

The Paradigm of Interfaith Relations Thought in the Post-Reform Era as a Conflict Resolution Strategy in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as a country with high religious diversity, faces challenges in maintaining interfaith harmony, particularly in the post-Reform era of 1998, which expanded religious freedom while also increasing the risk of religion-based conflicts. This study aims to analyze the paradigm of interfaith relations in the post-Reform period and its contribution to resolving religious conflicts. Using a qualitative approach based on literature studies, this research examines various theories and perspectives of interfaith figures. The key findings indicate four phases in the dynamics of interfaith relations in Indonesia: the *interfaith dialogue phase*, which led to the emergence of interreligious communities; the *advocacy phase*, which focused on defending religious freedom rights; the *creative campaign phase*, which disseminated messages of tolerance through innovative media; and the *intersectional phase*, which integrates multiple approaches to develop inclusive policies. The academic contribution of this research lies in integrating various paradigms of thought, including neo-modernism, democratic socialism, universalism, liberative modernism, universal humanism, and non-violent conflict resolution, which can be implemented in religious diversity policies in Indonesia. However, this study has limitations in empirical research, and further studies are recommended to assess the effectiveness of these approaches through direct case studies and more specific policy analyses.

ABSTRAK

Indonesia, sebagai negara dengan keberagaman agama yang tinggi, menghadapi tantangan dalam menjaga harmoni antarumat beragama, terutama pasca-Reformasi 1998 yang membawa kebebasan beragama lebih luas sekaligus meningkatkan risiko konflik berbasis agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis paradigma pemikiran hubungan antar iman pasca-Reformasi serta kontribusinya dalam resolusi konflik berbasis agama. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan, penelitian ini

mengkaji berbagai teori dan pemikiran tokoh lintas iman. Temuan utama penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya empat fase dalam dinamika hubungan antar iman di Indonesia: fase dialog antar iman yang melahirkan komunitas lintas agama, fase advokasi yang berfokus pada hak kebebasan beragama, fase kampanye kreatif yang menyebarluaskan pesan toleransi melalui media inovatif, serta fase interseksional yang menggabungkan berbagai pendekatan untuk membentuk kebijakan yang inklusif. Sumbangan keilmuan penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi berbagai paradigma pemikiran, seperti neo-modernisme, sosialisme demokratis, universalisme, modernisme liberatif, humanisme universal, dan resolusi konflik tanpa kekerasan, yang dapat diimplementasikan dalam kebijakan keberagaman agama di Indonesia. Namun, penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan dalam aspek studi empiris, sehingga penelitian lanjutan disarankan untuk mengkaji efektivitas pendekatan ini melalui studi kasus langsung dan analisis kebijakan yang lebih spesifik.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with high religious diversity, often faces challenges in maintaining harmony among religious communities (Hutabarat, 2023). Significant changes have occurred in Indonesia's social and political dynamics, especially interfaith ties, since the Reform Era in 1998. Religious freedom and expression were significantly impacted by the Reform Era. But along with this greater freedom came the possibility of religiously motivated disputes, which may take many different forms, including intolerance, sectarian tensions, and even acts of violence committed in the name of religion (Saiya, 2015). A new paradigm in interfaith relations has also been shaped by changes in the political system and official policy surrounding religion following the Reform Era. As a result, analyzing the post-Reform paradigm of interfaith interactions is essential as a suggested means of resolving disputes in Indonesia.

Interreligious tensions have a significant impact on social stability. Attacks on places of worship, discrimination against certain religious groups, and the use of identity politics in elections are some of the concrete manifestations of these tensions. Additionally, the rise of conservative Islamic populism in the post-Reform era has worsened the situation by spreading intolerance and exclusivity among Muslims toward non-Muslim communities. During the New Order period, interreligious relations were strictly controlled by the state to maintain political stability. After the Reform era, the paradigm of religious freedom and belief shifted, accompanied by various movements. However, these movements faced numerous challenges, such as conflicts in Ambon and Poso, the use of religious identity as a political tool, and the prolonged prohibition of religious activities in certain regions.

Conflict resolution theory and the idea of religious plurality serve as the foundation for this study's conceptual framework. Religious pluralism highlights that religious diversity is a possibility for fostering more amicable relationships via communication and understanding, in addition to being a reality that should be acknowledged (Daddow et al., 2021). Johan Galtung's theory of conflict transformation provides a crucial basis for this study's investigation of conflict resolution (Galtung, 2010). Galtung contends that profound structural and cultural changes are necessary to address conflict rather than just reducing it with bandaaid fixes. This method is pertinent to examining how Indonesian religious issues can be resolved using the interfaith relations paradigm.

Previous research on the paradigm of interfaith relations has been presented by several scholars. Among them is Tidore, Burhanuddin. (2020), "Resolusi Konflik Berbasis Teologi BakuBae: studi konflik Ambon 1999-2002," *Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta*. This study focuses on conflict resolution based on BakuBae theology in the case of the Ambon conflict from 1999 to 2002. It highlights how religious values and local culture serve as key instruments in building peace through a civil society approach while comparing its effectiveness with the state's more repressive approach (Tidore, 2020). Meanwhile, Imadudin, Muhammad. (2023), "Hubungan Agama dan Negara: Dialektik dan Dinamika Antara Paradigma," *Jurnal INDEPENDEN: Jurnal Politik Indonesia dan Global*, examines the dialectical process and intellectual dynamics that influence the emergence and development of three major paradigms. This study focuses on the relationship between religion and the state from the perspective of social-political thought, tracing the evolution of these three paradigms through the processes of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the dynamics of such relations (Imadudin, 2023).

