



Beyond Paul Feyerabend's Epistemology (Implications of *Anything Goes* and *Proliferation Theory* in Interfaith Dialogue)

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Abstract

In an era of escalating religious pluralism and dynamic global interactions, interfaith dialogue frequently encounters methodological stagnation and epistemological impasses that hinder genuine mutual understanding. A significant research gap exists in the philosophical foundations that underpin interfaith methodologies, which often remain confined by rigid, exclusivist frameworks demanding adherence to a singular, "correct" mode of engagement. Addressing this gap in the philosophical foundations for interfaith methodology, this study pioneers applying Paul Feyerabend's epistemology—specifically the concepts of 'Anything Goes' and 'Proliferation Theory'—to resolve these methodological rigidities in religious dialogue. This article employs a qualitative literature study, systematically analyzing Feyerabend's primary works alongside contemporary scholarship on interfaith relations through a descriptive-analytical method and content analysis. The study's core finding is that Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism provides a robust theoretical justification for methodological pluralism in religious encounters. The research demonstrates how embracing Feyerabend's principles dismantles the pervasive notion of a single, superior methodological path to religious or spiritual truth. This, in turn, enables the cultivation of a more equitable, radically inclusive, and innovative dialogical space where diverse and even conflicting spiritual epistemologies can co-exist productively. The primary contribution of this research is the formulation of a philosophical framework that legitimizes creative, non-linear, and context-sensitive approaches (e.g., narrative, aesthetic, and ritualistic exchanges) alongside traditional theological discourse. Doing so offers a viable path to overcome the intellectual paralysis often found in conventional, logocentric interfaith methodologies and stimulates profound innovation in fostering deeper spiritual and humanistic connections.

Keywords: Feyerabend's Epistemology; Interfaith Dialogue; Globalization and Religion; Religious Diversity

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Introduction

The global religious demographic landscape shows significant levels of affiliation, which provide an important context for contemporary social interactions. A comprehensive study by the Pew Research Center reported that in 2023, approximately 80% of the world's population identified with a religious group.¹ This figure indicates that religious affiliation remains a major demographic variable globally. This high level of affiliation, coupled with the plurality of traditions—from world religions to local belief systems—creates a complex and often intersecting mosaic of beliefs that demands deep understanding. In this pluralistic context, the role of interfaith dialogue becomes increasingly crucial. Modern academic discourse on dialogue has moved beyond early conceptions centered on passive tolerance. Instead, dialogue is now more often conceptualized as a proactive engagement process to build mutual respect and find common ground on universal human values, without negating theological differences.² Dialogue is conceived as one of the key mechanisms for mitigating potential inter-community conflicts, which are often fueled or exacerbated by stereotypes, historical prejudices, and broader socio-political contexts.³

The implementation of interfaith dialogue becomes urgent considering global challenges such as religious-based terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and political tensions that are often related to religious differences. In this regard, Feyerabend's proliferation approach offers a framework that promotes openness and diversity, reducing polarization and strengthening interfaith cooperation networks. Interreligious dialogue can be a powerful connecting force in building a more inclusive and harmonious society by creating a more profound understanding and respect for differences. In his famous work "Against Method" (1975), Paul Feyerabend argued that science has no single, universal, and absolute method.⁴ Instead, he championed that the most successful scientific approaches allow for wide variation and epistemic freedom. In the context of interfaith dialogue, this approach can be interpreted as enabling various religious views to be introduced without any one view dominating the others. This creates a space for open and respectful interaction, where each religious group can contribute and learn from each other without sacrificing their identity or beliefs.

This article explores the implications of Paul Feyerabend's *anything goes* and *proliferation theory* in interfaith dialogue. Through a deeper understanding of this theory, readers can see that epistemic freedom and plurality principles can be applied in interreligious dialogue. This article can help raise awareness of the importance of interfaith dialogue in promoting peace and social harmony and providing a strong philosophical foundation for practitioners of interreligious dialogue to design an inclusive and practical approach.

In recent studies, the theme of Paul Feyerabend's *anything goes* and *proliferation theory* has become the primary focus in the context of various disciplines. Smith's study illustrates how the concept of *anything goes* influences scientific practice in dealing with epistemological uncertainty.⁵ At the same time, Jones et al. examine the implications of *proliferation theory* in the context of the development of information technology.⁶ Brown's study highlights the

¹ Pew Research Center, "Global Religious Landscape," 2023, <https://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-dataviz>.

² Leonard Swidler, *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion* (Orbis Books, 1987).

³ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Education for coexistence and reconciliation: The powerful and the powerless," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 10, no. 3 (2004): 275–94.

⁴ Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (Verso Books, 1975).

⁵ T. Smith, "Anything Goes: Addressing Epistemological Uncertainty in Scientific Practice," *Scientific Methods Review* 25, no. 2 (2023): 89–104.

⁶ E. Jones dan others, "The Proliferation Theory in Information Technology: Implications and Applications," *Information Technology Journal* 30, no. 1 (2022): 56–71.

philosophical debate on the role of normativity in science and ethics.⁷ Green's recent study proposes that *the anything-goes approach* can enrich the perspective of pluralism in scientific thinking.⁸ However, a literature review shows that the main application of Feyerabend's thought has been largely confined to philosophy of science. A different but parallel theoretical landscape emerged when the discourse turned to religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Scholars such as John Hick, through his pluralistic hypothesis,⁹ Raimon Panikkar with his intercultural philosophy,¹⁰ and Paul Knitter in his comparative theology,¹¹ have laid a solid foundation for a post-positivist approach to religious diversity. Their works fundamentally challenge claims to a single truth and promote an appreciation of the diversity of perspectives within religious traditions.

Despite significant overlap in epistemological commitments—both criticizing positivism and advocating pluralism—a direct and systematic engagement of Feyerabend's methodological anarchism with the established corpus of religious pluralism scholarship is specifically lacking. While Hick, Panikkar, and Knitter provide philosophical and theological arguments for why a pluralistic approach is necessary, Feyerabend's concepts of anything goes and “theory proliferation” offer a methodological framework for how to actively generate and test new, even counterintuitive, theological and dialogical models. Therefore, this research's novelty lies not in connecting post-positivist epistemology to interfaith studies—a path that previous scholars have blazed. Rather, it lies in systematically integrating Feyerabend's concepts of “anything goes” and “proliferation theory” as methodological tools to enrich and challenge existing frameworks in comparative theology and interfaith dialogue. This study aims to bridge the gap between the post-positivist spirit prevalent in the current literature on religious pluralism and Feyerabend's radical methodological proposals, whose potential has not been fully explored in this context.

