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Government Policies on Religious Education and Prevention of Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia

CONVEY Indonesia
PPIM UIN JAKARTA – CONVEY - UNDP INDONESIA

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GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Foreword

This CONVEY REPORT is written to provide comprehensive knowledge on key findings of the research on Government Policies on Religious Education and Prevention of Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia. The research is part of Countering Violent Extremism for Youth (CONVEY) program in Indonesia, which is initiated by PPIM UIN Jakarta in cooperation with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Indonesia. The research is conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta in six countries that include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, The Philippines, and Myanmar.

The research focuses on analyzing the relationship between state and religion, state and religious education, and religious education and prevention of violent extremism. This research is very timely as there is a tendency of growing conservatism that turns into radicalism at the regional level. Youth, in this regards students, are prone to be exposed to radical views and recruited by radical groups in Southeast Asia.

On behalf of the research team, I extend my gratitude to the Project Management Unit of PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia that have facilitated and supported this research. Special acknowledgement is addressed to the senior researchers of PPIM, Prof. Jamhari Makruf, Dr. Fuad Jabali, Dr. Ismatu Ropi, and Dr. Didin Syafruddin that have supervised this research starting from research instrument design, data collection, report writing, to the dissemination of the research result. Additionally, our gratitude also goes to Debbie Affianty who has rigorously scrutinized, edited and provided feedbacks to this CONVEY REPORT. Last but not least, our appreciation to all research partners and assistants that have shared their time and thoughts for the past five months in conducting this research. Without their hard work, this CONVEY REPORT could not exist.

Ciputat, 21 January 2019
Khoirun Nisa

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Executive Summary

Despite the debate over its meaning, violent extremism is an alarming issue in Southeast Asia. The region which contains a wide array of minorities, ethnics and religious groups, has shown cases of violent extremism related with issues of the state-religion relationship such as citizenship, majority-minority relations, the practices of inclusions and exclusions, and the rise of conservatism of a certain predominant group. There are a number of grievances that give birth of violent extremism, including feeling of injustice, politically or economically marginalized, and anti-mainstream religious interpretations.

This research tries to identify efforts to prevent violent extremism in multi-ethnics and religions circumstance in each country of Southeast Asia, which include Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines where tolerance, mutual cooperation, and trust are supposedly built through religious education. Religious Education here refers to religious instructions, education about religions, and moral/ values/ ethics/ peace/ civic education that purport shaping characters, promoting social cohesion, or preventing violence extremism.

Religious education in Southeast Asian societies is an important part of education in general. Since the very beginning, religious education aims at improving students' awareness, faith and practices of their own religious beliefs. Amidst the challenge of violent extremism, religious education is expected to be able to give a significant contribution to strengthen the development of positive characters of human resources so that they could prevent the occurrence of violent extremism. Prevention Violent Extremism aims to get to the root of violent extremism by challenging the 'push' and 'pull factors' that can lead to radicalization and violence. It aims to prevent the recruitment of individuals into violent extremist groups by providing positive alternatives to engagement or reengagement in violent extremism (Zeiger, 2015).

This research focuses on analyzing the relationship between 1) state and religion; 2) state and religious education; 3) and religious education and prevention of violent extremism. There are several key findings from this study. **First of all**, establishing and maintaining a shared sense of national identity in vast and diverse six countries of Southeast Asia is quite a challenging task. There is **a gap of what lies in the states' constitutions with those in practices**. Constitutionally, each state respects its citizens regardless their background. However, in practice some countries such as Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand define ethnic groups with a specific religious affiliation. The majority often treats the minorities as "the other" simply based on their religious or ethnic affiliation. This can be seen from the terms like "as a Malay means you are Muslim", "to be Burmese is to be Buddhist", or "Thai-ness is equal with Buddhism". This leads to privileges given by the state to the majority that enjoys more space in the nationhood life, causing the practices of restriction, discrimination and even persecution of the minorities. Minorities too often become the subjects of both heightened public suspicion and new or enhanced forms of state-sponsored discrimination and mistreatment. Only in a country that declares as upholding secularism such as Singapore, the state shows neutrality towards religion, thus keeping such practices at bay. The Philippines, however, although declares as a secular state, has difficulty in keeping away the Catholic clergy from its politics.

Secondly, the way the state treats its majority is reflected in its policies in national education and religious education. Religious education takes various forms of in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines and Myanmar. Some are in the form of formal religious education at schools while some others take subtle form in which the teachings of values, norms and ethics are embedded in any school subjects. The study shows that **countries in which religion is embedded with national identity would provide more facilitations to the majority ethnic and religious groups in educational system**, sometimes curtailing the rights and freedoms of religious minorities. Some countries in Southeast Asia have shown that they have not accomplished their nation building project yet. This is heavily emphasized through the "unity" aspect of the religious education over and against its "diversity" component. The minority ethno-religious groups sometimes have to manage their own religious education.

Third, despite the increasing threat of violent extremism as well as communal conflicts in Southeast Asia, **religious education**

has not played a significant role in the prevention of violent extremism. Religious education in some countries still focuses on the religious instruction. Religious instruction is a religious activity that is designed to nurture young people in a particular faith, and thus to preserve that faith across the generations. This type of religious education is criticized for paying inadequate attention to such liberal values as critical openness and personal autonomy; for teaching as truth beliefs that are significantly controversial; for defining knowledge in terms of dogma, revelation, and religious authority rather than in terms of rationally justifiable beliefs; and for failing to prepare children adequately for life in a multicultural, multifaith society (Jackson, 2007). There is still some vacant room for dialogue and discussion with people with other religions. There are still tiny vigorous initiatives to promote religious tolerance through "education for diversity" and "shared values" programs at religious education at schools. Therefore, countries that suffer from ethno-religious communal conflict often see general intolerance towards religious minorities and an upsurge in religious extremism among the community.

Overall, various relationship between the state and majority religion of the six countries in Southeast Asia (be it Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism, or even secularism) and various religious education policy that each of them imposes (be it confessional, secular, or multicultural), have contributed to the problematic relationship between majority and minority rather. This becomes the biggest challenge for finding proper solutions to the existing majority-minority issues that often lead to the issue of violent extremism and ethno-religious communal violence. Despite its own uniqueness as a secular country, Singapore could serve as a role model in the religious education policy and efforts to prevention of violence extremism through value education.

Recommendation

The task of tackling violent extremism in society is a complex one as there are many factors that can cause people to walk down this destructive path. There can be different levels of intervention: at the individual, school and societal levels. Based on this research, it is hoped that relevant authorities are encouraged to formulate timely and proper policies on religious education along with its compatible implementations in fighting violent extremism. This study offers several points of recommendations for the government, stakeholders and public at large in Southeast Asia countries:

At the Regional level

1. States in Southeast Asia should promote a principle of **inclusion as part of the national identity**. Providing recognition for the minorities is important for a harmonious life of multicultural and multi-religious societies, which would be immune to the spread of prejudice and hatred. One culture or one religion could not exist without the other.
2. AICHR as the regional body should formulate **legal minority rights protection mechanisms** to address injustices and persecution against the minorities. It will be hard to fight violent extremism unless communalism and the insecurities it brings for minorities are combatted with equal vigor.
3. ASEAN countries should promote shared regional capacity building for officials in countering violent extremism, including on how to **strengthen education as a tool of moderation such as through government regulation, curriculum development, and teacher's training**.
4. For countries in Southeast Asia that still deal with ethno-religious conflicts, it is necessary for the government to provide clear and developed policies and procedures to support inclusive education so there is **no room for discrimination and lacking of inclusion and diversity in narratives, histories, and perspectives in the national curriculum**.

At the State Level

5. Building and strengthening the state's resistance against extremist propaganda, for example through campaigns and general education, with a focus on inclusion, democracy and citizenship.
6. It is vital that the authorities take a proactive lead to ensure that **minority rights are respected** on the ground, and to actively **advocate** within society for the fundamental **principles of tolerance and inclusion** upon which they are based.
7. Another broad attempt at minimizing rifts in society revolves around competition for resources. School environments in countries may be bogged down by high degrees of competition, which can nurture an attitude of students treating others as competitors to be beaten rather than as people to cooperate with. **The education system as a whole should nurture attitudes of cooperation so that every student and every citizen can feel that s/he has a**

stake in society. The presence of egalitarianism is likely to be an effective tool in tackling extremism.

8. Preventing Violent Extremism should be included in the universities since **the production of teachers in educational institutions has great importance in conveying the idea of Prevention of Violent Extremism** in schools.
9. Teachers can serve as the first line of defense against extremist ideologies in schools by being a role model and initiate sincere personal interaction with students outside of classrooms. The Ministry of Education must invest more effort in **training and shaping teachers to embody and internalize these virtuous characteristics** such as moderation, empathy, understanding, open-mindedness, and non-aggressive behavior so they can be the persons to which the students can look up for inspiration. The Ministry of Education and schools need to organize **more extracurricular activities and programs and encourage the teachers to interact more with students** as a way to get to know them on a personal level.
10. In order to prevent the access to extremist ideology through social media and the internet, the Ministry of Education through the schools can organize training programs for teachers and students on how to **properly vet information from social media and the internet and the proper etiquette of sharing these information**.
11. As it is necessary to learn how economy and politic influence trigger violent extremism, it is also important to know how misunderstanding of religious text potentially perpetuates radicalism that further leads to violent extremism. Therefore, ensuring that **religious education makes its contribution to prevent violent extremism** is unquestionably important.
12. In the case of Indonesia, a number of private schools have designed their own religious education's curricula, in addition to the official curriculum**. The government should use its authority to supervise religious education curricula in private schools.** This is important in order to ensure the relevance of religious education to the aims of national education.
13. In the case of Malaysia, traditional *pondok* and *tahfiz* schools are not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and therefore are not scrutinized as closely as schools in the national education system. It is imperative for the Ministry of Education to work closely

with the state governments to tackle the issues associated with the informal religious schools by **having standardized syllabus that incorporates lessons on inclusiveness, pluralism, and inter-religious empathy** that help to expose the students of these ethnically and religiously homogeneous schools to the rich diversity found in Malaysian life.

14. In the case of Philippines, the government should commission a group coming from all faith denominations like Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and Iglesia ni Kristo to **make the module more acceptable to all students coming from diverse religious background.** Traditional values of diverse Filipino culture, including Islamic values should be integrated in the values education subjects to make students remained connected to their roots.
15. In the case of Thailand, the Thai Ministry of Education should **incorporate a non-biased information regarding new threats and terrorism in the textbooks.** The Thai government should disseminate and implement policies around the Prevention of Violent Extremism in other areas in Thailand, not just the conflict-affected areas. Hence, the Ministry of Education should cooperate with religious organizations in co-writing “Social Studies, Religion and Culture” textbooks and should publish textbooks with the emphasis of all religions written by all those who are knowledgeable of all religions.
16. In the case of Myanmar, the Ministry of Education should review and reform **curriculum for conflict sensitivity, bias, and promotion of a culture of peace** so there are no terminologies referring to identity groups (ethnic, racial, religious, political, class, and others) that could produce stereotypes, discrimination, hatred, or causes of conflict. Peace education could covers subject areas such as human rights, peace and conflict, civic education, inclusive histories of Myanmar, as well as inter-religious dialogue.

At the Societal Level

17. In many Southeast Asian societies, there can be one dominant religion in society. Where students are educated from a young age about the multitude of faiths in their society, **the interpersonal relationships that are likely to be forged can help to correct the power imbalances in society.** Students, when older, may themselves call for society-wide action to ensure more equitable power relations, which can negate one of the factors fueling extremism.

18. Still at the societal level**, the education system as a whole should strive to minimize rifts that may exist elsewhere in society.** This can help curb the attraction of extremism. When it comes to the different kinds of values / religious education provided in schools, all citizens should receive similar content in their classrooms so as to avoid differentiation. All citizens should have a similar framework within which they exist; this facilitates communication and it also nurtures a sense of egalitarianism.

At the School Level

19. Many Southeast Asian countries are plural societies where there exist diverse religious / philosophical communities. At the level of the individual, **students should be equipped with an understanding of the religious vocabularies of faith communities that exist in their societies**. Religion can be politicized and so it is not just a matter of teaching students about these subject matters, but also teaching them how to function effectively as citizens in a plural society.
20. **Students ought to know their own beliefs and that of others deeply.** Thus, they should be taught religion / philosophy in their schools. Such instruction should not be superficial—attending to the demographics and major beliefs of a group—but the curriculum should provide opportunities for deep learning.
21. **Teaching students the religious / philosophical vocabularies of beliefs other than theirs need not necessarily be divisive as there are common values that can hold the different communities together.** Friendships forged when students are young can go a long way in building a more cohesive society. As a part of the activities that students can be exposed to during curriculum time, interfaith dialogues can be incorporated, together with **visits to places of worship or other places of religious** / philosophical significance.
22. As societies in Southeast Asia in general is ethnically and religiously segregated, it is imperative for schools to help teachers and students transcend these boundaries by **fostering more inter-ethnic and inter-religious interactions** through visiting places of worship and ethnic enclaves, engaging in joint programs with other schools with different composition of student body, celebrating religious holidays, and inviting religious NGOs to give talks at schools.

23. Introducing a brand **new subject on comparative religion in schools help create deeper understanding between ethnic and religious groups**, which is the core of any efforts to counter extremism in the society. The Ministry of Education could revamp the religious education syllabus to include a component on comparative religion and establishing a module for comparative religion in the teachers' training curriculum, and organize training seminars on comparative religion which is compulsory for existing teachers.
24. Educational initiatives aimed at **teaching antidiscrimination and the acceptance of cultural/religious differences.** Promoting interreligious and intercultural understanding would build young people's resilience to narratives often used by extremist groups, which frequently suggest that people from different cultures have nothing in common. The children were to discover what they have in common, learn to successfully navigate difference, and realize that stereotypes about different cultures were not true.
25. School teachers to **promote students' historical understanding, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning.** As students explore the complexities of history, and make essential connections to current events, they reflect on the choices they confront today and consider how they can make a difference.

Background

Southeast Asia have witnessed intermittent outbreaks of violent extremism and communal violence at different times involving all the region's major religious groups. Combatting the rise of extremism and communalism is accordingly viewed by many as the critical challenge confronting the region today in the sphere of majority-minority relations.

