

SEEKING INTERSECTION OF RELIGIONS: An Alternative Solution to Prevent the Problem of Religious Intolerance in Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia consisted of multicultural, ethnic and religion. There are six legal religions in Indonesia. Religious plurality is part of Indonesian life. In Religion, adherents always tried to compare between their own religion with other religions that can cause a truth claim of superiority of their religion. This caused any conflict like the case of GKI Yasmin in Bogor, three massive bomb blasts of Bali, and conflict of Ambon. This is a library reseach applying sosiological approach. To analyze the problem, author used the conflict theory of Gillin and Gillin saying that conflict can be caused by deferences. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the intersection of religions in order to prevent the conflict, included religious intolerance. This research find that the intersection of religion can be found in values of humanity or the horizontal aspect (*ḥabl min al-nās*). While the vertical aspect (*ḥabl min Allāh*), they are different. By understanding the intersection of religions and nature of these differences, it is expected that religious harmony can be reinforced.

Indonesia terdiri dari beragam budaya, etnis dan agama. Terdapat enam agama yang diakui di Indonesia. Pluralitas tersebut merupakan bagian dari kehidupan masyarakat Indonesia. Pada kenyataannya, seseorang selalu ingin membandingkan antara agama mereka sendiri dengan agama-agama lain, sehingga yang dapat menyebabkan klaim kebenaran. Kondisi ini menyebabkan terjadinya konflik seperti kasus GKI Yasmin di Bogor, tiga bom Bali, dan konflik Ambon. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kepustakaan dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi. Analisis kajian menggunakan teori konflik Gillin dan Gillin yang menyatakan bahwa konflik dapat disebabkan oleh perbedaan. Oleh karena itu, perlu untuk memahami bagaimana titik pertemuan antar agama untuk mencegah konflik, termasuk intoleransi agama. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pertemuan agama dapat ditemukan dalam nilai-nilai kemanusiaan atau aspek horizontal (*ḥabl min al-nās*). Sedangkan aspek vertikal (*ḥabl min Allāh*), mereka berbeda. Dengan memahami pertemuan antar agama dan sifat perbedaan ini, diharapkan kerukunan beragama dapat diperkuat.

Keywords: intersection; religion, religious intolerance; alternative solution; Indonesia

A. Preface

Indonesia is categorized as a plural nation, both in ethnicity, culture, and religion. In the context of religious plurality, in Indonesia there are six religions recognized by the state, namely Islam, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Catholic, and Confucianism. Religions in Indonesia has long been a complicated issue. Recently, many problems about religious intolerance happen anywhere. For example, the case of GKI Yasmin in Bogor, Three massive bomb blasts of Bali, and conflict case of Ambon. Conflict is actually a natural thing in line with the dynamics of human life, as disclosed by Lewis A. Coser that conflict is fairness for all people who are experiencing social and cultural change. Conflict usually arises in a society in which is characterized by diversity (plurality) - despite the religious teachings of any conflict cannot be justified. Thus, the religious plurality at the same time holds the potential dangers of its own.¹

To analyze the problem, conflict theory may be applied in order to find some solutions. According to conflict theory, deferences can cause conflict. This is the root of conflict of religious intolerance. So, it is important to reduce deferences by seeking the intersection of religions. Because, the people often compare between their own religion with other religions that can cause a truth claim of superiority of their religion authenticity. Based on the reality, it is important to seek the intersection of religions in Indonesia as an alternative solution to prevent the problem of religious intolerance.

This is a library research, a research that uses some books or relevant references as sources of the data. Therefore, the object of this research is any kind of book related to religious plurality and tolerance both written in Bahasa Indonesia and foreign languages. Besides books, the data of this research was also gained from journal published in various sources.

The characteristic of this research is *analitic-descriptive*, it tries to present the data of some literatures about religious plurality and tolerance, specially about

¹According to Hefner, Indonesian critical issue is the change of local tensions which were turned into the National fierce battle. Say, a murder of Dai in East Java and bombings are organized by clever to about 15 Church on Christmas 2000. It was all show that there is a fierce determination of people who want to poison the religious relation to confront political reform. see Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Politik Multikulturalisme* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2007), p. 69.

the problem of religious intolerance. Furthermore, this research applies a *sociological approach*, especially by conflict theory of Gillin and Gillin in order to solve the problem by maximizing the rational mind through focused contemplation and thinking about the the problem in the form of systematic analysis as well as considering the science of thinking (logic). From this research will be gotten alternative solution for problem about religious intolerance indonesia by seeking the intersection of those religions.