As a distinguishing feature and a novel contribution, this article focuses on the development of interfaith relations in Indonesia after the Reform Era. Unlike Tidore's research, which examines a specific case of conflict, this article takes a broader perspective by analyzing the dynamics of interfaith interaction within the socio-political context of post-Reform Indonesia (Tidore, 2020). Furthermore, unlike Imadudin's study, which primarily explores the relationship between religion and the state, this article emphasizes how the paradigm of interfaith relations can serve as a solution to mitigate religious tensions and conflicts in Indonesia (Imadudin, 2023). Thus, this article offers a new perspective in understanding and developing a conflict resolution model based on interfaith relations within the contemporary socio-political landscape.

The Reform era not only brought freedom but also a more open political competition. Religious identity has often been used as a political instrument, creating polarization within society. This phenomenon has not been extensively explored in previous research, particularly regarding its impact on interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism in public spaces. Most studies on interreligious conflict in Indonesia remain descriptive, without offering strategic solutions to address these challenges. Previous research has primarily focused on specific religious conflicts or internal religious dynamics, but few have examined how these paradigm shifts create new challenges in interfaith relations. This paper proposes an interfaith dialogue-based approach as a solution to maintaining social harmony, drawing from the examples set by key figures in the development of theoretical and practical policy frameworks within Indonesia's pluralistic context.

This study's theoretical framework integrates a number of methods for examining interfaith relations. First, according to John Hick's view of religious plurality, all faiths are answers to the same ultimate reality, or the Real, and hence share the same essence (Hick, 2008). Second, according to Lewis Coser's social conflict theory, conflict is an unavoidable part of the social system and can sometimes be constructive, strengthening group identities and social structures (Coser, 1956). Third, there are three primary strategies offered by Johan Galtung's conflict resolution theory: peacemaking, which aims to establish peace before disputes worsen, peacekeeping, which sustains peace by agreements made by all parties, and peacebuilding, which aims to create lasting peace (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). This study uses this theoretical framework to examine and suggest an interfaith relations paradigm that is appropriate for Indonesia's post-Reform environment.

The main issue addressed in this study is how the paradigm of interfaith relations in Indonesia has developed in the post-Reform era and to what extent this paradigm can contribute to resolving religious-based conflicts. The Reform Era created space for various thoughts and approaches in understanding interfaith relations (Bagir, 2004). However, the challenge that arises is ensuring that religious freedom does not exacerbate conflicts but instead serves as a means to strengthen social harmony. Therefore, it is crucial to formulate a more comprehensive understanding of the paradigm of interfaith relations that can provide solutions to religious conflicts in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research lies in reviewing the development of interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. Through the review of thoughts and phenomena that occur, several alternative strategies or approaches can be seen in the resolution of religious-based conflicts in Indonesia. Of course, the phenomenon is always evolving and the paradigm of thought that can accompany it. So that it can produce a more

complete view as an offer of ideas in conflict resolution so that it does not recur in the future. Based on these issues, this study formulates several key research questions. First, how has the paradigm of interfaith relations evolved in Indonesia after the Reform Era? Second, how has the transformation of interfaith relations occurred in the post-Reform era? Third, what are the strategies for implementing the paradigm of interfaith relations as a proposed resolution to religious conflicts in Indonesia?

This study aims to understand the development of interfaith relations in the post-Reform era and explore its transformation and impact. Additionally, it seeks to examine the extent to which this paradigm can contribute to resolving religious-based conflicts and to formulate implementation strategies applicable in Indonesia. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to efforts in building religiously based social harmony in Indonesia.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in the field of interfaith relations and religious conflict resolution in Indonesia. A deeper understanding of the paradigm of interfaith relations in the post-Reform era can serve as a valuable reference for academics, researchers, and students interested in religious and social studies. Additionally, this research seeks to develop theories relevant to the Indonesian context in fostering harmonious relations among religious communities.

Practically, this study offers benefits to various stakeholders, including the government, religious organizations, and the general public. For the government, the findings can serve as a foundation for formulating more inclusive policies that promote religious harmony in managing diversity. For religious organizations, this research provides insights into more effective approaches for fostering interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Meanwhile, for the general public, it serves as an educational resource in understanding the significance of tolerance and harmonious interfaith relations in Indonesia.

Through the discussions presented, this research is expected to make a tangible contribution to the efforts of fostering more sustainable and harmonious interfaith relations in Indonesia. The paradigm of interfaith relations in the post-Reform era is not only crucial for preventing religious conflicts but also serves as a social asset for inclusive and just national development. Therefore, this study holds particular relevance in the Indonesian context, where religious diversity is vast, and ongoing efforts are essential to maintaining unity within pluralism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the paradigm of interfaith relations in the post-Reform era as a proposed resolution to conflicts in Indonesia. The research utilizes both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of books written by interfaith figures who were actively engaged during and after the Reform Era. This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis to examine the paradigm of interfaith relations in post-Reform Indonesia. The primary sources include books authored by influential interfaith thinkers, such as *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai untuk Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan* by Abdurrahman Wahid (Wahid, 2007), *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan* by Nurcholish Madjid (Madjid, 2008), *Soal-soal Teologis dalam Pertemuan Antar Agama* by Th. Sumartana (Sumartana, 2015), *Gandhian Experiment in Primary Education: The Indonesian Experience* by Gedong Bagoes Oka (Oka, 1996), *Sastra dan Religiositas* by Y.B. Mangunwijaya (Mangunwijaya, 1982), works on Buddhayana in Indonesia by Ashin Jinarakkhita, *Menimba Pelajaran dari Berbagai Agama dan Keyakinan* by Djohan Effendi (Effendi, 2014), and *Rekayasa Sosial: Reformasi, Revolusi, atau Manusia Besar* by Jalaluddin Rakhmat (Rakhmat, 2021b). In addition to these primary sources, the study incorporates secondary sources such as academic journals, books, dissertations, and research reports on religious conflict resolution in Indonesia. Several key events are referenced in the analysis, including data on religious freedom, interfaith conflicts, and decentralization policies that have influenced interreligious dynamics across various regions.

