiculturalism – content integration, the process of knowledge construction, the reduction of prejudice, *equity pedagogy*, and the empowerment of school culture – as outlined by Mochammad Kholisin, whilst *developing them further* by adding a dimension of spirituality which, within Banks' framework, is not an explicit focus. The implementation of Gus Dur's inclusive values demands a school culture that respects differences and provides equal space for all learners, as emphasised by Kholisin in his empirical study * * (Kholisin, 2019) .

The success of implementation at the micro level also depends heavily on the transformation of teachers' professionalism. Teachers must be trained not merely to convey religious material, but to act as facilitators of dialogue between Islamic values and modern science. This requirement reinforces al-Zuhaili's thesis on egalitarian values as the fundamental principle of Islamic education, as inclusive teachers treat learners as equal subjects, not passive objects. Thus, the micro-level operationalisation of Gus Dur's thought becomes a meeting point between Freirean principles of dialogue, Banks' multiculturalism, Azra's integration of knowledge, al-Zuhaili's egalitarianism, and al-Faruqi's concept of tawhid as *a worldview*.

Synthesis of the Second Sub-chapter: Gus Dur's Thought as a Structural and Paradigmatic Bridge

An analysis of the operationalisation of these three levels demonstrates that Gus Dur's inclusive thought possesses the capacity to function as a dual bridge. Firstly, as a structural bridge integrating policy, institutional frameworks, and curriculum. Secondly, as a paradigmatic bridge uniting religious and general knowledge within a single monotheistic

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worldview. In a theoretical context, this operational framework *develops* four key theses in the study of dualism: Mahmud Yunus's thesis on an integrated curriculum is extended to the policy and institutional levels; Shaleh's thesis on the colonial legacy is supplemented with structural solutions; Rahman's thesis on curriculum reform is deepened with the paradigmatic foundation of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*; and Azra's integrative-interconnective paradigm is supplemented with political-institutional dimensions and cultural indigenisation.

Unlike the ' approach which emphasises *top-down* epistemological Islamisation, Gus Dur's approach places greater emphasis on *bottom-up* cultural indigenisation, making it more flexible in accommodating Indonesia's local wisdom. It also differs from Rahman's approach, which emphasises internal reform of the madrasah curriculum; Gus Dur adds a political dimension in the form of the democratisation of education and *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah*. Thus, it can be analytically formulated that the construction of Gus Dur's inclusive thought can indeed serve as a comprehensive, contextual, and integrated operational framework to bridge the gap between religious education and general education in Indonesia. This result also *reinforces* Habibi's findings regarding the nature of inclusive Islamic education as a paradigm that addresses the needs of the times, whilst simultaneously filling the gaps in previous research, which generally stopped at the conceptual level without systematically mapping out its operationalisation.

Final Synthesis of the Discussion

Based on these two sub-sections of the discussion, two interrelated analytical conclusions can be formulated. First, Gus Dur's concept of Islamic educational inclusivism is an alternative paradigm built upon five pillars of Islamic thought: *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, the indigenisation of Islam, universal humanism, substantive democracy, and *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah*, which consistently *reinforces* the key theses of Race, Azra, al-Zuhaili, Freire, Banks, and Ramayulis, whilst substantively *developing* this framework through original contributions across three-tiered dimensions (theological-social-curricular), institutional-political dimensions, and national dimensions. Secondly, the operational construction of this thought can be mapped linearly at the macro (policy), meso (institutional), and micro (curriculum-learning) levels, each of which reinforces and develops the theses of Yunus, Shaleh, Rahman, Azra, Ramayulis, al-Faruqi, Banks, and Freire. Gus Dur's position within this theoretical framework, therefore, does not lie at a pole opposed to existing theories of inclusivism and dualism, but rather at an integrative node that combines the strengths of each theory and adds original elements relevant to the Indonesian context. This is what makes Gus Dur's inclusivism not merely an abstract theological discourse, but an operational paradigm capable of comprehensively bridging the dualism of the national education system from paradigm to praxis, from policy to the classroom.

E. Conclusion

Having examined and analysed the various ideas presented earlier, this study has arrived at a number of fundamental conclusions. The first conclusion states that Gus Dur's

view of the inclusive nature of Islamic education is in fact founded upon five closely intertwined pillars. These five pillars encompass, first, the understanding of Islam as a blessing for all creation; second, the effort to ground Islamic values within the context of local culture; third, a spirit of universal humanity; fourth, a commitment to substantive democracy, not merely procedural; and fifth, the strengthening of national bonds or *ukhuwwah wathaniyyah*. These five pillars do not stand alone but reinforce one another, forming a framework that calls for ' 'openness, respect for diversity, and dialogue between religious values and the needs of communal life within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. These five pillars are integrative in nature and directly address the issue of dualism within the national education system at three levels simultaneously: paradigmatic (rejection of the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge), institutional (the transformation of pesantren and IAIN into UIN), and curricular (a methodology of contextual and responsive indigenisation of Islam). Thus, Gus Dur's inclusivism is not merely a theological discourse, but an operational and relevant educational paradigm for comprehensively addressing dualism.

Secondly, the construction of Gus Dur's inclusive thought can serve as a concrete operational framework to bridge the gap between religious education and general education. At the macro level (national policy), Gus Dur's inclusivism demands the equalisation of regulations and the recognition of pesantren as an integral part of the national system. At the meso level (institutional), the implication is the transformation of pesantren and madrasahs into institutions that are integrative and on a par with state schools. At the micro level (learning), Gus Dur's proposal consists of an integrative curriculum based on tauhid, dialogical and critical methods, and the instilling of pluralistic values from an early age.

What distinguishes this research from previous studies is that it positions Gus Dur not merely as a supplementary figure in the list of theoretical foundations, but as the gravitational centre of the analysis. Gus Dur's thought is relevant not only in normative-theological terms, but also in historical-sociological terms (pesantren as a proven model of inclusivity) and political terms (democracy as a prerequisite for educational justice). Thus, this research is not merely a study of a figure, but a study of the relevance of an intellectual vision to structural issues in education that remain current and urgent to resolve.

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