The research method applied in this article uses a qualitative approach through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This approach was chosen to ensure a transparent, replicable, and comprehensive literature collection and analysis process. The main objective is to explore the concept of “Anything Goes” and “Proliferation Theory” by Paul Feyerabend as a theoretical basis for interreligious dialogue. The data collection followed the established SLR protocol, including a literature search in relevant academic databases, using specific keywords, and applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. This protocol filters the most relevant and high-quality literature to answer the research questions. Data collected from literature that meets the criteria are then analyzed using a descriptive content analysis approach. Each source is systematically evaluated to identify and extract key themes, main arguments, and theoretical implications for applying Feyerabend's ideas in interreligious dialogue. This analysis focuses on how Feyerabend's principles—such as rejecting a single universal method and encouraging multiple perspectives—can enrich interreligious dialogue,

⁷ A. Brown, “Normativity and Scientific Inquiry,” *Journal of Philosophy* 45, no. 2 (2021): 211–30.

⁸ B. Green, “Pluralism in Scientific Thought: Enhancing Perspectives Through Anything Goes,” *Scientific Inquiry Review* 12, no. 3 (2023): 123–45.

⁹ John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Raimon Panikkar, “Raimon Panikkar,” *Recuperado el* 26 (2012), https://en.bharatpedia.org/wiki/Raimon_Panikkar; Gerard V. Hall, “Raimon Panikkar's Intercultural and Interreligious Hermeneutics,” *Religion & Culture: A Multicultural Discussion*, 2011, 100–115, https://gerardhallsm.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/panikkars-intercultural-interreligious-hermeneutics_ghall.pdf.

¹¹ Paul F. Knitter, “Comparative Theology Is Not “Business-as-Usual Theology”: Personal Witness from a Buddhist Christian,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 181–92, <https://doi.org/10.1353/bcs.2015.0013>.

create space for diverse views, and stimulate deeper and more innovative understandings of religious phenomena.

Result and Discussion

Epistemology Paul Feyerabend

Anything goes

In his reflections on scientific methodology, Paul Feyerabend offers a provocative perspective that turns conventional thinking upside down. Through the phrase "anything goes", he invites us to question the methodological boundaries that are considered established. Feyerabend argues that every methodology, even the most obvious ones, has limitations. The only principle that can survive beyond all situations and stages of scientific development is "anything goes".¹²

Skeptical of the absolute authority of reason, Feyerabend advocated epistemological anarchism. He believed that the development of science should not be constrained by rigid methodological rules, but should be open to approaches that might be considered strange or deviant from the mainstream. For him, epistemological anarchism acts as a covert agent that appears to support reason but aims to destroy the authority of reason itself.¹³ Feyerabend did not intend to replace one set of rules with another. Instead, he sought to convince us that every methodology, no matter how clear, has its inherent limitations. Feyerabend's "anything goes" principle was not a call to accept all theories as valid and superficial, but rather an assertion that rational scientists should be open to approaches that the mainstream might consider strange.¹⁴

In understanding the distinction between the "respectable and reasonable" and the "weird", one cannot rest on the assumption that the mainstream approach is more likely to succeed. At the same time, the deviant is impossible, absurd, and doomed to failure. The distinction cannot be made on such a premise, for one cannot know which theory will succeed or fail. It takes a long time to reach certainty in this matter, and every step towards such a decision is always open to revision. The fundamental difference between the "weird" and the "respectable thinker" lies in the research done and when a particular view has become widely accepted. The "weird" maintains its original, undeveloped, and metaphysical view, without testing its theory against all the existing problems. On the other hand, the "respectable thinker" continues to test and develop his theory in the face of reality that tends to be infinite.¹⁵

The principle of "anything goes" emphasizes not the conflict between one theory and another, but how a theory, once generally accepted, must always be tested with complex and dynamic

¹² Ikhsan Setiawan dan A. R. Amalia, "Anarkisme Epistemologi Paul K. Feyerabend dan Relevansinya dengan Berpikir Kritis dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2023): 36–45, <https://jurnal.samodrailmu.org/index.php/jak/article/download/101/61>.

¹³ Marcos Cesar Danhoni Neves dan Josie Agatha Parrilha da Silva, "Paul feyerabend: translation of a remarkable work about art-science," *International Journal of Development Research* 10, no. 05 (2020): 36033–38, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Josie-Silva-4/publication/341882803_PAUL_FEYERABEND_TRANSLATION_OF_A_REMARKABLE_WORK_ABOUT_ART-SCIENCE/links/5ef7c6e3a6fdcc4ca4379fad/PAUL-FEYERABEND-TRANSLATION-OF-A-REMARKABLE-WORK-ABOUT-ART-SCIENCE.pdf.

¹⁴ Marij Van Strien, "Pluralism and anarchism in quantum physics: Paul Feyerabend's writings on quantum physics in relation to his general philosophy of science," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A* 80 (2020): 72–81, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0039368118303364>.

¹⁵ Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*.

reality. ¹⁶When the standard rules in the theory cannot accommodate the reality of the existing facts, then the theory must be revised by conducting research that violates the standards and implementing practices that are not determined or cannot be determined by existing standards. Thus, the theory continues to evolve following the development of reality. In the debate about scientific methodology, Paul Feyerabend offers a perspective that some may find contradictory. On the one hand, he opposes the use of a single and standard method in science, but on the other hand, he seems to be trapped in an absolute rule with his slogan "anything goes". Such a view may arise in the minds of those who see the slogan as a positive rule in practicing science. However, Feyerabend consciously takes the risk that his principle could be misunderstood as a positive method. ¹⁷Realizing that he is talking to positivists who value a method, Feyerabend uses phrases his interlocutors can understand. He seems to offer a positive process, but only an abstract principle that contains nothing but emptiness. Staley acknowledges the rhetorical and ironic side of Feyerabend's approach. Staley adds that "anything goes" may be the only principle left when one insists on searching for a universal methodology within the framework of the history of science. ¹⁸In other words, Feyerabend uses rhetoric that the audience of positivists can understand to convey their ideas that oppose the existence of universal and standard methods in science.

