
Religious and Cultural Moderation of Ambonese Society Post-1999 Conflict

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Abstract

Psychologically, A conflict can cause various traumas towards two contradicting communities, including the Ambon conflict in 1999, even though the Ambonese people are known as tolerant and open-minded society. This research aimed to determine: the condition of Ambonese society before the 1999 conflict; the dynamics and periodization of Ambon-1999 conflict; the essence of teaching moderation toward religions in Ambon; and the practice of religious and cultural moderation of Ambonese society post-1999 conflict. The research was a qualitative research (field research). The instruments used were interview session, observation, and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative method. The research indicated that initially the Ambonese society lived in harmony and peace, because they were bound by the culture of *pela* and *gandong*. The Ambon-1999 conflict lasted for about five years, sometimes the conflict reappeared because of the dominant ethnic sentiments especially the sentiments of religious believers who were very sectarian in understanding their religious teachings. Hence, religious believers were required to be moderate in understanding their religion. Religious moderation became an important matter for all believers. In this case, religious moderation did not mean to confound the truth while eliminating the identity of each religious believers. However, religious moderation tended to an openness of attitude in accepting the existence of other religious believers besides certain religion that need to acknowledge and respected as well. Thus, this belief will lead to openness, tolerance and flexibility in behavior. As one nationality, people should be fair to others whether an individual was born in Ambon or who just came to Ambon, regardless of their religious, racial, ethnic and linguistic background. Religious and cultural moderation of the Ambonese society is reflected in their behavior, not only in slogans. There was a new collective awareness of Ambonese society after the 1999 conflict in order to respect each other's beliefs according to each different religions and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Religious moderation, Cultural moderation, Conflict of Ambon, Religious tolerance.

Introduction

Indonesia with its diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, and languages made it as one of the nations that has multicultural society. This diversity becomes a blessing if it could be managed properly, even become a uniqueness and strength (Fareckh, 2008; Hanna, 2015; Mahfud, 2011). Yet at the same time, the reality of such plurality could be a big challenge if it is not addressed wisely. Even, it could be a disunity threat and hostility that could tear social security. As in religious contestations in Indonesia which sometimes decorated with an uproar between groups caused by differences in religious understanding and paradigms of thinking. This group could be mapped into a group of exclusivism and liberalism (Azmi, 2013; Bakri, 2015; Bartels, 2017). Exclusivism is a paradigm of

thinking that tends to be closed to diversity, while liberalism is on the other side, it is an understanding that fights for freedom in all aspects. Those two groups show the face of all religions, ethnic groups and ethnicities that are less modest and even religion is no longer considered as a blessing (Jati, 2013; Darlis, 2016).

In the middle of such condition, the moderation of all religious adherents as well as ethnic and cultural supporters is expected to provide solutions along with the character of religious and cultural technique which offered as solutions. Religious and cultural moderation does not mean as a gray neutral position which was often addressed to the term, nor does it mean that religious and cultural moderation was identical to the western paradigm bias which tended to fight for excessive freedom. In fact, religious and cultural moderation reflects universal values such as justice, equality, humanity, balance which belong to all religions and cultures (Idham, 2019).

The issue of religious moderation in the country has been rewarmed in recent years. This idea was brought up again by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and it becomes the main stream of the Ministry program in the next few years. In this case, religious moderation is a response to the emergence of intolerance and radical movements that change the nature of relations between religious communities to a more exclusive direction (Idham, 2019).

In recent years, the phenomenon of intolerance has intensified in Indonesia. This phenomenon does not only emerge from certain religious group, but from several religious groups. The relation between majority and minority groups which should be equal becomes more dominant. (Liliweri, 2016; Grunebaum, 1983; Wahid, 2006; Wathloly, 2016; Maula, 2019). Thus, conflicts in Indonesia have been a valuable lesson for the development, particularly the relation of inter-religious communities. One of the most noticeable conflicts was the Ambon conflict in 1999.

There are several things that needed to be achieved in implementing religious moderation in Indonesia, one of them is strengthening tolerance, whether social, political or religious tolerance. Tolerance is an attitude in order to provide space and avoid interference towards other people's rights in believing and expressing their beliefs, as well as stating opinions even though their beliefs are different from ours. (Farid, 2016; Hafidzi, 2019). Thus, tolerance refers to an open, generous, voluntary and gentle attitude in accepting differences (Ahmad, 2019).

