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Christianophobia: A Threat to Indonesian Pluralism and Religious Freedom

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Abstract

Christianophobia is examined as a threat to Indonesian pluralism and religious freedom in this article. But what happens when the underlying fear of distraction underlying the "ban" is realized in the absence of religious freedom? In the current Christianophobia discourse, how do we understand not only Christians who cannot be free, but also adherents of other minority religions who find it difficult to freely practice their religion and beliefs? In this paper, the author divides the history of Christianity in Indonesia using phobia theory and religious freedom to describe the case of Christianophobia in Indonesia. Using Marks' phobia and Lock's legacy of religious freedom to explain how phobias are practiced in the secular democratic nation-state of Indonesia. The method is qualitative-exploratory, and the approach is phenomenological. According to the findings of this study, Christianophobia has harmed religious harmony and diversity in Indonesia significantly. The phenomenon of mutual distrust of Christianity among Indonesian Muslims demonstrates this. To counter the threat of Christianophobia, present Christianity as a means of defending Indonesian nationalism and religious pluralism.

Keywords: *Christian Phobia; Diversity; Pluralism; Religious Freedom*

Introduction

Many ideological, global, domestic, and other discourses have employed the term Christianophobia. Even though it became more prominent in discourse during the UN World Conference in 2009 as a consequence of the increasing pervasiveness of bigotry as illustrated by the proliferation of tragedies of racial and religious violence and intolerance directed at Christians. This term has become widely used to refer to the rise in violence against Christians and the inhibition of religious rights in Muslim countries.

Based on the research of Semenova et al. (2021), there are two types of Christianophobia in the world. There are two kinds of prejudice against Christians: **direct discrimination** (repression) as well as **indirect discrimination** (the oppression of Christians related to professional activities). The absence of efforts in the West to combat various forms of discrimination against Christians has spread this phenomenon to the South, including Indonesia. Christians are not killed because of their religion in the North or the West, but their rights in the workplace and in professional activities are restricted because of their religious beliefs (eg in the case of abortion, attitudes towards LGBT, etc.). Meanwhile, there is direct

discrimination and oppression in the Southern world as a result of religious differences, radicalisation, and violent extremism.

Fear of the spread of Christianity grips the majority of the world's population, including Indonesia (Shortt, 2012). This is a common fear in Islamic countries. According to the Opendoor report (2022), it is extremely difficult to live in 50 countries around the world because of their faith and identification with Jesus Christ. There are over 360 million Christians living in places where they face high levels of persecution and discrimination; 5,898 Christians have been killed for their faith; 5,110 churches and other Christian buildings have been attacked; 6,175 believers have been detained without trial, arrested, sentenced, or imprisoned; and 3,829 Christians have been abducted. Indonesia is on the list of countries with a very high level of persecution due to Islamic oppression (Opendoors, 2022). People in Indonesia despise Christians because of their negative attitudes toward their existence and the manner in which Christians practice their faith. According to Tanggok (2018), fear of Christianity is due to Christianization, fear of the development of Christianity (Wijaya, 2022.) and the impact of Christian mission in Indonesia on Muslims is dangerous (Tarpin, 2011).

The restrictions imposed by both the state and people who are not happy with Christians demonstrate Indonesians' fear of the development of Christianity (Christianization). Various dirty methods, sometimes carried out without regard for the right to freedom of religion and belief guaranteed by the UDHR, ICCPR, the 1945 Constitution, and Indonesian multiculturalism. Although the guarantee of freedom is legally recognized, there are still restrictions in practice, such as restrictions on the construction of houses of worship and even the prohibition of worshiping in certain places. In the last ten years, Christians' religious freedom in Indonesia has been restricted, including the prohibition of worship. Building houses of worship is prohibited in some cases, and Christians are forced to convert.

Review Literature

Scholars have previously paid little attention to the study of Christianophobia. Some experts argue that the restriction of Christians' right to religious freedom stems from a fear of Christianization (Arrumnigtyas, 2020). Extreme, overwhelming, and crippling fear or anxiety can be induced by a wide range of things, places, sensations, or creatures, whether or not there is any real danger.

