Optimization of Interfaith Organization (IO) in ASEAN: Inspiration from Indonesian’s IO (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama) for Preventing and Dealing Conflicts in Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia

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Abstract
Freedom religion and beliefs is a basic human right. Most of ASEAN societies are adherent of particular religion or belief. The social dynamics relate to religions and beliefs that become global and important issues, moreover when some conflicts happened because of religion issues, for example in Myanmar, Pattani (Thailand), Ambon and Poso (Indonesia). The idea inspired by interfaith organizations in ASEAN, for example ASEAN Youth Interfaith Community, ASEAN Interfaith Network, and other. It is focused on increasing interfaith and social activities (interfaith dialogue, peace campaign, helping minority, and diplomacy to solve religion, belief, and culture problems) in ASEAN. Optimization and Revitalization means reinstatement and reforming interfaith organization function, particularly in conflict areas. Conflict areas such as Myanmar, Pattani (Thailand), Ambon and Poso (Indonesia) have to have representative offices that can help to solve the conflicts. It can create stability and peace in ASEAN country. This research method is literature study which is done by reviewing and discussing theories from text books, journals, dissertation, and some cases that already happened in conflict areas.

Keyword: Revitalization, interfaith organization, religion conflicts, peace and stability

Introduction
Freedom in believing religion is the right of every human. It’s implicating the government to protect their citizen in doing religion activities. It’s one of human right principle. Freedom religion includes either changing religion or does not embrace particular religion. The state that supports religion freedom must give their citizen opportunity to implement worship. Freedom religion becomes “main guarantee” to uphold human right and for them who live in the state concerned. The consequence is the governments have a big responsibility to raise interfaith reconciliation.

World peace is the most crucial aspect to care of. United Nation (UN) declared International Convention about Citizen Rights and Politic to protect citizen who adhere particular religion (Topidi & Fielder, n.d.). Section 18 of UN International Convention stated that every people have a right to adhere particular religion and they do not permitted to obtrude other in embracing religion. Both religion and politics are different but they are similar to two sides of coin (Barzilai, 2007)

Freedom religion’s violence causes systemic effects and it means that human rights have been violated too. Some effects that have been during in some areas are genocide, worship places destruction, and vandalism. This proves that interfaith reconciliation as one of the important key to create world peace. The history tells us how serious conflict effects that is caused by religion issues. One of the biggest conflicts in history happened before century and is recorded by Old Testament Gospel and Quran. It’s stated about Amalek and Midian genocide. It innumerable how many people were killed. Other memories that is reflecting how terrible religion issues’ effects are Holocaust in World War II. It’s about 11 million to 17 million people died.
ASEAN shows significant development in socio-economic aspect. It is mostly influenced by culture and views about religion. How peoples face the challenge with their habits that is influenced by both of them. It remains us that culture and religion is good start point to build ASEAN civilized and dignified society. Although most of ASEAN countries are developing and developed country, there are still some religion conflicts that are caused by religion issues.

Conflict in Thailand is an intractable conflict taking place mainly in Southern Thailand (Afp., 2014). It originated in the 1960s as an ethnic and religious separatist insurgency in the historical Malay Patani Region, made up of the three southernmost provinces of Thailand and parts of a fourth, but has become more complex and increasingly violent since 2001. The former Sultanate of Patani, which comprised the southern Thai provinces of Pattani (Patani), Yala (Jala), Narathiwat (Menara), also known as the three Southern Border Provinces (STSR, 2014) as well as neighboring parts of Songkhla Province (Singgora), and the northeastern part of Malaysia (Kelantan), was conquered by the Kingdom of Siam in 1785 and, except for Kelantan, the area has been governed by Thailand ever since.