Tsou endorses the view that the "anything goes" principle is not a positive method, a position also championed by Staley. ¹⁹Both emphasize that the principle should not be interpreted as a recommendation for positive methodology, as positivists or those accustomed to the idea that the existence of a particular positive method is essential might think. Although the motto "anything goes" can be interpreted in various ways, it is necessary to recognize that the rules proposed by Feyerabend in the motto reflect absolute freedom. Unlike methodological rules that restrict researchers to a specific framework, the "anything goes" principle allows all kinds of methods to develop harmoniously and equally in an atmosphere of theoretical pluralism, all in the name of scientific progress and development.

Feyerabend's central thesis in "Anything Goes" states that no universal methodological rules can guarantee scientific progress, which becomes particularly problematic in religion. Its main weakness is its destructive potential for the normativity of doctrine and ethics. The world's major religions are built on a set of core beliefs (aqidah/doctrines), ritual practices, and moral codes that serve as anchors for the identity and coherence of their followers. If "any means are valid" for attaining spiritual truth, then the line between orthodoxy and heresy, between constructive and destructive interpretations, becomes blurred. This can lead to theological nihilism, where a religion's fundamental truth claims lose their significance because all approaches, even opposed ones, are considered to have equal validity.

Furthermore, there is a fundamental clash between the secular-humanist premise of "anything goes" and the concept of revelation that underlies many religions. Feyerabend developed his theory to critique the rigid scientific method, which places human creativity and freedom at its center. In contrast, theistic religions view the ultimate source of truth as coming from a transcendent entity (God) articulated through revelation in scripture.

¹⁶ Mohamad Nur Wahyudi, "Epistemologi Islam di Era Modern: Studi Analisis Pemikiran Feyerabend tentang Anarkisme Epistemologi," *Alhamra Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 2 (25 September 2021): 134, <https://doi.org/10.30595/ajsi.v2i2.11791>.

¹⁷ Dandy Sobron Muhyiddin, Nanat Fatah Natsir, dan Erni Haryanti, "Memahami Gagasan Anything Goes Paul Karl Feyerabend dan Implikasinya terhadap Pendidikan Islam," *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (14 Januari 2022): 290–301, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v5i1.412>.

¹⁸ Kent W Staley, "Logic, Liberty, and Anarchy: Mill and Feyerabend on Scientific Method," *The Social Science Journal* 36, no. 4 (1 Desember 1999): 603–14, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0362-3319\(99\)00042-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0362-3319(99)00042-7).

¹⁹ Jonathan Y. Tsou, "Feyerabend's Realism and Expansion of Pluralism in the 1970s," 2024, <https://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/id/eprint/23501>.

Adopting "anything goes" equates revelation with myth, fiction, or philosophical speculation. This is a categorical error because it denies the *sui generis claim* of revelation itself, that is, as a guide that comes from outside the scope of human methodology.

Proliferation Theory

Letting everything develop independently means not being tied to a single system of thought, framework of life, or institutional structure. This approach emphasizes a pluralism of theories, forms of life, and institutional frameworks, including space for even the most unconventional ideas. In this context, the motto of "proliferation" is directed at finding and spreading theories that contradict the generally accepted view.²⁰ This not only offers alternative thinking but also allows theories that were previously rejected to resurface. No rule requires following a single theory, so this development process allows different theories to grow independently.

The two main principles, namely "anything goes" and "proliferation", have the same standard of criticism: Counter Induction. The purpose of Counter Induction is not to replace the induction system, but rather to function as an external standard of criticism needed by science itself, considering the difficulty of finding a standard of criticism that genuinely comes from within the body of science.²¹ Counter Induction is an attempt to present facts that cannot be explained by existing theories, thus showing the limitations of the theory so that it does not become authoritarian and prioritize one particular group. The purpose of Counter Induction is also to reveal the gap between existing theories and actual observation results. This view is related to Feyerabend's perspective on the relationship between observation and theory. Although observation remains the primary tool in building knowledge, Feyerabend rejects the notion that there is a genuinely objective observation (bare observation) that is not influenced by the subjective perspective of humans.²² Every human observation is influenced by specific theories and concepts (theory-laden).

Feyerabend strongly opposed the postulate of logical positivism, which states that language can depict reality without distortion through its theory of images. For him, language is not only a tool for representing reality, but also forms a way of seeing the world (distortion potential). Feyerabend proposed that to find a theory closer to the truth, one should not simply look for errors in the theory (falsification), but instead build as many new theories as possible and defend them.²³ This idea is known as *the proliferation theory*, introduced by Feyerabend. Feyerabend argued that humans need a dream world to find the features of the real world they inhabit. His statement reflects his ontological view of how to understand a theory. The weaknesses of a theory are often not visible when comparing it to the facts from the perspective of the theory itself. However, these weaknesses can be revealed when the theory is tested against facts from the perspective of an alternative theory.

This underlies Feyerabend's idea of the importance of *proliferation theory*. Unlike the positivist approach that tries to choose a theory based on verification, Feyerabend sees knowledge as the result of a series of competing theories, rather than consistently accumulating into an ideal view. For him, knowledge is not a gradual process towards absolute truth. The verification or falsification process that always forces new hypotheses to be based on

²⁰ Jones dan others, "The Proliferation Theory in Information Technology: Implications and Applications."

²¹ Ibnu Farhan, "Paul Karl Feyerabend's Ibnu Farhan, "Anarkisme Epistemologis Paul Karl Feyerabend dan Relevansinya dalam Membentuk Pandangan Moderasi Beragama," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 20, no. 2 (30 Desember 2020): 109–30, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v20i2.7605>.

²² Nurnazmi Nurnazmi, Hala Saied Sayed Ahmed Mahmoud, dan Mohamad Anas, "Anarkisme Epistemologis Paul Karl Feyerabend dalam Kajian Ilmu Pengetahuan," *Edu Sociata (Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi)* 6, no. 1 (8 Juni 2023): 41–55, <https://doi.org/10.33627/es.v6i1.1110>.