Involving young people in violent extremism activities is not a new phenomenon in Southeast Asia. The 2018 Surabaya bombings in Indonesia involved three families along with their children aged seven to 17. Previously, the Maute brothers were involved in the Marawi Siege in Southern Philippines in 2017. In February 2009, a 23-year old Malaysian undergraduate student from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Muhammad Fadly Zainal Abidin, was arrested in Southern Thailand for allegedly attempting to steal a motorcycle to wage jihad against the Thai military (Samuel, 2018).

Cases of threats to violent extremism were also found in Singapore. In 2001, the Singapore government discovered a Singapore connection to the regional Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network, deemed a risk to the state's 'survival' (Chan 1971). According to a White Paper entitled *The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*, the Internal Security Department had made initial arrests of 15 persons in December of that year, of whom 13 were 'members of a radical, regional Islamic group called Jemaah Islamiyah (JI or "Islamic community")'. The group had allegedly been preparing bomb attacks at the time of the arrest (Singapore Parliament 2003: 1–2).

There is a tendency of growing conservatism that turns into radicalism at the regional level. Radicalization, according to Borum (2012), is a dynamic process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs. It is different from action pathways, in which there is a process of engaging in terrorism or violent extremist actions. Ideology and

action are not always connected: not all people who hold radical views and violent justifications engage in terrorism. Likewise, many perpetrators of violent extremism are not pious and do not have deep understanding about radical religious ideology they promote.

Youth, in this regards students, are prone to be recruited by radical groups in Southeast Asia. In a survey of tolerance and susceptibility toward extremism conducted in 2017-2018 by Malaysian-based the Merdeka Center, support for ISIS in Malaysia was highest, at 5.2 percent while the other three countries were 3.8 percent in the Philippines, 2.4 percent in Thailand and 1.3 percent in Indonesia. Conducted in 2017 and 2018, Merdeka researchers surveyed 5,014 individuals age 18 and older in 753 distinct areas across the four countries, with the exception of Indonesia where respondents were age 17 and older. Filipino Muslims respondents, at 52 percent, showed the highest tendency toward being receptive to violence to achieve religious goals. Merdeka surveyed 1,000 Filipinos between Nov. 13 and 17, 2017, just weeks after government forces turned back Islamic militants who had taken over the southern city of Marawi for five months. By contrast, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand's responses were 28 percent, 26 percent and 21 percent respectively. ("Regional Survey Tracks Muslim Support for Terror Groups", 2018).

Additionally, a survey conducted by PPIM in 2017 shows that majority of the Indonesian youth (senior high school students and university students) are prone to hold radical views. The survey findings show that 58.5% of the students tend to be radical in attitude/opinion while 51.1% of them tend to be intolerant to "the others" within Islam and 34.3% of them are intolerant to other religious believers. However, there is a paradox in the action level. Most of the students are moderate (74.2%) in the level of action. They are more moderate for being tolerant to other religious believers (62.9%) rather than to Ahmadiyah or Shi'ite believers (33.2%).

Similar trends are also found in Malaysia. According to the 2015 Global Attitude Survey by Pew Research Center, 11 percent of Malaysians have a favorable view of ISIS, compared to only 4 percent of Indonesians. This finding is augmented by a 2017 survey carried out by *Institut Kajian Strategik Malaysia* (MYRISS). The survey asked 5,062 respondents from 20 public universities across Malaysia and found that an astounding 42 percent of the public university students showed sympathy with ISIS/Daesh ("42% Siswa simpati Daesh," 2018). Most recently in 2018, a regional survey carried out by the

Merdeka Center indicated that 28 percent of Malaysian Muslims showed "violence-receptive" tendencies when it comes to justifying violence in the name of Islam and 18.1 percent exhibited support for the violent religious terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah ("Survey finds Malaysian Muslims sympathetic toward terrorism," 2018).

Several studies have confirmed that some radical views and movement have infiltrated Indonesian schools and universities through various factors: religious extracurricular activities (Wahid Foundation, 2016; Maarif Institute, 2018), teachers who tend to have radical views (PPIM, 2016 and 2018), and materials in Religious Education book that contain radical and exclusive view (PPIM, 2016). Therefore, in the light of rising radicalism among the youth in Southeast Asia, issues of religious education in relations to the Prevention of Violent Extremism beg to be resolved.

Radical groups often use soft approach through narratives in disseminating their views and recruiting potential members. Religious education (RE) can play a role in creating citizenship and countering religious narratives and challenging the symbols that the violent extremist use. As religion or a set of believe can motivate a person to action, RE is able to present as political and influential authority in delivering a message to those who has specific message of those of violent extremist. Hence, RE plays a role in challenging the extremist narratives from the same religious education (Limba, 2017 accessed on July 28th, 2018).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) have been used interchangeably to capture nonviolent initiatives and attempts in fighting extremism. Thus, PVE involves civil society in developing initiatives and plans of actions. Zeiger and Ali captures the essence of CVE and PVE in their combined definition in the following:

> "….programs and policies for countering and preventing radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism and terrorism as part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy and framework. This definition is inclusive of strategic, non-coercive counterterrorism programs and policies including those involving education and broad-based community engagement; more targeted narrative/messaging programs and counter-recruitment strategies; disengagement and targeted intervention programs for individuals engaging in

> radicalization; as well as deradicalization, disengagement and rehabilitation programs for former violent extremist offenders." (Zeiger & Aly, 2015:2 as cited by Lynn, 2017)

The role of education in combatting extremism is a recent phenomenon. In December 2015, the UN Secretary General launched Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE). The UN Secretary General highlighted the importance of education to address driving factors of violent extremism. Also, religious education needs to take on roles in encouraging dialogue amongst different faith groups, in eliminating stereotypes and stigma attached to specific faith groups, to stand up against discrimination and oppression against groups of those minorities and to promote a non-violent approach in fighting radical narratives. Questions around religious education in preventing violent extremism highlights roles of religious community in fighting extremism across various context and help local community in shaping the religious education they need (Mlimba, 2017).

Moreover, religious education is supposed to give students a strong basis of knowledge and understanding of a multitude of both religious and non-religious beliefs, and to help them to understand both common and divergent views between different religions and faiths. If religious education is properly formulated, it can help young people understand and respect different beliefs, practices, races and cultures (Jackson, 2007). Such well-formulated religious education should be designed by states to young people of all faiths so that it may help to prevent radicalization and thus diminish the danger of terrorism.

Understanding government policies on Religious Education and its implementation can help us to understand whether values supporting or condoning violent extremism is spread in schools and supported by the state through its policies on religious/moral/ethics education of its citizen. Comparative case studies of countries in this research would unveil differences and similarities on religious education policies in Southeast Asia and to what extent they could prevent violent extremism. The research also attempts to suggest alternative policies that promote tolerance, diversity, inclusivity and justice in schools.

Methodology

This research focuses to analyze existing state policies and its implementation with regards to religious education in relation to the state's efforts in preventing violent extremism in Southeast Asia. Conducted in six countries in Southeast Asian that include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar, the study examines the implementation and interpretation of government policy on religious education at particular schools or areas and identify key actors (government, school headmasters, and religious education teachers) that are involved in such processes.

The qualitative case study approach is employed utilizing three data collection methods. First, document review of existing policies and religious education textbooks was conducted. The local researchers collected documents on government policies on religion, religious freedom, religious education and religious education textbooks in their respective countries. The policies reviewed are federal constitutions of the state and religion's status in a country, laws around religious affairs in a country to regulation around the religious education administration in schools if relevant. What has been studied is whether the Religious Education policy only favors for one religion and neglects other religions or giving rooms for other religions, although different, fairly, and emphasizing tolerance to different faith and religions.

For the textbooks, the study examines textbooks for schools students coming from three types of schools, namely state schools, minority faith-based schools and majority faith-based schools. The study is to examine the extent that religious education can play in countering/preventing violent extremism. The content analysis aims at studying on how government policy on Religious Education presenting the religious teachings, particularly on how the policy provides room for dialogue, co-existence of differences, tolerance, values of freedom, and things that are potential as sources of conflict in the society.

Secondly, the local researchers conducted in-depth interviews with relevant actors in religious education (teachers and heads of school) in order to capture the general description of religious education and PVE. To complement the data that have been gathered from two previous methods, a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was held, inviting policy makers and civil society organization who are involved in the religious education policy making and its implementation at schools. Religious figures, school principals from public schools to faith based- schools, scholars with the interest in religious communities and violent extremism gathered to discuss government policy on religious education, whether it is inclusive, promoting dialogue, fair and based on national values or local wisdom so that it could prevent violent extremism.

The Field Research at Glance

No.	Name of country	Location of Research	Types of Schools Involved	Informants Involved
1.	Indonesia	Jakarta Province, City of Bogor, City of Tangerang, and City of South Tangerang.	12 schools that include general public school, private non-religious school, private school affiliated with Muslim organization, *private madrasah* (Muslim school), and catholic school.	12 respondents for interviews, consisting of 5 principals, 5 religious education teachers, and two government officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Participants in the focus group discussion (FGD) are school principals, RE teachers, academics, and government officials.
2.	Malaysia	The states of Penang, Kelantan, and Selangor.	12 schools, including state schools and a private Islamic school.	14 informants for in-depth interviews, comprises of two government officials (one state and one federal) and twelve principals and religious education teachers from public and private schools (religious and non-religious). Also an education official at a State Islamic Council. The FGD comprised of twelve participants who are teachers, NGO representatives, academics, a government official, and a church pastor. The FGD participants are made up of four women and three non-Muslims (one Christian, one Hindu and one Buddhist)
3.	Myanmar	In Yangon and Mandalay, a region that has the largest amount of monastic schools and known as the region with strong monastic education.	1 Public School, 1 Madrasah, 1 Dhamma School and 1 Monastery.	FGD involving 1 monk who works as a focal person for monastic education and dhamma school, 1 Islamic scholar, 1 township level education deputy superintendent, 5 activists, 1 Islamic studies researcher, 1 and social researcher. Two research assistants from Myanmar who work for the study in Myanmar as facilitators.

4.	Singapore		Government schools and a private institute (Nuur Institute)	In-depth interviews were conducted with 11 people comprising a principal and vice-principal, curriculum developers and trainers, and teachers implementing curricula in the classroom. Practitioners of religion, who teach their faith's scriptural texts in sites like churches, temples and societies, were also invited to a focus group discussion. In all, the interviewees were from secular and religious (Islamic) domains. They represent the public as well as private sectors.
5.	Thailand	Khon Kaen Province, Buriram Province, Bangkok Metropolitan Region, and Pattani province.	Buddhist Monastery and Christian Private schools (Khon Kaen Province), Public School (Burirum Province) Islamic Public School (Bangkok Province), and Islamic Private School (Pattani Province).	15 schools' representatives interviewed, including the school principals and teachers of Social studies, Religious and Cultural subjects and Civic Duties subjects. The Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted in Khon Kaen province attended by nine various participants from government officers (2 Educational Supervisor), 1 Buddhist and 1 Islam leaders , 2 academic scholars from Khon Kaen University and school representatives from 1 Christian Private School, 1 Public School and 1 Islamic Public School.
6.	The Philippines	Manila and Mindanao	Public and private schools, Christian and Islamic schools.	An in-depth interview was pursued on different related government agencies both national and regional such as Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. Civil societies and private Islamic and Christian educational institutions are also included. To understand how government policies on education are implemented, the researcher engaged in a small group discussions with religious, values and peace education teachers as well as public and private school administrators. A focused group discussion involved various stakeholders, military, national security sector, peace advocates, interfaith group, civil societies, and academicians.

Research Findings

A. The Role of State in Regulating Religious Affairs

Southeast Asia has great diversity of religions, ethnicity, languages, traditions, cultures and historical experiences. How does the state in the region regulate its religious affairs? According to Grim and Finke (in Ropi, 2017), the state regulates religion could be in the form of neutrality, favoritism, discrimination, restriction and persecution. In neutrality, the state may explicitly (or implicitly) gives religion full autonomy and leaves religious groups to manage themselves alone. Neutrality could also work when the state treats all religious groups on an equal basis. Favoritism could mean some privileges are given by the state to one or more religions or religious traditions in which they are treated as the official state religion(s). Restriction happens when there is limitation on the practices, profession or selection of religion by official laws, policies or administrative actions of the state. It includes any treatment that puts boundaries on individual or group behavior and rights, such as the wearing of clothes. The six countries in this study have shown patterns of treatments that span from favoritism to the religion of majority to the persecution of those of minorities.

Indonesia (Favoritism and Restriction)

Indonesia is one of diverse countries in Southeast Asia with more than 17,000 islands and more than 300 ethnic groups. Predicted to have 271,066.000 population that by 2020 (Central Bureau of Statistics/BPS 2013), Indonesia is a home for 87.18% Muslims, Protestantism (6.96%), Catholicism (2.91%), Hinduism (1.69%), Buddhism (0.72%), and Confucianism (0.05%) (BPS 2010). These are the six religions recognized by the state (Presidential Decree no. 1/PNPS/1965).

Indonesian 1945 Constitution is not based on religion but the state grants the freedom of faith for its citizens. "The State shall be based

upon the belief in the One and Only God, and The State guarantees every citizen the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief" (Article No. 29 of the Constitution). As the recognition of diversity, the founding fathers of Indonesia agreed on Pancasila (Five Principles) as the national ideology, with "Believing in God" as the first principles. They also upheld Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, a Sanskrit word for "Unity in Diversity", as the national motto.

The recognition towards different religious beliefs in Indonesia is implemented through the official national holidays. The state respects every citizen's right to celebrate their religious festivals by granting some holidays for religious celebration. Certainly the state cannot accommodate all religious events as holidays, but giving specific days for religious celebration is one of the evidences that the state grants its citizen to practice their religious beliefs.

There are some law that tends to protect the majority against the minority. The Presidential Decree no. 1/PNPS/1965 recognizes six official religions in Indonesia, and hence those religions are facilitated and protected by the government, including against blasphemy. Other than the recognized ones, other religions can also exist, but not facilitated and protected. The state has issued a Join Decree No. 1 Year 1979 on regulations concerning the procedures for the dissemination of religious teachings (Ministry of Religious Affairs 1979). The government requires the establishment of a prayer house should meet the following criteria: 1) a list and IDs of at least 90 people of the future users of the prayer house recognized by the authority; 2) Written supports from at least 60 local people recognized by the village chief; 3) written recommendation from head office of the district ministry of religious affairs; and 4) written recommendation from the district FKUB (Inter-religious Believers Forum) (Article No. 14 in a Joint Decree No. 9 Year 2006, the Ministry of Religious Affairs).

