



The Reality of Spirituality and the Challenge of Religious Freedom in Indonesia: Theological and Social Perspectives

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Abstract

Freedom of religion in Indonesia is an important and sensitive issue. Indonesia's religious diversity often leads to disputes and conflicts that disrupt harmony and unity. It is considered the emergence of diverse understandings and unfulfilled rights from religious differences. A theological approach can be an effective tool in facilitating the transformation of religious awakening and promoting religious freedom in Indonesia. This research aims to determine how theological perspectives influence the understanding and practice of religious freedom, which is communicated effectively. The research method used is descriptive, analysing the index of religious freedom in Indonesia with a theological analysis of religious freedom. The study's results highlight the importance of a theological approach in fostering a spiritual attitude and influencing expressions of religious freedom. The values of harmony, tolerance, and respect have encouraged efforts to build respect but still raise concerns about the emergence of conflict with the development of community interaction. Implementing effective strategies to place theology that encourages religious freedom in Indonesia is essential.

Keywords: Spirituality, religious, freedom, theological, social, diversity.

Introduction

Religious freedom in Indonesia has diverse challenges. Social, political, and economic influences affect the effectiveness of government and civil society measures to address differences and intolerance, which can disrupt community harmony. Freedom of religion in Indonesia is one of the most critical and sensitive human rights issues. Although the Indonesian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the diversity of understandings makes



it difficult to unite the religious perspectives of religious believers in Indonesia, and the diversity of truth claims over religious interpretations can lead to friction and ultimately conflict (Fathurahman, 2020). Religious affiliation and cultural diversity have the potential to be a source of social conflict in Indonesia. Almost every religion has a truth claim, and its adherents must follow religious teachings and values (Ghazali, 2017). Christianity affirms as do other religions and philosophers that in society and even in business, deep spirituality which considers others fairly at all times is vital for societal success, sustainability and harmony (Nicolaiades, 2014; 2020). Religious theology affirms the meaning of diverse freedoms ranging from the liberation of the spiritual path of adherents to moral responsibility, respect, moral judgement, and distinguishing between spiritual and worldly affairs about religious freedom. The basis in Islamic theology respects freedom of religion, found in Surah al-Baqarah verse 256; al-Kafirun verse 6; al-An'am verse 108; Yunus verse 99; al-Kahfi verse 29; and al-Ghaasyiyah verses 21-22 (Wijayanti, 2016). Meanwhile, the basis of religious freedom in Catholic Christianity is contained in *Dignitatis Humanae*, born from the Second Vatican Council and the East Asia Christian Conference General Assembly. Unlike Catholicism, the basis of religious freedom in the Protestant church is only an explicit interpretation of the Bible, which is a logical consequence of human recognition of the image of God (*Imago Dei*) and the commandment from Jesus to love fellow human beings as one loves oneself (Derung et al., 2022). Communication is essential in voicing theological approaches to religious freedom in spreading a better understanding of theological values, affirming religious principles, encouraging interfaith dialogue, building understanding and persuasive efforts to voice theological approaches to support religious freedom through the media providing education (Rijaal, 2021) People's ability to accept religious differences or have more tolerance in Indonesian cities has generally stayed the same and needs some urgent improvement (Ahdiat, 2024). This condition is a challenge in ensuring community harmony is retained. The complexity of the implementation and protection of religious freedom in Indonesia is inseparable from the existence of religious discrimination, inter-religious conflict, and tensions between religious freedoms. Throughout 2023, there were problems of harmony among people of religion or belief in Indonesia, such as the establishment and management of houses of worship, blasphemy on social media, and the state's paradoxical attitude towards freedom of religion or belief for believers (Wardah, 2023), (BBC.com, 2024). Traditional cultural influences emphasise the importance of harmony, so Indonesians are often suspicious of religious freedom as an individualist concept. It emphasises the importance of religious tolerance and religious harmony. The fear is remarkable that any overt statement of religious criticism could trigger communal conflict (Marshall, 2018).