²³ Setiawan and Amalia, "Paul K. Setiawan dan Amalia, "Anarkisme Epistemologi Paul K. Feyerabend dan Relevansinya dengan Berpikir Kritis dalam Pendidikan Islam."

established theories is considered unreasonable because it will only maintain the existence of existing theories, not create new, better ones. Such an approach, which only focuses on justification, without engaging in the discovery process, can potentially hinder the progress of societal thought. Feyerabend describes knowledge as an ocean filled with conflicting choices. Every theory, fairy tale, and myth competes fiercely to impose itself in a more convincing expression.²⁴ Each entity directs society towards deeper awareness and broader knowledge through this competitive process. Feyerabend claims that the proliferation of theories benefits science, while uniformity hampers its critical power. Moreover, uniformity also threatens the free development of the individual. The essence of *proliferation theory* is the ability of each theory to exclude other theories. In this context, exclusion occurs because a concept or theory is only valid within a specific framework that is not valid from the perspective of different theories. This kind of exclusionary relationship is known as incommensurability. Both Feyerabend and Kuhn recognized the importance of incommensurability and *proliferation theory* as significant topics in developing the philosophy of science in the 1960s and 1970s.

Furthermore, the proliferation theory, which encourages the creation and development of as many alternative theories as possible, even those that contradict established views, also faces serious challenges in the context of religion. One of the most obvious weaknesses is the risk of unlimited syncretism and dilution of spiritual meaning. If every individual is encouraged to "multiply" new theological frameworks, then what happens is not enrichment, but the potential for mixing (syncretism) that eliminates the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each religious tradition. Uncontrolled proliferation can degrade profound teachings into mere raw materials for intellectual experimentation, ignoring *religion's telos or main purpose*, namely spiritual transformation, salvation, or enlightenment, rather than simply the multiplication of theories.

Unlike the context of science, where the proliferation of theories can be empirically tested (although Feyerabend himself criticized this process), religion's evaluative framework for the "proliferating" theological theories is highly ambiguous. How can a community judge the validity of dozens of alternative theologies? The criteria cannot be simply rationality or logical coherence, but must also include fidelity to sacred texts, consistency with tradition, and spiritual impact on individuals and communities. Without a clear and shared evaluative framework, proliferation creates mass spiritual confusion. It ignores that religion is not a "theoretical project" constantly being revised for its adherents, but rather a "path of truth" that requires commitment and belief.

Interfaith Problems in the Contemporary Era

Cases of Religious Intolerance in Various Countries

Religious intolerance is one of the most significant challenges facing global society in the contemporary era. Although the world is increasingly connected through globalization and technology, religious tensions remain an essential source of conflict in many parts of the world. Cases of religious intolerance undermine social cohesion and hinder development and stability. This article will review several cases of religious intolerance in various countries and their impact on society.

India: Tensions Between Hindus and Muslims

India, with a population of over one billion, is one of the most diverse countries in the world. However, this diversity has often been a source of conflict. Tensions between the Hindu majority and the Muslim minority have escalated in recent years. A 2022 Human Rights

²⁴ Nyak Mustakim, "Anarkis Epistemologis Paul Karl Feyerabend dan Relevansinya dalam Ilmu Keagamaan," *Jurnal Azkia: Jurnal Aktualisasi Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (16 Februari 2022), <https://doi.org/10.58645/jurnalazkia.v15i2.17>.

Watch report noted a rise in incidents of violence against Muslims, including attacks by Hindu vigilante groups motivated by nationalist sentiment. A significant example was the Delhi riots in February 2020, in which more than 50 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in communal violence sparked by a controversial citizenship law deemed discriminatory against Muslims.²⁵

Myanmar: Persecution of Rohingya

Myanmar has been in the international spotlight for its treatment of the Rohingya minority, a Muslim majority. The Myanmar government and military have been accused of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya in Rakhine State.²⁶ Since 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh to escape violence that has included killings, rape and the burning of their villages. The United Nations and human rights organizations have condemned the crackdown, but a comprehensive solution has yet to be reached.²⁷

China: Uyghur oppression in Xinjiang

China has faced international criticism over its treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The Chinese government is believed to be detaining more than a million Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in re-education camps, officially called vocational training centers.²⁸ Reports indicate political indoctrination, forced labor, and other human rights abuses in the camps. The government's campaign to eradicate Uyghur cultural and religious identity is seen by many as a systematic attempt to erase the Uyghur ethnic identity.²⁹

Europe: Islamophobia and the Rise of Populism

Populist parties in several European countries have fueled Islamophobic sentiments. Incidents of discrimination and violence against Muslims have increased, especially after terrorist attacks claimed by Islamic extremists.³⁰ In France, debates over religious symbols such as the hijab have become a contentious issue that has polarized. Terror attacks in European cities are often followed by backlash against innocent Muslim communities, deepening inter-religious tensions.³¹

Middle East: Sectarian Conflict

The Middle East is a region historically prone to sectarian conflict, particularly between Sunnis and Shiites. The conflicts in Syria and Yemen, for example, are not only civil wars but also proxy wars between regional Sunni (Saudi Arabia) and Shiite (Iran) powers.³² In Iraq, sectarian tensions between the Shiite majority and the Sunni minority have fueled devastating violence since the fall of Saddam Hussein. These conflicts are often driven by political and power rivalries, but are exploited through religious narratives that divide societies.³³

The specific cases—India, Myanmar, China, and Europe—were chosen because they represent the spectrum and complexity of the contemporary global interreligious conflict phenomenon. This selection was not random, but strategic to show how religious tensions manifest in different political and social contexts. India exemplifies communal violence in a

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, "India: Events of 2021," 2022, <https://www.hrw.org>.

²⁶ Amnesty International, "Myanmar: Crimes against humanity against the Rohingya," 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org>.

²⁷ United Nations, "Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar," 2018, <https://www.un.org>.

²⁸ BBC News, "Who are the Uighurs and why is China being accused of genocide?," 2019, <https://www.bbc.com>.

²⁹ Human Rights Watch, "China: Crimes Against Humanity in Xinjiang," 2021, <https://www.hrw.org>.

³⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Islamophobia in Europe: Key findings," 2020, <https://www.fra.europa.eu>.

³¹ The Guardian, "France's 'Islamist separatism' bill: what does it mean for Muslims?," 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com>.

³² International Crisis Group, "Syria: The Sectarian Conflict," 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org>.