However, in practice, some cases such as the closure of Taman Yasmin church in Bogor (West Java Province), the burning of a mosque in Tolikara (Papua), the burning of temples in Asahan (North Sumatra), and the creation of religion-based regulations in several districts and provinces that become challenges for the government to fairly treat different religious groups. The protection of religions, especially against blasphemy, is one of the crucial issues that the government is struggling with. This regulation is often used to persecute some groups of believers whose understanding of their religions different from the mainstream, such as Ahmadiyah and Syi'ah.

Malaysia (Favoritism and Discrimination)

Malaysia is a home of 32.4 million people with the ethnicity background of Bumiputra, which includes Malays and various indigenous groups that makes up 67.4 percent; Chinese, 24.6 percent; Indians, 7.3 percent; and Others, 0.7 percent. When it comes to religious communities, Muslims constitute about 61.3 percent, Buddhists 19.8 percent, Christians 9.2 percent, Hindus 6.3 percent and Others 3.4 percent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018).

Islam is an official religion that has special place in Malaysian Constitution. First, Article 3(1) of the Malaysian constitution states that Islam is the official religion of the Federation but other religions can be practiced in peace and harmony. Article 3(2) bestows to the sultans the position of the head of Islamic affairs in their respective states, while the Yang Di-pertuan Agung (Head Sultan) would be the head of Islamic affairs in the Federal territories, Penang, Melaka, Sabah, and Sarawak.

The non-Islamic groups are protected under the constitution. Article 11 of the constitution lays out the rights of these religious communities, namely their rights to manage their own affairs, establish institutions for religious and charitable purposes, and acquire and own property. However, the article also clearly states that federal and state laws can be used to control and restrict propagation of non-Islamic faiths among Muslims. In reality, non-Islamic groups are not allowed to openly propagate their faiths to Muslims; even the Bible has a warning on its cover that states "Not For Muslims" ("Police record statements," 2018).

Article 153 of the Constitution outlines the responsibilities of the Yang Di-pertuan Agong to safeguard the special status of Malays and the establishment of quotas for Malays in the areas of education, civil service, commercial, and scholarships. Only Bumiputra people, which include Malays and indigenous tribes, are qualified for these privileges. Non-Bumiputra people such as Chinese, Indians and others are excluded. Article 160 provides three criteria of what constitute as a Malay person: 1) Professes Islam; 2) Speaks the Malay language; and 3) Practices Malay customs and traditions.

On May 13, 1969 there were race riots between Malays and Chinese, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, along with serious property damage. The 1970s became the decade in which Malay political elites within UMNO began to assert their dominance vis-

à-vis other ethnic groups via the *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy) rhetoric and practices such as favorable recruitment of Malays in the civil service, implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium language in schools, and the preferential admission for Malay students in public universities.

The government formulated the National Cultural Policy (*Dasar Kebudayaan Kebangsaan*) in 1971, and put Malay culture and Islam firmly at the heart of the government's idea of "Malaysian culture" (Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia). The state also passed the 1971 New Economic Policy, a form of affirmative action policy that heavily favors the Malays. All of these required non-Malays to conform to the Malay/Islam-centric notion of Malaysian nationhood ("Sorry attempt to rehabilitate Ketuanan Melayu," *Malaysiakini*, 2011). This pervasive "Malay"ized climate in the government and national schools proved to be conducive to the widespread growth of Islamic piety that took place during the Islamic resurgence period from the late 1970s onward.

Myanmar (Favoritism and Persecution)

Although it has a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society, there are no reliable statistics on Myanmar's population. Between 29 March and 10 April 2014, the government conducted a Population and Housing Census in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Provisional summary results were published in August, 2014 (Department of Population Ministry of Immigration and Population, August 2014). These preliminary results found 51,419,420 people, including an estimated 1,206,353 persons who were not counted in parts of Arakan, Kachin, and Karen State. Over one million Rohingya were counted as 'other', and the census did not count the millions of people of Myanmar who live outside the country. It is estimated that there are 135 different indigenous ethnic groups in Myanmar.

These 135 races are grouped into eight: 1. Chin, 2. Kachin, 3. Kayah, 4. Kayin, 5. Mon, 6. Bamar or Burman, 7. Rakhine, and 8. Shan. Most of the ethnic minorities are grouped according to region rather than linguistic or ethnic affiliation. For example the Shan includes 33 tribal groups and the Chin includes more than 60 ethnic tribal groups. There is no clear census of ethnic population after 1988 since the dictators tried to minimize the minority population. According to the 1983 census records 69 percent of the population belongs to the majority Burman (Bama) group, while 8.5 percent is Shan (including

sub nationalities), 6.2 percent is Karen, 4.5 percent is Rakhine, 2.4 percent is Mon, 2.2 percent is Chin, 1.4 percent is Kachin and 1 percent is Wa (South 2008).

According to the 2014 Census of Myanmar, Buddhists constituted 87.9 per cent in, Christians made up 6.2 per cent, Muslims 4.3 per cent while the proportion of Hindus has remained constant at around 0.5 per cent over the forty year period. Animists made up 0.8 per cent and "Other religion" was 0.2 per cent while the response option "No religion" represented 0.1 per cent of the total population in 2014. There is a widely shared notion that "to be Burmese is to be Bamar and Buddhist".

While stating in its constitution that Buddhism is the religion of majority, Myanmar recognizes other religions in its constitution. "The Union recognizes special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union. The Union also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the religions existing in the Union at the day of the coming into operation of this Constitution" (Article 361 and 362 of the 2008 Constitution). Moreover, the article 363 and 364 of the Constitution states that "the Union may assist and protect the religions it recognizes to its utmost. The abuse of religion for political purposes is forbidden. Moreover, any act which is intended or is likely to promote feelings of hatred, enmity or discord between racial or religious communities or sects is contrary to this Constitution. A law may be promulgated to punish such activity."

Buddhism was thought by many as being essential to Burmese identity and culture. For the Burmese, the separation of church and state was considered a foreign imposition. The post-colonial period started with the 1947 Panglong Agreement upholding the principles of equality and self-determination for not only Burma's Buddhist majority, but also diverse ethnic and religious minorities. Independence leader Gen. Aung San — the father of Aung San Suu Kyi, the current Burmese government leader — was a principal author of this agreement. The situation for minorities --Christians and Muslims-- quickly deteriorated with the military coup in 1962, which tore up the Panglong Agreement, an earlier vision of a multi-religious, multi-ethnic society of unity and tolerance. The army then made Buddhism as the national identity. The regime instituted a state Ministry of Religious Affairs and a Department for the Promotion and Propagation of Sasana (Buddhist teachings).

Muslims in Myanmar can be categorised into four different groups, omitting some significant Muslim minority communities: Pantay, the

largest group, includes the Rohingya of Rakhine (Arakan) whose members number approximately one million throughout the country; Bamar who converted to Islam in the time of Bamar kings and who call themselves 'pure Bamar Muslims'; Indian Muslims born in Myanmar of two Indian Muslim parents; and the Zerbadees, who are the children of mixed marriages between Indian Muslim fathers and Burman mothers. Each group has very different relationships with the Buddhist majority and with the regime of Myanmar today (Sulaiman, 2008)

To be recognised as a citizen, a person needs to have one of three documents: a Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC), denoting "full" citizenship, or a "Naturalised" or "Associate". Citizenship Scrutiny Card denoting subordinate forms of citizenship. If a person is not eligible for these documents, he/she is deprived of most rights. He/she cannot vote or travel freely within the country and is not legally allowed to own land or rent an apartment. In this sense, he/she is effectively made stateless. Citizenship cards state the holder's race and religion. This pushes Muslims to accept nonsensical foreign identities – for instance, having their "race" stated as Indian, Pakistani or Bengali – so that they can be branded as "mixed blood", even though, in most cases, their families have lived in Burma for generations ("Identity Crisis", Frontier Myanmar, 2019).

In 2015, four laws, known as the "Race and Religion Protection Laws" were adopted by parliament. They caters protection for the Buddhist majority and not for religious minorities and are against inter-faith marriages. The Buddhist Women Special Marriage law stipulates notification and registration requirements for marriages between non-Buddhist men and Buddhist women and stipulates obligations to be observed by non-Buddhist husbands and penalties for noncompliance. The Religious Conversion law regulates conversion through an extensive application and approval process. These include having to petition to township if someone wishes to convert to another religion, or if a Buddhist woman wishes to marry a non-Buddhist man. The Population Control Law allows for the designation of special zones for which population control measures could be applied, including authorizing local authorities to implement three-year birth spacing. Women in certain regions are required to space the birth of their children at least 36 months apart. This is clearly aimed at controlling population growth among certain ethno-religious groups. The Monogamy Law bans polygamous practices, which were already criminalized under the country's penal code. It is a criminal offense to

have more than one spouse, or to live with someone who is not your legal spouse (auburnseminary.org; International Religious Freedom Report: Burma, 2017).

There are some cases in which ethno-religious minorities are persecuted by a group from the majority while having been supported by the state apparatus. Since Myanmar's independence from Britain in 1948, the government has placed severe restrictions on Rohingya's rights to education, marriage, employment, and freedom of movement. In 1982, the government passed the Citizenship Law, effectively denying Rohingya the right to citizenship. Today, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya are stateless, homeless and vulnerable. The Myanmar government claim that the Rohingya ethnicity was invented by Bangladeshi nationals seeking land in Rakhine State. Officials often refer to Rohinyga as "Bengali," "Muslim Bengalis," and even by the pejorative "kalar," meaning "dark" (Myanmar, Counter Extremism Project). From the early 1990s onward, the military increased its occupation of predominantly Christian Chin, Kachin, and Naga areas, destroying churches and crosses while simultaneously expanding Buddhist infrastructure such as monasteries and pagodas, at times with the use of forced labor exacted from Christians. The military routinely occupies churches and summons entire congregations for interrogation (Reese, 2016).

The 969 movement, a self-proclaimed "social movement to preserve the cultural traditions of Buddhism" was founded in 1999. It is led by a monk named Ashin Wirathu, who served time in prison between 2003 and 2012 for inciting religious conflict. Wirathu regularly warns that Burmese Muslims are plotting to take over the country, and that shopping at Muslim-owned stores will lead to the decline of Buddhism in the country. In a February 2013 speech, Wirathu instructed Buddhists: "If you buy from Muslim shops, your money doesn't just stop there…It will eventually go towards destroying your race and religion." Wirathu has also said that "once [Muslims] become overly populous, they will overwhelm us and take over our country and make it an evil Islamic nation." Wirathu's extremist and conspiratorial messaging is sold on DVDs and CDs throughout Myanmar (969movement.org, Public Radio International, Atlantic).

The group's ideology and Wirathu's rhetoric, in particular, is believed to spur violence between Buddhists and Rohingya in Rakhine State, as well as violence between Buddhists and non-Rohingya Muslims throughout the country. In early 2013, for example, riots between

Buddhists and non-Rohingya Muslims in the central Burmese town of Meiktila led to the death of 40 people. During those riots, Buddhist monks attacked the Mingalar Zayone Islamic Boarding School, reportedly killing 32 students and four teachers with machetes, metal pipes, chains, and stones (Counter Extremism Project, Myanmar (Burma): Extremism and Counter-Extremism, p.5, no year).

Singapore (Neutrality)

As an ethnically and religiously diverse country, Singapore has population of 3.9 million people, with the Chinese constitutes 74.3 %, the Malays 13.3 % and Indians 9.1 %. Others, such as Eurasians and Arabs, made up 3.2 % of the resident population (Department of Statistics 2016: vii). In terms of religious diversity, over 81 percent of the resident population aged 15 and above subscribe to a religion. Most of Singapore's religious adherents are Buddhists, who make up 33.2 percent, Christians 18.8 percent and Muslims at 14.0 percent. The largest religious group is made up of the Taoists, who constitute 10.0 percent and 5 percent are Hindus (Department of Statistics 2016).

Although Singapore's status as a secular state is not explicitly enshrined in the Constitution, there have been various occasions whereby the country's secular nature has been made clear. The 1966 Constitutional Commission report stated that Singapore is a 'democratic secular state' while the 1989 White Paper, *Maintenance of Religious Harmony*, reaffirmed that political authority in Singapore is not derived from 'any divine or ecclesiastical sanction'. It also stated that Singapore is a 'strictly secular state' (Singapore Parliament 1989: 2). The 1991 *Shared Values* also described Singapore as 'a secular state'. Given the principle of secularism and state neutrality towards religions, government officials rejected the inclusion of 'Belief in God' as a shared value (Singapore Parliament 1991: 8).

Singapore has shown neutrality to religion as it separates religion and politics. Singapore Constitution does not recognize any religion and places religion as a private domain. The Singapore's Constitution accords absolute equality to all citizens and provides an elaborate framework for managing and accommodating diversity. Citizens are protected from religious-based discrimination in any law, in public employment and in public educational institutions. As an expression of the freedom of religion, people are also free to profess, practice and propagate their faith. There cannot be any compulsion on anyone to pay taxes whereby the proceeds can be used for a religion not his

own. Religious groups have the right to manage their religious affairs and set up religious or charitable institutions and to acquire, own and administer property (Articles 12, 15–16, Constitution of the Republic of Singapore).

Upon independence, Singaporean government created the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA), which re-enacted specific provisions of the Muslim Ordinance 1957, for example, the provisions related to the Registry of Muslim Marriages (ROMM) and the Shariah Court. The government passed the AMLA in Parliament in 1966 and it took effect two years later. The AMLA provides for the existence of Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, or MUIS, a government-linked organisation with the status of a statutory board. MUIS, or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, has a variety of aims, including advising Singapore's president on Islamic affairs in the country. As a sign of the relatively vast ranging powers that MUIS has, it is responsible for administering mosques as well as Islamic schools (Parts II, V and VA, Administration of Muslim Law Act). Today, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth overseas MUIS. A part of MUIS's funding is derived from government grants (MUIS undated: 103).

Singapore's second Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, introduced the idea of a 'common space' in the late 1990s, which tried to gather together Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other Singaporeans in a shared civic space. Here, a common set of laws and a common Singaporean identity are intended to prevail. The different ethnic and religious communities would have equal status relative to each other.

Thailand (Favoritism and Persecution)

Thailand is a home of 69 million people of which 94% are Theravada Buddhist, 5% Islam (mostly reside in the Deep South provinces), and 0.7% Christian and Sikhs. There are about 10,000 people are adherents of Hinduism and small percentage of Taoism, Confucianism, and Judaism as well as animism (Thailand Bureau of statistic, 2016).