Data collection in this study is conducted through a literature review, involving the search, examination, and analysis of relevant academic works related to the research topic (Daffa, 2023). The data analysis process follows a structured content analysis approach, beginning with source selection, where literature is chosen based on its relevance to interfaith relations and conflict resolution, utilizing academic databases. The next step involves identifying key themes in the thoughts of interfaith thinkers and relevant historical events to establish a conceptual foundation. This is followed by filtering data to extract core concepts that contribute to constructing a comprehensive paradigm of interfaith relations in post-Reform Indonesia. Finally, the study integrates multiple perspectives through synthesis and interpretation, combining various theoretical insights to develop a more holistic analytical framework (Bakker & Zubair, 2024). The collected data is then analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns of thought that have emerged in interfaith relations in the post-Reform period. This analysis aims to uncover how interfaith paradigms can contribute to resolving religious-based conflicts in Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. *The Paradigm of Interfaith Relations Thought in the Post-Reform Era*

The paradigm of interfaith relations in Indonesia after the Reform Era underwent significant transformations, particularly in social, political, and cultural aspects. It is worth noting that in an earlier phase, Mukti Ali had already introduced the concept of religious harmony (Syarifuddin et al., 2023). The Reform Era created a broader space for religious freedom, enabling the emergence of interfaith movements and increasing the role of religious figures in fostering dialogue among different faith communities. However, this newfound openness also brought challenges, including the rise of religious intolerance and exclusivism, fueled by radical groups such as Jamaah Islamiyah, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah, and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (Galamas, 2015). From the perspectives of John Hick, Lewis Coser, and Johan Galtung, this paradigm shift can be analyzed through multiple dimensions.

The intellectual aspects of thought from the Reform Era to the post-Reform period can be classified into various streams. As stated by Asep Salahudin in the epilogue of *Halaman Akhir: Percikan Pemikiran Nalar Kritis Religius-Spiritual Islam*, Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendy, in their seminal book *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* (1991), identified four unique currents of Islamic thought formed by Indonesian Muslim scholars throughout the New Order period. The first is neo-modernism, exemplified by thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. Gus Dur promoted an inclusive and tolerant Islam while emphasizing the importance of interfaith dialogue. In his book *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai untuk Peradaban Indonesia*, he asserted, "It does not matter what your religion or ethnicity is; if you can do something good for everyone, people will never ask about your religion." His thoughts contributed to peacemaking by fostering a broader understanding of interfaith relations. This philosophical approach is marked by a combination of contemporary analysis and a persistent endeavour to examine the depth of traditionalism in religious interpretation. Madjid introduced the concept of individual freedom in Islam in *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan*, where he asserted, "He is a servant without idols, dogmas, prejudices, or a priori thoughts. He is tolerant, driven by a deep sense of justice and equality, recognizing himself as both an individual human and a universal human being." (Madjid, 2008). This concept is relevant in reducing religiously based political tensions.

The second is socialism democratic, exemplified by personalities like Muhammad Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono, and Kuntowijoyo. This movement is closely linked to Islamic identity along with the principles of social justice and democracy. It highlights that the essential purpose of the Qur'an is to promote justice, and the main mission of prophethood is to foster essential social change grounded in principles of liberation. The third concept is universalism, which views Islam as a timeless and spaceless teaching that provides answers to the shared problems of humanity. Important individuals in this group consist of M. Amien Rais, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, and A.M. Saefuddin. Rakhmat responding to the development of dialogue and religious institutions in relation to the government, he stated, "We have a genetically inherited tolerance from our ancestors, allowing the entire nation to coexist peacefully. So, the current situation is only a temporary phenomenon. The government must revive interfaith dialogue institutions or strengthen and support organizations that advocate for religious freedom."

The fourth is modernism, a movement that incorporates Islam into wider socio-political and cultural conversations. Notable individuals in this realm are Djohan Effendi and Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, who aimed to establish Islam as a vital influence in molding societal advancement and leadership. This categorization of ideas illustrates the variety of intellectual viewpoints in Indonesian Islam, which still influences interfaith interactions and reactions to societal changes in the post-Reform era (Rakhmat, 2021a).

Interfaith relations in Indonesia are not solely driven by the Muslim majority. Religious figures from various traditions have also played an active role in fostering interfaith engagement. Gedong Bagoes Oka, a prominent Hindu-Balinese figure, embraced a philosophy aligned with Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent conflict resolution approach. He deeply admired Gandhi's concepts of *Swadeshi*, *Ahimsa*, *Satya*, and *Karuna* (Oka, 1996). He emphasized that, "No matter how powerful the anti-humanitarian forces are, they can still be subdued. Do not give up; you must be strong in fighting for peace," reinforcing a reconciliation strategy based on local wisdom. His advocacy emphasized simplicity, spirituality, and interfaith solidarity in pursuit of peace and humanitarian efforts. With a strong focus on education, women's empowerment, and environmental concerns, he was critical of ritualistic practices that overlooked the essence of Hindu spirituality.

Y.B. Mangunwijaya, with his universal humanism perspective, sought to develop an inclusive cultural framework and liberating education. His thoughts on universal humanism emphasized the importance of equality in interreligious relationships at an individual level. In *Sastra dan Religiositas*, he stated, "Religiosity essentially transcends, or goes beyond, the visible, formal, and official religion. Religiosity operates more within a communal structure (*Gemeinschaft*), which is characterized by intimacy." (Mangunwijaya, 1982). This perspective played a role in peacebuilding by instilling values of tolerance from an early age.

