

Increasing the Society's Engagement Role Through Interfaith Dialogue

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Abstract: Community involvement to create a harmonious life is very important in the current of the globalization era. Some cases of broken relationships in society are caused by a lack of concern for others and some effects of globalization such as the inclusion of new ideologies and lifestyles. Concern by involving oneself in society can minimize the influence of globalization which threatens wholeness and harmony. This can be done them through interfaith dialogue. The purpose of this study was to determine community involvement through interfaith dialogue that focuses on interfaith communities and beliefs in Kudus Regency. This study is a typical phenomenological qualitative research. The data were collected using the techniques of interview, document studies and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The data validity was tested using triangulation on the method. The data analysis was technically carried out using data collection, data reduction, data presentation and concluding. The results showed that the interfaith dialogue undertaken by the community with various beliefs contributes to succeeding the society's active Engagement in realizing a harmonious life in the current era of globalization, where they began to realize the importance of people's Engagement in an interfaith dialogue. Besides, by holding an interfaith dialogue, it provides society with broader insights of interfaith and beliefs that may have not been known to the public. Interfaith dialogue is an alternative in creating a harmonious life in a heterogeneous society.

Keywords: *interfaith dialogue, society's engagement*

INTRODUCTION

An individual is an inseparable part of society, where society is an integrated social system wherein it resides elements consisting of individuals with different religious, racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Each of these elements holds a role to run the system of either the community, society, nation or state. The social lives in society have always been developing, to keep these elements away from disintegration, such as conflict between people of groups in society, tribes, or different religions are the typical constraints afflicted the society.

One of the possible causes of the conflicts in society with diverse religious beliefs is their unwillingness to get to know and understand their fellow community's differences. In addition to many of the people in Indonesia hold a very strong sense of exclusivism within-group or sect can certainly be a major trigger for conflict in society. The Indonesian people are preserving a quire strong customary law along with the community activities, each individual's life decision and act, is, therefore, dependent on the community's leader. Thus, a group's role as an element in the social system is highly influential in the community, nation and state's course of life. Through the group Gencer, Huseyin (2019: 223) states that at least two or more people gather together for the same purpose, communicate with each other, influence each other and are interdependent, they not only have the same goals and norms but also they feel become part of the group. Tumanggor in Haryanto (2014: 14) states that individuals formed in different groups and have a strong influence on their group members will find it easier to carry out subjectivity to conflict. They are also easier to translate conflicts involving objective conditions (objective conflicts) into personal conflicts (subjective conflicts), for example, conflicts over economic or

criminal issues usually develop into ethnic or religious conflicts, both conflicts between different religions and conflicts between people of one religion.

The importance of individuals' role in the community to improve the social relationship among people with diverse belief systems lays on in their ability in holding a better communication, the better the community achieve the understanding, the easier the harmony is created, all of which can be successfully realized through holding an interfaith dialogue. Zolotukhina, M et.all (2016: 7409) states that communication is very important for life, with communication we can convey the goals we want to achieve. Interfaith dialogue is an effective communication oriented solution to establish society's engagement in various groups or different religious backgrounds. This is in line with Liliweri's opinion (2007: 19) who argues that one of the perspectives of intercultural communication is in it aims to reduce uncertainty among the believing peoples. The typical uncertainty is on the information uncertainty which further frequently be wrongly understood, therefore, it triggers conflict. Bearing in mind society continues to grow and be affected by things beyond them, such as other group's attitudes whose ideology is liberalism. People who embrace this ideology prefer their lives instead of others. This study examines society's increasing Engagement by holding an interfaith dialogue in today's global era.

The importance of this research is to provide insight as well as one solution in developing communication in the community that supports interfaith communication. It can't be denied as communication is one way to ask for stability and harmony of community relations to be maintained, because conflicts can be resolved divisions within the community and can occur at any time so that improvement between communities must be maintained.