The 1997 Constitution mentioned the state's equal support to all religion in the country. However, with 2017 Constitution, the state emphasizes on the faith of majority, which is Theravada Buddhism. "the State should support and protect Buddhism and other religions. In supporting and protecting Buddhism, which is the religion observed by the majority of Thai people for a long period of time, the State should promote and support education and dissemination of dharmic principles of Theravada Buddhism for the development of mind and

wisdom development, and shall have measures and mechanisms to prevent Buddhism from being undermined in any form. The State should also encourage Buddhists to participate in implementing such measures or mechanisms" (section 67 of the 2017 Constitution).

The government under the coup; Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha (2014 - present) launched "the National 20 year's Strategic plan" for sustainable development in Thailand after political turmoil and bring people together under three pillars of "Nation, Religion and Monarchy". "The main institutions of Thailand are 3 pillars: 1) Nation, 2) National religion; 3) The king. These main institutions have stayed with Thailand for a long time especially "the King"; a major institution of national solidarity. It is the heart of love, harmony of people in the country".

Although Thai-ness equals to the submission to King and Theravada Buddhism, the state, however, provides freedom of religion to its citizens as citizen's rights. "A person shall enjoy full liberty to profess a religion and shall enjoy the liberty to exercise or practice a form of worship in accordance with his or her religious principles, provided that it shall not be adversed to the duties of all Thai people, neither shall it endanger the safety of the State, nor shall it be contrary to public order or good morals" (Section 31 of the 2017 Constitution).

The King appoints the Chularajmontri (Sheikhul Islam or Grand Mufti), as nominated by the Prime Minister, after first receiving approval from the Provincial Islamic Committees, to be the leader of Thai Muslims. The Act on the Administration of Islamic Organizations was enacted in 1997, leading to the formation of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand. The Central Islamic Committee is presided over by the Chularajmontri, who acts as a state adviser on Islamic affairs. Under the Central Committee, each province with a sufficiently large Muslim population has its own Provincial Islamic Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity on Islamic affairs at the provincial level and has the power to appoint the Committee of the Mosque ("Muslim in Thailand", thaiembbasy.org).

Thai government imposed assimilation policy to the conflict area along the Thai-Malaysia border, where the majority of the local population is ethnically Malay and Muslim. The conflict dates back to the period of state formation in Thailand when the area of Malay Kingdom "Kesultanan Pattani" was incorporated into the Kingdom of Siam in 1909. The conflict-affected area consists of three provinces, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and the southernmost four districts in Buddhist-

majority Songkhla province. This group has a distinctive ethno-religious identity and history that predates the modern establishment of Thailand. The region has a combined population of 1.8 million people, with more than 75% ethnic Malay Muslims. While this ethnic population is a considerable majority in this area, they make up only 2.9% of the country's total population. As a result, the Deep South has been relatively marginal in Thailand's national politics and rapidly growing economy (Burke at all, 2013). The area has seen incidents of violence on a daily basis from 2004 to 2018, including assassinations, bombings, roadside attacks, arson attacks, and occasional attacks on military installations.

National assimilation policies were aimed primarily at incorporating the national Thai identity and promoting loyalty to the state. They include a ban on the use of minority languages (including Patani Malay) in government offices, emphasis on Buddhism as the national religion across the country, and the requirement that everyone take a Thai name. The effort to promote assimilation of the Malay Muslim communities in the South was particularly focused on displacing the pondoks (Muslim religious schools), which traditionally performed a central function in the reproduction of Malay Muslim culture and identity. One of the most controversial elements of the assimilation campaign was the 1921 Compulsory Primary Education Act, which required all children to attend state primary schools for four years and to learn the Thai language (Melvin, 2007).

Faith-based violent acts also have been prevalent in since September 2001, some are in the form of the banning of construction Mosques of throughout Thailand. In early June 2017, 70 members of the Khon Kaen Buddhist Assembly for National Security gathered in the town of Khon kaen, demanding the revoking of licence of the construction of mosque in Ban Lerngh as it is deemed to cause suspicion leading to violence. Similar incidents happened in Muang District, Nan Province and Mukhadan (Pathan, Tuansiri and Koma, 2018).

The Philippines (Neutrality but Restriction)

The Philippines's population is estimated of 104.3 million (estimated in July 2017). It is a home of Catholic 82.9% (Roman Catholic 80.9%, Aglipayan 2%), Muslim 5%, Evangelical 2.8%, Iglesia ni Kristo 2.3%, other Christian 4.5%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.6%, none 0.1% (2000 Census).

There have been three constitutions that have governed the republic: the 1935 Constitution adopted under American tutelage and under which the country gained independence from the United States; the 1973 Constitution adopted under Marcos's dictatorship; and the 1987 Constitution adopted under Corazon Aquino and under the country is currently governed today. The separation of church and state is the main principle for the Philippines, as stated in the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines: *The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable.* (Article II, Section 6). The state also recognizes the freedom and equality of all religions by declaring: "*No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights* (Article III, Section 5).

There is no constitutionally preferred or privileged religion in the Philippines. The Constitution, however, invoked the aid of religion, which appears in the very first sentence in the preamble, which begins with "We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society, and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations … do ordain and promulgate this Constitution. There are no government agencies that regulate religion. The Office of Muslim Affairs is the only official representation of a religious community in government. It is primarily tasked with preserving and developing the culture, traditions, institutions and well-being of Muslim Filipinos. Several religious holidays are recognized as official holidays for the country: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, All Saints Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, plus one Muslim holiday, Eidul Fitr (Pangalangan, no year).

There is no law regulating religious symbols in public places, although Catholic artifacts are commonplace in government buildings. The Catholicism as the faith of the majority in reality has given many influences in the country's public policies. The Roman Catholic clergy remains a force in the politics of the Philippines, for example: Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin was a key figure in the two —People Power uprisings, that of 1986, which ousted President Ferdinand Marcos, and that of 2001, which ousted President Joseph Estrada. The post-Marcos Constitution of 1987 was drafted by a 50-person commission appointed by President Corazon Aquino, which included two Catholic priests, one Catholic nun, one Protestant minister, and one lay leader (the founder

of the Opus Dei in the Philippines). The well-organized Christian, non-Catholic groups have also flexed their political muscle and endorsed electoral candidates. The Iglesia ni Kristo (the local Protestant Church) is known to adopt ―official candidates and has delivered a solid vote for these candidates. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued its Catechism on Family and Life for the 2010 Elections, urging the Catholic voters to oppose ―artificial contraceptives that were being promoted by a Reproductive Health bill pending in Congress. The Catholic majority does not have any overt and official role in the secular governance of the country; however, it does hold immense influence over legislation. For example, abortion is a crime under the Revised Penal Code61 and divorce is illegal. The Reproductive Health bill has been filed three times since 2001, and each time the bill has been successfully blocked by Catholic lobbyists (Pangalangan, no year).

The Philippines is plagued by two armed rebel groups, both of which have religious components. The first is a Maoist rebellion led by the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has formed the group Christians for National Liberation along the lines of liberation theology. The second is an Islamic separatist movement currently led by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which seeks a separate Muslim state for Bangsamoro.

A state-minority conflict has occurred for decades in Mindanao, the second largest island in the Philippines that lies nearby Malaysia and Indonesia. It is a home to three major groups: Muslims, Christian settlers, and Lumads. Since 1968, fighting between Muslim secessionist and the government occurred due to resistance of the Bangsamoro to integration into the Catholic, Manila-based social order since the granting of the Philippines' independence by the United States on July 4, 1946 (Kamlian, 2011). The 1898 Treaty of Paris, through which Spain relinquished its claim over its colonies. As Spain "cede[d] to the United States the archipelago known as the Philippine Islands," it also unjustly annexed to a colonized country the lands which the Bangsamoro people successfully defended against the Spanish. Despite strong objections from Bangsamoro leaders, the United States would also eventually cede to the Philippine Republic areas it never owned nor conquered. In 1921, leaders in Sulu wrote to the United States government and said that "it would be an act of great injustice to cast our people aside, turnover our country to the Filipinos in the north to be governed by them without our consent and thrust upon us a government not of our own people, nor by our people, nor for

our own people." In the 1924 Zamboanga Declaration, leaders from Maguindanao, Lanao, and Zamboanga wrote, "it is our firm intention and resolve to declare ourselves independent Constitutional Sultanate to be known to the world as Moro Nation," while the 1935 Dansalan Declaration of the Meranaws declared that "our public land should not be given to other people other than the Moro Nation" (Kamlian, 2011). The Bangsamoro (Muslim) sultanates were integrated despite the strong outcry of the sultans. The conflict exacerbated when Catholic settlers from other parts of the Philippines often rank higher socioeconomically and in possession of government jobs and access to government programming while the indigenous Lumads and the Bangsamoros tend to be the poorest on the island (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2013).

A series of blood-shed clashes between the military and the Bangsamoro's armed groups along with a series of peace negotiations for more than 40 years have come to almost and end with the endorsement of the Bangsamoro Organic Law by the Government of the Philippines in 2018. With this, the state would give special autonomy to the Bangsamoro to administer and to regulate their Islamic-based practices nationhood. The state grants the "right to chart their political future through a democratic process that will secure their identity and posterity" in the form of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (CNN Philippines, 2018).

B. Religious Education Policies and Its Implementation

Southeast Asia's diversity is also reflected in religious education, which has been developed and provided in different ways. The state and religious communities are the main actors in the issue of religion and schooling, including determining the model of religious education provided in schools. In many countries, the term *religious education* commonly refers to an item on the school curriculum. In denominational schools, religious education is typically taught from the perspective of a single faith and in nondenominational schools from the perspective of a diversity of faiths. In this study, we define Religious Education as religious instructions, education about religions, and moral/ values/ ethics/ peace/ civic education that purport shaping characters, promoting social cohesion, or preventing violence extremism.

The study attempts to find out the current policies of the six countries under study with respect to the religious education and to

what extent religious education is dependent to the state in terms of policy implementation.

Indonesia:

The aim of religious education in Indonesia is directed towards the enhancement of students' understanding and implementation of their own beliefs (Government Regulation No. 55 Year 2007). Religious education means teaching children about religion that their families have embraced in. Religious Education is institutionalized through state policies to be implemented in schools for each religious group. However, the implementation varies depending on the types of school: public school, private school, religious faith-based school. The state gives liberty to school authorities to administer religious education.

There are three different positions of the status of religious education within the national education system with different purposes. The changing education laws indicated that religious education is intensifying overtime.

National Education Law No. 4 Year 1950	Voluntary religious education	The law explicitly stated that public school had to provide religious education for the students, but parents can decide whether or not their children join religious education at school.
National Education Law No. 2 Year 1989	Compulsory religious education	The law mandated religious education as a compulsory subject at every level of formal education.
National Education Law No. 20 year 2003	Compulsory religious education with proper teachers	The law does not only mandate every school to provide religious education, but also provide teachers that share the same belief with students.

As mentioned earlier, the obligation for Indonesia's students to take religious education at school was first introduced in the Law No. 2 Year 1989 on the National Education System. This was actually the second education law in Indonesia's history. The Law clearly stated that school curricula should include Pancasila Education, Religious Education and Citizenship Education. The reason for compulsory religious education policy is that because one of the aims of national education is to create human beings who believe and obey the almighty God. This applies to all recognized religions.

In 2003, the regulation went further. In addition to make religious education compulsory, the Law No. 2 Year 2003 mandated school to provide teachers that share the same belief to teach religious education. This means that teacher cannot teach religious education

unless he/she personally believes in the religion that he/she teaches. This latest education law implicitly confirmed that religious education in Indonesia does not only aim to introduce students to their own religious beliefs and traditions, but also to maintain their faith. In other words, religious education is not merely knowledge about religion but more about religious values and practices, also known as religious understanding (Jackson 2005, 4).

In order to ensure that religious education takes place confirming the objective of the national education, the government released Government Regulation No. 55 Year 2007 on Religious Education. As the official interpretation of Law No. 20 year 2003, Government Regulation No. 55 year 2007 explains that "religious education in Indonesian context means providing knowledge and developing students' attitude, personality and skill that will guide them to exercise their religious teachings, through at least a subject in every pathway, level, and type of education" (Government Regulation 2007).

There are three different curricula of religious education in Indonesian schools:

Types of Schools	Religious Education	
Madrasah (Muslim School)	There are five subjects: *Al-Quran–Hadits* (the holy Quran and the Prophet's tradition), *Akidah Akhlak* (Theology and Moral Education), *Fikih* (Islamic Law), *Sejarah Islam* (Islamic History and Civilization) and Arabic Language	Based on Minister of Religion's Decree No. 165/2014.
General school (non-religion-affiliated, public or private school).	There is only one subject, namely religious education	Such schools open for students of different religions, the schools should provide religious education for different religions, i.e. Islam, Christianity, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, based on students' religious affiliation (Warsiyah 2018).

Religion-affiliated schools (such as Islamic School and Christian School).	Refer to the curricula of general schools, in which the school is only obliged to provide one religious education subject depending on their affiliation.	Since they are affiliated with a certain religious denomination, the schools will add one or two more subjects on religious education. In Muhammadiyah school for instance, the school also provides a subject called *Kemuhammadiyahan*, which means understanding the practice of Muhammadiyah.

There are three forms of religious education at school: religious education subject, extra-curricular activities, and religious culture. Out of the three forms of religious education, only religious education subject that has clear guidance from the government, extra-curricular activities and religious culture mostly depending on schools' policy. Concerning religious education subject, government does not have absolute control to what happens in school. Private schools can offer their own religious education curricula in addition to what the government has prescribed. Moreover, teachers have the authority in teaching religious understanding of their own to their students which may be different from the mainstream religious understanding.

Three paths of the implementation of religious education at school:

Curriculum and textbooks	Government provides the structure or religious education curriculum and recommendation for textbooks. Teachers should refer to the government (prescribed) curriculum and use any recommended textbook that they are comfortable with	Teachers could interpret and implement the curriculum into the lesson plan. The government review textbooks that will be used in the classroom, but it does not force teachers to use the recommended text book.
Religious activities (celebrating religious events and extra-curricular activities).	Some private religion-affiliated schools encourage students to do collective noon prayers and daily Quran recitation (Interview with A3, 2018). Most public schools have students' religious groups, such as Rohis (Rohani Islam; group of Muslim students in public school).	Most such group creates its own religious training, sometimes facilitated by instructor from out of school. A religious education teacher of a public school in Jakarta affirms that there is a guidance from the provincial education office for school to carefully select instructor or speaker for religious activities (interview with B5, 2018).
Private schools' own religious education curriculum.	The schools have affiliation to any religious group or organization.	There is no such supervision from the government.