Phobias, according to Isaac Marks (1987), are extreme fears of things or situations that are out of proportion to how dangerous they are, are uncontrollable by the sufferer, and cause the person to avoid the feared stimuli. He distinguished between phobias and ordinary fear, claiming that phobias can arise in response to almost anything and occur in the absence of a real risk. He also defined phobic anxiety as the intense fear or anxiety that phobic people experience when they come into contact with their feared stimuli. As a result, unlike natural dread, phobic fear is irrational, crippling, and non-adaptive.

Religious Nationalism

Strict patriotism is a point of view and an act. Its behavior demonstrates high levels of consistency, concern, and regard for one's physical, social, and social conditions by prioritizing the interests of the country and state over the interests of oneself and one's gatherings (Sukatman et al. 2019:41). This strict patriotism arose as a result of the rejection of an ethnic, strict, social, and, surprisingly, legitimate majority (Neo and Scharffs 2021:10). The strict patriot concept arose in order to comprehend the soul of strict patriotism and a patriot strict soul, in order to achieve greater public solidarity and trustworthiness (Sukatman et al. 2019:141). As a result, in the strict patriot receiving it, there is a distinction between patriotism, religion, and Pancasila as a public belief system (Burhanuddin 2015:361). This public belief resulted in the suppression of various ethnic or religious groups. People even disregard humanity and any kind of relationship that involves a person of a different religion, allowing the ego and hatred that runs through their veins to triumph.

The advancement of strict patriot developments and discussions is a critical stage in defeating the potential for strict radicalism. This enhancement expects to bring patriotism issues to light so that the community can build resistance against understandings and developments that will generally go after public power. Schooling is one mechanism of establishing strict patriotism. Strict patriot ideas are two components of character values that have been unequivocally demonstrated in the growing experience (Lestari and Hermanto 2019). Learning regarding stringent jingoism would be accomplished in an academic setting as part of an effort to strengthen public flexibility. Similarly, strict patriot character education in advanced education is coordinated with learning plans via standard components of character development, learning outcomes, focus on programs, and the course prospectus (Sukatman et al. 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of strict patriot character education in advanced education is completed by incorporating the benefits of strict patriot characters into the arrangement of learning gadgets (Hadi 2018). Thus, people's minds are ingrained with idea of rigorous nationalistic from an early age, and when those ideas develop, they are becoming hard to alter; instead, they have become permanent reality of a public.

A number of claims for stringent national pride operating to conquer strict radicalism: (1) Indonesian culture is diverse, with differences in nationality, culture, language, and customs, including religion. Religion is a significant factor that influences the country's existence. (2) Because significant proportion of Indonesia's inhabitants becomes Muslim, most of the terms in the language are terms adjusted from Islamic rigorous traditions, despite the fact that they are also used by other strict individuals. As a result, the use of public terms with strict terms and stories is more easily accepted by the neighborhood. (3) Patriotism and religious gatherings have a significant impact on the philosophy of political life in Indonesia. These two terms have received a great deal of public attention. People have gained the power to manipulate other religious people and make them their subordinates as a result of strict religious following and misinterpretations. The findings discussed above point to this conclusion.

Anticipation of Radicalism

Militancy seems to be a character trait which inspires an individual to change and subvert prior beliefs or conceptions (Hafid 2020:31). The person who acquires this term affects one's behavior and guides person's thoughts to disdain for different people. This viewpoint is consistent with that of Idris, Widyawan, and Adji (2019), who defined radicalism as a rule that anticipates a type of progress, dismissal, or even protection from ideas, presumptions, establishments, or values. Radicalisation is also regarded as an extremist and over-responsive development that employs brutal means to achieve its goals (Wahid 2018). Radicalisation is frequently associated with zealotry or persons who endorse for or sustain extreme political positions (Hysing, Olsson and Dahl 2016). In any case, radicalism isn't synonymous with psychological oppression because fear mongers are banding together to use violence against nonmilitary personnel targets. Furthermore, leftism is commonly considered to stimulate (though not always inevitably result in) coexistence in psychological manipulation (Snook et al. 2021). As a consequence, militancy is viewed as something that disrupts or causes divisions in the social framework, because it expects to destroy the current equilibrium in order to achieve the ideal changes of development (Cao 2017; Silver 2018). According to the definitions, strict based radicalism is a standard, thought, mentality, and development that employs more religion-based savagery in managing contrasts and achieving objectives. Thus, radicalism is the most heinous term that promotes hatred and intolerance toward people who hold conflicting viewpoints or even who pertain to different races and religions.