Based on the background above, this study examines 1) what is interfaith dialogue? and; 2) how to form an effort to increase community involvement through interfaith dialogue in the current of globalization era.

METHODS

The Interfaith Community and Pantura belief (TALI AKRAP) in addition to being guided by relevant literature studies. Bungie (2011: 79) suggested that the qualitative data collection technically used observation method, which uses qualitative traditions such as in-depth interviews, participation involved-observation, or data collection, all of which were realized by engaging several important people to conduct focused group discussions. Besides, Herdiansyah (2012: 116) argues that qualitative research constitutes several methods of data collection, including interviews, observation, study documentation and focus group discussion.

In this study the data were technically obtained by holding interviews on several interfaith leaders of community members called TALI AKRAP, the field observation was conducted to community activities, field results documentation in addition to other supplementary documentation from various relevant sources and participating in focus group discussions (FGD). The data validity test of this study was technically implemented data source triangulation technique, where this technique according to Moleong (2006: 330) is systematically conducted by comparing and checking both the degree of trust in information obtained through time and different methods in qualitative methods carried out by means of; (1) comparing observational data with interview results; (2) comparing what people say in public with what is said personally; (3) comparing what people say about the research situation to what is said all the time; (4) comparing the situation and perspective of a person with various opinions and other people's views such as ordinary people, people with secondary or high

education, rich people and people in government, (5) comparing the results of interviews with issues related to document. Thus the obtained results are expected as similar with or it explores reasons underlying the differences. The data analysis technically follows Milles and Huberman's data analysis model, it is an interactive model of data analysis technique that consists of four stages, among others: (a) data collection, (b) data reduction, (c) data presentation, (d) concluding.

The study focuses on the inter-religious social life of believing communities living throughout the north coast of Kudus Regency, under several considerations as follows: 1) Kudus is one of the regions with typical residents constitute of various kinds of religions and there are even many schools of beliefs; 2) there are frequently occurring conflicts between religious groups in the society share social impacts among groups of people; 3) the TALI AKRAP community is a cross-religious and believing community established by common community as a complementary media of interfaith communication initially proposed by government, which at the first hand may not be optimally served its actual function; 4) Kudus is the smallest city in Central Java Province with a rapid level of progress that requires authoritative efforts to keep the community observing the harmonious lives and as much as possible avoid social conflicts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interfaith Dialogue

In a society, communication plays a significant role in partly in harmonizing people of different faith understands, thinking, attitudes and life views. Bazezew, Arega and Mulugeta Neka (2017: 28) argue that effective communication between individuals can resolve conflicts in a good and acceptable way. In an interfaith society, communication is highly recommended to establish a shared understanding of different ideas, given that each religion should carry special teachings or doctrines of their faith. In case all the existing differences cannot be figured out, the ultimate goal of creating a harmonious social life across believing communities can never be succeeded.

Interfaith dialogue is a typical communication carried out by members of society with different beliefs to succeed in realizing common goals. This interfaith dialogue has long been carried out by communities across religions and beliefs (TALI AKRAP) in Kudus Regency. Based on the results of the study, interfaith dialogue became one of the effective ways to maintain people's harmony, to realize harmony among religious groups. In case all people were in stable condition, environmental defense and security will not be easily destructed. Bearing in current fast development and social life changes and technological progress in our society, new penetrating ideologies take major role in influencing one's life, it does turn us rethinking to protect what we bestowed with, we must keep ourselves from time and culture changes which possibly can disrupt our peace living in society and religious lives sustainability as well. This is in line with Malcolm Walter's commentary (cited in Afif, 2012: 2) that the globalization that comes along with capitalism has brought new powers that can potentially be a threat to religious, political, military, and other sources of power. For global movement recommends us to embrace a new ideology oriented to create a social life circumstance that glorifies the western values and ideology. Finally, the western ideas have been many afflicted our communities in living their social lives, thoughts, and decision making ways, in addition to varied issues affected our society and world perspectives, such as human rights, democracy, feminism, liberalism, secularism, and pluralism. However, agreeing to freedom from the outer influences,

the limit on such freedom should never be left without attention, this is meant to maintain our society's characters of origin.