His thoughts were grounded in the anthropological belief that humans possess an evolving conscience that holds inherent truth. Romo Mangun, as he was widely known, pioneered alternative education and was regarded as a leading figure in humanistic education in Indonesia (Mulyatno, 2020). As an architect, his work was deeply rooted in *cultural critique*, history, communication, language, discourse, meaning, and symbolism in architecture. He opposed indoctrination in education and championed the rights of marginalized groups, such as the residents of Kampung Code and the victims of the Kedung Ombo Dam project, employing a contextual approach in both architecture and social advocacy (Khudori, 2001).

Th. Sumartana, categorized as a modernist-liberative thinker, emphasized religious pluralism and religious freedom as fundamental human rights. He was critical of religious missions focused on conversion, asserting that interfaith dialogue should prioritize humanity and avoid the dominance of a single truth claim (Lumingga & Humaedi, 2023). In *Soal-soal Teologis dalam Pertemuan Antar Agama*, he criticized forced conversions and promoted equal pluralism. He emphasized, "Conflicts are not caused by differences in ways of life, but purely by politics, namely differences in interests. The problem arises when one civilization imposes its values on another. Such coercion may not succeed." (Sumartana, 2015). His thoughts supported religious freedom and criticized the coercion that frequently occurs in theological aspects. Sumartana also advocated for a reexamination of Christology, which had long been shaped by Western rational orthodoxy, and proposed a liberative Christology adapted to the Indonesian context (Sumartana, 1994).

Meanwhile, Ashin Jinarakkhita, a neo-modernist thinker, sought to unify various Buddhist traditions in Indonesia through the *Buddhayana* concept. He introduced *Sang Hyang Adi Buddha* as a theological framework for Buddhism in Indonesia, despite its controversial reception (Chia, 2018). He emphasized, "Dharma is essential. If we practice loving-kindness, there will be no war, no hatred." This statement highlights that hate speech contradicts the essence of religion, which is fundamentally based on love and compassion. Through an inclusive approach, he worked to align Buddhist teachings with the cultural and social contexts of the archipelago. These four figures have made significant contributions to shaping an interfaith paradigm in Indonesia that is more open, dialogical, and contextually relevant, fostering greater harmony and understanding among diverse religious communities.

The analysis of the paradigms of various thinkers can be explained through several theoretical frameworks. John Hick's theory of religious pluralism asserts that all religions share the same essence and serve as responses to the same ultimate reality (the Real). He emphasizes that the conceptual differences among world religions stem from human limitations in perceiving the Real, making each religious tradition a valid path to truth (Hick, 1988). In the context of interfaith relations in post-Reform Indonesia, this idea is reflected in the efforts of interfaith figures such as Gedong Bagoes Oka, Y.B. Mangunwijaya, Th. Sumartana, Ashin Jinarakkhita, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Nurcholish Madjid, who advocate the notion that religious differences should not hinder social harmony. These figures actively promote unity through education, advocacy for religious rights, and social movements that highlight the importance of universal human values. Their perspectives are also evident in the widespread growth of interfaith dialogue initiatives following the Reform Era, which seek to instill awareness that religious diversity is an inherent reality that must be embraced and managed constructively.

According to Lewis Coser's social conflict theory, post-Reform societal developments have also presented difficulties, such as the emergence of religious extremism and exclusivism in some Indonesian regions. Conflict, according to Coser, can maintain social boundaries and group identity, but if it is not handled well, it can turn destructive (Coser, 1956). He divides conflict into two categories: non-realistic conflict, which is primarily motivated by ideology and feelings, and realistic conflict, which originates from concrete material sources. Knowledge of the dynamics of religious disputes in Indonesia following the Reform Era—tensions that frequently stem from ideological disagreements, group identities, and sociopolitical factors—requires a knowledge of this theory. The rise of extremist organizations like Jamaah Islamiyah and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid serves as an example of how religious exclusivism has evolved in response to greater religious freedom (Galamas, 2015). Furthermore, these groups have been able to grow because of decentralization policies and the state's limited ability to regulate sociopolitical dynamics. Interfaith tensions continue to be a serious problem that calls for a more inclusive and successful approach to conflict resolution, as seen by religiously motivated societal disputes in places like Ambon and Poso.

In the realm of conflict resolution, Johan Galtung's theory presents the notions of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding as frameworks for comprehending endeavors to promote interfaith harmony in post-Reform Indonesia. Peacemaking is exemplified by the efforts of leaders like Abdurrahman Wahid, who advocated for a moderate and tolerant interpretation of Islam, alongside Nurcholish Madjid and Muhammad Dawam Rahardjo, who played a role in shaping the conversation on religious inclusivism. Peacekeeping is observable in various governmental efforts aimed at sustaining stability in interfaith interactions, even though considerable challenges persist in their execution.

In the meantime, peacebuilding is exemplified by social movements spearheaded by leaders like Adi Sasono, Kuntowijoyo, and Jalaluddin Rakhmat, who championed the enhancement of multicultural education and the cultivation of collective consciousness to achieve enduring peace. The different models of interfaith interactions in post-Reform Indonesia show an intricate dynamic. On one side, increased religious liberty and the rise of interfaith initiatives demonstrate the effectiveness of religious pluralism in promoting social cohesion. Conversely, the growth of exclusivism and religious extremism presents challenges that must not be ignored. By applying methods derived from the theories of Hick, Coser, and Galtung, these obstacles can be tackled via enhanced interfaith conversations, broader policies, and the strengthening of community values grounded in indigenous knowledge and tolerant religious principles.