Currently, there are five regulations regulating the contents of religious education in Indonesian schools. Those are 1) the Minister of

Education's Regulation No. 20/2016 on Standard of Competence for Schools' Graduate; 2) the Minister of Education's Regulation No. 21/2016 on the Contents of Schools' Curricula; 3) the Minister of Education's Regulation No. 24/2016, 4) the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 16/2010 on Religious Education in School; and 5) the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 165/2014 on Madrasah's Curricula.

The Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 16/2010 on Religious Education in School sets the guideline for schools to manage religious education. There are at least two forms of religious education at school: Intra-curricular, meaning the official curriculum of religious education as a subject, and Extra-curricular, meaning in-school activities that are designed to enrich students' experiences on religious education. As clearly mentioned in the article no. 2, this regulation is applicable to all official religions: Islam, Catholics, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

In addition to different kinds of subject in curricula, there are three other forms of religious education at school: extra-curricular activities, religious culture, and religious festival. In most schools, students have an option to join a religion-devoted students group known as *rohani* (spiritual group), such as *Rohani Islam* (Muslim students group, also known as *Rohis*) and Rohani Kristen (Christian students group). These groups facilitated students to learn more about their religion at school in addition to Religious Education subject. These groups are considered as extra-curricular activities, which are mostly managed by students. There are a number of studies that indicate *Rohis* influences highschool students to be exclusive with their religious understanding (Habibullah 2014).

Categorization of the contents of Religious Education Curriculum in General School

Islam	**Catholics**	**Christianity**	**Hinduism**	**Buddhism**	**Confucianism**
Holy books (Quran Hadits)	Students' Personal Life	God and His Creatures	Prayers	Theology	Faith and Theology
Theology and Morality (Akidah Akhlak)	Jesus the Christ	Christian Values	Human Relationship	Morality and Wisdom	Prayers
Islamic Law (Fikih)	The Church		Holy book and the teachings of Hinduism	Holy book	Morality (Junzi)
Islamic History (SKI)	The Community			Meditation	History
				History	

The table indicates that despite the fact that Muslims are the majority of the population, the government facilitates religious education to all recognized religions. Article No. 2 of the Ministry of Religious Affaisr' Decree No. 16/2010 clearly states that "Religious education consists of Islamic Education, Catholic Education, Christian Education, Hindu's Education, Buddhism's Education and Confucian Education. Moreover, as the National Education Act (No. 20 Year 2003) mandates, students only receive religious education from teachers of the same religious belief and practices. This is to ensure that students will not be misguided should they receive religious education form teachers of different faith.

Malaysia:

The education policy in Malaysia is overwhelmingly dominated by the federal government due to the highly centralized federalism practiced in the country. The state obligates Islam religious education for Muslim students and requires non-Muslim students to take Moral Education. Religious education is an integral component of the national education system in a Muslim-majority country such as Malaysia. Islamic studies subject is mandatory for all Muslim students who attend public schools. Many Muslim students also enroll in numerous public and private Islamic schools across the country. As such, religious education plays a crucial role in inculcating values and shaping the character of Muslim students in Malaysia.

Centralized federalism is the driving factor that shapes the ways schools combat extreme ideology in religious education, which in turn, has so far managed to stem the influence of the said ideology in the national education system. Malaysian government through the Ministry of Education and the Department of Islamic Development (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam*, JAKIM) have been keeping a tight control over the formulation, management and implementation of Islamic education in Malaysia despite Islamic affairs being a state prerogative in the constitution. By closely monitoring the curriculum and teaching of Islamic education in schools that make up the national education system, the Malaysian government has largely managed to prevent violent religious ideology from spreading among teachers and students.

Myanmar

Since at least the advent of military rule in 1962, the state has been perceived and experienced as pursuing a more-or-less explicit project

of forced assimilation vis-a-vis ethnic nationality communities. Ethnic nationality elites have resisted 'Burmanisation' through a number of strategies, including armed conflict and the development of education regimes which preserve and reproduce their languages and cultures, under often very difficult circumstances.

Burmese schools have predominantly performed teacher-centered and subject-oriented teaching and learning with a lack of teacher training and a weak curriculum. Furthermore, indigenous people have little chance to promote their language and culture given the supremacy of the Burmese language. The teaching of history is a controversial issue in Myanmar and many in ethnic areas believe they should be taught the history of their own people as well as that of the Bamar.

The reformed Myanmar government then set objectives that provide a legal basis upon which to build an education system that could improve social participation and cohesion, and contribute to the long-term goal of national reconciliation in the country through its National Education Law 2014 that stated: "to produce citizens who respect and follow the law by practicing their civic and democratic duties and upholding standards of human rights". Also "to develop union spirit and to create citizens who respect, value, preserve and develop all the ethnic groups' languages, literatures, culture, arts, traditions, and historical heritage and who value and protect the natural environment and who can carry out sustainable development and pass these things on to others" (Chapter 2 point b and c).

Religious education is not institutionalized in public schools. Religious instruction is given specifically by the schools that have declared themselves as faith-based schools such as madrasah and monastic schools. Religious teaching for Buddhists is carried out in monasteries where young boys are expected to be novices. Religious education for Muslims are available in formal schooling in madrasah and informal course at mosques.

Buddhism is not a subject in the public school curriculum as the state school is secular. The national school system does not cater for any particular faith or belief except Buddhism. Learning about morals might benefit pupils in the state curriculum. Currently 'morals' is taught as a subject, but there is no exam, so neither students nor teachers pay much attention. Learning about morals might benefit pupils in the state curriculum. There are Buddha images and Buddhist shrines in every government school. Buddhist rituals are commonly performed

in public schools. Every morning after the assembly to sing the national anthem, the Buddhist students squat on their chairs, hold their palms together and loudly chant Buddhist prayers. Teachers would tell students of other faiths to be still and say their prayers in silence. Teachers occupy a unique and influential role in Myanmar society. In Burmese government schools, each time a teacher enters the classroom, students have to stand, press their palms together and greet the teacher with a Pali verse that glorifies teachers as one of the five "universal benefactors" in Buddhist cosmology (Than Toe Aung, 2019).

There are six types of schools providing religious education in Myanmar:

1. *Dhamma Schools (Buddhist Sunday Schools)*

The school is led by monks and donations are derived from the parents. The curriculum of Sri Lankan Dhamma schools were taken as a reference and adapted to Myanmar's context. There is no clarity whether they get support from the government or not. Classes are held once a week in accordance with the local context and in some schools, the lesson starts in the morning (from 8 am to 11am) while some others in the evening.

Usually, Dhamma schools open in May and close in January and February when there are final exams at public schools. There is a curriculum for a year. After a year, the lessons get more advanced and comprehensive and have connection with the previous lessons. Even though there are no exams, annual performance of students is evaluated and award prizes are given at the end of a year.

The lessons emphasize on moral codes but the teachers teach them through painting, story-telling, poems recital, team games, presentations and exchange personal opinions. Dhamma schools teach children to have strong faith in their religion. They speak nothing about other religions. For example, they are trained on how to do cleaning or to switch old flower offered at Buddha with fresh flower and harmonize with the society, to become an outstanding person in a group, to have better teamwork and behaviors.

There are teacher trainings for Dhamma schools and now it is in its 200th batch. All of the trainees' per diem, accommodation and transportation are compensated. However, teachers of Dhamma schools do not receive salary as they are considered as volunteers.

2. Monastic Schools

Monastic schools are established and managed by monks and administered through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. They are located in every state and region, and provide education for over 150,000 children. Monastic schools follow the government curriculum, but until recently have received very little government support, and have traditionally relied on community donations. Monastic schools rarely charge fees, and are therefore accessible to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Facilities are generally very basic, and there is a lack of minimum standards.

Myanmar state primary schools do not charge school fees. However, parents often have to pay for supplementary expenses and private tuition, which is not affordable for all. Monastic schools run by monks or nuns, which are usually free of charge, fill the gap by providing an education to needy and orphaned children. There are two types of Monastic School: the religious education (due to tradition) and secular education. In traditional education, at first, they were only taught tradition education concerned with monks which causes them to have limited general knowledge and have difficulties in different places and fields. Therefore, English was also taught later on. There were also educating by collaborating with other schools and the secular schools were also integrated with religious education especially as they got weakened in religious knowledge. monastic schools often teach Buddhist practices, such as morning chants and meditation, and transmit Buddhist teachings and values. This may include studying Buddhist history and philosophy, and having tenets such as the ten *paramitas* or "perfections" woven into classes. At monastic schools, at weekends, the boarders study Buddhist scriptures and learn stories about moral values. At monastic schools, there is much greater emphasis on this subject. For example, at weekends, the boarders study Buddhist scriptures and learn stories about moral values.

Indeed, the tradition of monastic schools in Myanmar dates back as early as the 11th century. They play a significant role in the protection of the rich Buddhist heritage on which Myanmar prides itself. Historically, the village monastery served as an education center for the community, a close relationship demonstrated by the fact that the Burmese word "kyaung" is used to refer to both school and monastery. Monastic schools are an integral part of the communities in which they are located, engaging in cultural as well as religious activities. By practicing *dana* (generosity) and supporting the monastic schools,

villagers, who offer what they can, generally in kind, are able to generate merit and practice the important Buddhist idea of "parahita," which involves giving for the benefit and welfare of others. For the poor and disadvantaged in remote areas who have no access to or cannot afford to go to public schools, monastic schools are often the only source of education, providing free tuition and textbooks. Some monastic schools also double as orphanages, and offer accommodation and meals. Buddhist values, such as generosity and loving-kindness, imparted through the monastic schools can help to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the common history and aspirations that have pervaded the country and the people for centuries.

Monastic schools and all private educational institutions were banned from 1962 to 1988 when the country was ruled by General Ne Win's Burma Socialist Program Party. Monastic schools were permitted to re-open in 1992 and teach the national curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. Today, monastic schools are recognized in the National Education Law enacted in 2014 and are co-governed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the Ministry of Education. There are no laws (procedures and manuals) for monastic schools yet.

Figures from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in 2016 showed there were 1,593 monastic schools across the country providing an education to nearly 300,000 children. Mandalay had the highest number of monastic schools, with many others in Yangon and Sagaing regions. Phaung Taw Oo monastic school was founded in Mandalay, 1993 and it has over 8,000 students and 400 teachers and staff.

There are restrictions that prevent from opening schools within a certain mile radius of a public school and the General Administration Department heads support if anything is needed in the schools. But, according to an interviewee, there are no supports in some townships.

Poems, art and dancing are taught at monastic schools and children of other religions also attend the monastic schools. There are also boarding students and there are also many boys from the conflict areas of ethnic areas. And, there are also around 200 orphans. The total students are around 800. All students can study up to 11 grade and there are also overseas scholarship programs after graduating 11th grade, said the Sayadaw. English and critical thinking lessons are also taught.

3. Islamic Schools

Madrasahs (Islamic religious schools) and courses at mosques

remain the only alternative for educating Myanmar Muslims about their religion. In Islamic education, there are two kinds: (1) Maktab education and (2) Madrasah education. Maktab education is compulsory for Muslims and equivalent to Buddhists' dhamma (Sunday) schools for children. Maktab education can be taught at an age when a person starts to learn to read or write and there are 4 grades. The modules consist of basic Arabic vocabularies, Islam, advanced Qur'anic reading lessons, hadiths (in Myanmar) and Urdu until 4th grade. And, if one desires to resume the religious education further, they can learn at Madrasah until he becomes a hafiz or a mawlawi. Hafiz schools and Mawlawi schools are parts of Madrasah education. Hafiz schools teach to memorize Qu'ran. Mawlawi schools teach until one can interpret Qu'ran and one has to learn Arabic grammar and other important scriptures written in Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Burmese.

Most Myanmar madrasahs are boarding schools exclusively for male students from all over the country but currently, new madrasahs welcoming female students in Tahfiz (memorizing the Qur'an) and Mawlawi courses are being established in Yangon and throughout the Yangon division. While madrasahs in upper Myanmar already tend to teach in Burmese, most madrasahs in lower Myanmar use Urdu because of their closer ties with South Asia. Arabic and Persian are also sometimes used, although less frequently. Reading Arabic grammar is compulsory, along with reading the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (Hadiths). Graduates of madrasahs can translate Arabic religious texts in either Myanmar or Urdu language, but none of them can communicate fluently in conversational Arabic. Neither mathematics nor science subjects are taught in those madrasahs, although attempts are made to introduce English-language courses in some schools. Therefore, Madrasah certificates are not recognized by the state.

There are no direct interventions of government on Islamic education activities in any perspectives. Only requirements to request government before founding and building religious schools. Government does not interfere with the curriculum either. No new madrasahs were given permission to build since 1988 and current ones were opened since colonial and AFPFL (Anti-Fascist and People Federation League) eras. Even though there were requests made to the General Administration Department and the Ministry of Cultural and Religious Affairs, the request were turned down. It is also learned that there are no special legislations for opening religious schools. There

seem to be no clear-cut rules and regulations for what a madrasah can do or cannot do in Myanmar.

Every Muslim is aware that madrasahs are being closely watched and monitored by the regime. In June 2018, the General Administration Department issued an order that mosques and madrasahs only use Burmese language, and that religious services and classes only be held in permitted places (Frontier Myanmar, 2018). Township administrators in Kantbalu Township, Sagaing Region, and Yangon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township had both issued a notice in late June 2018, instructing all ward and village-tract administrators in the township to check if Islamic classes were being held in buildings without the required permit so that it could "report back" to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture. "It has been reported that in some wards and residential areas and houses in some states and regions, Arabic-language Islamic culture schools are operating unlawfully. Praying and worshiping in residences and schools are prohibited," the notice said, warning that those who violated this prohibition would face legal action. It added that a "management committee meeting" of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture had decided that Islamic classes could only be held at mosques and religious buildings, and that the language of instruction must be Burmese. It also said that schools and mosques should translate their curriculum into Burmese and submit them to the state or region government along with the original curriculum (Frontier Myanmar, 2018).

