Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization
ISSN 2614-5472 (p), ISSN 2614-7262 (e), Volume 3, Number 2 (2020), Pages: 245-267

Religious Diversity and The Challenge of Multiculturalism: Contrasting Indonesia and The European Union*)

Muhammad Wildan
State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
Email: muhammad.wildan@uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

As the profile of religions in the world is changing rapidly, religious diversity is becoming a more common phenomenon nowadays in almost every society. Indonesia and European Union (EU) are not an exception to be more diverse and plural societies. Although religious diversity gives such richness of culture in society, religions are known as vulnerable entities. Many social problems caused by religions brought about various conflicts and violent actions on a big scale and also numerous hostilities, discriminations, and hatred on a small scale. Many regulations have been issued to address such social tensions both in Indonesia and the EU. However, many conflicts, hostilities or discriminations are recurring in both Indonesia and EU states. Interestingly, in many cases, hostilities and discrimination even done by the apparatus of the state. The current paper is dedicated to explore how these countries deal with religious diversity and whether there are social tensions and discriminations occurred. Religion as a common phenomenon in the world should be seen more as a challenge for every country rather than a contentious threat.

Keywords: religious diversity, hostility, prejudice, multiculturalism, religious values.

A. Introduction

Indonesia and European Union (EU) are naturally plural and homes for several big religions i.e., Islam and Christianity respectively. Although only certain religions are quite dominant in

these regions, other religions could grow and develop well. This is to say that religious diversity is naturally growing well in these regions. In more modern states and societies, however, religious diversity is much more complex as it is intertwined with other issues such as ethnicity, race, culture, politics, economics, etc.[1] Unquestionably, therefore, many religious diversity challenges emerge along with the development of the diversity level.

The more developed and complex society, the more complex also its diversity. In the Indonesian context, diversity is unavoidable as the country comprises 19 major ethnics and hundreds of minor ethnics.[2] Along with the development and the growth of Indonesia, society is becoming more dynamic and mobile. In the same vein, the European Union as a big unitarian state comprising of 27 countries also more complex and dynamic in terms of culture, politics, and economics. The challenge of diversity requires EU people to become more mobile and diverse. All above require more regulation at the central government level which should bind all of its state/provincial members. Therefore, it is interesting to study and compare the religious diversity in those two regions.

This paper tries to explore what are the challenges of religious diversity in both regions respectively and also to observe regulations issued by both central governments to handle issues of diversity. Finally, the paper would also see to what extent do multiculturalism and integration of the people going on in both regions. Based on the findings, hopefully, this paper could be a preliminary inquiry for further researches in the future to come.

---

*) Earlier version of this article has been presented at the Conference on Religion and Public Piety: Comparing European and Indonesian Experiences organized by ICRS Yogyakarta and EU Embassy in Yogyakarta on 27-28 October 2015. Some data used in this article was excerpted from field research conducted in some EU countries with kind help of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesia Embassy for EU in Brussel, Belgium in 2013.

[1] Bryan S. Turner, "Religion in Liberal and Authoritarian States" in Jack Barbalet, Adam Possamai and Bryan S. Turner, *Religion and the State: A Comparative Sociology*. UK: Anthem Press, 2011, p. 25.

[2] Martin Russell, *European Parliament Briefing May 2016: Religious pluralism in Indonesia, Harmonious traditions face challenges*. Brussel: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016, p.2.

B. Religious Diversity

Indonesia is a home for Muslims which comprise about 87% of the population.[3] Some islands with major Muslim populations are Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan. Interestingly, other religions could also grow and develop well, even becoming the majority in some outer islands. Christianity as the second biggest religion in Indonesia (10%, nationally) grows well especially in eastern provinces such as Northern Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua, while Hinduism is the majority in the Island of Bali (1.7%, nationally).[4] Besides, there are also some spots of Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus on the islands with a Muslim majority such as Java and Sumatra.[5] Moreover, religious diversity in Indonesia is closely associated with ethnic diversity. Muslims are associated with some major ethnics such as Arabs, Javanese, Sundanese, Malays, Minang, Madurese, Bugis, and Banjarese, while Christians are closely related with Minahasan, Papuan, Batak, and Moluccans. The above underlines that diversity is not a new phenomenon, and is even rooted in Indonesian history.[6]

European Union (EU), which currently comprises 27 countries has long been as a home of Christianity (approx. 70%). Different from that of in Indonesia, no other religions are having a big number of adherents in EU collectively. Other than Christianity and all its denominations and sects, the second biggest 'religion' in EU is atheism (9.3%), while others are non-believers (agnostic) (17%) and Islam (2.1%).[7] While religious diversity in Indonesia is more at the

[3] Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*. USA: Pew Forum, 2015, p. 73.

[4] Indonesia is the fourth largest Hindu population in the World in 2010 after India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

[5] Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*. Leiden: Brill, 2008, p. 639.

[6] Andrée Feillard and Rémy Madinier, *The End of Innocent? Indonesian Islam and the Temptations of Radicalism*. Singapore: NUS & IRASEC, 2011.