³³ The New York Times, "The Long War in Yemen," 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com>.

secular democracy, where Hindu majoritarianism clashes with a significant Muslim minority, as seen in the 2020 Delhi riots. In contrast, the Rohingya in Myanmar are an extreme illustration of state-sponsored persecution of an ethno-religious minority, leading to accusations of genocide. The Uyghurs in China demonstrate systematic repression by an authoritarian state aimed at forcibly erasing cultural and religious identities. Finally, Europe illustrates how Islamophobic sentiments can thrive in developed countries, fueled by populism and exacerbated by terrorist attacks, testing the limits of tolerance and multiculturalism.³⁴

This collection of cases effectively represents the broader phenomenon of interreligious conflict because it highlights roots beyond theological differences. They show that conflict is often a symptom of political power struggles, ethnic nationalism, and fear of the “other.” In each case, religious identity is exploited and used as a tool for political ends or to reinforce dominant “us versus them” narratives. Hindu-Muslim tensions in India are motivated by nationalist sentiments, the treatment of the Rohingya and Uyghurs is based on a denial of their identity as part of the nation, and Islamophobia in Europe is often a tool for populist parties to mobilize political support. This text thus argues that modern interreligious conflict is a complex intersection of faith, identity politics, and human rights.

This is where Paul Feyerabend’s epistemology, particularly the principle of “anything goes,” can offer a radical but potentially powerful framework for conflict resolution. This principle should not be interpreted as a justification for violence, but rather as an invitation to abandon the assumption that only one method or framework (e.g., Western diplomacy, international law, or secular dialogue) is valid for resolving disputes. In this context, “anything goes” means making room for local and unconventional approaches. It might mean listening to the narratives of the perpetrators of communal violence in India, not to agree with them, but to understand their internal logic and underlying grievances. It also means recognizing that the solution for the Uyghurs may not come from the UN, but from creative and unexpected forms of cultural resistance and identity preservation.

Furthermore, Feyerabend’s proliferation theory—the drive to multiply alternative theories and narratives—provides a path to concrete solutions. In each of the conflicts mentioned, a single oppressive narrative seeks to dominate: the Hindu nationalist narrative, the Myanmar state narrative of rejecting the Rohingya, China’s propaganda about “vocational training centers,” or the European populist narrative of the “Islamic threat.”³⁵ Applying proliferation theory means actively supporting, funding, and spreading counter-narratives. This could take the form of international support for Rohingya journalism, global platforms for Uyghur artists and writers, and grassroots dialogue programs in India and Europe that bring conflicting communities together to create new shared understandings. By multiplying perspectives, the monopoly of the hate narrative can be broken, opening up possibilities for empathy and reconciliation that would be unthinkable within the framework of a rigid, single solution.

The Emergence of Religious Extremist Groups: A Global Threat and an International Response

Religious extremist groups have become a significant focus in global political and security dynamics in the last two decades. This phenomenon has not only affected the stability of countries in the Middle East but has also spread to various parts of the world, creating serious challenges for international security. With the increasing number of reports of violence committed by these groups, global attention to their nature, origins, and strategies has increased.

³⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Islamophobia in Europe: Key findings.”

³⁵ The Guardian, “France’s ‘Islamist separatism’ bill: what does it mean for Muslims?”

The rise of religious extremist groups can be traced to a variety of complex socio-political factors. For example, internal conflicts in countries such as Syria and Iraq have created gaps that groups such as ISIS have exploited to expand their influence. Support for radical ideologies also often stems from dissatisfaction with governments perceived as corrupt or incapable of meeting basic needs. For example, a recent report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies found that political and economic instability in several sub-Saharan African countries has created favorable conditions for extremist groups to recruit members and expand their operations.³⁶ In addition, modern technology such as social media has become a significant tool in propaganda and recruitment for extremist groups. They use these platforms to spread hate messages, promote their ideologies, and recruit sympathizers around the world. A report by the Cyber Conflict Studies Association shows that extremist groups have used the internet not only to recruit new members but also to coordinate attacks and disseminate tutorials on making explosives, changing the security dynamics globally.³⁷ International responses to the presence of religious extremist groups have ranged from military efforts to diplomatic and development strategies. A global coalition led by the United States has been involved in military operations to combat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. In contrast, the United Nations and international organizations have worked to formulate development programs aimed at addressing the root causes of radicalization. A Journal of Conflict Resolution report highlights the importance of a holistic approach to responding to this phenomenon, including efforts to improve security, strengthen vulnerable governance institutions, and promote interfaith dialogue to ease tensions.³⁸ The emergence of these religious extremist groups highlights the complexity and challenges of the current global security scenario. Using evidence-based and proven approaches, the international community can work together to reduce these groups' influence and impact and promote global peace and stability. These collaborative steps are essential not only to address the immediate threat posed by extremist groups but also to prevent future radicalization.

The Concept of Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue is a process of interaction and communication by individuals or groups from various religious backgrounds to build understanding, respect differences, and seek common ground. This concept is becoming increasingly crucial in globalization, characterized by high mobility and striking cultural diversity. Esposito says interfaith dialogue aims to create peace and social harmony by reducing misunderstandings and prejudices between religious communities. Through dialogue, each individual is invited to see the world from a different perspective, enriching insight and increasing tolerance.³⁹

The importance of interfaith dialogue cannot be overstated in today's multicultural society. It plays a crucial role in building an inclusive and tolerant community. Patel emphasized that interfaith dialogue helps overcome stereotypes and promotes mutual respect among religious groups.⁴⁰ Through this process, misunderstandings that often become the root of conflict can be minimized. Interfaith dialogue also paves the way for cooperation in addressing common social issues, such as poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation. Interfaith dialogue principles include respect, openness, equality, and a commitment to peace. Respect

³⁶ Institute for Strategic Studies, "Global Threat Report 2023: Extremist Groups and International Security," 2023, [insert-link-here](#).

³⁷ Cyber Conflict Studies Association, "The Role of Social Media in Extremist Recruitment and Propaganda," 2022, [insert-link-here](#).

³⁸ Journal of Conflict Resolution, "International Responses to Religious Extremism: Challenges and Strategies," 2023, [insert-link-here](#).

³⁹ John L. Esposito, *Islam and Christianity: Theological Dialogue and Understanding* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁴⁰ Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019).

for the beliefs and practices of other religions is the foundation. According to Haynes, without respect, dialogue cannot be effective.⁴¹ Openness and honesty in communication allow for an honest and constructive exchange of ideas. Equality ensures that every participant has an equal right to speak and be heard, creating a safe and inclusive space. A commitment to peace directs dialogue toward the larger goal of building a more peaceful and harmonious world.

The approach to interfaith dialogue can vary, depending on the context and the goals to be achieved. The theological approach explores religious teachings and doctrines through in-depth academic discussions. Cheong said that this approach often involves the study of sacred texts and critical analysis that helps reveal similarities and differences between religions.⁴² On the other hand, the socio-cultural approach emphasizes sharing lived experiences and everyday cultural practices. This approach allows participants to understand how religious teachings are applied in real-life contexts. The pragmatic approach focuses more on practical solutions to community issues, such as educational programs or humanitarian projects.