In 2023, more than 87% of Indonesians identified themselves as Muslim, followed by 7.4% Christian, 3.1% Catholic, 1.7% Hindu, 0.2% Buddhist, 0.03% Confucianism and 0.04%. However, Indonesia's Government Restrictions on Religion Index score is relatively high. Indonesians who follow unrecognised religions, including Indonesia's indigenous or traditional belief systems, such as animism, dynamism and totemism, face legal restrictions and discrimination (Statista.com, 2024). There is a tendency for governments to emphasise the positive aspects of governance rather than the importance of coexistence and harmony (Marshall, 2018). In the Indonesian context, the obstacles to religious freedom include Indonesian authorities' continued inability or unwillingness to enforce existing laws (Hefner, 2013). According to the Setara Institute, violations of freedom of religion or belief in 2022 have increased. There were 171 events, and 318 were acts that violated freedom of religion or belief. State actors carried out a total of 168 actions, while 165 actions were carried out by non-state actors (Silvia, 2023). Although the Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion, especially in Article 29, paragraph two of the 1945 Constitution, violations of freedom of religion still occur. One that has increased is the rejection of the establishment of places of worship. This is inseparable from the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 9 and Number 8 of 2006, which requires 90 users of places of worship and 60 support from residents (Silvia, 2023).



The entanglement of harmonious religious relations, with the threat of religious freedom, is inseparable from binding regulations. Often, the defects of religious freedom regulations do not guarantee that freedom. This strengthens the theological approach in providing an understanding of religious freedom. The expression of freedom of religion or belief is often assumed simply as the freedom to choose religion. However, according to Sharma (2011), this expression also includes the freedom to believe in the teachings of other religions or beliefs even if it contradicts the teachings and concepts of the adopted religion. This positions the researcher's different perspective in seeing the importance of communicating a theological approach in guaranteeing freedom of religion. The researcher will explore how the concept of theology, which comes from an understanding of religion viewed from the perspective of belief and doctrine, interacts with social, political and legal realities in the context of freedom of religion in Indonesia. Theology may influence the interplay of religiosity, perceptions, policies and practices related to religious freedom in Indonesia. There is a tendency to pay attention to the legal aspects of religious freedom. At the same time, the article provides an in-depth understanding of theological approaches to building expressions of religious freedom in Indonesia.

Literature review

Freedom of religion is a right of every individual (Bielefeldt et al., 2022; Petersen, 2022). Religious freedom is a controversial topic for at least three reasons. First, not everyone believes it is an inalienable right; second, those who do believe this disagree on how the term is defined; and third, because in practice, it is religious freedom, however defined, rarely exists in its pure form (Fox, 2016). People's knowledge of the nature of belief gives rise to religious understanding (Hannan, 2022). According to Sharma (2011), the expression of religious freedom includes the freedom to believe in the teachings of other religions or beliefs even though it contradicts the teachings and concepts of the religion adhered to. Meanwhile, according to Stepan (2000), religious freedom includes freedom of worship and freedom to advance religious ideas in civil society and prohibiting religion impacts democracy, law, and other religious freedoms (Fox, 2021). This suggests that the potential for human rights law to protect religious differences lies in understanding theological-political bias (Fox, 2021). The tendency to believe that practising religion can foster friendship (Cornelio & Aldama, 2020) raises the concern that religious freedom is not only about the law but society's acceptance of religious differences. Religious freedom demands respect and recognition of religious believers and non-religious believers by the government and society at large. This requires strengthening civil and political rights in a way that does not ignore or over-emphasise religious morality (Jereza, 2016). Strengthening civil and political rights while maintaining a balanced approach to religious morality can be achieved by ensuring inclusive policy-making that respects diverse beliefs and prioritizes universal human rights (Lubis et al., 2024). The practice of religious freedom in Indonesia must be distinct from the life of a multicultural society with different cultural backgrounds in each region. Cultural expressions usually have religious motivations. Culture and religion blend at the level of personal motivation and continue to interact (Abdulla, 2018). Often, in overcoming these differences, people need to compromise to create harmony. Compromise can be appropriate if the goal of religious freedom is to promote inclusion (Hutler, 2020).