Although low level separatist violence had occurred in the region for decades, the campaign escalated after 2001, with a recrudescence in 2004, occasionally spilling over into other provinces. Outside the region, incidents blamed on southern insurgents have occurred in Bangkok and Phuket (“1 killed, 10 injured by Songkhla motorcycle bomb,” 2015). In July 2005, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra assumed wide-ranging emergency powers to deal with the southern violence, but the insurgency escalated further. On 19 September 2006, a military junta ousted Thaksin Shinawatra in a coup. The junta implemented a major policy shift by replacing Thaksin's earlier approach with a campaign win over the "hearts and minds" of the insurgents. Despite little progress in curbing the violence, the junta declared that security was improving and that peace would come to the region by 2008. By March 2008, however, the death toll surpassed 3,000 (Courtney, Haynes, & Paradice, 2005)

During the Democrat-led government of Abhisit Vejjajiva, Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya noted a "sense of optimism" and said that he was confident of bringing peace into the region within 2010. But by the end of 2010 insurgency-related violence had increased, confounding the government's optimism (Gigli, 2011). Finally in March 2011, the government conceded that violence was increasing and could not be solved in a few months. Local leaders have persistently demanded at least a level of autonomy from Thailand for the Patani region and some of the separatist insurgent movements have made a series of demands for peace talks and negotiations. However, these groups have been largely sidelined by the BRN-C, the group currently spearheading the insurgency which sees no reason for negotiations and is against talks with other insurgent groups. The BRN-C has as its immediate aim to make Southern Thailand ungovernable and has largely been successful at it.

Estimates of the strength of the insurgency vary greatly. In 2004 General Panlop Pinmanee claimed that there were only 500 hard-core jihadists. Other estimates say there as many as 15,000 armed insurgents. Around 2004 some Thai analysts believed that foreign Islamic terrorist groups were infiltrating the area, and that foreign funds and arms are being brought in, though again, such claims were balanced by an equally large body of opinion suggesting this remains a distinctly local conflict. Over 6,000 people have died and more than 10,000 have been injured between 2004 and 2014 in a formerly ethnic separatist insurgency, which has currently been taken over by hard-line Jihadis and pitted them against both the Thai-speaking Buddhist minority and local Muslims who have a moderate approach or who support the Thai government.
Anonymous leaflets issued by militant groups often contain jihadist language. Many young militants received training and indoctrination from Islamic teachers, some of which took place within Islamic educational institutions. Many see the Southern Thai violence as a form of Islamist militancy and Islamic separatism, testifying to the strength of Malay Muslim beliefs and the determination of local people to resist the (Buddhist) Thai state on religious grounds.

Other religion issue that is causing religion conflict is happening in Myanmar. The Rohingya Conflict in Western Burma is an armed conflict between the state of Burma and its Rohingya Muslim minority since 1947 (Yegar, 1972). Their initial ambition during Mujahideen movements (1947-1961) was to separate the Rohingya-populated Mayu frontier region of Arakan from western Burma and annex that region into newly formed neighbouring East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). The Burmese junta allege that the Rohingya groups were active during the period of the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 (Thit Maung, n.d.). Around 800,000 Muslim Rohingyas live in Burma with around 80% living in the western state of Rakhine. Most of them have been denied citizenship by the Burmese government. The United Nations consider the Rohingya one of the world’s most persecuted minorities (Moffic, Peteet, Hankir, & Awaad, 2019).

Some historians stated that the main factor of Rohingya rebellion is the declaration of Buddhism as state religion which causes discrimination. After Burma's independence, Muslims were not accepted for military service; the Burmese government replaced Muslim civil servants, police and headmen by Arakanese who increasingly discriminated against the Muslim community; Muslims were arbitrarily arrested by police and soldiers; and, the immigration authorities imposed limitation of movement upon Muslims (Zöllner, 2000).

Indonesia known as the complex and plural ranging from culture to religion, but it’s not guarantee that religion conflict won’t happen in Indonesia. There are some conflict relate to religion issues, such as Chinese genocide, the latest incident are mosque burning in Tolikora Papua, and Poso conflict between Muslims and Christians. Short chronology of Poso conflict explained by (August., 2011). The conflict in Poso was initially triggered by local elite political skirmishes. Over the last four years, however, it has transformed into a conflict between grass-roots communities. Hatred and suspicion have spread among a society that previously co-existed peacefully. The bloody conflict between the 'red group' (Christians) and the 'white group' (Muslims) remains a daily topic of conversation. A string of horror stories have graced the front pages of the local media, making it difficult to differentiate between information and rumour.