[7] Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions*: 147; Special Eurobarometer, "Attitudes of Europeans towards Biodiversity, Awareness, and Perceptions of EU customs, and Perceptions of Antisemitism", European Union: European Commission, 2019. https://www.gesis.org/en/eurobarometer-data-service/survey-series/standard-special-eb/study-overview/eurobarometer-904-za7556-december-2018 (retrieved 9 December 2020)

level of inter-religious diversity, the primary concern in EU has been more on intra-religious diversity.

It could thus be said that religious diversity in EU is completely different compared to that of Indonesia. Since the advent of the renaissance in Europe in the 14th century, Christianity with all its denominations has been a major religion almost throughout European Union.[8] This is to say that most native EU is Christians, except for many converts in recent years. Although Islam had made a long history in Europe such as in Spain and Italy Islam has almost disappeared in the region during the medieval countries except some portions in Northern Greece and Cyprus.[9] Therefore, I can argue that religious diversity in Europe is a more recent phenomenon after the arrival of blue-collar worker Muslims in the 1960s and with the arrival of political asylum seekers and refugees during the last decade.

Indeed, religion is always a sensitive issue in any society. Many wars, conflicts, violence, discrimination, hate speech, etc. are mostly caused or triggered by religious issues. Historically, many wars occurred because of religion with the primary example of the Crusades, and also some other European wars. Many recent wars in the Middle East such as the ones in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen were also triggered arguably by intra-religious sectarianism. In the same way, some wars were caused by inter-religious conflicts such as the conflict between Palestine and Israel. To mention a few in Indonesia, there are Sunni-Shi'i incidents in Madura, Sunni-Ahmadiyah conflict in West Java, and also Muslim-Christian conflicts in Maluku some years ago.[10]

While such wars may no longer occur in the EU and Indonesia nowadays, violence and discrimination against religious believers are still quite prevalent. Some religious tensions and discrimination occurring in some EU countries are partly caused by the rise of

[8] Pew Research Center, *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010*. US: Pew Templeton Project, 2012, p. 18-19 (retrieved 15 March 2021).

[9] Konda, Religion, *Secularism and the Veil in Daily Life.* Istanbul: Konda Araştırma ve Danışmanlık, 2007).

[10] Rizal Panggabean Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (eds), *Policing Religious Conflicts in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy (PUSAD), 2015.

islamophobia and extremism among Muslims. European Network Against Racism (ENAR) notes that discrimination against minority groups mostly occurred in EU countries in their dealing with religion.[11] In Indonesian contexts, some NGOs dealing with inter-religious relationships such as Interfidei, Wahid Institute, Center for Religious and Cultural Studies (CRCS) for example note that the escalation of religious conflicts of majority and minority religious groups. Therefore, this issue is significant to discuss and to have some inputs for the society as well as the policymakers.

C. Policies on Religious Diversity

Although there are many similarities between Indonesia and the EU in managing diversity, there are of course many interesting dissimilarities. The most significant dissimilarities are in historical and cultural contexts. In the Indonesian context, religious diversity has long been part of culture and nation-state. The formation of Indonesian nation-state and the stipulation of Pancasila as the state's ideology of Indonesia reflects the diversity of religions and ethnics of the country.[12] Although Europe is well-known as a bastion of secular countries, in the last several decades religion has been the concern of European countries, especially since the formation of the European Union (EU) in 1993. In many cases, even the church-state relations could not be simply detached. This is to say that there are some close links between the state and a particular religious community in some EU countries.[13]

As religious diversity is becoming the challenge of almost all regions in Indonesia, regulations dealing with religions and inter-religious relationships are at the state level. Beside Pancasila as the foundation of the state, religious rights are also clearly managed in

[11] Interview with Julie Pascoet, policy officer of ENAR in Brussels in September 2013.

[12] Faisal Ismail, "Religion, State, And Ideology in Indonesia: A Historical Account of the Acceptance of Pancasila as the Basis of the Indonesian State" in *Indonesian Journal Of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* (IJIIS) Vol. 1, no. 2 (2018), pp. 19-21. DOI: 10.20885/ijiis.vol1.iss2.art2.

[13] Russell Sandberg and Christopher Norman Doe, "Church-State relations in Europe" in *Religion Compass* Vol. 1 No. 5, pp. 564. DOI: 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2007.00040.x

Article 29 of the Constitution. However, this regulation alone is too general and not enough to address all inter-religious issues in the country. Therefore, the government issued several other regulations on inter-religious as well as intra-religious issues. To control the possibility of religious adherents insulting others, the government issued the so-called "blasphemy law" (1965), while to regulate how a certain religious community should build their worship house, the government issued a Joint Ministerial Decree on Houses of Worship (2006). However, many conflicts and acts of intolerance remain to be prevalent in some regions in Indonesia.[14]

In the European context, the regulation on religion also appears in EU treaties. Initially, religion was quite insignificant, as the continent was considered a homogenous society. After the influx of many migrant Muslims in the 1960s, religious diversity has become somewhat more visible. Such visibility became even more evident after the huge influx of Middle East migrants in 2015 due to long internal conflicts and wars. The vast majority of Muslims who were initially be perceived as helpers in "difficult, dirty, and dangerous" works are perceived nowadays as a threat to national identity, domestic security, and the social fabric.[15] This social situation also influenced the formation of religious regulations in Europe.