Methodology

The research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This method is considered appropriate in providing an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This research uses a document analysis approach to Indonesia's religious freedom index report, which questions the integration of theology in building a society that wants religious freedom. The research steps in this article include the following. Reseracherscollected online



data related to religious freedom in Indonesia. The data was obtained from various explanatory documents and academic journal articles and books available online. Second, the collected data was analysed using data on the index of religious freedom in Indonesia and theological views. Furthermore, the researchers' formulated a theology-based model for voicing religious harmony and moderation to hopefully realise religious freedom. Thirdly, the researchers' wrote down the results of their analyses (Miles et al., 2013).

Results and Discussion

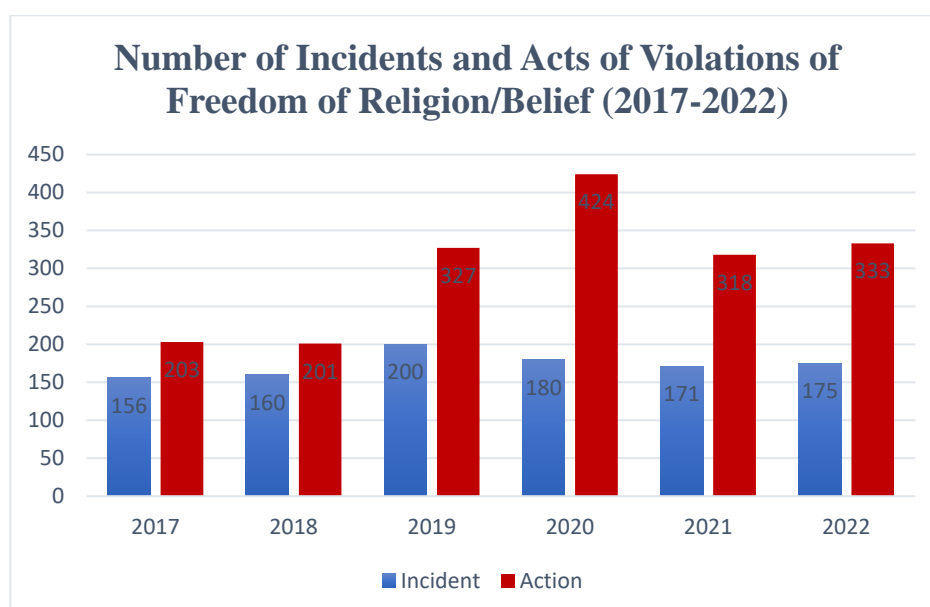
Freedom of religion in Christianity is formed based on three main reasons: the existence of human nature, the nature of true faith, and the state. The limitation of religious freedom is adherence to the moral principle of personal and social responsibility. The purpose of religious freedom is to realise religious harmony (Schumann, 1980; Heuken, 1992; Wijayanti, 2016). Islam gives freedom to its citizens to embrace their respective religions and does not allow them to impose their beliefs on others. Restrictions on religious freedom to embrace religion by their beliefs, and each individual has no compulsion to embrace Islam. It is not allowed to change their religion and beliefs without any reason that Islam can accept. The laws automatically bind the followers of Islam. The purpose of individual religious freedom is the realisation of harmony between religious communities (Zarkasyi, 2011; Wijayanti, 2016). The relevance of Spirituality in the condition of freedom of religion or belief in Indonesia cannot be separated from the influence of the expression of understanding religion in Indonesia in daily life. The construction of religious identity in Indonesia is a complex and multifaceted process. The diversity of religions and other beliefs has led to the development of different religious identities shaped by cultural, historical, and social factors. It affects individuals' interpretation of spirituality, which refers to an individual's deep connection to the search for meaning, purpose, and transcendence through spiritual practices, beliefs, and experiences. The realities of the process then develop as the identity of life in the community. Starting from the location of worship near each other, celebrating the big day of diversity and the personality of social guidelines (Sudjarwo, 2023; Astro, 2023). The personality is realised in daily life and is not limited to narrative, so it is not easily provoked when there is a dispute. The concept of harmony and harmony becomes a common goal as part of the expression of religious freedom. The construction of this identity depends on the reality of Spirituality in Indonesia as a manifestation of freedom of religion that enhances and inhibits. The first view is that spiritual practices that emphasise individualism and a personal relationship with God can promote religious freedom by encouraging individuals to explore and express their beliefs without outside interference. This then encourages various expressions of harmony and tolerance in daily life. This view is implemented in various cities in Indonesia in various forms, including regulations, budgets, and community activities (see Table 1).