B. Seeking the Intersection of Religions

1. The Problem of Religious Intolerance in Indonesia

The problem of religious intolerance in Indonesia is under acute threat. It can be seen in many cases recently. Muslim militants are seeking confrontation with Buddhist,² Catholic and Shia Muslim communities in different places of Indonesia. It is not only religious tolerance and freedom that is under threat, but also the rule of law. Another church, GKI Yasmin in Bogor, has approval from the Supreme Court to open, but the local mayor, again under the pressure from Islamists, refuses to allow it. A district mayor is in defiance of the Supreme Court, and no one says a word.³ In many instances, moreover, Indonesian government and Muslim mass organizations are not doing enough to help.

Besides, many problems happened in muslim communities. For example, conflict between Sunni-Syia in Madura Island. Since August 2012, hundreds of men, women and children have sought refuge in a sports stadium after more than 1000 Sunni militants attacked their village. The attackers torched about 50

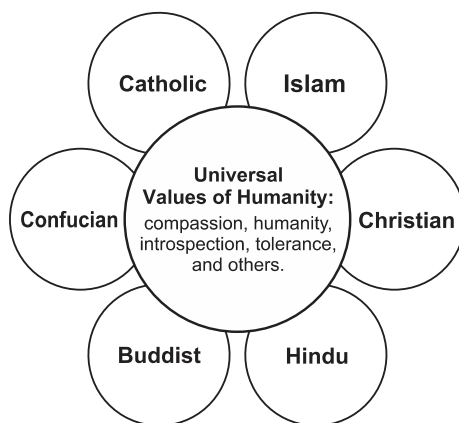
²Last month, Indonesian police tightened security around Java's Borobudur Buddhist temple complex in response to a threat by Islamist militants to destroy the UNESCO World Heritage site. The militants had circulated the threat online, calling for the "demolition" of Borobudur by "Islamic caliphate mujahidin." On August 7, 2013 a bomb planted by unknown perpetrators exploded inside a Buddhist temple in downtown Jakarta during services, injuring three. That came just weeks after Indonesian Islamist militants vowed vengeance against Buddhists for attacks in Myanmar against Rohingya Muslims by members of the country's Buddhist majority. A day later, unknown perpetrators tossed Molotov cocktails into the yard of a Catholic high school in Jakarta. The staff extinguished the flames by dousing them with water from the school's bathroom. See <https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/phelim-kine/indonesia%E2%80%99s-growing-religious-intolerance>, accessed on July 22, 2015.

³http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/22/opinion/indonesias-rising-religious-intolerance.html?_r=0, accessed on July 22, 2015.

homes, killed one villager and seriously injured another. The local police stood by watching while the Shia survivors fled for their lives.⁴

Based on conflict theory of Gillin and Gillin, Conflict is process of opposing human social interaction process, its mean part of a social process that occurs the conflict namely differences.⁵ Individual or group that is aware of the religion differences can be a trigger of conflicts. Therefore, it is important to reduce the deferences by seeking the intersection of religions so that can prevent the problem of religious intolerance.

2. The Intersection of Religions in Indonesia



Picture 1.
The intersection of Religions

Based on the normative-theological perspective, all religions in the world is actually confronted with the same universal mission so that even still have particularity, there are some universality aspect of religions. There are two universal mission that can be a wide variety of religions, namely: first, religion has a mission to provide affirmation of the spiritual needs of man as a continuation of

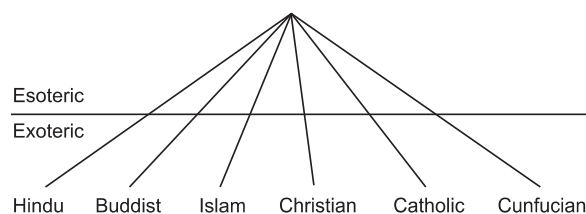
⁴<https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/phelim-kine/indonesia%E2%80%99s-growing-religious-intolerance>, accessed on July 2015.

⁵<http://uchieeinna.blogspot.com/2013/03/konflik-sosial.html>, accessed on July 22, 2015.

the census religiousus potential inherent in human beings. Second, religion become a resource of social and humanitarian values. In other words, the proximity of man's relationship with God is not only done through a rigorous ritual practices, but also through the creation of social harmony, justice and the defense of human oppression or alleviation of under development.⁶ This is the essence of the mission of religion salvation so that can be found the intersection of religions in Indonesia. Is was Illustrated by Picture 1.

From illustration, the intersection of religions can be found in the values of humanity or the horizontal aspect (*ḥabl min al-nās*). It reinforces the unity or tolerance. While the vertical aspect (*ḥabl min Allāh*), they are different.