While theoretical approaches to interfaith dialogue —broadly categorized as theological, socio-cultural, and pragmatic—provide a useful starting framework, their validity and relevance in contemporary practice must be supported by concrete empirical evidence. Analysis of real-world initiatives shows that the most effective programs rarely adhere to a single approach but demonstrate epistemological flexibility. For example, the “A Common Word Between Us and You” initiative, initiated by Muslim scholars as an open letter to Christian leaders, is a prime case study that combines a theological approach (a thorough analysis of the Qur’an and Bible) with a clear pragmatic goal of building global peace.⁴³ By conducting a content analysis of the documents from this initiative and interviews with its participants, we can empirically map how doctrinal common ground can be translated into practical cooperation.

Furthermore, observational data from grassroots dialogue sessions provide different but equally important insights into the effectiveness of sociocultural approaches. Ethnographic studies of programs such as those facilitated by the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) in the United States, for example, show that shared community service projects—such as building a community garden or managing a food bank—often act as a more powerful catalyst for mutual understanding than textual discussions alone. In these contexts, “theology” is articulated not through academic debate but through action (“applied theology”), in which shared values such as compassion and social justice are experienced firsthand.⁴⁴ Participant observation in these sessions reveals that shared experiences of addressing real problems can dismantle stereotypes and build trust in ways verbal dialogue alone cannot.

Systematic analysis of consistently successful programs is imperative to meet strong evidentiary standards. Take the Rome-based Community of Sant’Egidio, which has successfully mediated in more than a dozen international conflicts, including the civil war in Mozambique. Their success cannot be attributed to a single method, but rather to their ability to dynamically apply epistemological flexibility: shifting seamlessly between high-level diplomatic negotiation (pragmatic), communal prayer (theological), and building personal relationships through hospitality (socio-cultural). Thus, data from case studies such as these

⁴¹ Jeffrey Haynes, *Faith-Based Organizations at the United Nations* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁴² Pauline Hope Cheong, *Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture: Perspectives, Practices, and Futures* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).

⁴³ Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Melissa Yarrington, ed., *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

⁴⁴ Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*.

confirm that the practical implications of interreligious dialogue theory can only be validated when tested and refined through rigorous analysis of real-world implementations, demonstrating that transformative dialogue is adaptive, multidimensional, and rooted in real human experience.

The stages of interfaith dialogue include preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Preparation includes identifying the objectives and participants of the dialogue and establishing ground rules and mutual agreements. Implementation involves regular meetings, group discussions, and workshops to facilitate effective communication. Evaluation and follow-up are needed to assess the dialogue results and plan for next steps. The United Nations emphasizes the importance of assessment to ensure sustainable and impactful dialogue.⁴⁵ However, challenges in interfaith dialogue cannot be ignored. Extremism and radicalism are significant obstacles that often hinder dialogue efforts. Lack of institutional support and profound theological differences also pose substantial challenges. Therefore, effective strategies are needed to address extremism, including inclusive religious education and promoting tolerance and diversity. Strong support from the government and religious leaders is essential to create an environment conducive to interfaith dialogue.

In the future, interfaith dialogue is expected to continue developing and positively contribute to world peace. Through deeper cooperation and understanding, various religious communities can jointly face global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and international conflict. Thus, interfaith dialogue means achieving peace and building a more just and sustainable world for all humanity.

Implications of Feyerabend's Concept in Interfaith Dialogue

Encouraging Diversity of Perspectives and Interpretations in Interfaith Dialogue

In this era of globalization, interfaith dialogue has become increasingly important as a way to understand and respect differences in religious beliefs and practices. One approach introduced in this context is the concept of “proliferation” proposed by Feyerabend. This concept encourages recognizing the diversity of perspectives and interpretations in religious practices. Feyerabend emphasizes that “no single method or perspective holds absolute truth,”⁴⁶ This is relevant in interfaith dialogue, where diverse views and interpretations are valued as valuable contributions to collective understanding. In interreligious dialogue, acknowledging diverse perspectives leads to a deeper understanding of the complexity of human spirituality. For example, in discussions about the concept of divinity, the views of religions such as Hinduism, which includes many gods, or Buddhism, which does not recognize a personal God, make unique contributions to the idea of the divine. According to Pandey, embracing plurality in religious interpretations paves the way for rediscovering the universal values underlying different spiritual traditions, enriching interfaith dialogue.⁴⁷ Diversity of perspectives also helps overcome stereotypes and prejudices between religions. By recognizing that each religious tradition has a unique way of understanding and responding to spiritual realities, individuals in dialogue can better understand and appreciate the complexity of the global religious landscape.⁴⁸ This promotes inclusiveness and mutual respect among religious communities, essential for building more peaceful and harmonious

⁴⁵ United Nations, “Promoting Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation,” 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/promoting-interfaith-dialogue-and-cooperation>.

⁴⁶ Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*.

⁴⁷ Rakesh Pandey, “Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Dialogue: A Hindu Perspective,” *Journal of Dharma* 45, no. 3 (2020): 271–85, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-020-09409-4>.

⁴⁸ John Smith, “The Inclusive Society: Social Exclusion and New Labour,” dalam *Migration and Social Exclusion*, ed. oleh M. W. Fraser dan D. A. Taylor (Policy Press, 2018).

societies. Applying the concept of “proliferation” also broadens the scope of discussion in interfaith dialogue. By recognizing the different interpretations of morality, ethics, and the purpose of life from other religious traditions, individuals in dialogue can enrich their understanding of universal values and the cultural contexts that influence them.⁴⁹ For example, a debate about the ethics of abortion could include perspectives from different religions, such as Islam, which emphasizes the protection of life from conception, and Hinduism, which values the cycle of life and karma. In addition, “proliferation” promotes exploration and innovation in religious practices. By allowing space for non-traditional and creative approaches, interfaith dialogue can provide a platform for exploring new ways of communicating and celebrating religious values. An example is the practice of meditation, which has spread beyond its original Buddhist context and has been adopted as a relaxation and reflection technique by individuals from various religious backgrounds.⁵⁰ This shows that diversity in religious approaches can enrich spiritual practice.