City	Assessment
Singkawang	Implementation of the one school one local wisdom and real action project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students in schools.
Bekasi	Issuance of local regulations on Pancasila education and nationalistic insight.
Salatiga	Establishment of religious moderation villages and gender mainstreaming regional regulations.
Manado	Providing grants for houses of worship and religious organisations
Semarang	Establishment of Semarang Religion Centre at the sub-district level and designation of houses of worship as nature reserves.
Magelang	Optimising the role and function of places of worship for social interaction.
Kediri	Establishment of regulations and budget allocation for the collaboration agenda.
Sukabumi	Development that prioritises inclusivity and enhances collaboration between government and community elements.
Kupang	The establishment of Kupang as a mansion of brotherhood and harmony and during 2023 no violations of religious freedom occurred.
Surakarta	Provision of interfaith collaboration spaces and organisation of religious festivals.

Table 1. Consideration of the 2023 Most Tolerant Cities in Indonesia

Source: (SETARA Institute, 2024; Dyah, 2024).

The second view is that spiritual practices emphasise group identity and conformity to a belief system. This can limit religious freedom by imposing restrictions on individual beliefs and practices. The construction of religious identity is inseparable from individuals or groups identifying themselves in the religious realm. The spiritual experiences of individuals or groups are considered to be an integral part of life. The reality of spirituality affects the perception and exercise of religious freedom. Meanwhile, religious identity construction refers to how individuals or groups build and express identity in a religious context. Religious identity construction is vital to understanding social dynamics related to religion in Indonesia. In practice, there are various refusals to build places of worship. The trend of violations in 2022 shows that cases of disturbance of places of worship have continued to experience a significant increase in the last six years. There were 44 (2021), 24 (2020), 31 (2019), 20 (2018) and 16 (2017). Of the 50 houses of worship that experienced disturbances in 2022, 21 were churches (18 Protestant churches and 3 Catholic churches), 16 were mosques, six targeted monasteries, four targeted masala, two targeted temples, and one occurred at a place of worship for panchayat (SETARA Institute, 2023). In general, in 2022 there were 175 events with 333 violations of freedom of religion/belief in Indonesia (see graph 1).



Graph 1. Number of incidents and acts of violations of freedom of religion/belief (2017-2022)
Source: (SETARA Institute, 2023).

Looking at the development of religious freedom in Indonesia, the reality of spirituality affects individual religious interactions and social interactions between religious communities. Different spiritual interpretations can lead to conflicting principles. For example, one community might emphasize strict adherence to religious laws in public life, while another might advocate for secular governance to ensure freedom of belief for all. Such contradictions can lead to conflict or interpretations of an attitude of harmony to understand and respect the spiritual differences that exist in Indonesia.

How to Communicate Tolerance as a form of Religious Freedom in Indonesia

Integration of theological approaches in overcoming differences in religious tolerance attitudes is important. It can determine the differences in the interests of society. Strengthening the common values and goals shared by all religions, such as peace, respect, and justice, can determine similarities and minimise differences that trigger conflict. In overcoming different

perceptions of the interpretation of religious teachings, aspects of recognition and respect of other religions by adherents of different religions, this helps to create an atmosphere of Tolerance and reduce conflict. According to Setara Institute's research in 2023, by measuring eight indicators divided into City Government Regulation, Social Regulation, Government Action, and Socio-Religious Demographics. By describing a gradation range from low to high quality, with a value of (1) for low quality and (7) for the highest quality (see Table 2). Cities' innovations and breakthroughs, essentially towards institutionalising Tolerance and inclusive governance, are progressive-collective achievements. Previously, the vision of Tolerance of narrative and incidental programmes was transformed into systemic policies and programmes as outlined in regional regulations, mayoral regulations, and some sustainable strategic programmes (SETARA Institute, 2024).