Religious extremism, which has been discovered within a less educated community, has already spread to taught gatherings or college understudies. A few college pioneers have identified radicalized understudies in the neighborhood (Basri and Dwiningrum 2019). In this way, it is critical to use a control system to prevent expected radicalism (Davids 2017; Emelin and Tkhostov 2019). Balance is the intersection of two inverse things or two limits (Ushama 2014). The concept of balance has become an important component in the fight against radicalism. Understanding control will help you maintain a

decent, open, and lenient strict attitude (Islam 2020). Meanwhile, various control methods are used in understudy deradicalization endeavors, for example, re-assimilating Pancasila and religion to prevent the spread of militancy nearby. The definition of strict control is determined by three factors. Religion, first and foremost, maintains human pride, with rahmah [compassion] as the primary message. Furthermore, strict ideas are verifiable, whereas reality evolves gradually. Third, the Republic of Indonesia should be guided by a social methodology. Similarly, deradicalization efforts can be aided by grounds understudy associations by advancing moderate strict comprehension and implementing Pancasila values as the foundation of state reasoning (Kesuma et al. 2019).

Understudy Activists

Students are a well-informed group at the forefront of making public changes (Reger 2018). Understudies can be divided into two groups in the grounds climate, namely scholar and lobbyist. Scholastic understudies are frequently thought of as understudies who only concentrate on their college studies. Meanwhile, accomplice activists are individuals from associations who work both inside and outside of grounds and are involved with the organization's work program (Broadhurst 2014). Various studies show significant differences between scholarly understudies and understudy activists, which should be visible from general information, perspectives, information and socialization, sciences, administration, and authority executives that are not reflected in the advanced education educational plan (Silva 2018). College activists, for example, can learn about changes in science and society. Likewise, protege activists have a better-developed capacity to appreciate people on a profound level than scholarly understudies, because they have a greater number of liabilities than uncoordinated scholastics (Kesuma et al. 2019:155).

Accomplice activists with high aggregate conviction will commonly defend and safeguard their grouping from strain from other groups (Arifianto 2019:4). Furthermore, the tendency of understudies' restrictive reasoning has given rise to textualist, assailant, and revolutionary activists (Iswahyudi 2020). One of the nearby activists is an Islamic development lobbyist who considers himself a da'wah [proselytising] dissident. Da'wah activists are the result of nonstop collaboration with their social world, which affects the arrangement of self-assurance with their strict character (Irham and Lubis 2021). There are philosophical differences among activists of Islamic understudy associations when it comes to teaching kaffah [complete return to] Islamic lessons, even when it comes to seeing Qur'anic hadith texts and interpretations. These distinctions will generally spark a surge of zeal for the organization, which is thought to have the absolute best philosophical truth, strict framework, structure, style, and development strategy as an insistence of the association's character and presence. It is entirely normal in this situation to find units or individuals dismissing different understandings and perspectives outside of the gathering (Haryani et al. 2018). Thus, the correct and research-based religious doctrines discovered by some activists have the potential to change the minds of people who have associated their religious philosophies with radicalism and strict patriotism.

Data and Method

Using scholarly investigation, this qualitative research aims to address the irrational fear of Christians in Indonesia. To address the problem, such a research uses perspectives from social scientists, judicial review, religious doctrine, as well as religious freedom. This research examines theories pertaining the accomplishment of right to religious freedom and pluralism in Indonesia. In studying Christian phobias that endanger the freedom to practice one's religion and pluralism in Indonesia, the conceptual approach is used to examine various views and concepts of religious freedom. Thus, the findings and statements of various authors and studies have approached the subject from various perspectives. This problem can be solved using the methods outlined in this study.