As a nation, Indonesian religious identity is moderation. All religious communities in Indonesia employed a moderate religious paradigm. It causes religious life in Indonesia went on peaceful and serene atmosphere. This moderate paradigm has also become the foundation that uphold Indonesian state and nation (Idham, 2019). However, there was an interesting fact about the conflict of Ambon that spread all over Maluku (Maluku and North Maluku Provinces) which took countless lives and material. The conflict that lasted for about 5 years was resolved again and reunited the two contradiction groups of society (Bakri, 2015; Bartels, 2017). The reunification and reintegration of the two groups were through exploring the values of moderation in their own religious and cultural teachings.

Statement of Problem

The identification of problem in this research was defining the religious and cultural moderation of the post-1999 conflict of Ambonese society. The problem was elaborated in several research questions, namely: How was the condition of Ambonese society before the 1999 conflict? How was the dynamics and periodization of the 1999 conflict of Ambon? How was the core teachings of moderation on religions in Ambon?, Then, how was the practice of moderation by Ambonese society after the 1999 conflict?

Aim of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the practice of religious moderation towards Ambonese society in the post-1999 conflict, and specifically to find out: The condition of Ambonese society before the 1999 conflict, the dynamics and periodization of the 1999 Ambon conflict, the core teachings of moderation on religions in Ambon, and the practice of moderation employed by Ambonese society after the 1999 conflict.

Literature Review

The concept of "Religious Moderation" issued by the Ministry of Religious Affair is "Perspectives, attitudes and behavior, as well as always taking the middle path, acting fairly and avoiding extremeness in religion. "The elaboration of this meaning could be developed, that "Religious Moderation" meant to prior the balance of thinking and acting which related to living and life, whether as an individuals or citizens living in the state of Indonesia Republic (Compilation Team of Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affair, 2019). For Moslems, religious moderation is synonymous with "*Islam Washatiah*" or the middle line Islamic Movement which has an open (inclusive) minded, tolerance and also spreads peace (harmony) (Turmudi, 2016; Hanafi, 2017; Shihab, 2019).

The book written by M. Quraish Shihab (2019) revealed that the issue of moderation or *wasathiyah* was not an indecisive attitude towards something like a passive neutral attitude, nor a mathematical one. Also, it was not suggested by the word "*wasath*", as "middle" which leads to the notion that *wasathiyah* did not encourage people to try to reach the peak of something good and positive such as worship, knowledge, wealth and so on (Kamali, 2015; Shihab, 2019).

Islam Berkebudayaan (the root of Traditional wisdom, State Administration and Nationality) was written by M. Jadul Maula. It reveals thousands of cultures that lies on every inch of the islands which shows that Indonesia is not a merely exotic colors and trifles. But it is also the learning area and "at the same time" our socio-cultural basic (nationality). As in its local culture often experienced the traces of creativity and certain achievements of local geniuses in developing their way of life, system of thinking and also certain social systems (Maula, 2019; Jena, 2019).

The term of moderation, especially religious moderation emerged two points of view. First, this term is considered as a political term with a tendency to obscure and weaken the religious spirit, especially Moslems. In this case, the recommendation of religious moderation is seen as an effort to accommodate secular and liberal values. Therefore, many Moslems are skeptical of the idea of religious moderation (Ministry of Religious Affair of Indonesia Republic, 2019).

Second, the term of moderation is only being associated with religion. The discussion about moderation so far has only been about religious identity, especially as a response to the emergence of religious fundamentalist and violence-oriented acts. In fact, moderation can also be applied to cultural issues (Idham, 2019; Rais, 2020). Therefore, this study also discussed the cultural moderation. Thus, this is not only about religious identity but also cultural substance.

Research methodology

The investigation towards religious moderation in Ambon was categorized as a "phenomenological" research, which aimed to see the phenomenon of religious moderation after the communal conflict in Ambon in 1999. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach. Therefore, all research procedures were implemented qualitatively. As a result, the collected data were in the form of words

(sentences) which reported qualitatively whether oral or written sourced by the society and behavior that being observed (Usman, 2008; Creswell, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Ambon in Socio-Religious Perspective

Reading the Historical Context and Socio-Cultural of Ambon, Maluku Province.