Religious freedom is enshrined in the charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU (2000), most noticeably in Article 10 on Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion and also in Article 22 on Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Diversity. Similarly, the Treaty of EU, which was agreed in Maastricht (1999) and amended in Nice (2001), dan Lisbon (2007) clearly stated religion in Articles 10 and 19, especially on combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief. Another one concerns the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU in 2009, which stipulated in Articles 17

[14]Among some studies on minority issues in Indonesia is Cahyo Pamungkas, *Mereka yang Terusir: Studi tentang Ketahanan Sosial Pengungsi Ahmadiyah dan Syiah di Indonesia.* Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017; and Ahmad Suaedy, *Islam dan Kaum Minoritas: Tantangan Kontemporer*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2012.

[15] Bichara Khader, "Muslims in Europe: Construction of a "Problem" at Thehttps://www.bbvaopenmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/BBVA-OpenMind-Muslims-in-Europe-The-Construction-of-a-Problem-Bichara-Khader.pdf.pdf (retrieved on 15 March 2021).

and 19 on the Rights of Religious Associations and Combat of Any Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.[16]

In addition to all the above regulations at the EU level, other regulations at the country or state level persist. As the EU regulations bind all the member countries, the regulation at the country or state level basically should not in principle contradict the former regulations on building houses of worship, religious leaders or imams, religious education, religious attire, etc. differ in each EU state. Among the excellent examples of the state's regulation on Islam are the appointment of IGGiO (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich* or Islamic Religious Community in Austria) to run Islamic teachings in public schools in Austria, EMB (Executive Muslim of Belgium) to run Islamic teachings in public schools and regulate mosques and imams as well as the Islamic education in some federal states in Germany.[17]

In some cases, however, the regulations at a country or state level may contradict with EU regulations, such as the law banning veils in public schools in France (2004), the law banning *niqāb* from public places in France (2011), a law banning the full-face veil in Belgium in (2011), 'banning' of building mosques in Athens, Greece, abandoning more than 200,000 of Muslims in the city, etc. Thus, even in so-called democratic countries, religious freedom is not fully guaranteed by the states yet. All the cases above clearly point to the fact that religious diversity is increasingly becoming a huge challenge for the EU.

D. Religious Misunderstanding and Prejudice

Religion as a sensitive entity in many cases brings about tensions, hostilities, and conflicts in the society. I tend to say that almost all religious tensions and hostilities in Indonesia and the EU due mostly to misunderstanding and prejudice among religious

[16] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012E/TXT (retrieved 16 March 2021)

[17] Further on this issue, see Muhammad Wildan and Fatimah Husein, *Social Challenges of Muslim Communities in Europe: The Response of Muslim Communities to EU Policies*. A Research of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (forthcoming 2021).

adherents. I believe this is what lies behind the conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar, Hindus and Muslims in India, atheism, and Muslims in Uyghur China, etc. In Myanmar's conflicts, for example, the is caused largely by the fear of the Buddhists that Myanmar would be turned into a Muslim majority country, as had occurred in Indonesia, as they perceived it. In the same way, many religious tensions and conflicts in Indonesia are due mostly to prejudice and misunderstanding. The issue of Christianization of Java had been the major cause of tension and conflict between Muslims and Christians in some areas in Java.

Similarly, in many areas in Indonesia, both inter-and intra-religious conflicts are due mostly to suspicion among the believers. Some of the most recent inter-religious conflicts in Indonesia are the persecution of Syiah believers in Sampang Madura (2012), the burning of a mosque in Tolikara Papua (July 2015) and the subsequent burning of a church in Singkil Aceh (October 2015), the destruction of some viharas in Tanjungbalai North Sumatera (2016) etc. Among the causes of these inter-religious conflicts is the lack of dialogue among religious adherents, which could reduce misunderstanding and prejudice. The below table may best explain how social hostilities involving religion in Indonesia remains quite high from 2013, 2015, and 2017 according to Pew Research Center from the scale Very Hight (7.2 and higher), High (3.6 to 7.2), Moderate (2.4 to 4.4), and Low (0.0 to 2.3).[18] From the table, we could see that the rate of social hostilities in Indonesia getting lower (better) from time to time. On the other hand, Pew also identifies at the same researches that the government restriction index (GHI) even higher in Indonesia.

[18] Pew Research Center, *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities Overall Decline in Social Hostilities in 2013, Though Harassment of Jews Worldwide Reached a Seven-Year High.* USA: Pew Forum, 2015: pp. 54; Pew Research Center, *A Closer at How Religious Restrictions Have Risen around the World.* US: Pew Research Forum, 2019, p. 88.