Rank	City	Ind 1	Ind 2	Ind 3	Ind 4	Ind 5	Ind 6	Ind 7	Ind 8	Skor Akhir
1	Singkawang	6,50	7,00	6,50	6,00	6,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	6,500
2	Bekasi	6,00	6,55	7,00	6,00	6,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	6,460
3	Salatiga	6,50	7,00	6,50	6,00	6,00	7,00	5,00	6,00	6,450
4	Manado	6,00	7,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,400
5	Semarang	6,00	6,90	6,50	6,00	6,00	6,00	5,00	6,00	6,230
6	Magelang	6,00	6,85	7,00	5,00	6,00	6,00	5,00	6,00	6,220
7	Kediri	5,83	6,70	7,00	5,00	6,00	6,00	5,00	5,00	6,073
8	Sukabumi	5,17	6,65	6,50	5,00	6,00	6,00	5,00	6,00	5,997
9	Kupang	5,33	6,85	7,00	6,00	5,00	5,00	6,00	5,00	5,953
10	Surakarta	5,50	7,00	6,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	6,00	6,00	5,800

Table 2. 10 Cities with the Highest Tolerance Score on the 2023 IKT
 Source: (SETARA Institute, 2024).

The data shows the importance of tolerance values not only in the form of narratives and discourses, but also in the form of the community's regulations, attitudes and personality. This condition allows the attitude of tolerance to be a manifestation of religious freedom in life. The integration of the theological approach affects the attitude of tolerance in realising religious freedom. First, this approach encourages individuals to understand and respect differences and encourages the emergence of attitudes to participate in community activities, discussions and dialogues that are more inclusive. Indonesian society is more manifested through cultural festivals such as the Tuk Panjang Tradition in Semarang, the Aceh Ramadhan Festival in Aceh, and the Tolerance Festival. The cultural approach is a significant effort to strengthen awareness of the importance of tolerance.

Second, the approach helps individuals understand the values of tolerance and respect for diversity since this is an essential building block to harmony. This attitude then puts an open and tolerant aspect on various social problems. Differences in views, opinions and beliefs make it a universal value that increases brotherhood. This view develops mainly in various villages in Indonesia that maintain brotherhood rather than differences in beliefs. For example, in Pabuaran Village, Gunung Sindur Subdistrict, as a pilot village in interfaith tolerance by the Bogor Regency Government (Ismi, 2022), there are villages dubbed as Pancasila villages because of religious diversity, such as Balun Village in Lamongan (Sudjarwo, 2023), Tanimbar Kei Village in Maluku (Ohoiulun, 2024), Wonorejo Village, in Situbondo, East Java (Astro, 2023). Then there is Aik Pelempang Jaya Village, the most tolerant village in Bangka Belitung (Rusaidah, 2024). The community's life is a religious identity and a culture in the form of brotherhood. Third, the individual basis for applying tolerance in everyday life. To create a more inclusive social environment, social interaction requires awareness of integrating



tolerance values into behaviour. This happens in Indonesia's most tolerant cities (see Table 2).

Challenges to Religious Freedom in the Modern Era

Freedom issues in Indonesia have various complexities. The attitudes and actions of the majority towards the minority determine social interactions that promote tolerance and inclusiveness. Progressive religious majorities can play an essential role in facilitating constructive interfaith dialogue. Dialogue plays a role in building mutual agreements to protect and strengthen religious freedom for all parties, including knowing needs. The most significant challenge is the existence of intolerance and discrimination against various religions and beliefs. For example, cases of violence and discrimination against religious communities in several regions in Indonesia (Mubarok et al., 2020), the dissolution of religious rituals (Bbc.com, 2023), (Mawardi, 2023), the prohibition of the establishment of places of worship, and at times the destruction of places of worship (Meiliana, 2021). Cases of rejection and destruction of places of worship are high; from 2007-2022, these violations amounted to 140 incidents of destruction and 90 incidents of rejection (Ismail, 2022). These conditions present serious obstacles that interfere with freedom of religion in Indonesia. Inter-religious dialogue is an important and possible option to overcome conflict arising.

Often, a paradox arises in the context of religious freedom in the modern era. This paradox arises when efforts to achieve general harmony in a society often marginalise unpopular beliefs or marginalise minority groups and give rise to pressure to normalise or even criminalise different religious views or practices. To maintain social stability or unity, there is often a tendency to restrict or suppress the freedom of individuals or groups to exercise their religious beliefs and practices. This creates a paradox where the goal of creating a harmonious and inclusive society may conflict with the basic principles of religious freedom. The case of conflict experienced by Ahmadiyah pilgrims is an example of how the handling of Ahmadiyah cases tends to follow the pressure of the masses as the majority group, so the handling experiences ambiguity (Ummah, 2016).