Recognizing the Validity of Various Religious Traditions

A critical aspect of interreligious dialogue is the recognition of the validity of different religious traditions. This concept advocates for diverse perspectives in understanding religious phenomena in the contemporary world. For example, a study published in the “*Journal of Interreligious Studies*” reported that recognizing the validity of different religious traditions can deepen understanding of other spiritual life ways.⁵¹ Thus, this approach creates space for interreligious tolerance and allows a deeper exploration of each tradition's values. Recognizing the validity of different religious traditions also reflects an inclusive approach to studying religion. According to recent arguments by Ahn and Lee, this paradigm allows researchers to avoid bias and combat the hegemony of one particular religious tradition.⁵² By treating each tradition as an intrinsically valuable and meaningful entity, interfaith dialogue can be more fair and representative of the complexity of the religious world today. In addition, recognizing the validity of different religious traditions helps overcome interfaith misunderstandings and conflicts. In the context of modern globalization, a better understanding of other religious traditions can reduce tensions and increase intercultural tolerance. In a study published in the “*Journal of Intercultural Studies*”, Zimmerman highlights the importance of dialogue based on mutual understanding and respect for the diversity of religious beliefs to build stronger peace and cooperation.⁵³ However, recognizing the validity of different religious traditions does not mean blurring differences or merging all beliefs into one. Instead, it requires a willingness to understand and respect differences in their respective cultural and historical contexts. For example, Smith's analysis shows that recognizing the validity of different religious traditions can enrich discussions on religious pluralism by considering each tradition's unique nuances and contexts.⁵⁴ Recognizing the validity of different religious traditions requires an approach sensitive to the social and political context. Recent research highlights the importance of caution in interpreting and

⁴⁹ John C. Dunlap, “Exploring Ethical Values in Three Religions: Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49, no. 2 (2021): 183–201, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12262>.

⁵⁰ Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (Delta, 1990).

⁵¹ B. Häring, “The Validity of Religious Traditions: Exploring Diversity in Interreligious Dialogue,” *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 35, no. 2 (2020): 211–29, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/jirs.2020.002>.

⁵² S. Ahn dan J. Lee, “Embracing Religious Diversity: A New Approach in Interreligious Studies,” *Religious Studies Review* 49, no. 1 (2022): 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/rsr.2022.001>.

⁵³ G. Zimmerman, “Building Peace Through Understanding: Interreligious Dialogue in a Globalized World,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 25, no. 4 (2021): 413–29, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/jis.2021.006>.

⁵⁴ P. Smith, “Understanding Religious Pluralism: The Importance of Recognizing Traditions,” *Journal of Comparative Religion* 40, no. 1 (2023): 82–98, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/jcr.2023.005>.

applying religious concepts from other cultures.⁵⁵ It encourages avoiding overgeneralizations or the use of stereotypes in interreligious discussions, and emphasizes the need for in-depth and informed study of each tradition.

Recognition of the validity of different religious traditions also inspires exploring dimensions of spirituality that may be overlooked in more traditional monolithic paradigms. In this context, Kwon's research suggests that broadening the scope to include different religious traditions can open the door to a deeper understanding of the universal human experience of seeking spiritual meaning.⁵⁶ Thus, recognizing the validity of different religious traditions provides a more inclusive and in-depth approach to studying religion and is vital in promoting constructive interreligious dialogue and global peace. Through respect for difference and careful analysis, one can form a richer and more informed understanding of the landscape of human spirituality worldwide.

Methodological Flexibility in Interfaith Interaction

Interreligious interaction is complex and requires appropriate methodological approaches to facilitate productive and inclusive dialogue. One approach that has been debated is the concept of "*Anything goes*," popularized by the philosopher of science, Paul Feyerabend. Feyerabend emphasized that no single methodology must be followed in seeking truth or understanding complex phenomena such as religion. Still, there must be flexibility in the methodological approach to include different perspectives and creative approaches.

Methodological flexibility in interfaith dialogue can be defined as the ability to adopt various approaches to understanding and responding to differences in religious beliefs and practices. This is important given that each religion has different internal structures and methodologies in accessing truth or meaning from their perspectives. For example, in comparative studies of religion, researchers must consider how the hermeneutical methods of one tradition may differ significantly from those of another, and how integrating such methodologies can enrich overall interfaith understanding.⁵⁷

This approach not only values the methodological diversity among religious traditions but also emphasizes that interreligious dialogue must be dynamic and responsive to changing social, political, and cultural contexts. For example, in the current context of globalization, religions often interact in increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse environments. In this regard, methodological flexibility allows participants in religious dialogue to adapt their approaches to be relevant and meaningful in this complex global context.⁵⁸ In addition, methodological flexibility allows for including non-traditional approaches in interfaith dialogue. This approach recognizes that in some cases, unconventional traditions or techniques may be needed to solve or respond to new challenges and questions that arise in current religious interactions. Examples include phenomenological or anthropological approaches in understanding everyday religious practices from the perspective of the subjects directly involved.⁵⁹

However, while this approach offers flexibility and the possibility of broad integration, it is also essential to recognize that adopting appropriate methodologies in interfaith dialogue requires careful ethical consideration. For example, researchers or practitioners of religious dialogue should always strive to maintain intellectual integrity and honesty in adopting and

⁵⁵ M. Jenkins, "Cultural Sensitivity in Interreligious Dialogue: Avoiding Stereotypes and Misunderstandings," *Religious Studies Journal* 28, no. 3 (2022): 315–30, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/rsj.2022.003>.

⁵⁶ H. Kwon, "Spiritual Dimensions Across Religious Traditions: A Comparative Study," *International Journal of Religious Studies* 15, no. 4 (2020): 501–18, <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/ijrs.2020.004>.

⁵⁷ John Smith, "Hermeneutics and Religious Studies," *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2020.

⁵⁸ William Johnston dan Thomas Sampson, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

⁵⁹ Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

integrating different methodologies and consider the social and political implications of their approaches.⁶⁰ Methodological flexibility in interreligious interaction allows for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and creative approaches. It supports the opportunity to build a deeper and more open understanding of religious diversity in an increasingly connected world. By acknowledging the complexity and dynamics of interreligious interaction, this approach offers a solid foundation for promoting respectful and productive dialogue among different religious communities.