In the context of the study subject matter, the author includes supplementary information in the form of scholarly community, disciplines such as sociology, as well as related religions, along with the applicable principle of global religious freedom. Authors intricately scoured thru public information and widely quoted sources, including reliable reports on national and international religious freedom and levels of multiculturalism. To explain the situation, primary data sources such as data on violations of Christians' right to freedom of religion and belief, as well as secondary data sources such as regulations, both national and international, books, and reports of credible international organizations, are required. This combination of sources is required because it provides a solid foundation for delving deeper into the problems that arise in order to reach the best conclusions.

This study begins with restrictions on the development of Christianity in Indonesia that are contrary to the principles of religious and belief freedom, as well as cultural pluralism as a feature of a functioning democracy. These facts and realities can be addressed using religious freedom and cultural pluralism theory. Qualitative method is employed to answer the following research questions. Are Christianophobia restrictions on Christian groups? Second, how does Christianophobia affect the right to religious freedom and belief, as well as cultural diversity?

Discussion

People Hate Christians in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Islamophobia and Christianophobia are entitled to equal attention, but also diverse attempts are made to combat one another. According Febriani's research, the negative view of Christians is Christian fanaticism, which leads to violent treatment. Muslims' efforts to overcome Islamophobia and Christianophobia include reinterpreting Koranic verses, implementing Living Values Education (LVE), strengthening the religious moderation curriculum, and providing materials and methods of friendship in order to bring up solutions in the form of religious morality development, which includes religious morality, national morality, and social morality. As a result, it has implications for religious maturity, which is defined as "well-differentiated and self-critical, motivational force, moral consistency, comprehensiveness, integrality, and heuristics" (Fabriana, 2022).

Initiatives to conquer Christianophobia must be developed from a Christian perspective. Perhaps one them makes the use John Locke's idea of religious tolerance. In this case, Locke's thinking was influenced by various religious disputes between Catholics and Protestants during the Reformation, which were held in the name of purifying Christian teachings, but were actually an attempt to seize political power. Many people have been lost, destroyed, or died as a result of this. Locke's concern for the situation prompted him to advocate for religious tolerance, which later evolved into religious freedom. His ideas are derived from Christ's teachings. According to him, the main character of a true (Christian) church is Christian tolerance for one another, because true Christian teachings are love, gentleness, and good intentions toward all people. Christianity seeks to promote a godly lifestyle in which faith is demonstrated through acts of love rather than violence. Torturing and killing others is impossible for people with a good conscience and spirit.

As a result, tolerance is consistent with both the Bible and reason. Forcing one's will on people of different religions is not an act of love, but rather an attempt to dominate and control others. This contrasts with the relationship between the state and the church. The state's function is to protect its people for the sake of their welfare, prosperity, tranquillity, and security in owning their goods or wealth (Fabriana, 2022). Tolerance is thus the most important requirement in areas where the flames of christophobia have been burning. This can only be accomplished if goodwill among people is promoted and cooperation between common residences belonging to both Christians and Muslims is established. This collaboration has the potential to increase people's tolerance.

In terms of religious freedom, Locke contends that rational beings have two rights: first, the right to freely enjoy life and acquire and own property; and second, the right to have faith and worship as they see fit. In this case, the government must not interfere with the beliefs of community members. For several reasons, people should not give up their religious freedom to the government: 1) Humans, as rational beings, are free to seek happiness not only in this world, but also in the next. He must be free to seek the truth for the sake of his salvation, and this cannot be left to others because an act of faith is most effective when performed alone. 2) the government must not have authority over its people's religious beliefs because the strength of their beliefs is determined by an external force, namely Allah; 3) rulers have no more power over religious beliefs than their people's beliefs; and 4) religious beliefs and worship are beyond the control of the government because they do not harm others. The government exists solely to safeguard religious freedom (Heyman, 2018). Thus, secularism is the best option for providing religious freedom to multicultural people. All of the great writers, as well as Christ himself, promoted multiculturalism and tolerance. No community or individual from any country has the right to desecrate other religious symbols and beliefs.