Since the beginning, the Maluku islands were inhabited by two indigenous tribes, the Alune and the Wemale. Those tribes evolved to bring forth a number of other tribes, such as the Alifuru, Togitil, Furu Aru, Ternate, Seram, Rana, and Moa tribes. The diversity of these tribes then emerged becoming the term of Maluku. At least, at that time there were 41 sub-ethnic groups living in the Maluku islands (Suaedy, et al. 2000). The life of the society before the 1999 conflict was very harmonious. Moslems and Christians lived side by side and even mingled with one another without any quarrel (Farid, 2016; Jenna, 2019). On the other hand, this togetherness was strengthened by the existence of a *pela* system which functions as a social bond in their lives, whether it was inter religions, ethnicities and even relatives.

Maluku is known as a royal region which famous for the best spices in the world such as the cloves and nutmeg. As the largest spice-producing region in the world, many European, Arab, and other traders came to Maluku. These traders began to affect the lives of indigenous people such as Ternate, Tidore, Bacan, Jailolo, Makian, and Moti ineconomical, social and cultural aspects. At first, the arrival of the Europeans was welcomed by the natives. However, their dominant practice in trading had generated resistance from sultans such as Sultan Babullah, Sultan Nuku, and Pattimura. In Indonesia, conflicts and violence had also occurred since the colonial era, the revolution, the Old and the New Order. Violence was actually rooted in the political traditions of the kingdoms and also within Indonesian society itself (Andaya, 2015; Safi, 2017). The conflict in Ambon during the colonial era was reoccurred during the reformation era. The conflict of Ambon was the biggest and longest conflict in the 1999 reformation era (Mas'ood, 2001; Masringor, 2017).

Ambon was the main destination of the European in spices trading such as cloves and nutmeg as preservatives. Before the arrival, the trading had been going on for a long time between the local and traders from Malay, Arab, India, and others. The trading process used barter system or the exchange of goods between traders and locals. The traders were not only trading but also spreading their religion, Islam, which first encountered through the Kings especially in Ternate and Tidore (Hamid, 2015; Riza, 2019). The Europeans flocked to Ambon to trade in spices, because at that time cloves and nutmeg were very expensive in international trade. Europeans also spread religion in Maluku, in this case was Christianity. The spreading of Christianity was first carried out by the Portuguese and then followed by the Dutch. Since then there has been a differentiation between Muslims and Christians. Christians was backed up by the privileges of the Dutch government in terms of education and protection in case of problems with other social community (Andaya, 2015; Ismail, 2017).

The location of Ambon City is mostly in Ambon island territory (while the rest was part of Central Maluku Regency which consists of Leihitu, West Leihitu, and Salahutu Districts) and geographically it is located at the position: 30-40 South Latitude and 1280-1290 East Longitude, where as a whole of Ambon City is bordered by Central Maluku Regency. The area of Ambon City is 377 Km² and consists of 5 districts. Administratively, the government in the 5 sub-districts were divided into 25 customary lands, 5 villages and 20 sub-districts (BPS of Ambon 2019).

The country is a government unit which in the same level as village/ subdistrict led by a leader called the king. Its characteristic is traditional and part of cultural heritage of Maluku long ago. In socio-cultural terms, Ambon is an inseparable part of Central Maluku. The classification of society based on their father's line (patrilineal) which in traditional village structure is known as the "*matarumah*" or "*rumatau*". This was the foundation and main source in the government system of a country led by a particular clan as "*rumatau*" (Salokory, 2019). According to Jacob, the country as an alliance of indigenous people based on genealogical territory was formed based on religious segregation. Islamic country was popular among Ambonese as *negeri salam*, and Christian countries were called *negeri sarani* (Lattu, 2012).