4. MaBaTha-run Dhamma Schools

The Committee to Protect Race and Religion (Myanmar as Ma Ba Tha) ordered Sunday morning sessions to be no longer available for children attending government schools. Instead, the children should go to Dhamma schools established by the Dhamma School Foundation (DSF). From March 2012 to 2015, there are around 5,000 schools throughout the country, where its curriculum is taught by more than 25,000 DSF-trained teachers to 700,000 children. A third of the teachers are monks and nuns and the rest are lay people.

DSF headquarters, which has 118 trainers for teachers and 20 office staff, has expenses of about US$62,500 a month and relies mainly on donations and a monthly K1,000 fee from its 10,000 members for income. The Shine Hope Company donated K15 million to help establish the foundation. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the military and people from the government often donate it.

it was reported to have received a K280 million donation from media tycoon Daw Ni Ni, who owns Skynet, and another donation of K20 million from the owner of a popular free-to-air TV channel.

In 2016, Ma Ba Tha opened a private high school on the outskirts of Yangon, in which it provided free education for children and teach them to "protect race and religion" of Myanmar. Ashin Panya Vara, the monk who founded the school, said that teaching would follow the standard high school curriculum, but also include religious and literature programs taught by monks that will build children's morals and Buddhist devotion. The school bears the name of the young Buddha-to-be, Mahaw Thadar High School, and was built on 5 acres of land. It has a brand-new, five-storey building and two extensions where students receive free meals and lodging. An agricultural resources company named Maha Myaing donated the land and the buildings were paid for by gold mining company Amyotha Kyipwa Toetat Yay, or National Prosperity Company, which has financed many of Ma Ba Tha's activities.

5. Hindus Schools

Reigious education for Hindu community is rarely institutionalized. Even if it applies, it is in the form of stressing the teaching of culture, traditions and language for the children of the Hindu community. Amidst the absence of any Hindu *sannyasins* in the country due to lack of contact with India over a long period of time, the Sanatan Dharma Swayamsewak Sangh, Myanmar's most prominent national Hindu body, has established four Sanskrit schools for priest training and try to work with all the temples in the country. They initiated the Hindu Dharma Shiksha Samiti to teach the children and produced school books in Hindi, with the goal that Hindi be spoken in the homes where it is the ancestral language. The language effort is being aided by the easy availability of Hindi TV channels from India. However, there is resistance from parents who want the children to focus solely on their school education. Many would prefer their children learn Chinese instead of Hindi.

Meanwhile, Sikh gurudwara brings *granthis* (teachers) for every summer vacation. The children could expertly recite stanzas from the Guru Granth Sahib accompanied by music. In Mandalay, there is the Nepalese Dharmashala guest house and temple. More than one hundred Nepalese children were being taught Nepalese language and Hinduism. While they are well connected with the other Hindus in the country,

they differ in their celebration of festivals, with the Nepalese observing Dussehra and Teej in a grand manner, while the Indian Hindus do so for Raskha Bandhan and Diwali. Additionally, the Shri Neelkantheshwar Shiv Mandir, located in the Jheel Basti area, has a dedicated team of teachers instructing Hindu and Nepalese children. As at the Ganesha Temple managed by the Tamil community, serves as a premise to teach Tamil and even English to the Hindu children. The Shri Rameshwar Vidya Peeth Dham in Lakhu is known all over Myanmar for the teaching of Sanskrit and training of temple priests. It was founded 50 years ago on 80 acres of land. The school has over 100 students learning Sanskrit, Nepali and Hindi in a full-time course of study. The curriculum includes Sanskrit grammar, the writings of great saints such as Kalidas, plus geography, social science, English, computers and other topics of modern education. The students live at the institution and the education is free of charge. It is estimated that in the past few decades they have trained around 700 priests who are now serving in temples around the country. It plans to gradually expand to 300 students. "Our vision is to propagate and promote our own religion and Vedic culture among our people and thereby socially and religiously uplift the community," said Dr. Vishnu Dutt Mandavya, the leader of the institution. His plan is to build a team of a dozen brilliant, dynamic, knowledgeable and totally dedicated graduates who will then work for the betterment of Hindu dharma all over Myanmar. He also hopes that with the improving political situation it will be possible to bring Hindu saints and scholars from India to teach in Myanmar (Malik, 2018).

6. Church-run Schools

In 1962, General Ne Win, who ruled the country from 1962 to 1988, promised that the government would not involve itself in mixing religion and politics. His government, however, expelled all of the foreign Christian missionaries from Myanmar and their properties and mission schools became the property of government. As of 2017, there are only church-run four primary schools and two secondary schools in the country, according to the Education Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar. However, the Catholic Church currently runs about 300 boarding houses in parishes across the country. Village children stay in the boarding houses and attend state-run schools. They are given supplementary lessons in their boarding houses besides the teaching of the Christian doctrine and the Bible (Zaw, 2017).

Singapore:

Singaporean government removed Islamic Religious Knowledge [together with other religious education subjects in the 1980s from the secular Ministry of Education curriculum]. This is because Singapore is a secular society that practices integration in which a person is allowed to keep his/her identity but cannot show it when he/she in a public sphere. Religion is not something to share.

The Education Act does not apply to institutes offering technical education and private education, to which other pieces of legislation apply. Institutions of higher education may be exempted from the Act as well (Sections 2, 3 and 4, Education Act). Rather, the Act applies to government schools, which also includes schools that follow the Ministry of Education's syllabus but also provide some religious instruction, for example, the attendance of weekly religious services.

According to the Education Act, there are general provisions to control school syllabi. School syllabi have to be approved by the Director-General before the school can issue instruction to pupils. It is the duty of the school supervisor to submit to the Director-General the syllabus of instruction for each of the classes in the school. The school principal is 'responsible for the organization of the curriculum both in and out of the classroom'. The Director-General can suggest amendments to the syllabi as he deems it to be fit (Sections 7 and 79, Education (Schools) Regulations, Education Act).

Where religious education, not necessarily limited to the Islamic type, is concerned, Singapore's Constitution allows religious groups 'the right to establish and maintain institutions for the education of children and provide therein instruction in its own religion'. No one is required to receive instruction in a religion other than his own (Articles 16 (2) and (3), Constitution of the Republic of Singapore). As described earlier, the Education (Grant-in-Aid) Regulations of the Education Act also stipulate the conditions under which religious instruction can be offered in secular schools which to all intents and purposes function like government schools.

Where Islamic education is concerned, Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) is important for the management of Islamic schools. According to the AMLA, it is MUIS or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, which controls Muslim schools. MUIS is empowered 'to register and to control the conduct of Muslim religious schools and to approve the curricula of instruction in such schools' (Section 87 (1), Administration of Muslim Law Act). In reality, MUIS's control over

Islamic schools is not total because of various factors. One of them is that there is a large variety of organizations offering Islamic education, some of them preferring to protect their independence rather than being managed by MUIS closely. Historically, they have operated in this manner and thus continue to do so.

Values education referred in this study applies at institutions implementing curricula that teach students civic, moral, character-related, national or religious values. The programs can be named variously, for example, Social Studies (SS), National Education (NE), Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) or they may take the form of thematic lessons, such as Muslim and non-Muslim Relations in Islam. These programs can be contextualized to fit into specific school and classroom contexts. The citizenship lessons delivered to students in two separate spaces—in government schools and in the Islamic institution—there are overlaps in the goals, content and citizenship duties assigned to students but there are significant differences as well. Thus, there are similar yet different conceptions of citizenship that Singaporean students are taught and assigned depending on whether they operate out of generally secular space or religious space in the multicultural and multi-religious state that Singapore is.

Educational institutions in Singapore have adopted various forms of values, including religious, education to build peaceful societies, with or without a focus on extremism. The Singapore values and the accompanying duties of citizenship taught to young citizens operating out of two different kinds of space: secular and (Islamic) religious spaces. Depending on whether they are enrolled in government schools or at the Islamic institute studied, Singaporeans aged 15-18 are exposed to similar as well as significantly different conceptions of Singapore values and duties of citizenship. In both secular and Islamic religious spaces, curriculum writers have stressed the importance of securing peace in Singapore society through social relations that are harmonious or cohesive. In government schools, the concept of 'harmony' is explained and students learn about the institutions that support 'harmony'. Students are treated as actors that are capable of rationally digesting information to arrive at informed beliefs and action.

Values education in Singapore government schools, which has a strong emphasis on nurturing a sense of common belonging and loyalty to Singapore, has been a response to the contingencies of society. Values education started as early as the 1940s. Based on

the post-Second World War British Ten-Year Program, students were introduced to civics lessons. There were also provisions for religious or ethical instruction in schools (Gopinathan 1974, Lim and Gopinathan 1994: 61). Singapore students were introduced to a variety of values education program following the country's independence in 1965. These include Civics and Moral Education in 1992 National Education in 1997 while Social and Emotional Learning was introduced in 2005 (Ministry of Education 2012: 1).

Today, citizenship education for secondary government school students can be delivered through various platforms. In this study, the focus falls on Social Studies (for Express and Normal (Academic) students) although there are some comments on other values education programs students aged 15-18 are exposed to. The Social Studies curriculum is easily accessible as textbooks are easily available in public bookshops. Social Studies is compulsory and examinable. The students are largely Singaporean but can nonetheless be of different nationalities. They can come from any ethnic, religious or socio-economic group. Social Studies aims to nurture students to become 'citizens of tomorrow', help them better understand Singapore's interconnectedness with the world and to help them appreciate the complexities of the human experience. Students are nurtured to be informed, concerned and participative citizens. The textbook, designed for a two-year course with lessons spanning one hour and forty-five minutes per week, provides instruction on four topics: Exploring Citizenship and Governance; Living in a Diverse Society; Being Part of a Globalized World; and Skills for Issue Investigation (Interviewee; Ministry of Education 2016a: 2–3; Ministry of Education 2016b). The content of Social Studies can overlap with that of Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), which also delivers lessons on Singapore citizenship.

CCE, in the form of a component of the MOE's 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes model, was introduced in 2010 and onwards. Here, CCE focuses on teaching students to see Singapore as their home while they simultaneously act as global citizens (Ministry of Education, Undated a). National Education (NE), a component of CCE (MOE Undated a), aims to 'develop in students the civic knowledge, understanding, skills, values, motivation and identity … so that they will be able to play their role well as concerned citizens and active contributors, and to co-construct the next chapter of Singapore'. (MOE undated b: 7). There can be different expressions of NE, for example,

commemorating days important to Singapore's history, such as Total Defense Day. Other than in Social Studies lessons, teachers can discuss NE topics in History and Geography, Mathematics or Science classes (MOE undated b: 2-3; *The Straits Times*, 5 March 2018).

Islamic institutes have also offered their students citizenship education. Especially since the September 11 attacks, MUIS and other Islamic organizations have offered their vision of how Islam should be interpreted and practiced in Singapore, which has impacted on education. In 2003, MUIS released *Risalah for Building a Singapore Muslim Community of Excellence*, which details a state-aligned social engineering project called the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) project. It outlines ways to integrate Muslims into a multicultural and multireligious society, introducing values for Muslims to adopt, such as progressivism, economic development and excellence, and active citizenship. The SMI program has shaped the Islamic education program that the organization delivers. Yet another document that has shaped the lives of Singapore's Muslims is the influential Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association's *Moderation in Islam*. This bilingual document offers Islamically-acceptable positions for Singapore Muslims to take on issues such as terrorism and an Islamic state, amongst other things (Abdul Azeez 2016: 56, 150; 204). This book and some of the topics covered therein are currently being used as a resource manual in shaping Islamic education, including citizenship education, offered at selected Islamic institutions.

One of the newer educational programs shaping Muslim mindsets is *Being a Muslim in Singapore*, offered at various Islamic institutions such as mosques. Offered by MUIS when presented at mosques, the program constitutes three separate lectures typically offered in a year to students in efforts to primarily combat extremism. *Being a Muslim in Singapore* can be offered by other organizers at locations other than mosques and is the focus of analysis in this chapter. The program's first lecture, like others on shaping a Singaporean Muslim identity, is on Muslim and non-Muslim relations according to Islam. In it, students are introduced to living with people of other faiths in the Singapore context, the appropriate suggested attitude being one of tolerance. The second lecture focuses on Muslims citizens living in a non-Muslim state. Amongst other things, the lecture justifies Singaporean Muslims feeling faithful to their country at a time when extremists are suggesting that Muslims cannot live in a non-Islamic

country or be a citizen there. The third lecture, on inter-faith dialogue, aims to instill positive attitudes amongst Muslims towards inter-faith dialogues, amongst other things (MUIS 2018). All lectures are followed by question-and-answer sessions. The modules are not examinable.

Thailand:

Thailand government through its National Buddhist association sends out letters to schools to hold Theravada rituals and religious celebrations periodically, marginalizing those who are not part of the faith of majority. As a secular state, Thailand treats all religions and faith equally in its constitution. However, Buddhism as the faith of majority has a special position in the country's institutions.

RE formally takes form teaching about religions (e.g. Social Studies, Religion and Culture). Yet it is dominated by the Theravada Buddhism, unless the school is of the Muslim majority. In fact, the Ministry of Education in some cases urged Theravada Buddhist religious prayer, celebrations and holidays in schools.

The 20-Year IP Roadmap has also been used as a framework in setting up the national education plan. The educational plan emphasizes on building national security through education under the aforementioned three pillars, especially monarchy for the people's unity, affection and solidarity. To be specific, the peace-building process in the three Southern Border Provinces through education and peaceful means is also mentioned in the roadmap of which is strictly followed by the government.

Furthermore, the curriculum is an opportunity for the government to implement its policies. Social, religion and culture studies primarily focus on Buddhism and its principles. Whereas, according to the curriculum, there is religious diversity in Thai society which includes Islam, Christianity, Brahmin, Hinduism and Sikhism, but Thai students can only obtain a shallow overview of these religions in school. The research finds that there are guidelines in the textbooks recommending appropriate behaviors for conflict resolutions and peaceful coexistence in the society through understanding of diversity and tolerance. This open-mindedness and acceptance of religions leads to prevention of violent extremism.

The data in this study shows that government plays an important role in the administration of religious education along with the values government needed to instill, to be specific, the values of diversity, tolerance and respecting others.

The Philippines:

The 1987 Constitution also recognized the spiritual dimension of citizens when it stated that educational institutions shall "teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, and develop moral character and personal discipline."