2.2. The Transformation of Interfaith Relations Dynamics in Indonesia

The evolution of interfaith relations in Indonesia has experienced substantial progress in tandem with shifts in social structures, political environments, and government policies. Indonesia, known for its extensive religious diversity, still encounters difficulties in promoting harmony among its religious groups. A range of factors has shaped these changing interfaith dynamics, such as the influence of prominent individuals, faith-based groups, academic establishments, government policies, and socio-

economic circumstances (Prideaux & Dawson, 2018). In the Old Order period, identity politics started to be utilized to influence national religious consciousness. This method was subsequently formalized during the New Order era, with Pancasila serving as the exclusive ideological basis (Pattipeilohy, 2018). Although this action bolstered national unity, it also limited specific types of religious expression.

The paradigm of transformation in religious freedom in Indonesia refers to the conceptual framework that shapes how interfaith relations are understood and practiced within the socio-political context of post-Reform Indonesia. This paradigm encompasses not only theoretical concepts but also real-world practices that have evolved through various phases of social change. Several key factors influence the phases of interfaith relationship transformations.

Government policies play a crucial role in shaping religious freedom and social cohesion. While the Reform era expanded religious freedom, it also increased the risk of social fragmentation. The decentralization policy, for instance, allowed some regions to implement discriminatory regulations, triggering local conflicts. On the other hand, initiatives such as the government's *Moderasi Beragama* (Religious Moderation) program represent efforts to balance religious freedom with social harmony. Additionally, social actors have been instrumental in fostering a more inclusive interfaith environment. Figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Gedong Bagoes Oka, and Y.B. Mangunwijaya played a key role in promoting pluralism, humanism, and non-violence as core values in interfaith relations. Another crucial factor is globalization, which has significantly influenced both conflict and resolution dynamics in Indonesia. Increased access to information and transnational ideologies has strengthened interfaith networks, yet it has also facilitated the spread of extremist ideologies that heighten religious tensions.

The post-Reform era has seen interfaith relations develop through several key phases. The Interfaith Dialogue Phase marked the rise of cross-faith initiatives aimed at fostering mutual understanding. Organizations such as DIAN/Interfidei, MADIA, and JAKATARUB played a foundational role in strengthening inclusive discourse in Indonesia, as noted by Elga J. Sarapung. As religious discrimination against minority groups intensified, the Advocacy Phase emerged, with organizations like the Setara Institute and Wahid Foundation actively defending religious freedom rights. The Creative Campaign Phase introduced innovative approaches, utilizing digital media and art to promote tolerance. Initiatives like Peace Generation used animated videos and interactive games to instil values of diversity among younger generations. Finally, the Intersectional Phase integrated various approaches from academics, activists, and policymakers to develop more inclusive policies. This phase recognizes that interfaith conflicts are often intertwined with broader socio-economic and political factors, requiring a holistic strategy for conflict resolution and social cohesion.

The Reform Era of 1998 introduced significant alterations, enhancing religious liberty while also paving the way for identity politics, which was occasionally leveraged for sectarian purposes (Imadudin & Anis, 2023). During this time, there was also an emergence of movements viewed as exhibiting tendencies toward extremism and terrorism. Terrorist acts, like the 2002 Bali Bombings and other, created fear and suspicion among various religious groups (Cianflone et al., 2007). Extremist factions often exploited religious narratives to legitimize their actions, resulting in the strengthening of bias and harmful stereotypes against particular religious communities. Nevertheless, these terrorist acts also ignited interfaith unity and collaboration, with religious groups coming together to denounce such violence and promote peace.

After the 1998 Reform Era, Indonesia experienced a notable increase in incidents of religious violence and infringements on religious freedom. The Setara Institute indicated a rise in these violations, mainly caused by the politicization of religion. In 2024, Imparsial documented a minimum of 23 instances of religious freedom infringements in different areas of Indonesia (Imparsial, 2024). These infractions mainly concerned limitations on the right of minority groups to worship and bans on the creation of places of worship. Those responsible included government officials, religious authorities, local inhabitants, and community groups. Incidents like the cancellation of the Jalsah Salanah Ahmadiyah religious event in Kuningan, opposition to mosque building, and interruptions to church services demonstrate that the issue of religious freedom continues to be intricate and unresolved in Indonesia (Setiawan et al., 2024). Contributing elements consist of unclear regulations, inadequate law enforcement, and insufficient regard for impacted groups. The National Human Rights

Commission (Komnas HAM) has likewise condemned regulations like the Joint Ministerial Decree from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding the construction of worship facilities, viewed as a barrier for religious minorities aiming to create sites of worship. Since the 1998 Reform Era, interfaith dynamics in Indonesia have experienced numerous changes, characterized by a growing push for freedom of religion or belief (FoRB).

Constitutional amendments in the Reform era safeguarded human rights, particularly religious freedom, by altering the 1945 Constitution and establishing new legal structures (Jadidah, 2020). Nonetheless, in spite of legal progress, obstacles persist because of discrepancies between national regulations and local policies, which are often more limiting. This has led to incidents such as the forced displacement and attacks on the Shia community in Sampang between 2011 and 2012. A notable case is the GKI Yasmin church in Bogor, where the government revoked an already approved building permit, triggering a prolonged legal dispute that reached the Supreme Court. Additionally, violent attacks against members of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation (JAI) and restrictive local regulations further highlight how laws such as the Blasphemy Law (No.1/PNPS/1965) have been used to discriminate against specific religious groups. Accusations of blasphemy, which have gained significant media attention, include high-profile cases like those of Lia Eden and Yusman Roy, both of whom, along with their followers, faced legal action for their religious beliefs.