The large amount of small powers in Maluku was bound by the same values and cultural models as a sign of the socio, historical, and cultural similarities of the Maluku people. Culturally, these people were bound by familyhood called as *gandong* and *pela*. In their tradition, *Gandong* had become a means of binding "family bond" between people of different religions, clans, and villages / countries as a result of the exodus (Ismail, 2017; Hananussa, 2019). *Gandong* is a cultural bond based on genealogical unity. *Pela* is a socio-historical culture which bound the two countries / villages of different religions (Islam and Christianity). Besides *gandong* and *pela*, there were also several Maluku local wisdoms, such as *asmasohi*, a process of cooperation in helping each other in order to complete a work based on society awareness (Takaria, 2011; Trijono, 2011).

According to BPS of Ambon (2019), the total population of Ambon in 2018 was 371,650 people (186,033 men and 185,617 women) spread over five sub-districts, Sirimau, Nusaniwe, South Leitimur, Ambon Baguala Bay, and Ambon Bay. The population was concentrated in Sirimau District with a density of 2,057 people / km² and the most sparsely populated sub-district was Leitimur Selatan with a population density of only 235 people / km². Currently, the population of Ambon city is very heterogeneous. Not only consist of communities known as "anak negeri", but also there were new comers from various regions in Indonesia known as "orang dagang". The economic sector was quite controlled by "orang dagang" who generally come from ethnic of Buton and Bugis, as well as Java. Meanwhile, "anak negeri" dominated over the government sector.

Religious life in Ambon

Ambon City was an encounter of two major religions, Islam and Christianity. Islam came to Ambon Island and *Lease* was brought from the Sultanate of Ternate at the beginning of the XV century, at least it was marked by the establishment of the Wapaue Mosque on the land of Keitetu Jazirah Leihitu which was claimed to have been established in 1414. Later, almost all countries in Ambon Island and its surroundings embraced Islam until the arrival of Dutch. At the beginning of XVII century the VOC came to Ambon Island and built the first church called the Immanuel Church in 1605 which was located not far from the Wapaue Mosque. Since then, the Christianization process has begun in Maluku region, especially Ambon Island and has succeeded in Christianizing most of the countries in the Leitimur Jaziran (which later became the Ambon City area) and some countries in the Leihitu Peninsula (which later became part of the Central Maluku Regency). Since then, the Ambonese population has been divided into two major religions with the proportion of the Christians which was bigger than the moslems (Castells, 2010).

It was mentioned that the amount of moslems in Ambon were 28,3% or 16.693 people from the total amount of 58.893 people in 1862 (Kadir, 2009:69). Leitimur areas which later became a part of Ambon, there was only one of 25 countries inhabited by moslems. It was Batumerah, while the 24 others were Christians. Eventhough in different religion, they were bound by cultural bond as social ties namely *pela* and *gandong* especially in

Maluku, Ambon. For example, moslems in Batumerah had a *pela* bond with *Passocountry* while also a *gandong* bond with Ema country. The moslems called the Christians as *basudara Sarani*, meanwhile the Christians called them as *basudara Salam*. The relation of two religions experienced anticlimaxes when a big riot took place in Januari 1999 until 2003.

Before the riot in 1995, the population of people in Ambon based on religion calculation was 52,93% for Christian, 41,71% for Islam, 5,23% Catholic, and the rest was Hindu and Buddha (Trijono, 2001:15). Christianity was generally held by locals (Ambon) as well as immigrants from other Maluku regions. Islam was generally embraced by immigrants from other Maluku regions as well as migrants from Buton and Bugis-Makassar. While Catholic generally came from Southeast Maluku which was the center of Catholicism in Maluku.

In 2019, there was a striking difference in population numbers in the BPS book of Ambon. This data shown the population of Ambon City in 2018 was 371,650 people (186,033 men and 185,617 women) (BPS p. 61 and 65). However, when describing the number of people based on religion, the population was 392,411, with details of 195,717 Muslims, 173,801 Christians, 22,321 Catholics, 348 Hindus, and 224 Buddhists (BPS p.81). There was a difference in population based on Ambon BPS data in 2019 between p. 65 and page 81 up to 20,761. The striking difference was the data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2019. The total population of Ambon City was 393,545 people with details of 195,717 Muslims, 174,051 Christians, and 23,777 Catholics, without mentioning Hindus and Buddhists.