On the other hand, Aliran Kepercayaan is often considered another sect whose existence is at times underestimated and even to be eliminated at other times (Umam, 2018). Some 117,412 Indonesians adhered to Aliran Kepercayaan by the end of 2022. That number is equivalent to 0.04% of Indonesia's population of 277.75 million (Mustajab, 2023). This condition may allow a more expansive space for religious freedom in fulfilling obligations and rights. Without deistic dialogue, the complexity of social dynamics in maintaining the balance between freedoms will be even more complicated in the modern era, especially with religious pluralism and changing social values. For example, addressing issues like the implementation of Sharia law in certain regions while upholding national secular principles requires careful negotiation and dialogue among different religious and secular groups to avoid marginalization and ensure harmonious coexistence.

There are concerns that technological developments and AI, could disrupt peace in Indonesia. This can be seen in the emergence of various forms of blasphemy on social media. Various motives, range from the purpose of entertaining and providing information (Nurrijal, 2024), (Noviansah, 2024; Detik.com, 2024; Rifa'i, 2024), actually hurt the principle of mutual respect for differences between peoples. Blasphemy is not only done individually but also in groups, with the findings of the emergence of blasphemy groups on social media (Ramadhan, 2024). This then attracts the attention of religious leaders who emphasise paying more attention to the wise use of social media. Blasphemy is a serious problem in Indonesia; recorded in 2021, there were 10 cases in 2022, and there were 19 (SETARA Institute, 2023).

The number of cases of rights disputes from differences in beliefs and the challenges of freedom of religion in Indonesia refers to two complex aspects: first, Religious Inequality and beliefs that include attitudes of intolerance and discrimination and the development of digital technology that allows expressions of different beliefs to experience different interpretations.

Building Communication in Overcoming Conflict, Enhancing Harmony and Freedom of Religion in Indonesia

The limitation of freedom of religion depends on each country's policies. Of the 333 violations of freedom of religion/belief, 168 were committed by state actors, while non-state actors committed 165 actions. State actors' violations are committed mainly by local government (47 actions), police (23 actions), Satpol PP (17 actions), and public education institutions (14 actions) Forkopimda (7 actions) (SETARA Institute, 2023). It reduces conflict in the communication process. Freedom of religion is an integral part of human rights. For the community, the theological foundation becomes a spiritual basis for determining behaviour and actions, expressions of religious freedom, promoting tolerance, interfaith dialogue, legal protection, conflict prevention, resolving conflicts, and integrating religiosity in building religious freedom.