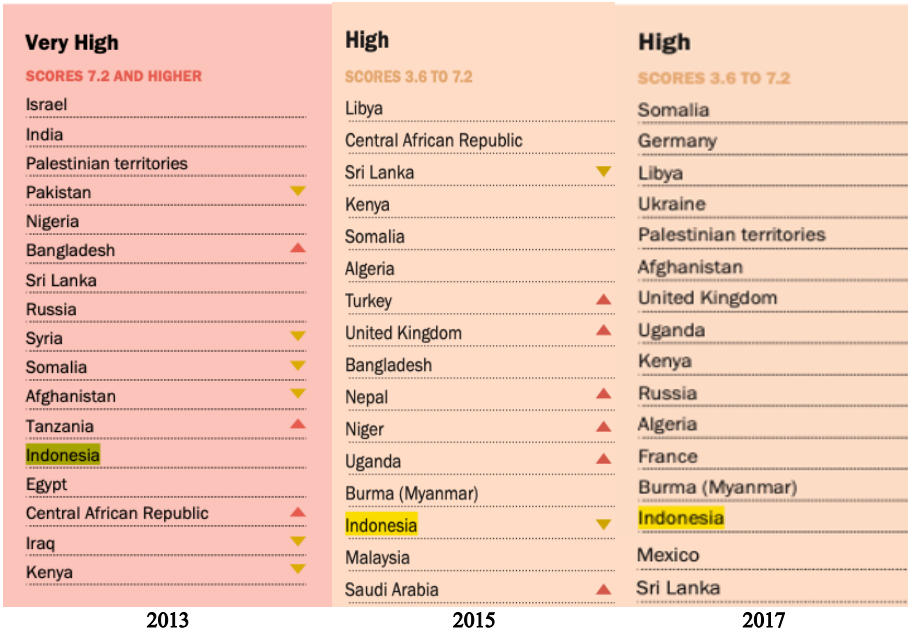

Figure 1. Countries with Social Hostilities Involving Religion in 2013, 2015, and 2017

In the EU context, such misunderstanding and prejudice have also become the main factor in the rise of religious conflicts. In some EU states, Muslim communities of numerous ethnic backgrounds have been excluded from receiving economic, political, and social benefits.[19] The marginalization of Muslims in these states is driven mostly by the widespread Western misperceptions of Islam as a monolithic faith. Some radical and violent actions in several EU countries have led to the general assumption that conservative Muslims who are wearing the *niqab* (female headcover) or growing beard are terrorists. Some cultural practices in Islam, such as wearing a big headscarf or calls for prayers over loudspeakers, have led to misjudgment in these societies. Some countries are even frustrated by the possibility of Muslims integrating into European culture. The figure 2 and figure 3 below show the religious hostilities in Europe

[19] Robert J. Pauly, Jr, *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization?* England: Ashgate, 2004: p. 2.

and the rest of the world as shown by Pew Research Center (2015 and 2019):[20]

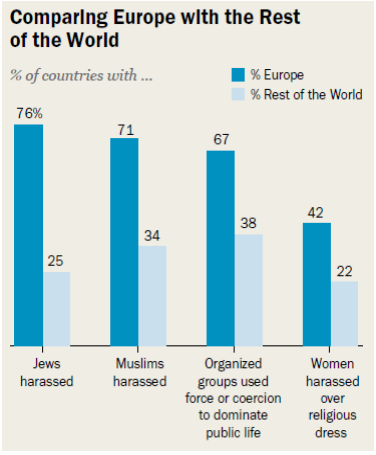

Figure 2. Religious Hostilities on Minorities in Europe and the rest of the World (2015)

Countries with High Levels of Social Hostilities related to Religious Norms
(Top 10 countries)

No.	COUNTRIES
1.	Germany
2.	India
3.	Somalia
4.	Uganda
5.	Israel
6.	France
7.	Iraq
8.	Italy
9.	Russia
10.	Ukraine

Figure 3. Countries with High Level of Social Hostilities related to Religious Norms.

[20] Pew Research Center, *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities*: p. 30; Pew Research Center, *A Closer at How Religious Restrictions Have Risen around the World,* p. 30.

Similar to that of Indonesian, the rise of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in Europe is mostly driven by religious suspicion. Although religion is a part of human rights, Muslims and many other minority groups such as the Roma,[21] Africans and Jews still feel that they have been the targets of discrimination. European Network Against Racism (ENAR) acknowledges that many minority groups are being discriminated against across Europe. Discrimination against women Muslims wearing hijab is the most common across EU countries such as France, Belgium, the Netherland, Germany, Austria, etc.[22] Many educated women Muslims have difficulties in finding jobs because of their veils, although they are qualified enough. Apparently, Muslim women and girls are mostly affected, in particular in the fields of employment and education, and face double discrimination based on both religion and gender. Similarly, many young Muslim families in Germany also acknowledge that they have difficulties renting apartments because they are Muslims.[23]

Hostilities and hatred against Islam are by no means casuistic, but take the form of movements at the grassroots level and among politicians. The biggest anti-Islam movement is in Germany i.e., Pegida, *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident). Although anti-Pegida movements exist in some cities in Germany, this anti-Islam movement has spread in a number of its neighboring countries.[24] Other anti-Islam movements are generated by European far-right political parties such as Golden Dawn in Greece, Austrian Freedom Party (FPO) in Austria, Vlaams Belang in

[21] The Roma also known as Romani, are an Indo-Aryan people, traditionally nomadic itinerants living mostly in Europe, as well as diaspora populations in the Americas. The Romani are widely known in English by the exonym Gypsies (or Gipsies), which is considered by some Roma people to be pejorative due to its connotations of illegality and irregularity.