The Malino Declaration was a government initiative to initiate reconciliation in Poso. The ten-point accord, subsequently known as Malino 1 after a similar agreement was drafted for Ambon, was signed on 20 December 2001. Poso’s inhabitants hoped that the declaration could be implemented successfully, to end the conflict that has resulted in riots on 25-30 December 1998, 16-19 April 2000, 23 May-10 June 2000, 26 November - 2 December 2001 and most recently 12 -16 August 2002. Sadly, the Malino Declaration now faces utter failure. Between the declaration's signing and 12 August 2002, there were 30 violations. These violations involved both parties to the conflict as well as incidents triggered by the security forces.

These incidents became increasingly common towards the end of the period set down by the accord for the restoration of security. They have included mysterious shootings, bomb blasts and inflammatory graffiti. These various incidents have rekindled trauma, mutual suspicion and sensitivity amongst society in Poso. The security forces have also contributed to the situation by making statements to the community that have implied that the end of the security restoration period would signal the end of security itself. Predictably, following the escalation of these incidents, the police and military have requested more operational funds from the Central Sulawesi
government to restore security. The tension that had subsided is again rising and could lead to further large-scale conflict.

The failure of the Malino Declaration can be traced to several factors. The declaration is elitist, relies on quantitative measures of success, and is laden with opportunities for profitable 'projects'. For example, in the period to June 2002, the Poso Regency Working Group spent 2.2 billion rupiah (roughly A$450,000) just on disseminating information about the Malino Declaration. The accord also separates social rehabilitation, reconstruction of facilities and security, as if these three concerns were not related. As a result, facilities have been constructed without regard for the prevailing security situation or whether inhabitants feel safe, and social rehabilitation has not been supported by affirmative policies towards various flare-ups and incidents. Efforts to restore security, which have focused on placing large numbers of security personnel in Poso, have been easily undermined by disquieting acts of terror. Security has become the monopoly of the security forces, who treat it like a tradeable commodity.

At a community level, there is still a genuine desire to live peacefully. Behind the conflict, the community still remembers a time when living with different religious groups didn't mean living with war. However, the trauma caused by various conflicts has unfortunately created a fear of attempting any reconciliation or rehabilitation that might succeed where the government has failed. Nevertheless, an awareness has started to emerge in Poso that the community has the right to feel safe and have their socio-economic needs fulfilled things they have lost during the conflict. For instance, after an Omega bus was bombed on 12 July 2002, the Poso Pesisir Subdistrict Inter-religious Congregation Communication Forum issued a statement demanding that the security forces work harder to prove that they are trying to resolve the conflict. This statement is also an example of efforts to shift the perception of the conflict away from conflict between grass-roots communities to the role of the state. However, such efforts are still a minority in the midst of media statements by religious figures and political parties that simply blame the other side.

The severance of lines of communication at a grass-roots level has made the community more easily influenced by divisive statements by members of the elite. The media, with its focus on circulation, is more likely to publish these statements. When signatories of the Malino Declaration expressed their disappointment with the security forces for failing to take serious steps to follow up violations of the declaration, the press packaged the statement in such a way that it provoked a negative reaction from one religious community.

Terror, issue and statement has been development to the negative potential activity. This has been the pattern following the Malino Declaration. If society again takes the bait and participates in violence, this pattern could result in further large-scale conflict. As such, the awareness that has been developed thus far must be guarded and continually consolidated. A broader alliance with a common perception must be established at the most legitimate level, namely between the communities that have directly suffered from the conflict.

Of course this will not be easy. Society has several vulnerable points that will need to be monitored, so that they do not influence the community's capacity to keep each problem in proportion. In Poso, there can be no separation between rehabilitating these vulnerabilities and placing the conflict in the framework of state accountability. These two matters must be worked on together, with the aim to muster a critical force in society aware of its rights and the practices that are weakening its former capacity to manage conflict and difference. Although those conflicts are tending to different but the general issues are religion issues. It is supported by person who has negative connotation to make it worse. They create a strategy to make conflicts in order to benefit the situation.
In addition to some of these incidents, there were several events which showed potential conflicts in the name of religion. Such as the continuation of protests and demonstrations based on racial conflict that occurred in Malaysia, violence and the potential for human rights violations that occurred in Myanmar to the Muslim community which led to the revocation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Suu Kyi, and the tension of several events in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand. This is an indicator that the potential for conflict in ASEAN is still very high and dangerous if not immediately addressed. So far, ASEAN as one of the official organizations between countries in Southeast Asia is still considered unable to provide the significant impact and intervention to these countries.