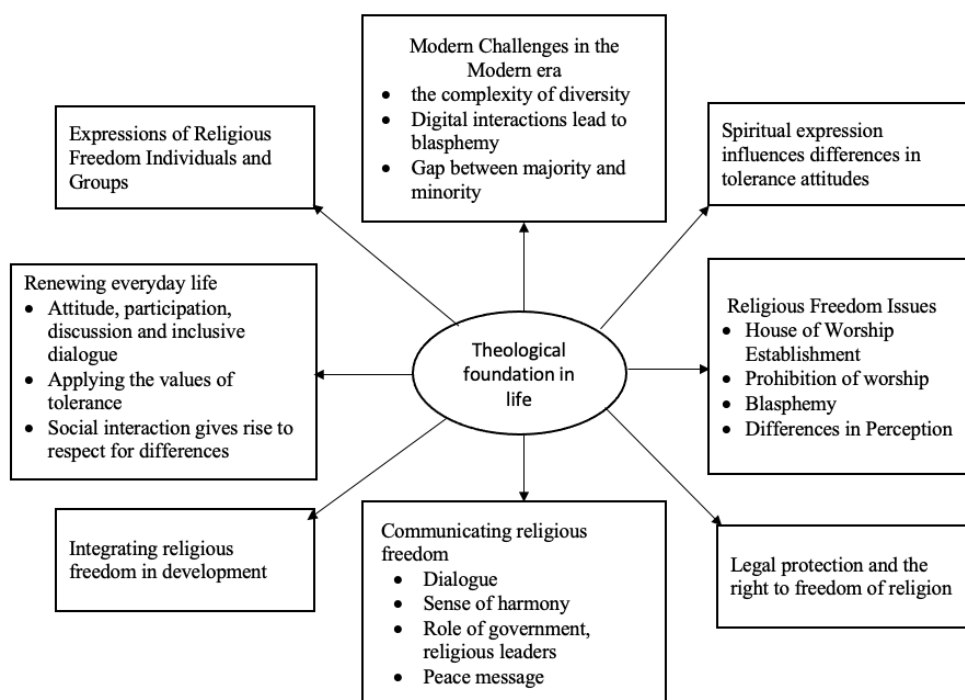


Figure 1. Theological Foundation in Building Religious Freedom

Communicating freedom of religion based on theology requires a process. It is not an effort to establish dialogue and a sense of harmony in forming an attitude of appreciation and respect for diversity. With socialisation and public policy by the government involving religious leaders, freedom of religion is more accessible and can be put into action. With Indonesia's diverse conditions, the message of peace is a basic necessity in maintaining harmony. It also presumes that peace is a fundamental need for all communities, potentially overlooking the unique priorities and complexities within different groups. Additionally, it implies that Indonesia's diversity requires a specific approach to fostering harmony. These assumptions

underscore the importance of understanding and addressing the varied needs and perspectives of Indonesia's diverse communities to effectively promote and maintain harmony.

In communicating religious freedom, the first primary basis is to place theology as the foundation for building relationships. This will raise awareness about the importance of tolerance, and build a needed sense of belonging and responsibility. Second, the government, religious leaders and the community must take on their critically important positive roles. Through the forum for religious harmony (FKUB), there can be an active building of dialogue. Efforts to build an active inter-religious dialogue have led to various programs such as the harmony campaign. With the principle of kinship and non-judgement, it can avoid making judgements about any beliefs. This encourages a sense of unity, tolerance and acceptance in all circles of society. Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the religious moderation program began in 2020 in the internal environment; then, in 2023, the program was increased to reach religious leaders and managers of houses of worship (Bbc.com, 2024).

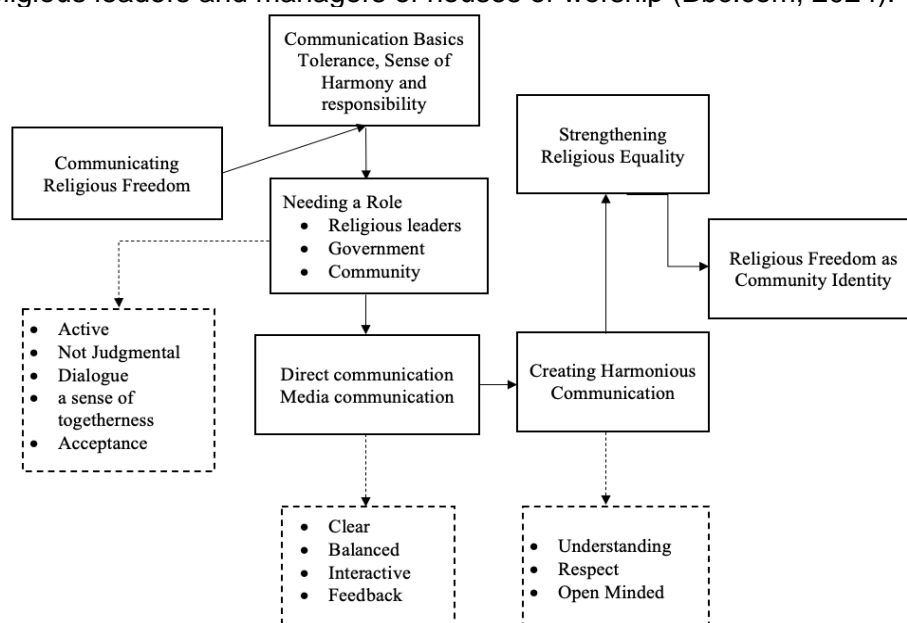


Figure 2. Communication model for building religious freedom

Third, the persuasive dialogue approach in dealing with religious freedom issues is conducted through direct and media communication. Direct communication builds a clear stance. Direct communication to ensure messages are conveyed straightforwardly and unambiguously is needed so as to avoid misunderstandings. In addition, it ensures treating others with respect and dignity at all times. One of them is by dialogue with the community. Religious leaders determine the effectiveness of this in advocating religious freedom, including conflict resolution measures that are peaceful.