[22] Julia Pascoet, ENAR Policy Officer, in a public lecture at UIN Yogyakarta on 16 January 2014.

[23] Interview with some youth Muslims in Berlin and Austria in September 2013.

[24] http://www.euronews.com/2015/02/03/anti-islam-pegida-protests-spring-up-in-austria

Belgium, Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands, National Front in France, etc.[25]

Among far-right politicians, suspicion and Islamophobic discourse still prevail. While some politicians argue that Islamic culture would substitute Christian heritage, others state that they are merely defending European values against Muslim invasion. Other politicians would even call the presence of Muslims in Europe as an "occupation".[26] In my view, such suspicion has gone overboard. It is conceivable to think that Muslims living in Europe would gradually integrate socially and culturally to be 'Europeans Muslims'. The more Muslims are welcomed in Europe, the faster they would foster European culture and, finally, they would feel being European and embrace European heritage. Hence, I believe that Muslim integration into European culture is fairly conceivable, to say the least.

Such prejudice and misunderstanding, which have worsened the relationship between Muslims and Christians, could also lead to violent extremism. Religious violent extremism, triggered by the declining relations between Islam and the West, is now perceived to widespread throughout the world. In Indonesia, the September 11 event had provoked some radicals to conduct terror operations in Bali (2002, 2005) and Jakarta (2003, 2004 and 2009). The political crisis in the Middle East has also exacerbated various forms of extremism and terrorism, which subsequently led to the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In Indonesia, ISIS-affiliated groups have become one of the toughest challenges confronted by government authorities until nowadays.[27]

The phenomenon of radical Islamism is also quite disturbing in the EU. Such radicalization occurs mostly due to the failure of some quarters within the Muslim community to integrate European values. Ultra-conservative interpretation of the Quran and Hadith (Prophetic

[25] http://europe.newsweek.com/european-far-right-parties-seeking-anti-islam-coalition-jewish-groups-330300

[26] Michael Emerson, *Interculturalism: Europe and its Muslims in search of sound societal model*. CEPS: Brussels, 2011: pp. 9-11.

[27] IPAC Report No.13, *The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia*. Jakarta: IPAC, 2014; IPAC Report No. 69, The Decline of ISIS in Indonesia and the Emergence of New cells. Jakarta: IPAC, 21 January 2021.

Tradition) could also lead to such resistance against European values. As a result, anything would be measured from the perspective of normative Islam. The murder of Theo van Gogh, a filmmaker of the controversial movie *Submission*, by a Moroccan descent could be categorized as a failure of youth Muslims to grasp European values. The attacks conducted allegedly by ISIS affiliates against Charlie Hebdo (2015), Stade de France (2015), Brussels' Airport (2016), which have caused hundreds of people to be victimized, has tarnished the image of Islam in the EU states.[28]

E. Multiculturalism and Integration

Religious diversity is not only a phenomenon but also a contemporary challenge for both Indonesia and European countries. Each country differs in its regulation on religious diversity. Indonesia has a completely different historical context compared to that of the states in the EU. Since the beginning of the nation-state building, Indonesia was already formed by many a diverse mix of ethnicities holding different religions and beliefs. As all ethnicities are united in the framework of the modern nation-state, multiculturalism has become second nature to Indonesians with Bahasa Indonesia as their *lingua franca.*

However, multiculturalism in Indonesia has yet been fully settled. Challenges remain to be confronted by society, especially concerning religion. Minority groups in Indonesia are still at the fringes. For instance, Arabs and Chinese are among the "foreigners" in the Indonesian archipelago. While the Arabs could be easily accepted by most Indonesians—as they share the same religion, Islam, with the majority—, the Indonesian Chinese still confront problems related to their identity as a minority group. In the same vein, many minority religious groups such as Ahmadiyah and Syiah still face many hostilities from both the government and society. The blasphemy law issued by the government in 1965 is perceived by many activists to be counterproductive to the practice of

[28] QuinnWilliams, *White Paper, The Attacks on Paris: Lessons Learned. A Presentation of Findings*. Paris: Courtesy of HSAC and the Paris Public Safety Delegation, June 2016.

multiculturalism and has caused major injury and displacement of many Syiah adherents in Madura.[29] Many efforts have been done by the state and non-government organizations to reduce hostility toward minority groups and decrease social tension. Excluding minority groups from any sociopolitical involvement would not make them better off. It could even worsen the already precarious social relations. Hence, many government policies and agendas could be enacted to reduce tension by way of including minority groups into mainstream society, and ensuring that they get involve in sociopolitical activism.