ASEAN as the most strategic organization in South East Asia is not optimum yet. Actually ASEAN has some principle and norm as the foundation of relation between ASEAN countries. For example (1) opposed violence and consider the peace solution, (2) Regional Autonomy, (3) Non intervention principle, and (4) opposed military pact and support bilateral cooperation (Cipto, 2007). ASEAN as an organization should be able to provide more intervention to resolve conflicts in the Southeast Asia region through a set of diplomatic strategies that are fair and in accordance with the principles of international law. One way that can be taken is through the re-empowerment of community-based organizations that grow and develop in each of the potential conflict areas. In Indonesia, there is the Forum for Interfaith Awareness (FKUB) which is one of the important instruments and media for the growth of peace and the decline in the potential for conflict in regions throughout Indonesia.

Method

This research method is qualitative method, using interview, observation and documentation as our collecting data techniques. Research location was in Forum Kerukunan antar Umat Beragama (FKUB) Malang, Tulungagung, and Blitar in East Java, Indonesia. The informants were FKUB chief and public relation staffs. Besides that we used literature study which is done by reviewing and discussing theories from text books, journals, dissertation, and some cases that already happened in conflict areas such as in Myanmar, Southeast Thailand, Phillipina dan Indonesia.

Locus or research settings in the Indonesian Interfaith Organization under the auspices of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion were chosen with consideration to the ease and speed of access that researchers can make towards the data requirements for this study.

Discuss

Strenght and Limitation

This research is based on roles and influences of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), it is one of the crucial interfaith organization in Indonesia that has a big role in keeping reconciliation. Writer belief that we are limited by time to do this research. It is because FKUB has its own representative offices in every province, so it’s impossible to visit them one by one. But we cover it by discussing information and data from 15 Interfaith Organization from all over the world. Those Interfaith Organization engaged in solving conflicts in Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Harmony simply known as agreement of opinions. Harmony can be decipherable as the just adaptation of parts to each other, in any system or combination of things, or in things intended to form a connected whole. Other opinion stated that harmony means agreed in the existing of differences and make it as a turning point for fostering social life and mutual understanding as well as accept them sincerely. Harmony is the condition of create and process of patterns interaction
between the various units (unsure and sub-system). It is reflecting feedback relation that is signed with acceptance (Syaukani, 2008).

Literally, harmony is peace and peaceful. Harmony can be applied in daily life activities, it is different with the using of harmony in music or art. Interfaith harmony is not majored particular religion or combining various religions in one unite as a new religion (religion syncretism) but interfaith harmony is how to create and manage relation between peoples from various religion, accepting and appreciation is the main key (Munawar, 2005).

Harmony is principle in how to create world peace. We have to keep harmony continuously because harmony is a brittle thing. We realize that social dynamic couldn’t avoid. Harmony is not only “given by God” but also “kept by human”. Those conflicts that we have discussed on the previous part are always dynamic and pointed to sensitive religion issues in Myanmar, Southeast Thailand, and Indonesia. Every human has to hand in hand to solve those problems. Interfaith harmony is striving to create a significance condition, no internal conflicts, groups, and religious community. Interfaith harmony is a harmonic relation within dynamic social life and we corroborating each other to keep world peace through

1) Appreciate each other in all of life aspects, such as freedom in doing religious activities
2) Helping each other, with all peoples with various religion background. It also helps us to create peace in our daily life.

Interfaith Organization Roles

Awareness of religion differences and socio culture understanding is the principle of Interfaith Organization roles. Those organizations exist in some countries, moreover in democratic countries which are admitting pluralism. They are the ‘meeting point’ of conflict solution that relate to religion issues. Interfaith organization actively held interfaith dialogue as the right solution to recognize and appreciate pluralism.

In America, Interfaith Organizations exist in some cities that have good tolerances. For example American Jewish Committee (AJC) Dept of Interreligious Affairs, established 1906 Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, established 1988, North American Interfaith Network (NAIN), established 2000, The Interfaith Alliance (USA), established 1994. America’s interfaith infrastructure consists of networks of interfaith organizations and leaders that organically link city, regional, state, national, and even international spheres (Edwards, 2011). By focusing on the multi-religious city, we sought in this pilot phase to isolate context in order to determine the replicability of interfaith initiatives. Simultaneously, this pilot phase has yielded rich data that could be used in future research to compare initiatives, city to city, region to region, to gauge the impact of 9/11, immigration, or economic hardship on the viability and direction of the interfaith movement.