Meanwhile, media communication campaigns for unity and diversity are the primary basis for realising religious freedom, interaction, and the provision of shared space. Ensuring media messages are inclusive and respectful of all religious beliefs and practices can avoid bias or misinformation raising their evil heads. The media in Indonesia plays an essential role in uniting Indonesian society, so the feedback when the message of religious freedom becomes a community identity, can encourage tolerance and strengthen harmony for the benefit of all roleplayers.

Fourth, the process creates harmonious communication that can understand differences as part of the uniqueness of Indonesian society. Then, the principle of respect between religions emerges. This is the basis for overcoming political, economic and social issues that link



religion to the source of the problem by thinking openly about overcoming differences that arise, campaigning for religious moderation and overcoming conflict. Fifth, it can strengthen religious equality, where the stigma of the majority controlling the minority can be reduced, and the right to religion can be replaced with the right of every individual. This process will encourage inclusive communication that allows all individuals to feel accepted and included, regardless of their religious affiliation. Ultimately, religious freedom needs to become an integral part of the identity of Indonesian society.

Building effective communication models is essential in addressing conflict, enhancing harmony, and strengthening religious freedoms in Indonesia. Effective communication can help prevent conflict and promote interfaith harmony in the context of religiously diverse Indonesia. Placing a theological approach in realising religious freedom is very important. It becomes the foundation for applying the principle of freedom in daily life. However, the effort is essential to place several aspects in order. First is the Indonesian government's commitment to affirming the principle of religious freedom and protecting the rights of individuals of all religions and beliefs. This includes the protection of religious minorities, law enforcement against religious discrimination, and the promotion of tolerance through public policy. Secondly, intensifying the interfaith dialogue forum (FKUB) is imperative. Interactions between religious leaders, community leaders, and individuals in dialogue can provide insights and experiences to build understanding and overcome interreligious tensions and diminish chances of strife. This includes encouraging the participation of religious and community leaders in decision-making processes that can help strengthen religious harmony and freedom. The Forum for Diversity Harmony (FKUB) can encourage dialogue between diverse communities (Khairiza & Ritonga, 2023).

The third aspect is to develop an early warning strategy for social conflicts that can lead to religion. Early detection of conflict triggers is one of the necessities for overcoming a multicultural society in Indonesia. In addition, the values of tolerance must be maintained through dialogue so that shifts in community values do not interfere with religious harmony and diversity. The three aspects of realising religious freedom stated above require cooperation and responsibility of all stakeholders in a harmonious and unified society.

Conclusion

The theological approach adopted can in many ways influence the view of religious freedom in Indonesia. This is inseparable from the reality that spirituality is essential in realising religious freedom in Indonesia and indeed in any country. Cultural, historical and social factors influence the construction of religious identity in Indonesia and significantly impact social interaction and interfaith harmony. There are two main views regarding the reality of spirituality in the context of religious freedom in Indonesia. First, spiritual practices emphasise individualism in personal relationships, encouraging religious freedom to explore and express beliefs. Second, spiritual practices also emphasise group identity and conformity to a belief system. This can limit freedom of religion.

Despite many efforts to guarantee religious freedom in Indonesia, there are still many religious conflicts including inter alia blasphemy, prohibition of worship and refusal to build places of worship. In communicating tolerance as a form of religious freedom in Indonesia, the integration of theological approaches must be carried out by strengthening the shared values of all religions, interfaith dialogue, and recognition and respect for other religions. The challenge to religious freedom in Indonesia is still the emergence of intolerance and discrimination, and the development of digital technology has led to various forms of blasphemy. Overcoming these challenges requires the government's commitment to affirming the principle of religious freedom, intensifying the role of interfaith dialogue forums, developing early warning strategies for social conflicts, and maintaining tolerance values through dialogue



between diverse communities. Therefore, efforts are needed to build effective communication to overcome conflicts and strengthen religious freedom in Indonesia.

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