The difference in data between BPS and the Ministry of Religious Affairs was also occurred in the amount of houses of worship. According to BPS data, the amount of houses of worship for Muslims was 199 consist of 142 mosques and 57 prayer rooms while from the Ministry of Religious Affairs version informed 230 houses of worship (175 mosques and 57 prayer rooms). According to BPS data, the number of Christian churches was 279, while according to the version of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there were only 291. According to BPS data, the number of Catholic houses of worship was only 34, consist of 23 churches and 11 chapels, while the Ministry version had 41 houses of worship consist of 8 churches, 17 stations and 16 chapels. The number of temples and monasteries for Hindus and Buddhists according to the BPS version was 2, while there was none from the Ministry version. In Ambon there were two state religious colleges, namely the Ambon State Islamic Institute (IAIN), which in 2015 changed its status from STAIN and the State Protestant-Christian College (STAKPN) which in March 2018 had changed its status to the State Christian Institute (IAKN) Ambon.

Muslims in Maluku owned strong Islamic traditions which were a blending of Islamic teachings and local traditions. Thus, in general, Muslims in Maluku, especially Ambon, were the believers of traditional Islam. There were several other Islamic groups such as *Muhammadiyah*, *al-Irsyad*, *Syarikat Islam*, and *Persis*. In addition, there were also *Salafi* and *Laskar Jihad* groups which had begun to develop since the riot, and *Syiah* groups had also existed in this city through the organization of *Ahlulbait* Indonesia (ABI). The mainstream church was the Maluku Protestant Church (GPM) which became the main synod for Maluku Christians. In Ambon there were also several other Christian denominations, which were quite large including the Indonesian Bethel Church (GBI), the *Sidang Allah* Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Adventist Church, and several fellowships of churches in Pentecostal and Charismatic levels. Catholics had a diocese called the Amboina Diocese which was originally based on Kei Island but later moved to Ambon City.

The Dynamics and Period of Ambon-Maluku Conflict

During the course of the New Order era, Maluku was one of the areas in Indonesia experiencing lack of attention from the central government, resulting in social and economic disparities (Idham, 2008; Safi, 2017), and such became the source of conflict. The conflict beginning in 1999 shocked all parties, both at the local, national and international levels. The conflict started between ethnic groups and then soon developed into a conflict between Islam and Christianity. This archipelago used to be a safe area tied to a cultural custom system such as *Pela Gandong*. The ambiguity of the role of Islam in Indonesia and the patrimonial relations in favor of the New Order has reinforced the divisions between Christians and Muslims. The New Order policies and the manipulative use of the religion in political support had negative consequences, particularly as Dutch colonial policies had created divisions among religious communities (Bertrand, 2012: 185-186). The Ambon case, which has spread throughout Maluku, is a human-caused refugee case. It was initially in the form of a simple conflict which led to limited riots, then continued into certain sporadic riots that ultimately became clashes between Muslims and Christians (Abdulrahman, 2002: 97).

Despite the fact that the 1999 Ambon conflict was triggered by trivial matters, but as it involved two different groups, in the end of the day, the conflict grew much bigger and attracted national and world attention. The bones of conflict in that region have actually been around for a long time, but incidents between drivers have been the actual trigger for a wider conflict. The conflict had been expanding in that the sensitivity of Ambon community people was to get involved that they were treated unjustly in concern with access to economy, education, political access and so forth (Rahman et al; 2020).

In the historical stage, Maluku is an open area. Its society is open to immigrants, so it is not surprising that in Maluku it is easy to find various ethnicities in the archipelago, even marriages among those ethnicities. The migration of people of Buton, Bugis-Makassar was increasing in Ambon and other Maluku areas, giving rise to economic competition with the indigenous population. Trade competition between immigrants and Ambonese people has resulted in social and economic disparities. January 19 of 1999, coincided with IdulFitri 1419 H, a holyday for Muslim following Ramadhan, in which Muslims usually celebrated the day by apologizing and forgiving one another, turned into a bloody tragedy (Safi, 2017).