The most challenging threat to Indonesia's religious diversity is the widespread propagation of transnational Islam. Due in part to globalization and modern technological advancement, many conservative and ultra-conservative Islamic schools of thoughts operate widely and freely through mass and social media. One of the symptoms of this phenomenon is the fragmentation of religious authority in society. Currently, religious people tend to rely on the propagation of their ideology and religious practices in the media such as websites and blogs, without much knowledge to which Islamic school of thought a certain webpage or *facebook* belongs. It is, therefore, necessary for Indonesian Muslims to re-indigenize Islam, as it was previously done during the early period of its spread throughout the archipelago. The introduction of a new brand such as "Islam Nusantara", for example, is a good way of rebranding Indonesian Islam.[30]

The coming of many different races and ethnicities in the EU states has brought about a problem of religious diversity. It should be noted, however, that the mobility of Europeans (primarily, Caucasians) does not pose too big a challenge for diversity in EU countries, as they share quite similar religious backgrounds i.e. Christianity. This is to say that the cultural diversity in the EU is

[29] Further see Masdar Hilmy, "The Political Economy of Sunni-Shi'ah Conflict in Sampang Madura" in *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol 53, No 1 (2015). DOI: https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.27-51

[30] See Ahmad Agis Mubarok and Diaz Gandara Rustam, "Islam Nusantara: Moderasi Islam Di Indonesia" *in Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2018). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.21580/jish.32.3160

more visible after the influx of Muslims in many European countries since the 1960s. Each EU country regulates differently on cultural and religious diversity. Today, some Muslims in Europe are recent immigrants, but others are second or third-generation Europeanized Muslims. The growth of Muslim communities in Europe poses significant social, economic, and, more specifically, religious policy dilemmas for European governments.[31]

Abundant migrant Muslims came to Europe due mostly for economic reasons. The pace of industrialization of many European countries has attracted many Muslims to come to seek better life especially Muslims from the Southern borders of Europe such as Turkey and Morocco. The presence of Muslims in EU does not only produce rapid development in EU economically but also socially and culturally. Muslims coming to EU states have different social and cultural backgrounds. This phenomenon gives a significant challenge for EU countries.

Many countries regulate cultural diversity using the perspective of multiculturalism. This policy means that each migrant community could live in Europe along with their own culture. Ideally, many different ethnic groups with their respective cultural background live side-by-side peacefully in various neighborhoods. And there no boundaries to segregate one community from the rest. In reality, however, this idealism is far from the truth.

Along with the development of multiculturalism, EU countries face many disadvantages in society. The diversity of ethnic groups within a society alone gives significant challenges for the society and the state. Different religions and languages are the most visible to this challenge, which only got worse after the September 11 attack. The devastating September 11 attack brought about a degree of hatred and prejudice, most notably between Christians and Muslims.

As a result, many EU countries had amended their regulation on minorities by not accommodating multiculturalism, but rather employing assimilation or integration. Chancellor Angela Merkel

[31] Jeffrey Gedmin, "The One Percent Problem: Muslims in the West and the Rise of the New Populists" Brookings at https://www.brookings.edu/product/muslims-in-the-west/ (retrieved 26 March 2021)

famously stated in 2010 that multiculturalism in Germany has failed to foster harmonious life and living among various ethnic and religious groups in society.[32] Her statement was later echoed by Belgium Prime Minister Yves Leterme. In the following year, in February 2011, United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicholas Sarkozy too declared that multiculturalism has pretty much failed.[33] To substitute multiculturalism policy, many EU countries have fostered assimilation, inter-culturalism, or integration. In Merkel's view, minority groups or migrants living in Germany should learn the German language and obey the country's rule of law to enable themselves to integrate into the society.

Over the last several years, EU countries have attempted to improve Muslim integration into European society through various policies. Such policies included introducing citizenship and language requirements, promoting dialogue with Muslim organizations, developing "homegrown" *imams* who are familiar with European ways, culture and tradition, improving educational and economic opportunities for Muslims, limiting foreign funding for mosques, and *imams*, and tackling racism and discrimination.[34]

I would argue that EU countries should reduce their suspicion toward Muslims and even include them in mainstream discourse in society. Religious piety, as manifested by Muslims' donning of religious attire or *hijab* is not necessarily understood as extremism or even radicalism. This kind of suspicion would only cause hindrance for Muslims wanting to adopt "Western identity" as such that it could generate resistance and hostility among Muslims. In turn, the mushrooming of Islamophobia in EU countries would lead to the flourishing of radical and violent actions by the more conservative segments of the Muslim community.

Fortunately, the acceptance of Islam in Europe by European leaders recently is a clear good sign for the vast number of Muslims

[32] Angeliki Mikelatou and Eugenia Arvanitis, "GreeceMulticulturalism in the European Union: A Failure beyond Redemption?" in International Journal of Diversity in Organisations Vol.19, No.1, (2019). DOI: 10.18848/1447-9532/CGP/v19i01

[33] Emerson 2011: 1.

