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ABSTRACT ONLY – WORK IN PROGRESS

“Islam and Religious Pluralism in Indonesia and India:
The Thought of Abdurrahman Wahid and Asghar Ali Engineer”

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Religious pluralism has been a contentious issue, but a comparative analysis of its origins and contexts seem to be lacking. This paper seeks to understand how ideas of religious pluralism emerged between two prominent Muslim scholars, Abdurrahman Wahid (Indonesia) and Asghar Ali Engineer (India), and why the politicization of religion as they see it in communal political conflicts has become a crucial factor for advocating religious pluralism. It will explore how Wahid and Engineer define Islam and pluralism within cross-cultural, intellectual, and sociopolitical contexts. Working beyond passive tolerance, both Wahid and Engineer view pluralism in religious and sociopolitical terms. Although Wahid and Engineer define pluralism in different ways within different national contexts (Indonesia where Islam is predominant, and India where Hindu is predominant), they both use histories of communal tensions and conflicts in their respective countries to argue for the relationship between politicization of religion and religious intolerance. They offer secularisms, advocating the creation of a public space for communication, dialogue, and cooperation. By analyzing a cross-cultural context for Muslim thought as well as comparability of approaches to religious pluralism, this paper is expected to contribute to a comparative understanding of religious pluralism.