Throughout the years, the approach for promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) has changed. In the initial phase (2005–2014), much of the effort centered on antagonistic methods, including judicial reviews and lawsuits in the Constitutional Court. Nonetheless, in recent years, different methods focused on conflict resolution and mediation have surfaced. For instance, the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) has assumed the position of community mediator in disputes related to FoRB, especially in addressing conflicts concerning the construction of places of worship. Furthermore, a social inclusion strategy has been implemented in support of indigenous faith followers, resulting in their formal administrative acknowledgment in civil records after a Constitutional Court decision in 2017.

In the meantime, the government has started implementing a policy of religious moderation, although it still encounters criticism about its effectiveness in tackling religious-based discrimination. Laws regarding religious freedom have likewise continued to progress. The updated Criminal Code (KUHP) implemented in 2023, for example, eliminated the word "blasphemy," which had often been utilized to oppress marginalized religious communities. Moreover, the launch of the *Standar Norma dan Pengaturan* (SNP) by Komnas HAM in 2020 has given more precise instructions for state officials in addressing FoRB-related matters (Bagir et al., 2023). Nonetheless, obstacles persist, especially with the rise of new types of authoritarianism that could limit the opportunities for promoting religious freedom. Going forward, ongoing cooperation among human rights advocates, academics, and the government is crucial for nurturing a more inclusive and tolerant society that honors religious diversity in Indonesia.

The complex changes occurring in interfaith relations can be understood as both challenges and opportunities for transformation. One of the key factors driving this transformation is the role of central figures who have contributed to fostering dialogue and tolerance. Prominent individuals such as Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), Romo Mangunwijaya, Th. Sumartana, and Gedong Bagoes Oka have been pioneers in building interfaith communication. They not only introduced the concept of religious pluralism but also advocated for inclusive policies that protect minority groups. Beyond individual figures, religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI), Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI), the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia (MATAKIN), along with other religious institutions and civil society alliances, have played crucial roles in shaping the discourse on tolerance and interfaith relations.

The development of interfaith relations in Indonesia can be categorized into several phases, each of which continues to have an impact. The first phase in this dynamic is the *interfaith dialogue phase*, which led to the emergence of various interreligious communities. During this stage, institutions and groups such as the *Institut Dialog Antar Iman* (DIAN/Interfidei), *Masyarakat Dialog Antar Agama*

(MADIA), supported by the *Institute for Cultural and Religious Studies* (ICRS) and the Asia Foundation, as well as the *Jaringan Kerja Antar Umat Beragama* (JAKATARUB), served as platforms for fostering communication between different religious groups. Additionally, the *Lembaga Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* (LK3) played a vital role in facilitating interfaith understanding to reduce sectarian tensions.

The next phase is the *advocacy phase*, marked by the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in championing human rights (HAM) and freedom of religion and belief (KBB). Institutions such as Imparsial, Ma'arif Institute, Wahid Foundation, and Setara Institute have played an active role in defending the rights of minority groups and pushing back against discriminatory policies. During this phase, legal approaches and advocacy became primary tools in addressing injustices faced by certain religious communities. Political identity and ideology have also significantly shaped the dynamics of interfaith relations in Indonesia (Daffa & Anggara, 2023). The politicization of religion is often used as a tool for mass mobilization, which in some cases has led to social tensions. Extremist ideologies, originating both domestically and internationally, present further challenges to interfaith harmony. However, on the other hand, pluralist and inclusive ideologies promoted by various academics and religious leaders continue to grow, serving as a counterbalance to intolerant narratives.

Following the advocacy phase came the *creative campaign phase*, which aimed to spread messages of tolerance and harmony through various media platforms. Initiatives such as *Peace Generation*, *Jaringan Gus Durian*, Young Interfaith Peacemaker Community (YIPC) and *Halaqah Damai* adopted innovative approaches, including creative videos, board games, and digital platform campaigns, to promote the value of diversity to younger generations. These methods have proven effective in reaching a broader audience in ways that are easily understood and accepted by different societal groups.

The next stage is the *intersectional phase*, where various interfaith approaches converge and evolve into more complex frameworks. At this stage, multiple actors—including the state, religious organizations, human rights activists, academics, and social media influencers—contribute to shaping the narratives and policies surrounding interfaith relations. Globalization also plays a significant role in this phase, as the influx of external information and ideologies influences Indonesia's social dynamics.

John Hick, in his theory of religious pluralism, argues that all religions lead to the same ultimate reality. In Indonesia, this idea is reflected in the efforts of organizations such as the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) and various interfaith institutions that emphasize the importance of inclusivity in religious diversity and facilitate interfaith dialogue. Meanwhile, Lewis Coser's theory of social conflict distinguishes between realistic and non-realistic conflicts, asserting that religious-based conflicts are often driven by economic and political factors rather than purely theological differences. The conflicts in Ambon (1999–2002) and Poso (1998–2007) illustrate how structural and economic factors exacerbated interreligious tensions.

In the context of conflict resolution, Johan Galtung proposes a non-violent conflict resolution framework divided into three main strategies. The peacemaking model (conflict prevention) is evident in Gus Dur's efforts to promote a more inclusive and tolerant interpretation of Islam. The peacekeeping model (maintaining peace) is reflected in the government's policies to establish FKUB as a mediator for interfaith tensions. Meanwhile, the peacebuilding model (long-term peacebuilding) is implemented through multicultural education pioneered by Y.B. Mangunwijaya, aimed at instilling values of tolerance from an early age.