This is where the need to develop community engagement as a manifestation of the citizens' responsibility to the development and influence of the world that began to enter into the people's life order. This is consistent with Bell's opinion (2015: 3) that the tradition in learning citizenship education in America emphasizes learning services that are manifested in activities such as community organizations and are involved in community-based work. Plater (2017: 24) reinforces Bell's statement that in this time many institutions emphasize experience through actual participation in community organizations. Community engagement by helping them to maintain harmony, maintain regional security and peace by holding an interfaith dialogue, for one of the social groups in a society is a religious group, thus it strongly determines the community's future life concern. Civic engagement is very necessary to achieve goals in communication in the community, in an organization and decision making (Davis, Katherine et. All, 2017: 39). The success of a group in bringing harmony to each member of a community is also determined by how the group responds to any differences that exist from each group member. So that the group's acceptance of its members is not only limited to accepting it but also recognizes and provides an opportunity to do the same thing as what they do. TALI AKRAP carried out typical interfaith dialogue activities such as discussions with fellow group members under a specific theme of discussion on current problems. Each group member consisting of individuals with different religious backgrounds is aligned in understanding and responding to developing issues in the communities such as the eradication of drugs, human trafficking, in addition to radicalism that potentially damages the resilience of a social system in society. In this dialogue activity, community members may not only work alone to cope with those life challenges, additionally, we need to cooperate with the local government authority and other relevant parties such as *Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik* (Kesbangpol) 'the National Unity and Political Body', *Jaminan Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak* (JPPA) or the Assurance Protection for Women and Children even to Regional Police. According to Brown, Lisa (2018: 105) civic engagement in efforts to maintain and maintain security is evidenced by the active participation of citizens and political issues in the community both local and international scope. In partly engage to cope with global challenges, all elements of society should stick together towards a common goal. This is in line with Rozak's view (2008: 24) that "in overcoming conflicts within society, i.e., religious conflicts, we should not just rely on the government, instead, communities at the internal level need to increase and intensify communication among the existing religious communities by developing an attitude of openness, democracy, tolerant, and peaceful", this shows that the community's role in developing interfaith dialogue is on their effort to create harmony, to foster people with peaceful concern, maintain defense and security. Any occurring problem is influential to an individual's life in society. The source of the problem is none other than the community it's own. Thus, citizen engagement in running a social system is quite important.

In line with the view of conflict theory which assumes that differences in interests between social classes create conflictual social relations, where social class is one of the cultural products found in society whether intentional like in Bali or unintentionally and all of them are the result of community culture. Conflicts that have arisen in the community both religious and interfaith are not infrequently sourced from the interests of groups or sects in using the power of their groups for their interests. Whereas actually conflict is only a matter of misinterpretation between groups that continues to be developed so that it becomes a problem that eventually extends to personal problems. This also shows the importance of communication or dialogue to

correct the stigma and wrong understanding by the community to establish harmonious and tolerant relations between religious communities. Poerwanto (1997: 42) states that if the frequency of social interaction that exists is quite high, there is an institutionalized tolerance that will be easy to eliminate the negative effects of conflict and not infrequently even able to suppress the emergence of conflict.

Society's Engagement in the Era of Globalization

Globalization sees the world as if borderless; it turns everything seems a single region that is easily and quickly accessible to people all over the world. Similarly, Gopinath (2008: 8) in his book "Globalization a Multidimensional System" suggests that "globalization is a process by which we come to experience, of the world as a single place". However, one of the inevitable consequences of globalization is its influence and change.