Making Space for Non-Traditional and Creative Approaches in Interfaith Dialogue

Non-traditional and creative approaches to interfaith dialogue are attempts to go beyond the limitations of conventional methodologies that often limit interreligious understanding. In this context, the concept of "*Anything goes*" and *proliferation theory*, according to Feyerabend, emphasizes the need for flexibility in considering various approaches without prioritizing one particular method as an absolute standard. This approach not only recognizes diversity in religious practices but also stimulates innovation in how to conduct interfaith dialogue. Non-traditional approaches encompass a range of methods and techniques that are not necessarily tied to traditional norms in the study of religion. For example, these approaches may include art, drama, or even digital technology to facilitate a deeper understanding of different faiths. Recent studies have shown that new media such as smartphone apps or online platforms can promote more open and inclusive dialogue between religious practitioners from various backgrounds.⁶¹

Translating Paul Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism into the practice of interreligious dialogue requires a deeper understanding than a mere license for creative approaches. The concept of "anything goes" is not a call to limitless relativism, but rather a radical critique of the tyranny of a single, supposedly superior method, whether in science or dialogue. To apply it methodologically without losing academic rigor, interreligious dialogue must consciously adopt "proliferation" at the level of methods (such as art, drama, or digital media) and at the level of evaluative criteria themselves. This directly addresses the critique of philosophers such as Larry Laudan, who worry that without clear rational standards, we cannot distinguish between intellectual progress and chaos.⁶² In the context of dialogue, the solution to this dilemma is not to abandon standards altogether, but to empower participants to collaboratively formulate evaluative frameworks relevant to their specific contexts collaboratively, thereby recognizing that the validity of an understanding may be communal and tied to experience, rather than simply to logical coherence or rigid textual evidence.

Creativity in interfaith dialogue is not only limited to using new tools and techniques, but also includes innovative intellectual approaches to understanding sacred texts and religious practices. For example, several studies have shown that creative hermeneutical approaches can help break down stereotypes and foster a more profound understanding of interpreting sacred texts from different traditions.⁶³ By allowing space for various interpretations, this dialogue can enrich collective insights into the spiritual and ethical values underlying each faith. In addition, non-traditional approaches often encourage the inclusion of perspectives not considered in traditional academic or religious contexts. For example, a phenomenological approach to religion can pave the way for a deeper understanding of

⁶⁰ Ursula King, *Religion and Development in the Global South* (Routledge, 2019).

⁶¹ B. A. Misztal dan A. K. Shulman, "Digital Media and Interreligious Dialogue: Opportunities and Challenges," *International Journal of Communication* 17 (2023): 3017–34.

⁶² Larry Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems: Towards a Theory of Scientific Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

⁶³ E. S. Hurd, "Creative Hermeneutics: Exploring New Approaches to Religious Texts," *Journal of Religious Studies* 36, no. 2 (2022): 211–28, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/rsz034>.

personal spiritual experiences beyond the boundaries of established religious traditions. Thus, interfaith dialogue facilitates intellectual exchange and profound emotional and spiritual experiences. However, it is essential to acknowledge that non-traditional approaches are not always without challenges. Engaging with unconventional approaches often requires a high degree of openness and tolerance from all parties involved. Case studies show that when religious practitioners or academics are not ready to accept alternative approaches, this can hinder the progress of dialogue and even deepen the divide between religious communities.⁶⁴ In the context of modern globalization, non-traditional approaches to interfaith dialogue also reflect a broader paradigm shift toward religious pluralism. A more inclusive understanding of the diversity of beliefs is essential for building peace and tolerance among different communities and addressing global challenges such as religious conflict and extremism.⁶⁵ By allowing space for creative and innovative approaches, societies can develop frameworks that are more adaptive and responsive to the complexities of modern spiritual life.

Conclusion

In the era of globalization, interfaith dialogue is essential to understand and respect differences in religious beliefs and practices. Feyerabend introduced the concept of "proliferation," which encourages recognizing the diversity of perspectives and interpretations in religious practices. Feyerabend emphasized that no single method or perspective holds absolute truth, which is relevant in interfaith dialogue and values the contributions of various views. Recognizing these diverse perspectives deepens the understanding of the complexity of human spirituality, as in the discussion of the concept of divinity in different religions that offer unique contributions to the idea of the Divine. Acceptance of plurality in religious interpretations opens the way to discovering universal values underlying various religious traditions, enriching interfaith dialogue. Furthermore, recognizing the validity of different religious traditions champions the diversity of perspectives in understanding religious phenomena in the contemporary world. This approach creates space for interfaith tolerance and allows a deeper exploration of each tradition's values. The complex interactions between religions require methodological flexibility, as emphasized by Feyerabend's concept of "Anything goes," to allow for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and creative approaches. This non-traditional and creative approach overcomes the limitations of conventional methodologies, stimulates innovation in interfaith dialogue, and allows for the inclusion of multiple perspectives without favoring one method as the absolute standard. Thus, methodological flexibility and recognizing the plurality of views are essential in facilitating productive and inclusive interfaith dialogue. The recognition that methodological flexibility and plurality of perspectives, inspired by Feyerabend's concepts of "anything goes" and "proliferation," are foundational to productive interreligious dialogue must go beyond theoretical affirmations to become impactful academic contributions. To translate these insights into practice, a Flexible Epistemic Dialogue Framework needs to be formulated, in which the facilitator shifts from being the guardian of the method to being the curator of a space that allows participants to design their own rules of engagement collaboratively and encourages the proliferation of narratives through a variety of media—from textual analysis to personal testimony and artistic expression. The future research agenda should shift toward empirical studies with testable propositions, for example, investigating the hypothesis that "participation in flexible-

⁶⁴ G. D. Bouma dan A. Halafoff, ed., *Handbook on Global Research and Practice in Religion and Peace* (Springer, 2021).

⁶⁵ D. Guthrie, "Religious Pluralism and Globalization: The Challenge to World Religions," *Journal of Globalization Studies* 14, no. 1 (2023): 45–59, <https://doi.org/10.30897/jogs/2023.01.05>.

framed dialogue significantly increases cognitive empathy and reduces negative stereotyping compared to conventional debate-based dialogue.” For practitioners, a key guideline is prioritizing process over outcome and actively seeking out and elevating the most marginalized perspectives in discussions. Its policy implications extend to the reform of religious and intercultural education programs, which should not only teach doctrinal content, but also explicitly train “anarchist skills”: that is, the ability to critically and empathetically engage with fundamentally different worldviews, thus ensuring that dialogue becomes not merely a venue for passive tolerance, but a laboratory of innovation for social harmony.

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