RE policies in the Philippines vary according to religion of majority within an area, either it is Catholic majority or Muslim majority. The religious education follows the religion of the majority. Religious education is given as a religious instruction for respective believers.

The 1987 constitution allowed the optional teaching of religion in public elementary and secondary schools. RE policies in the Philippines are implemented according to religion of majority within an area, either it is Catholic majority or Muslim majority.

Catholic group has a significant influence on the government policies on education e.g. integration of RE in the Philippine national education although the Constitution of the Philippines declares that the state is secular since the separation of church and state in the 1898 first Philippine Constitution known as the Malolos and the introduction of secularization by the Americans at the turn of the 19th century, religious education has been sidelined. But its essence was carried on within the development of values and peace education up until the present. This shows that religion remains to be an important component in the lives of the Filipinos and of the state. While Catholic educational institutions managed to cope with government's educational policies and became important and influential learning institutions in the country, Islamic education in Sulu and Mindanao that predated the coming of western colonizers was neglected. This neglect is one of the long historical injustices and oppressions the Muslims suffered from the hands of the Filipino Christian politicians from the time Sulu and Mindanao were integrated into the larger Philippine body politics. Despite of that, Madrasah continued to survive through the efforts of the religious scholars and voluntary contributions of the Muslim parents. It was only when the Muslims fought the government to regain their independence that government started to give importance to Islamic education in the country. Islamic education since then became an important part of the many peace agreements between the Bangsamoro fronts and the government and government's national educational agenda.

The most significant development is the accreditation of private madrasah and the integration of Arabic Language and Islamic Values

for Muslim students in public elementary schools nationwide in 2004. Other faith denominations have criticized the government for giving special consideration to Islamic education in the country. Actually this was done to counter and prevent the rise of violent extremism that posed a serious threat to the national security of the country. To Muslims, all government efforts of developing the Islamic education is not yet enough since the long issue of injustice has not yet addressed. Indeed, government development programs for Islamic education lost to the long cycle of war and peace talks between the Bangsamoro fronts and the government that did not put an end to the injustices in the Muslim areas. Some Madrasah even became a venue where disenchanted Muslim religious scholars openly expressed their anti-government sentiments like the case of the Maute brothers.

C. Religious Education and Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)

UNESCO distinguished two categories of driver to violent extremism, namely push and pull factors (UNESCO 2017, 20). Push factor is the condition that supports violent extremism to occur. Pull factor is individual attractiveness that influences others to commit to violent extremism. Education can be used to raise the awareness of the danger of violent extremism and to prevent individuals to be involved in such an action. The importance of education in preventing violent extremism can be implemented through religious education. However, careful consideration is important to ensure that the contents and the methods of religious education are relevant to the mission of violent prevention.

Ratna Ghosh, et all (2016) identified four approaches for education system to consider for good education but which will act as means to counter violent religious extremism. Firstly, ***Promote values of citizenship and diversity***. Citizenship education must instill both a strong sense of affiliation to the state, as well as develop a vision for the common good keeping in mind the diversity of the society. Secondly, ***Critical education to develop an understanding of history and power relations in society***. The importance of training students to think historically *is* related to the fact that it equips students with the conceptual and methodological tools that will equip them for daily social issues in today’s multicultural realities. Thirdly, ***Religious literacy to promote knowledge of the other***. Religious literacy can foster the spaces to develop the moral stance necessary to recognize *the other*.

Lastly, ***Media literacy***. Uncritical consumption of digital media and a lack of critical media consciousness among the population, especially among potential youth recruits pose an unprecedented danger to the security of the nations.

Therefore, teachers play significant roles in providing conducive environment in schools. Teachers are required to have skills in facilitating discussions around issues of violent of extremism and radicalization with their students. Classroom therefore has to be a safe place for students to voice and share their thoughts through respectful and open dialogue environment while encouraging critical thinking for the learners.

This study attempts to capture what educational institutions are actually doing in the six countries under study in a sustained way to tackle violent extremism, and whether there is any evidence of the impact of these activities.

Indonesia

The study found that the Indonesian government is aware of threat of violent extremism and has taken necessary actions. However, religious education policies remain vulnerable to intolerant, discriminative and violent practices. Most high schools are indicated to follow government regulations on religious education, especially curriculum. Additionally, schools also maintain freedom to create their own religious education curriculum and practices, which make religious education vary in practice.

It should be noted that although the policies and the curricula are designed to prevent religious radicalism, there are some opportunities that are potentially used to instill the values of intolerance and radicalism. The opportunities include misinterpretation of the prescribed curricula and the absence of government's supervision in school-developed religious education. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' regulation on religious education allows school to create their own religious education curriculum and create their own extracurricular activities related religious education. The extended curriculum and the extra curriculum activities are potentially used to infuse intolerant messages to students.

The government regulations and religious education practices are generally designed to promote moderate understanding of religion. However, religious education does not prepare students to live in a

pluralistic society. This is because Indonesia's religious education only focuses on religious understanding. Students are facilitated to learn and increase their knowledge and experiences on their own religious traditions. Indonesia's religious education does not allow students to learn other religions and understand different religious traditions. As a result, students' understanding of different religions is lacking.

Religious education remains exclusive to its adherent. There is no effort, both in policy and practice, in introducing different faith to students. In the school where classes of different religious education take place at the same time, for instance, students do not know what their friends do and learn. As a result, the harmonious life that state and school aim to achieve will be superficial, because they do not really know each other, and at some point they will see each other as threat.

State schools provide religious instruction for major religious group in confessional manner. Textbooks in Indonesian high schools acknowledge the six recognized religions in Indonesia. Yet when it comes to rituals and celebrations, other faith groups are less accommodated by the governments let alone the schools' authorities. As Religious education is more taught as religious instruction and is of the authority of school officials, much of religious education in private schools is beyond state supervision.

Malaysia:

Religious education for Muslim students is taught as Religious instruction and has not significantly touched upon PVE-relevant concepts. However, for those of non-Muslim students, Moral education -as an equivalent of Islamic education to Muslim students- includes tolerance and respect to others. The Malaysian government has done reasonably well in preventing violent extremism especially in religious education as evidenced by the very low number of domestic terrorist incidences in the past. Partial credit can be given to the federal government's vise-like control over schools and curriculum and the efforts of various federal and state agencies to nip the problem in the bud by organizing training workshops and seminars for school teachers.

However, absence of violent extremism does not mean that Islamic practice in Malaysia is inclusive and progressive. It is still deeply conservative and hostile to views that are deemed to be "deviant." The conflation of Islamic and Malay identities in Malaysia further complicates the unequal relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

There is a consensus among the informants that violent extremism is solely a problem found in Islamic schools, in particular *sekolah pondok*, *sekolah tahfiz* and *Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, all of which are outside the purview of the federal government. The informants believe that the main reason why violent extremism is barely an issue in public schools (religious and non-religious) can be contributed to close supervision of the federal government. The aforementioned "problematic" schools are part of the informal education system (for *sekolah pondok* and *sekolah tahfiz*) and fall under the aegis of the state government via the State Islamic Council (*Majlis Agama Islam Negeri*). Finally, in the long run, any effort to combat violent extremism has to incorporate inter-ethnic and inter-religious interactions at the core of its programs since it is the only way to foster genuine empathy and sustain peace in a multicultural country such as Malaysia.

Myanmar:

Religious education and PVE-concepts are non-existent in state schools. Schools are teachings about moral and ethics but very little about sharing and multicultural co-existence. Students receive very little information about different beliefs, and hence they do not understand the traditions and the beliefs of other religions. Further implication to this is lacking of awareness, conflict and destruction, because one will see other religions as a threat to the existing one.

There are no orders from the government that PVE/CVE for religious extremism must be taught but there is teaching about being evil to other people is bad. This is carried out through stories and lessons. Dhamma schools for children last only three months in the summer and there are examinations. There are no specific focused teachings about violence in Dhamma schools and teachers believe that children will not commit violence if they strongly believe in Buddhism.

There are also no discussions or studies made at madrasahs for preventing and countering the existing extremist violence relating to Islamic issues. Although some teachers are interested in the issues of PVE, they feel not capable on how to study the issues and discuss them. There are no teachings about extremism in the teachings of Islam. There is a preamble at the beginning of hadith scriptures and it says "One's action is driven by his intentions". It is meant to apply in reality and taught in schools. "There are no systematic teaching about violence prevention, we just add more knowledge in the lessons and education. They know how to think critically as they learn critical

thinking. Since they know critical thinking they will learn how to accept virtue and abandon evil. They will know teamwork as they learn cooperation. They were also taught how to work as a team with people of same or different characteristics. Addition to that, we also teach them international perspectives. If something happen, our action will be held accountable by law and there will be penalties", said one of the teachers during an interview.

There are no instigations to cause problems with other religions in monastic schools, but we heard it exists in a particular Dhamma schools. We haven't seen that much of other people speaking ill about other religions to the children. But, there are persuasions for political ideologies. There are no laws and by-laws to prevent about speaking ill against other religions, but there are policies for it. (There is a policy against inciting problems about religion and politics). But we have no by-laws instructing what to do when it happens, said one of the interviewees.

"Some people cherry-pick the religious teaching and try to mislead. Buddhism is kind of exclusive. There are also religious assumptions extracted from corporeal issues. Compulsory duties are only for monk, not for laymen. These are optional choices for laymen. According to my understandings, there are compulsory obligations to be followed in other religions. Therefore, religion and follower become one. Since the compulsory obligations are not for laymen, religious teaching misuses are very rare in Buddhism", a Sayadaw said.

"Anti-extremism is included in the lessons. But, not comprehensively. We teach them systematically that unity of diverse people can attain achievements. It also depends on the teachers. They do not teach that much on this subject. There is also a custom of trying to get individual development and not integrating, even with the people of same characteristics. There are training activities of monastic schools collaborated with CDNH. There is also an agreement between monks to teach about peace to the children in different ways only when they get older" said the Sayadaw at the monastic school. Even though there is a lesson called "Fundamentals of Other Religions" in the curriculum of the monastic school, but, it is not taught comprehensively.

Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH), a local NGO promotes racial and religious diversity through the development of public school syllabi and teaching materials devised to enhance understanding about different religions, foster interfaith dialogues and promote deeper understanding of human rights. A section called

Introduction to Religions is integrated into a module for third and fourth grade students, covering four major faiths—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. It aims at promoting knowledge for children regarding different faiths. It has published a total of 17 civic textbooks for basic education—from kindergartens to 10th grade, including handbooks and guidebooks for teachers. The center has introduced its civic materials to educators in Rangoon and Mandalay, seeking suggestions and discussions from civil society organizations as well as private and monastic schools.

However, such movement received challenges from the ultranationalist group MaBaTha. MaBaTha's monk U Wirathu said the move was an attempt at "Islamization" and that there was no need to include religious education in curriculums and if so, only Buddhist teachings were appropriate. "Only one popular faith is urged to be included instead of outlining all [four] religions." One of Ma Ba Tha's supporters, the National Development Party chaired by former presidential advisor U Nay Zin Latt, issued a statement denouncing the CDNH civic textbooks. "Civic education is a guideline for the public and should not be religious instruction….We strongly condemn any government or non-government organization that incorrectly publishes such inappropriate provisions in curriculums instead of focusing on teaching our own culture of race and religion." The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the country's leading opposition party, also issued a statement regarding the curriculum that stated "education and religion should not be mixed up." The USDP expressed concern that the Ministry of Education might use the CDNH materials in the government curriculum for primary school students. "In such a sensitive situation regarding religious tolerance, such a curriculum provision is unacceptable."

Singapore:

In government schools, i.e., within secular space, lessons on Singaporean citizenship are situated within a context of a 'multi-racial, multi-cultural society, where shared values and respect are key to building and maintaining a cohesive and harmonious nation' (Ministry of Education, undated). This is the context whether students, both non-Muslims and Muslims, are exposed to the broader and more global view of Singaporean citizenship that directly confronts violent extremism, or the local view of Singaporean citizenship. Whereas lessons on Singaporean citizenship couched within the larger global context take

a more descriptive and less prescriptive approach, in contrast, in the localized approach to Singaporean citizenship, curriculum developers have actively aimed to construct an ideal society out of Singapore by trying to cultivate particular kinds of civic values in students that aim to nurture 'harmony'.

In the Social Studies program for the students aged 15–16 from the Express and Normal (Academic) streams, 'harmony' functions as the leitmotif. Social Studies students are taught the mechanisms of creating and preserving peace and social cohesion out of the diversity in Singapore. Despite the Social Studies textbook not explicitly providing a link between harmony-building and a reduction in extremism, curricula are not fixed but are open to interpretation. Building a harmonious society is nonetheless linked with issues tied to extremism in both the minds of political leaders and some Social Studies teachers, who are important active interpreters of the curriculum.

Social Studies teaches tell students to cherish sameness and strive for 'meaningful' social relations. Students learn from their textbook that 'harmony' 'refers to an agreement in actions, opinions and feelings.' They are taught that 'differences will happen [but] interactions need to remain meaningful in order to strengthen harmony in society.' Students are reminded that '[a]ctions, opinions and feelings expressed irresponsibly could erode trust and weaken cohesion between people' (Ministry of Education 2016b: 157, 168).

The Social Studies textbook presents 'common space' as a way to facilitate some of the smoothening out of differences between people. Singapore's second prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, introduced the idea of a 'common space' in the late 1990s, which when actualized, gathers together Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other Singaporeans in a shared civic space. Here, a common set of laws and a common Singaporean identity are intended to prevail. The different ethnic communities are equal to each other. The different religious communities also have equal status relative to each other. Based on the Social Studies text, the common space has now been extended to incorporate different nationalities and socio-economic groups in the light of the rapidly changing demographic realities confronting Singapore, due to immigration, for example. Outside of the common space, what operate are separate and distinctive spaces where the different groups can live out of their separate ethnic conventions (Ministry of Education 2016b: 159; Vasu 2009: 320–21).

Students as responsible and committed citizens learn that there are different common space institutions. One of them is the IRCC or Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles. The IRCCs organise inter-ethnic or inter-faith themed activities such as heritage trails and dialogues. Curriculum writers also instruct students about other organizations that operate within the common space to promote harmony, such as OnePeople.sg (Ministry of Education 2016b: 160–1). "In theory, yes, they [students] know that they must play a part in maintaining harmony but how can they practice it?," said one teacher during an interview.