The twenty cities studied in this pilot project reflect the geographic, socio-economic, and racial diversity of the United States. Several cities were identified for this study based on prior knowledge through Pluralism Project networks that indicated further study in these metro areas would yield rich insights into the vitality and diversity of the interfaith movement. Cities selected range in population from 150,000 to 1.5 million. The focus on smaller cities for this pilot phase allowed for our research to reflect a broader cross-section of the country than would have been possible if larger cities had been the focus (Cipto, 2007).

Whereas in ASEAN, there are some positive impacts of interfaith organization, such as Interfaith Dialogue, Interfaith Youth Camp, Interfaith Youth Forum, ASEAN-Canada Dialogue on Interfaith. It shows the awareness and seriousness of ASEAN society to keep interfaith
reconciliation. Interfaith Dialogue as the preventive solution and it educates people to know well what is happening in ASEAN now. Through those ways, we will appreciate more about pluralism in conflicts area (Syamsudin., 2001).

**Optimization Strategy**

Indonesian's Interfaith Organization or FKUB has a specific character and role as a front guard in maintaining good relations between religious communities. The control function with a more private approach to certain community groups is the key to the success of this organization's performance in Indonesia, especially the research locus in Blitar, Malang and Tulungagung. Demographically, the three regions have a dynamic level of pluralism, although the potential for conflict always arises but the potential for conflict can be mitigated by the emergence of the organization. The organization has worked for more than 8 years by giving birth to several policies to find solutions to any conflicts that occur.

The inspiration and enthusiasm that can be obtained from Indonesian Interfaith Organization or FKUB is related to the resolution of conflicts in the name of religion, among others (1) approach to the community more massively and in ways that are in accordance with local culture and wisdom; (2) mediation by means of deliberation and win-win solution; (3) looking for cadres of young cadres who are the successors of the organization as early as possible to be fostered and as seedlings of peace; (4) minimal costs from related parties do not make this organization die directly but, it becomes a spirit to continue to exist and be active in efforts to reduce horizontal conflict; (5) always communicate actively with every stakeholder and mass organization both minority and majority.

Based on previous discussion and development about ideas of Interfaith Organization roles to prevent and solve conflicts in Myanmar, Southeast Thailand and Indonesia, here are the strategy that may apply:

1. Interfaith Organization possible established in ASEAN countries and registered officially in ASEAN. The Interfaith Organization members are religion figures from various religions. They can dialogue actively from community to community, for example campuses, schools, and society, especially in Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia;
2. Non intervention principle has to be upheld by ASEAN and its member comprehensively. ASEAN has to strive more to ‘help’ crisis countries;
3. Myanmar, Southeast Thailand dan Indonesia may doing consolidation actively to discuss about either conflict that already happened or conflict that is happening in every areas. Interfaith principle must noted by ASEAN society to create interfaith consolidation;
4. ASEAN must consider the existence of interfaith organization office that relates direct to ASEAN center office. It will make us easier to connect closely and expedite problem solving in conflict area because of ASEAN supports. The executive boards are ASEAN delegation from every religion in each country;
5. Special programs that is prepared to solve the problems are:
   a. Increasing Interfaith Dialogue frequency in societies;
   b. Campaign actively through mass media and social media to raise interfaith reconciliation in Myanmar, Southeast Thailand and Poso;
   c. Exclusive diplomatic path that relates to government directly;
   d. Program for family, specifically is aimed to educate people from their very first environment;
6. Anticipate irresponsibility person that creates conflicts deliberately relate to religion issues in some areas by informing local government;
7. Special programs start six months after Interfaith Organization are established.

Conclusion
Conflicts that happened in Myanmar, Southeast Thailand dan Poso can be seen from some perspectives, it will create some alternative in solving the problems. Interfaith reconciliation is the most important key to keep the world peace or in certain areas. Study about the roles of Interfaith Organization has shown a better change, but we need to increase it more. There are seven points to revitalize interfaith organization, such as create Vocal Point and represent office of interfaith organization in those three areas. Through interfaith organization revitalization, we hope that religion issues can be solved to prevent continuous conflicts.

References