Globalization brings about effects on social life order which consequently impacted individual lives, all of which are identifiable from their lifestyles, perspectives, in addition to changing in the attitudes. The more worrying is that globalization will potentially change the society's order which consequently can ruin their national identity. Kahraman, Pinar, and Gonul, Onur (2017: 234) state that globalization can have an impact on cultural values, customs, traditions, and customs so it is important to prepare to participate in the community to maintain it all. Thus, to cope with global challenges on society at large, it is necessary to involve citizens to have actively participated in various efforts oriented to realize harmonious living, thus the state's defense and security will remain stable. In undergoing such a participation process, cross-religious understanding helps communities across religious beliefs to be more directed and developed within members of each community, thus it enables them to achieve their common goals. A community facilitates the movement carried out by society in maintaining social system stability, for in each community both understanding and purpose have been harmoniously determined.

According to Rusnaini (2018: 2) Civics community hold their mission to prepare the younger generation in developing knowledge and skills to mutually build their communities. Civics community focuses on civic engagement or citizen engagement as a typical civic responsibility for citizen responsibility. The relevance of civic engagement to an interfaith dialogue held by TALI AKRAP community is, holding a dialogue between religious groups mainly aims to foster and strengthen communities across beliefs' understanding of the differences in religion, culture or even their life views. This study evokes our consciousness on the importance of conducting mutual understanding amidst the global world that potentially divides people instead of reminds them of a multicultural society.

Furthermore, Varshney (cited in Mujahidah 2015: 142) develops a civic engagement concept, which is public participation, which is through people's cooperative attitudes in daily and formal relationships. Civic engagement is divided into two, the first is more structural and the second is daily. Official civic engagement is business formulation, professional organizations, film clubs, sports clubs, trade units, and political parties. While routinely community activities such as visiting each other, eating together, participating in a festival and allowing their children to play together are examples of civic engagement forms. Varshney suggests that the main indicator for civic engagement is on reciprocal interaction between the two parties or groups. The interaction is a typical free interaction and not affected by the state. Thus, the typical interfaith dialogue held by TALI AKRAP is a reciprocal interaction between the existing various groups of religions and beliefs within a society who have attempted to

establish harmony, maintain the state security and defense, by involving all citizens of different religions to realize the national integrity.

The TALI AKRAP community's activity realized through dialogue, aims to facilitate nationalism, knowledge, and thoughts among religious believers to live in harmony. Members of a community are not only directly involved in conducting dialogue activities, but also in finding solutions when a conflict occurs within the community, such as the case of prohibiting for building of places of worship by a group of Christians in Kudus, the marriage law of the Samin tribe which have never been submitted their marriages to civil records, up to the conflict between the separation of Islamic tombs and Buddhism by certain elements in society. A society with direct engagement will optimistically see all differences in their social lives as can be harmonized; they will see that social security and people's integrity as the main concerns. This is the meaning of citizen engagement that partly contributes to enhancing the community's harmony, integration, and unity as members of the Indonesian nation. Everything can be succeeded; it may be firstly begun by acquiring a sense of self-awareness, willingly direct engaged within diverse communities, besides, to move for the society to cope with the global challenges.

CONCLUSION

Interfaith dialogue is communication carried out by involving various religions and the flow of beliefs that exist in society to realize common goals. This interfaith dialogue has been carried out for a long time by the interfaith and religious community (TALI AKRAP) in Kudus Regency by involving various religions and beliefs within the community. This community involvement is a form of efforts to create a harmonious life in the era of globalization as it is now because dialogue activities can involve all elements of society and increase citizen awareness, they begin to understand the importance of citizen involvement in societies especially those of different religions. Community as a facilitator in mobilizing community involvement as a form of citizen responsibility in maintaining the stability of the social system that exists in society.

Besides all that, interfaith dialogue also provides a broader insight into the issues of interfaith and beliefs and the diversity of religious backgrounds and not yet known by the public. Interfaith dialogue is one appropriate alternative in creating a harmonious life in society by directly involving people of different faiths. This dialogue activity is in the form of social activities, directly involved in dealing with conflicts between religions, and also insight into the alignment of the teachings of a religion that has developed in a society that causes different views.

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