[34] https://www.csis.org/analysis/euro-islam-state-sponsored-imam-training-europe-0 (retrieved 26 March 2021)

in Europe. In January 2015, Merkel declared in a speech that "Islam belongs to Germany", which was aimed at rebuking anti-immigration protesters. Another politician said, "The Muslims belong to Germany, not Islam. Islam is not a core element of German culture and is also not part of our history and tradition."[35] The welcoming of a huge number of Muslim refugees from various Middle Eastern and African countries in some EU countries such as Greece, Austria, Italy, Germany, and Norway mark a positive acceptance of Muslims in Europe. Although such an initiative invoked the rise of debate among many politicians in some EU countries, I believe such humanitarian cause to reduce the refugee crisis would ultimately strengthen the relations between Islam and the West. Current survey indicates that the second and the third generations of Muslims could integrate well into European society.[36]

Beyond the normalization of relations between Islam and the West, Muslims in Europe would no doubt welcome the development, and adjust to the positive circumstances. First and second-generation Muslims in some EU countries, for example, have struggled to uphold their European identity. For such reason, European communities need to develop an inclusive society, which would incorporate Muslims into their mainstream society. European Muslims should therefore develop a European brand of Islam so that the third and fourth generation of Muslims, who were born and raised in Europe, will feel the comfort and joy of coexistence. This is in line with what the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Integration Sebastian Kurz labeled as "Islam of European character", thus reducing or omitting the influence of foreign Muslim nations and organizations, and giving Muslims more security in practicing their faith.[37] In this regard, Tariq Ramadan, a second-generation European Muslim of Egyptian descent, has said:

---

[35] http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/09/21/migrant-rift-merkels-conservative-allies-declare-islam-not-a-german-tradition/ (retrieved 26 March 2021)

[36] https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/muslims-in-europe-well-integrated-new-study-claims/893089 (retrieved 26 March 2021)

[37] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/austria/11435388/Austria-passes-controversial-reforms-to-Islam-law-banning-foreign-funding.html (retrieved 26 March 2021)

> Sustained by their faith and on the basis of their understanding of the texts, Muslims must develop an understanding of the Western context that will make it possible for them to do what all Muslims have done throughout history: to integrate whatever there is in the culture where they live that does not contradict with what they are and what they believe in.[38]

Eventually, such integration of Muslims and subsequently Islam would reduce resistance and hostilities among religious adherents in both Indonesia and European societies. Admittedly, hostilities and radicalism, occurring in both regions, could be largely caused by the absence of a shared identity, which bonds them together. Such shared or collective identity could be smoothly built together by gradual integration of Muslims and Islam in Europe at large. Cultural origins such as ethnicities, languages, and values, including religions, could undergo a dynamic adaptation in global and local contexts. The formation of collective identity relies much on the authority as described by Benedict Anderson on the creation of the nation-state he called "imagined community". Furthermore, Anderson argues that the nation-state is not a natural truth, but constructed by a political body (Anderson 1983). As the concept of the nation-state is fluid and dialectical, I believe that such shared identity could be created through the authorities of EU governments. Therefore, I 'imagine' that Judeo-Christian Europe and Islam would merge, and melt into a shared collective identity in the future.

F. Conclusion and Recommendation

Although religious diversity is not a new phenomenon for Indonesia and the EU, it remains a big challenge for them. The more modern and developed a society, the more diverse it would become. Such a condition is formed largely through urbanization or migration of people to the more developed cities or countries. This is to say that the nature of modern societies is plural. Many policies and regulations have been issued to manage this challenge. Yet, not all

[38] Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002: 216.

could be addressed properly and comprehensively. Many conflicts, hostilities, and hatred are recurring patterns in modern and pluralized societies. As a sensitive entity, religious diversity is very complex and could not be addressed simply by policies nor regulations per se.

I would argue that all conflicts, hostilities, and hatred are in part due to narrow-minded and textual interpretations of religion. Such a limited understanding of religion would no doubt generate more ultra-conservative religious people than not. In the Indonesian context, these people could incite hostilities and even engage in radicalism. In the EU, such practice of religion would generate Muslims, who would most likely resist modernity. Moreover, these people would resist integrating themselves into Western culture and could even lead them to become radicals. Similarly, for the Europeans, such a narrow understanding could result in far-right organizations and political parties. Obviously, within religion itself, flexible interpretations abound, which are adjusted to certain circumstances. However, such interpretative action could only be taken by religious leaders and scholars, who are accustomed and well-adjusted to the modern context. Interpretations of Islamic teachings in rational and moderate ways, for example, would easily be accepted by people in Western Europe.

The government should therefore regulate and engage in fair treatment of the diversity of religion. In such a modern and plural society, religious pluralism cannot be avoided. The governments at the state or provincial level should issue clear and fair regulations on religion. Once a certain regulation on tolerance and inter-religious relations has been issued, the authorities should handle any violation fairly. In the same way, the government should review the regulation periodically. A regulation on religious diversity could even harm and violate human rights, as in the case of the blasphemy law in Indonesia. The EU governments and authorities should ensure that any restrictions on the donning of religious and cultural symbols are limited to very narrow circumstances and that it fulfills a proportionate requirement and in accordance with international human rights standards, including the European Court of Human Rights. Furthermore, the EU should take a courageous approach to

tackle the problem of hate speeches and racist rhetoric in public discourse and adopt a zero-tolerance policy.