Beyond these key factors, Indonesia's political history has also had a profound impact on the patterns of interfaith relations. Given this developmental overview, the transformation of interfaith dynamics in Indonesia reflects a constantly evolving process. From the *dialogue phase* to the *intersectional phase*, continuous efforts have been made to foster communication, advocacy, and inclusive policymaking. Challenges remain, but with collaboration among individuals, organizations, and state institutions, the vision of sustained religious harmony in Indonesia must remain an ongoing commitment.

2.3. Conflict Resolution Strategy Based on the Paradigm of Interfaith Relations

The model of interfaith engagement can act as a crucial strategy in addressing conflicts rooted in religion. Since the Reform Era, religious freedom has become increasingly attainable, but issues like exclusivism and intolerance have also worsened. Consequently, a thorough conflict resolution approach centered on interfaith relations must be established to promote enduring social cohesion. In the Indonesian setting, combining various methods can enhance a more inclusive and sustainable social framework. Neo-modernism and universalism encourage recognition of pluralism, while socialist democracy and liberative modernism support social justice. Additionally, universal humanism and non-violent conflict resolution provide effective methods for enhancing peaceful interfaith interactions.

Evaluation of interfaith dialogue and the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) in conflict resolution reveals both opportunities and challenges. FKUB, as a government initiative, was established to prevent religious conflicts through dialogue and mediation. However, its effectiveness remains debatable. A study by Imparsial (2024) found that in several regions, FKUB functions more as a state control mechanism over minority groups rather than as an equal platform for interfaith dialogue. Meanwhile, case studies from Ambon and Poso demonstrate that interfaith dialogue has played a crucial role in social recovery after conflicts. However, its success is largely dependent on local actors rather than solely on national policies. Community-based reconciliation programs, such as *Baku Bae* in Maluku, have proven to be more effective in fostering peace than top-down initiatives.

Despite the emphasis on non-violent conflict resolution, several structural challenges hinder its implementation. One major issue is socio-economic inequality. Data from BPS (2023) indicates that regions with high poverty rates, such as Poso and Aceh, are more vulnerable to religious-based conflicts. However, there has yet to be a systematic policy linking economic empowerment programs to religious conflict resolution. Additionally, radicalization and social polarization further complicate interfaith relations. Globalization and social media have accelerated the spread of extremist ideologies, exacerbating religious tensions. A study by PPIM UIN Jakarta (2023) highlights that youth radicalization has increased in the past decade, posing significant challenges to the effectiveness of dialogue-based conflict resolution strategies.

By embracing these concepts, Indonesia can further enhance social unity and effectively and peacefully handle religious diversity. The framework of interfaith interactions and the different dynamics that have developed in the post-Reform era provide a broad array of viewpoints (Yuliantri, 2024). This variety of concepts and methods can be correlated with the various challenges encountered. Neo-modernist scholars like Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid highlight the significance of openness in faith and the reinterpretation of religious teachings through the lens of democracy and pluralism.

Conversely, the socio-economic requirements of society should also be considered. A more tempered view of democratic socialism, promoted by individuals like Muhammad Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono, and Kuntowijoyo, highlights social justice and equal rights for all individuals, free from discrimination based on religion. In resolving conflicts, this method emphasizes the significance of economic and social justice as the basis for sustaining harmony within religious communities in Indonesia (Hutabarat, 2023). It has been noted that conflicts can frequently arise from or worsen economic and social inequalities. Consequently, a democratic socialist approach ought to be taken into account within a wider strategy.

In certain situations, though, preserving harmony necessitates a significant focus on ethical principles. Here is where universalism presents a different viewpoint, promoting universal human principles like freedom, equality, and solidarity. Individuals such as M. Amien Rais, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, and A.M. Saefuddin contend that interreligious harmony must be founded on ethical values that go beyond religious and cultural divides. A key method within the interfaith relations framework is interreligious dialogue (Orton, 2016). This conversation acts not just as a global channel for communication but also as a way to promote mutual understanding and reduce bias among religious communities. By engaging in dialogue, interfaith participants can foster trust and social unity, which helps to lower tensions and conflicts rooted in religion. Programs like the Forum Kerukunan Umat

Beragama (FKUB) and similar interfaith groups need to show that interreligious dialogue can be a useful tool in handling religious diversity in Indonesia.

Besides interfaith dialogue, multicultural education is an important component in conflict resolution strategies centered on interfaith relations. Education that embraces diverse values can cultivate a shared consciousness, promoting the recognition that differences are an unavoidable aspect of life that should be accepted and handled thoughtfully (Abu-Nimer & Smith, 2016). A well-organized curriculum that integrates the principles of tolerance, the historical context of religions in Indonesia, and a broader comprehension of the significance of social harmony can act as a proactive approach to mitigating possible conflicts. In the field of education, two primary conceptual frameworks can be utilized in Indonesia: liberative modernism and universal humanism.

Motivated by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, liberative modernism highlights the importance of critical awareness in addressing social injustices, particularly those associated with religion (Cortina & Winter, 2021). In Indonesia, Th. Sumartana supported this method by emphasizing the importance of enabling interfaith communities to take a more active role in combating bias and social conflicts. Conversely, universal humanism is based on the idea that shared human values ought to act as a foundation for social and religious exchanges. Individuals like Y.B. Mangunwijaya highlighted the significance of unity amidst diversity, placing humanity as the core basis of social interactions. By means of cultural critique, history, communication, language, dialogue, significance, and architectural symbolism, he aimed to establish an educational structure that fosters independent thinking and informed individuals, upholding human dignity in a multicultural society.