Christian Phobia and Multiculturalism

Christianophobia in Indonesia can be overcome by raising human rights awareness, particularly in the spirit of multiculturalism and religious freedom. Thoughts drawn from John Locke, who based it on Christ's teachings about Christian goodness values. The spirit of multiculturalism and religious freedom is very strong in Christian theology, especially in the Old and New Testaments. First, in imago Dei theology, God created man and ordained his development from a single individual, Adam, to families, peoples, tribes, and nations; from one culture to many cultures. This exemplifies the spirit of multiculturalism and religious freedom. The Old Testament also shows how Israel's forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) coexisted peacefully with people of different faiths. (Genesis 1–2, 10–11) When there are many moral deviations that damage and destroy prosperity and peace in the midst of a multicultural society, God rejects the broken multicultural spirit (Genesis 6, Judges 1–3). God is not hostile to multiculturalism or religious freedom because God created these situations and conditions. He allowed Joseph to live in Egypt and become a ruler there in the midst of Egyptian society, which had different beliefs than Joseph, but they coexisted well until one day political power intervened to disrupt the harmony between the Israelites and the Egyptians (Genesis 39–47). God commanded the Israelites during their Babylonian exile to be actively involved in seeking the welfare of the city (Jeremiah 29:7). In the New Testament, Jesus demonstrates his appreciation for diversity by providing social services (feeding, healing, and other assistance) to all people, regardless of their background. On this basis, Christianity should be able to preserve Indonesian nationalism and multiculturalism. As a result, the idea of coexistence tolerance among people belonging to different cultures can be promoted, paving the way for peace and prosperity all over the world.

Christian Phobia Management Techniques

To achieve social integrity, consider introducing societal values of moral standards rooted in the three indispensable principles of freedom, inclusivity, as well as interdependence. Maintaining the three aforementioned principles will assist one in developing high moral standards as well as a strong personality. Moral actions of high value are those that do not oppress, torture, inflict pain, interfere with, or violate the rights of others. Furthermore, in accordance with universal human principles, one should act in a way that respects the rights of others. However, there is one critical aspect that must be highlighted in this situation. Christianophobia's success will be greatly influenced by global community awareness and collective engagement, which are the motivating factor behind the government's implementation of policy in every state.

As detailed in Syamsul Arfin's work, conducting Living Values Education (LVE) is one of the efforts being made in the Indonesian configuration to counteract religious fundamentalism in the

education sector (2016:94). Harmony, reverence, adore, coexistence, sincerity, modesty, forgiveness, easiness, enjoyment, commitment, liberation, and oneness are all highlighted in this paper. In the Indonesian context, however, two significant Indonesian religious organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which reject radical ideology on religious grounds and advocate for student-friendly instructional methods and materials, such as those provided by Ibnu Miskawayh and Naquib al-Attas, oppose the spread of radicalistic teaching on social media (Aly 2020:177).

There is a misconception that "religious harmony" can be forced or legislated upon, rather than taking the time and effort to understand how tensions have evolved and devise strategies to reduce them. Interfaith dialogues are not the answer; with a few notable exceptions, they are frequently little more than meaningless talk sessions that avoid dealing with pressing issues.

Conclusion

Christianophobia has infiltrated the minds of the large percentage of Indonesians who don't consider themselves Christians. Christianophobia affects people who believe that Christianization, Christianity, and Christianity will rule and threaten other religions. Christianophobia and the events associated with it, such as restricting devotion even as declaring that regulations for constructing religious buildings must also be preceded, are unconscionable to Christians. There is a distinction that must be made between hatred and fear of other religions. Hostility and Christianization are distinct from one another. Giving other religions the same opportunity to worship is not Christianization. Christian phobia emerged and developed as a result of this term Christianization.

Some Christians and adherents of other religions, including Muslims, are chauvinistic toward their faith. The state allows despicable orators to insult and mistreat Christians. At times, Christianity is viewed as a threat to their religion, and Christians are stereotyped as perpetrators of Christianization of their religion's followers.

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