The lessons on Singaporean citizenship that directly address terrorism are more descriptive and less didactic; they are mostly located not in local but international space. For the first time, in 2017, several schools conducted exercises simulating a scene of an intruder in the school's premises to carry out an attack, prompting teachers and students to lock themselves within classrooms and to hide from the "intruder". The exercises were to prepare teachers and students in the event of actual terrorist attacks in schools or in nearby areas (*Today*, 28 October 2017).

Muslims students at Nuur Institute like many Muslim students registered to study Islam at other locales in Singapore—all in religious (Islamic) space—are exposed to conceptions of 'citizenship' to counter terrorism that share similarities with what government school students are exposed to. Institutions teaching Islam in Singapore are private but many, though not all of them, have government links.

The students, also of high school age like those in government schools considered above, are introduced to various topics in three separate lectures in a year in efforts to primarily combat violent extremism. These lectures are entitled 'Muslim and non-Muslim relations'; 'Muslims [as citizens] Living in a non-Muslim Country'; and 'Islam and Inter-faith Dialogue'. Islamic Singaporean citizenship is aimed at cultivating loyalty to the Singapore state and to perform other citizenship duties, such as the civic one described above. Concurrently, in a program that is religion-centered, Muslim students also have their faith in God and Islam reinforced, unlike non-Muslims and Muslims exposed to citizenship education in government schools. Arguments countering terrorists' discourse are often drawn from the Qur'an, the holy Prophetic traditions and Islamic law. In the lessons on how to nurture social cohesion at Nuur Institute, the aim has been to protect the country's pluralism, stability and security, all of which are seen as

interconnected.

Extremism, treated as transnational terrorism, is also discussed at schools. However, it is located less within Singapore society and more in global space. In contrast, the Muslim students at the Nuur Institute studied Singapore values and citizenship duties from an Islamic perspective, thus revealing a second track of Singapore values and duties for these students operating out of Islamic space. As a part of their program, Muslim students were exposed to meanings of terms like *jihad* and *hijrah*, which aimed to debunk extremist discourse. Also the concept of *al wala wal bara* Terrorism was brought home forcefully and not treated in a distant way. In this Islamic version of Singapore values and citizenship duties, Muslim students were also exposed to the importance of inter-faith dialogues as well as the need to contextualize Islam to the Singapore context, which is secular, multireligious and multi-ethnic.

In the goal of building a peaceful, harmonious and cohesive Singapore society, students at government schools as well as at the Nuur Institute have been introduced to similar yet different approaches on what it means to be Singapore citizens. Both sets of curricula emphasize the values of a united society that has space for expressions of pluralism. It is thus ironic that when placed side by side, the two curricula, in their detailed strategies on citizenship instruction, are different by presenting different ways of behaving as citizens. Whereas citizenship is a fundamental identity of a member of a nation-state, there have emerged two tracks of citizenship and their attendant duties. The ideological frames of reference for citizenship lessons in secular schools are different from that which students at Nuur Institute are exposed to. The rise of these two tracks of citizenship has been facilitated by different factors.

Singapore is a secular state which adopts an ambiguous relationship with the management of religion. While seemingly secular at the official level, historical and other reasons have given religious values and practices an institutional presence, backed even by legislation in the case of Islam. Islamic Singapore citizenship—its values and duties—has arisen because Islamic institutions operate in domains that do not sit squarely in the public realm and thus easily go unnoticed; they are encapsulated in a space of their own generated by the country's CMIO pluralism framework. In these Islamic institutions, a key government agency like the Ministry of Education is not present. The ultimate authorities of power in both the visions of citizenship education are

different and are very likely to operate in separate spaces. Singapore society thus has become more differentiated, standing at odds with the intended vision of building a more united, harmonious and cohesive Singapore. A more differentiated society, in the form of there being two tracks of citizenship values, may be one where these is greater diversity. However, for diversity of this kind to co-exist well, new bridges would have to be built to close the gap between secular ideals and religious (Islamic) ideals, where there are such gaps, and indeed, there are many of such gaps. The fight against extremism has attempted to solve one set of problems only to open up new ones in Singapore society.

Interactive dramas can be used, followed by a facilitator opening a conversation with the students. The skits can highlight racial prejudices and other similar content. When the facilitator gets the students to share their experiences, the conversations that can emerge can be very powerful as stories and experiences are shared, building a sense of empathy and a sense of community, even around people who have prejudices.

The Social Studies text presents information on religion to both Muslim and non-Muslim students. They are also introduced to short descriptions of six religions found in Singapore, i.e., Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Taoism.

Thailand:

In Muslim dominated areas especially in a conflict area, PVE-themes such as peace and reconciliation are taught in Islamic-based schools, however, the study finds that Buddhist schools are still dealing with Islamophobia that PVE-themes are not available in schools. With the objective in building the Thai-ness in the students' lives, Thai government has been in constant efforts reassuring that schools incorporate Thai ways in leading lives, such as Thai language and greeting in every school. However, when it comes to its implementation, the Thai government is ambigious in its position toward the faith of majority. For instance, annual formal letters are sent annually to all schools to hold meditation, religious holidays and youth camps, leaving the other faith groups unackowledged.

In the effort of preventing violent extremism, government issued education policy that promotes diversity and tolerance. However, the data reveals discrepancy between government policies on religious education and religious education textbooks used in schools. While

diversity is mentioned in the constitution, textbooks show otherwise. The faith of majority, Theravada Buddhism and its teachings- are main content of the text books with minimally recognizing other faiths. The religious education textbooks introduce concepts of peaceful coexistence, reconciliation, and basic principles of human rights yet exclude narratives of those who subscribe to faith minorities.

Schools run by minority groups, in this study, reveal to be open to other faith groups by opening space for discussion, exposing students to different places of worships and celebrating diversity by facilitating different religious holidays' celebration. While in most schools in this study, critical thinking is not encouraged. Religions are taught to be taken for granted and questioning one's faith is forbidden.

Furthermore, in regard to the understanding of PVE, the research discovers that it varies in each area. Pattani that is located in the region considered as a conflict zone has a better insight in PVE than the provinces like Khon Kaen and Buriram which are further away from the violence. This also means that the students are not exposed to the concepts of PVE in school and lack thereof the understanding and knowledge of PVE. Moreover, religion is an important aspect of such encouragement. According to the interviews, the religious schools are still facing Islamophobia due to the misperception of Islam teaching, which has been associated with terrorism. However, these schools eagerly incorporate peaceful means and reconciliation with a focus on religion in their curriculum and representation. Thus, they have a better understanding of PVE than the schools that prioritize Buddhism and self-consciousness.

The study finds that PVE cannot solely rely on religious education but also the teachers must accept and be open minded to the diversity. Religion teaching in Thailand does not have a significant role in the people's everyday life as the religious education is not taken seriously, but it rather has a starting point in memorizing i.e. memorizing the names of Buddha's relatives and the prayer chants which do not reflect the true doctrine. It has led to a misunderstanding of religious education not being part of the PVE. On the contrary, the religious schools in the three Southern Border Provinces regard religious education as a significant part of peace-building and reconciliation in this world because Islam is the way of life. The belief and the practices must conform to one another. At the same time, the religious education provided by the Ministry of Education merely emphasizes the examination. Students study religions to pass O-NET, and rather

participate in various religious activities than to learn the doctrine in coexisting peacefully.

The religious education in Thailand has not been taken seriously in preventing violent extremism. The three Southern Border Provinces are considered as a conflict zone and the government has illustrated the region as a vulnerable area where insurgency is fostered. This has created the atmosphere of fear and mistrust among the local residents. Nevertheless, the studies on this region have shown that the ongoing conflicts were born because of the historical wounds from oppression by the Thai government. The ethnic distinctions are no longer so distinctive as they have become obscured due to the attempts by the government in removing the Melayu characteristics, which is corresponded to the explanation of ethnic conflict by Michael J. Montesano and Patrick Jory (2017). Thus, the interaction across cultures specifically the multiculturalist framework, has been used as a strategy for conflict resolution in the three Southern Border Provinces.

From the perspective of PVE, religious education at some schools has been successful in preventing violence extremism as can be seen at minority religious-based schools such as, Christian based schools and Public Islamic base schools, where the space for discussion is open and safe and the students are not judged for their extremist behaviors, as they will be instead educated on the basis of love and empathy. However, there are other schools that lack of understanding and sensitivity of the subject, hence, they associate the concepts of PVE and VE with cause of violence and do not educate the students on such subjects. While some schools provide an open space for the students to discuss, accept and respect the religious diversity, the research finds that these schools do not include critical thinking in their teaching techniques and the students are not encouraged to question their own or other religions.

The Philippines:

Religious education in the Philippines has undergone various developments and continuously faces many challenges as a consequence of the local people’s reactions to the coming of various civilizations, and the domestic issues on peace and development. Religious education remains interwoven in the way of life of the Filipinos. Churches and mosques where religious education emanated remain to be powerful structures largely defining Philippine society and politics. Religious education takes a form as Values Education and

religious instruction. However, PVE-themes are yet to be integrated in the subjects.

Since the separation of church and state in the 1898 first Philippine Constitution known as the Malolos and the introduction of secularization by the Americans at the turn of the 19th century, religious education has been sidelined. But its essence was carried on within the development of values and peace education up until the present. This shows that religion remains to be an important component in the lives of the Filipinos and of the state. While Catholic educational institutions managed to cope with government's educational policies and became important and influential learning institutions in the country, Islamic education in Sulu and Mindanao that predated the coming of western colonizers was neglected. This neglect is one of the long historical injustices and oppressions the Muslims suffered from the hands of the Filipino Christian politicians from the time Sulu and Mindanao were integrated into the larger Philippine body politics.

Despite of that, Madrasah continued to survive through the efforts of the religious scholars and voluntary contributions of the Muslim parents. It was only when the Muslims fought the government to regain their independence that government started to give importance to Islamic education in the country. Islamic education since then became an important part of the many peace agreements between the Bangsamoro fronts and the government and government's national educational agenda. The most significant development is the accreditation of private madrasah and the integration of Arabic Language and Islamic Values for Muslim students in public elementary schools nationwide in 2004.

Other faith denominations have criticized the government for giving special consideration to Islamic education in the country. Actually this was done to counter and prevent the rise of violent extremism that posed a serious threat to the national security of the country.

To Muslims, all government efforts of developing the Islamic education is not yet enough since the long issue of injustice has not yet addressed. Indeed, government development programs for Islamic education lost to the long cycle of war and peace talks between the Bangsamoro fronts and the government that did not put an end to the injustices in the Muslim areas. Some Madrasah even became a venue where disenchanted Muslim religious scholars openly expressed their anti-government sentiments like the case of the Maute brothers.

Conclusion

Violent extremism and ethno-religious communal conflicts are amongst the most pertinent challenges to the states and societies in Southeast Asia. Its causes and origins are often as from the resentment towards the state's policies that are perceived as unfair and repressive. The impact of these problems has reached beyond the territorial borders of the individual countries in the region. These challenges produce instability, create mistrust and division within communities, eroding the legitimation of the ruling powers. The pathways to respond to and manage these challenges are complex and imposing.

One of the responses to prevent such problems from arising is through education, particularly religious education. What makes religious education in Southeast Asia is worthy of investigation is that the region provides a fault line of religious intensity and interaction. It is not only the home of the largest concentrations of Muslims but also Buddhism and Catholicism. Furthermore, groups that often launch violence are not confined to Islam. Violent extremism can manifest just as violently and significantly in Buddhist form, as shown by the MaBaTha in Myanmar. Religious violence led by extremist Buddhist monks in Myanmar against the minority Rohingya has manipulated nationalism and democratic freedoms of expression to promote religious hate and violence.

This study presents complex political, sociological, historical and legal background of the role of religion in the six countries under study. It provides interesting case studies related to the ways each state treats majority and minority groups as well as how extremist groups use make use of the history in the effort to reconstruct the past and reinvent nations. The study also explores to what extent religious education could deter extremism and address sources of ethno-religious conflicts.

Among the rich complexity and diversity of the Southeast Asian religious experience and religious education, Singapore would undoubtedly be of interest to policy makers concerned with the prevention of violent extremism. Singapore's experience with promoting a secular state in conditions of majority religiosity suggests that, appropriately conceived, secularism is a critical and potentially effective tool for managing relations between majority and minority religious communities—all the more so if the government both insists on secularism in theory and applies it evenhandedly in practice. Secularism, as understood by the majority in Singapore, implies not an attempt to keep religion as far out of the public domain as possible, but rather a set of norms regulating the state's relationship to religious groups that aims to ensure that all religions are accorded equal public status and respect.

Crucially, it also licenses the state to intervene whenever and wherever minority—and indeed majority—religious groups are subject to discrimination or ill treatment: in other words, to prevent not only society's domination by a particular religion, but also—and equally importantly in the Singaporean context—a majority religion's domination of other minority religious groups.

There is little evidence on how types of schooling or educational content and practices contribute to conflict by facilitating participation in and support for violence and extremism. PVE-related materials have not been embedded in formal curriculum in the schools within the six countries under study, except in Singapore. Singapore approach in using value education through schools in instilling values around citizenships and religious harmony could be a model for other countries in Southeast Asia in which all students, regardless their ethnicity and religions, receive equal treatment.

In its negative form, education can be a tool of control and exclusion, privileging certain groups and narratives, and may be marked by structural forms of discrimination and barriers to development. With respect to issues of identity, in the sense of the preservation and protection of core cultural religious beliefs and practices, it is plausible to argue that Muslims fare reasonably well in contemporary Myanmar.

With respect to Muslim security concerns, however, the picture is a less rosy. Justice and accountability are perceived as having been seriously undermined by developments over several years, the 2002 MaBaTha anti-Muslim pogroms in which there is clear evidence of direct official complicity, a command and control role stretching up to

the highest levels of state authority and a prevailing culture of impunity with respect to those implicated in directing and organizing the killings.

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Company Profile

The Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM UIN Jakarta) is an autonomous research center under the State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. PPIM UIN was established in 1994 and has continuously conducted research, advocacy and publication in the issues of religious life and religious education in Indonesia. In collaboration with UNDP Indonesia, PPIM UIN Jakarta has conducted a program on Countering Violent Extremism for Youth (CONVEY) Indonesia since 2017. It is a program aims at promoting peace in Indonesia based on the potentials of religious education focusing on issues such as tolerance, diversity and violent extremism among the youth. Additionally, since its establishment, PPIM UIN Jakarta has published *Studia Islamika*, an internationally recognized journal with a focus on Islamic studies in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

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