It is similar to Schuon argument saying that religions in this world definitely have similarities and differences. If there is no equation may not called by the same name, which is "religion". If there is no difference we could not even call it by a compound word, "religions". The problem is where the line will be drawn between unity and diversity between them? In this case Schuon draw the line between the esoteric to the exoteric. The dividing line instead of dividing the great historical embodiments of religions vertically, for example Hinduism from Buddhism, Christianity from Islam, and so on. But the dividing line had to be drawn horizontally and only one divides the various religions who met history. On the top of line it there is esoteric, while underneath there is exoteric. As illustrated by Picture 2.



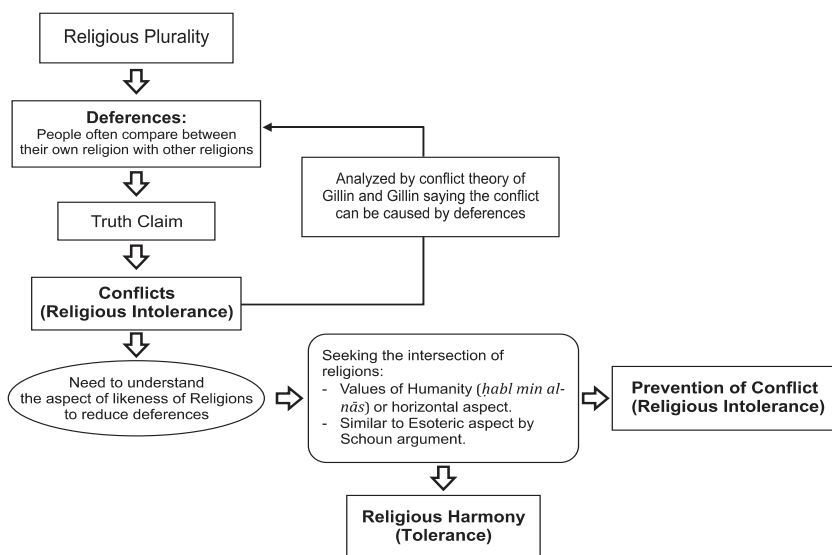
Picture 2.
Religios according to Schoun

⁶Syamsul Arifin, *Studi Islam Kontemporer: Arus Radikalisasi dan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia* (Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2015), p.2.

Thus, according to Schoun, all religions are essentially (esoteric) same and the are different only in the shape alone (exoteric). In metaphysical terms, only in Lord who is at the highest level, there is intersection of religions, whereas in the lower level, that religions different from each other. In this case, it can be said that in epistemological terms of the difference between one religion with one another are also shrinking and united at the highest level, whereas in the lower level of various religions divided. Therefore, the difference between the nature of the embodiment in Schoun terminology is very important.⁷

While in Islam, the nature of religious man is believe in God and serve Him. It is recognized in the monotheistic *rububiyah* Muslims, while distinguishing between Islam and other religions are monotheism *Ilahiyah*.⁸

C. The Intersection of Religions as Alternative Solution



Picture 3.
The Sistematic of Thinking

⁷Frithjof Schoun, 1987, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-agama*, terj. Saafroedin Bahar, (Jakarta: Pustaka Pustaka), p. ix-xi.

⁸Said Aqil Husin Munawar, *Fiqih Hubungan antar Agama* (Jakarta: Ciputat Press, 2003), p. 200-201.

As described above, the intersection of religion is important to reduce religious deferences so that can prevent the problem. By seeking the intersection of religions, people will think that actually religions have equation or likeness so that they will not seek the mistake or deferences of religions. Even so, they must not mix religions. The intersection just to reduce the deferences or truth claim appearing in the conflict. So, it is needed another solution. For example reinforce *Ukhuwrah Insāniyyah* or *Bashariyyah*. By this emphasis, the differential level between religions will be closer. Once public understood this, it is expected that the inter-religious-problems or conflict of religious intolerance. Will be more easily resolved.

D. Conclusion

Religions in Indonesia has long been a complicated issue, included the religious intolerance. Based on the conflict theory of Billgin and Billgin, the conflict is process of opposing human social interaction process, its meant part of a social process that occurs the conflict namely differences. The differences between religions generated some conflict because all the parties in the religious community stated their own truth claim, so there is no way out of their problem, because religious claim is something un-negotiable.

The possibility to get a shared point or intersection between religions is to see the values of humanity (*ḥabl min al-nās*) within religions. There will be found many shared principles between religions. So, it is important to seek the intersection of religion to reduce deferences so that it can prevent the problem or conflict. By understanding the intersection of religions and nature of these differences, it is expected that religious harmony can be reinforced.[w]

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