Finally, democracy, which has been adopted by modern states, could play a significant role in regulating religion. While it is true that each religion has its specific doctrines, teachings, and regulations, the values entrenched in democracy would not contradict the values of religion. Democracy could therefore be a meeting point for all religions, where the rule of law becomes the pivot. Similarly, democracy could also be an entry point for 'foreign' religions to be accepted in any society, provided that their adherents adjust themselves to the local context. Once Muslims accept democracy and the rule of law, I believe Islam could be well received by Westerners. In the end, democracy could be a signpost to the creation of a shared identity among Europeans and Muslims alike.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso, 1991.

Aritonang, Jan Sihar and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia.* Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Bayraklı, Enes and Farid Hafez, "Introduction" in Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Emerson, Michael, *Ethno-Religious Conflict in Europe: Typoplogies of Radicalism in Europe's Muslim Communities.* CEPS: Brussels, 2009.

Emerson, Michael, *Interculturalism: Europe and its Muslims in search of sound societal model*. CEPS: Brussels, 2011.

Gedmin, Jeffrey, "The One Percent Problem: Muslims in the West and the Rise of the New Populists" Brookings at https://www.brookings.edu/product/muslims-in-the-west/ (retrieved 26 March 2021)

Hilmy, Masdar, "The Political Economy of Sunni-Shi'ah Conflict in Sampang Madura" in *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol 53, No 1 (2015). DOI: https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.27-51

Ismail, Faisal, "Religion, State, And Ideology in Indonesia: A Historical Account of the Acceptance of Pancasila as the Basis of the Indonesian State" in *Indonesian Journal Of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* (IJIIS) Vol. 1, no. 2 (2018), pp. 19-21. DOI: 10.20885/ijiis.vol1.iss2.art2.

Khader, Bichara, "Muslims in Europe: Construction of a "Problem"" at Thehttps://www.bbvaopenmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/BBVA-OpenMind-Muslims-in-Europe-The-Construction-of-a-Problem-Bichara-Khader.pdf.pdf (retrieved on 15 March 2021).

Konda, *Religion, Secularism and the Veil in Daily Life*. Istanbul: Konda Araştırma ve Danışmanlık, 2007).

Mikelatou, Angeliki and Arvanitis, Eugenia "GreeceMulticulturalism in the European Union: A Failure beyond Redemption?" in International Journal of Diversity in Organisations Vol.19, No.1, (2019), p. 1. DOI: 10.18848/1447-9532/CGP/v19i01

Mubarok, Ahmad Agis and Rustam, Diaz Gandara "Islam Nusantara: Moderasi Islam Di Indonesia" *in Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2018). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.21580/jish.32.3160

Pascoet, Julia, ENAR Policy Officer, in a Public Lecture at UIN Yogyakarta January 2014.

Pauly, Robert J., Jr, *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization?* England: Ashgate, 2004.

Pew Research Center*, A Closer at How Religious Restrictions Have Risen around the World.* US: Pew Research Forum, 2019.

Pew Research Center, *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities Overall Decline in Social Hostilities in 2013, Though Harassment of Jews Worldwide Reached a Seven-Year High.* USA: Pew Forum, 2015.

Pew Research Center, *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities Overall Decline in Social Hostilities in 2013, Though Harassment of Jews Worldwide Reached a Seven-Year High.* USA: Pew Forum, 2015.

Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*. USA: Pew Forum, 2015.

Ramadan, Tariq, *Western Muslim and the Future of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Rizal Panggabean, Samsu and Ali-Fauzi, Ihsan (eds), *Policing Religious Conflicts in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy (PUSAD), 2015.

Sandberg, Russell and Christopher Norman Doe, "Church-State relations in Europe" in *Religion Compass* Vol. 1 No. 5, pp. 564. DOI: 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2007.00040.x

Others:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012E/TXT (retrieved 26 March 2021)

http://europe.newsweek.com/european-far-right-parties-seeking-anti-islam-coalition-jewish-groups-330300__(retrieved 26 March 2021)

http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/09/21/migrant-rift-merkels-conservative-allies-declare-islam-not-a-german-tradition/ (retrieved 26 March 2021)

http://www.euronews.com/2015/02/03/anti-islam-pegida-protests-spring-up-in-austria (retrieved 26 March 2021)

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/austria/11435388/Austria-passes-controversial-reforms-to-Islam-law-banning-foreign-funding.html (retrieved 26 March 2021)

https://www.csis.org/analysis/euro-islam-state-sponsored-imam-training-europe-0 (retrieved 26 March 2021)

https://www.csis.org/analysis/euro-islam-state-sponsored-imam-training-europe-0 (retrieved 26 March 2021)

https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/muslims-in-europe-well-integrated-new-study-claims/893089 (retrieved 26 March 2021)