Enhancing local wisdom is also an important tactic in addressing conflicts via interfaith interactions. Indigenous principles like *gotong royong* (collaborative effort), *musyawarah* (discussion), and customary traditions that support religious diversity can be essential tools for promoting social harmony. A non-violent method for resolving conflicts emphasizes conversation, reconciliation, and convincing strategies to tackle interfaith struggles (Rosario, 2024). In line with Gandhi's philosophy, Gedong Bagoes Oka illustrated that maintaining interreligious relations can be accomplished through effective communication and peace-building strategies grounded in simplicity, spirituality, and interfaith unity for the promotion of peace and humanity—initiatives that should also include education, women's empowerment, and environmental protection. Historical evidence demonstrates that Indonesian society has a deep-rooted tradition of tolerance supported by cultural values that celebrate diversity. Therefore, maintaining these values can offer a strong basis for handling disparities and reducing possible conflicts.

The implementation of interfaith thinkers' ideas in Indonesia has influenced both policy and social transformation. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) applied his concept of pluralism not only in theory but also in practice during his presidency. One of his significant policies was the revocation of restrictions on the Ahmadiyah community and the official recognition of Confucianism as a state-recognized religion. However, after his tenure ended, these inclusive policies faced significant challenges from conservative groups that sought to limit religious freedom. Similarly, Nurcholish Madjid's concept of *Islam Yes, Partai Islam No* laid the foundation for separating religion from politics to prevent sectarian dominance in national affairs. Despite its progressive vision, this idea has often been contested by Islamic political groups advocating for the implementation of Islamic law in state policies.

Multicultural education is frequently cited as a key strategy for reducing interreligious tensions in Indonesia. However, its effectiveness remains debatable and requires further analysis. In terms of curriculum development, while the government has incorporated tolerance values into the national education system, studies indicate that implementation remains largely normative. Research from Setara Institute (2022) found that some public schools still experience pressure from the majority group in shaping internal policies related to religious practices. The vision of inclusive and humanistic education, as conceptualized by Y.B. Mangunwijaya, was reflected in his *Yayasan Dinamika Edukasi Dasar*, an initiative aimed at transforming the education system towards a more progressive and people-centred approach.

Evaluating the impact of multicultural education programs on religious conflict resolution remains a challenge due to the lack of comprehensive data. However, initiatives such as the *Pesantren Toleransi* program by the Wahid Foundation demonstrate that interfaith dialogue-based education can effectively shape students' perspectives on diversity. Similarly, Nurcholish Madjid's founding of *Global Sevilla School* emphasized *academic excellence* and *character building* as part of a balanced education model. This aligns with Jalaluddin Rakhmat's establishment of *Yayasan Muthahhari*, which he described as an educational renewal movement for enlightenment through moral integrity and practical skills. Beyond formal education, interfaith values are also promoted through community-based movements and organizations, addressing various societal issues at different levels. Elga J. Sarapung highlights that the principles and examples set by these pioneering figures remain highly relevant in today's social, political, and religious landscape, demonstrating that their legacies continue to shape contemporary interfaith relations and educational reform in Indonesia.

An interfaith approach to resolving conflicts not only aims to prevent and address disputes but also to foster a more inclusive and harmonious social environment. Consequently, approaches like bolstering regulations that safeguard religious freedom, improving the capability of religious institutions to avert conflicts, and promoting interfaith cooperation networks need to be advanced further. By embracing an interfaith relations framework in conflict resolution, Indonesia can foster a society that is more inclusive, harmonious, and tolerant. To reach this objective, it is essential to engage various stakeholders actively, such as the government, scholars, religious figures, and civil society. With a well-rounded approach based on pluralistic principles, Indonesia can exemplify how to handle religious diversity in a peaceful and constructive manner for other countries.

4. CONCLUSION

The transformation of interfaith relations in post-Reform Indonesia has demonstrated significant shifts in socio-religious interaction patterns. The key findings of this study identify several phases in the evolution of interfaith relations, including the *interfaith dialogue phase*, which led to the formation of interreligious organizations and communities such as DIAN/Interfidei and JAKATARUB; the *advocacy phase*, where NGOs played a role in defending religious freedom; the *creative campaign phase*, which disseminated messages of tolerance through innovative media like Peace Generation; and the *intersectional phase*, which integrates various approaches to formulate inclusive policies and address globalization challenges. Additionally, factors influencing this transformation include the role of key figures in interfaith movements, contributions from religious organizations, the impact of political policies, and ongoing social dynamics.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes by integrating various schools of thought into interfaith-based conflict resolution. The *neo-modernist* ideas of Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid promote inclusivity in understanding religious diversity. *Democratic socialism*, as developed by Muhammad Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono, and Kuntowijoyo, underscores the importance of social justice in maintaining religious harmony. The *universalist* approach advocated by Jalaluddin Rakhmat and A.M. Saefuddin highlights ethical values as the foundation of interfaith solidarity. Meanwhile, *liberative modernism*, advanced by Th. Sumartana, and *universal humanism*, as promoted by Y.B. Mangunwijaya, emphasize education as a tool for social transformation. Furthermore, *non-violent conflict resolution*, applied by Gedong Bagoes Oka, prioritizes reconciliation and peacebuilding based on local values. Collectively, these perspectives can be applied to various social, political, and cultural issues and serve as a foundation for more inclusive policies in managing religious diversity in Indonesia.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite offering broad insights, this study has several limitations that should be considered. It primarily focuses on literature analysis and has yet to incorporate extensive empirical research on interfaith communities and the concrete impacts of existing policies. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of these proposed approaches through direct case studies,

interviews with religious leaders and activists, and more specific policy analyses. Additionally, further exploration of globalization's influence on interfaith relations in Indonesia is necessary. By addressing these aspects, future research can further contribute to developing a more contextual and applicable interfaith-based conflict resolution strategy.

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