First Period (January-April 1999)

January 19 of 1999 was the most historic date in the history of the Ambon conflict. It was the incidence of the initial conflict that was unprecedented. Local Ambonese people used to remember the frequent outbreaks of violence between inhabitants of *Mardika* who were mostly Christians and those of Batu Merah who are mostly Muslims (Bertrand, 2012). The dispute between a Christian public transportation driver and a young Bugismuslim descendant in Batu Merah developed into a religious conflict (Islam and Christianity). Information regarding the conflict varies. According to The Human Right Watch Refort, March 1999 (Triyono, 2001: 39-40), two versions of the causes of the 1999 Maluku conflict came out, that is, the version of the Church Lawyers team which was adopted by most members of the Christian community and that of Ambon Muslim Fact Search Team. According to the first version, the Church Lawyers Team:

“A Christian city transport driver, Jacob Lauhery or daily known as Yopi, became a victim of muggings and persecution of two Muslim youths of Bugis descent, one of whom was named Nursalim. According to this version, Yopi, who just arrived at the Batu Merah terminal when he arrived at the Batu Merah terminal, was approached by Salim asking for Rp500. Yopi refused the request, saying that he had no money because he had just

pulled his angkot. Then, Yopi drove her car to the Mardika terminal looking for passengers. Half an hour later Yopi returned to the Batu Merah terminal still without passengers. Salim approached Yopi again for money and again Yopi refused because she did not bring money. According to this version, Yopi asked the young man to stop his actions. As a counter reaction, Salim threatened to take out a knife from under his shirt and point it at Yopi's neck. Yopi fought and pushed the young man, closing the car and running to Mardika village. This happened twice, when Yopi returned to the Batu Merah terminal, Salim was still there again pointing his knife. Yopi then ran back to his house to take a badik knife followed by her friends from Mardika Village to look for Salim. But Salim was not there. Yopi and his friends finally returned home. But 15 minutes later, hundreds of Muslim youths from Batu Merah came to Yopi's house, but did not find Yopi and then attacked the residents of the nearby Mardikavillage” (Safi, 2017).

Meanwhile, the second version from the Ambonese Muslim fact-finding team, saying that:

“A young Muslim from Batu Merah was a victim of persecution by Yopi. The Muslim young man worked as a city transportation helper of a car by a driver named Yopi. According to this version, Yopi was a driver of a city transportation vehicle belonging to a resident of Bugis descent in Batu Merah. Before that incident, Yopi had used the car for personal use by renting it out to other people. Then, on behalf of the owner, the young helper asked Yopi for the rent of the car. Yopi refused the request and threatened the helper not to bring it up. An argument broke out between the two young men. Several Christian passengers in the car defended Yopi by berating the young Muslim helper. Then the Muslim helper ran to Batu Merah to ask his friend for help because he was threatened by Yopi. Finally, the two youth groups clashed and caused mass clashes between them (Safi, 2017).

The beginning of the outbreak of conflict in Ambon occurred on January 19, 1999 coincided with the Muslim holiday was known as the bloody Eid al-Fitr. The cause started with a fight between the youth of Batu Merah village who worked as a city transportation driver and a young *Mardika*, an unemployed man who often bullied a transportation driver headed for Batu Merah - *Mardika* at the terminal. From the conflict which was initially personal in nature, it escalated into communal conflicts between villagers of different religions, namely the villages of Muslim and Christian communities. The burning of places of worship belonging to the two communities in Ambon aroused sentiments of conflict of religious identity between them. In addition, the conflict also spread to ethnic conflicts between indigenous Christians and the Muslim migrant population of Butonese, Bugis-Makassar who is better known as BBM. On the same day, conflicts wildly broke out everywhere, such as in Dobo, Tanimbar, Southeast Maluku, Silale, Waihaong, Kudamati, Paradey, and BatuGantung.

On January 20, 1999, conflict spread to villages in the Maluku archipelago. The conflict was more devastating, erupting in many places such as Ambon City, Fort Karang, Nania, Hila, Wailete, Kamiri, Pohon Pule, Negeri Lama, Hitu, and Hative Besar. There was a burning of the Batu Merah market and the Mardika Market. In February 1999, conflicts erupted outside Ambon City, such as Seram Island. Conflicts occurred between residents of the villages of Rumberu, Rambatu, Witasi, and Kairatu on February 3-5, 1999. In Saparua, conflicts occurred, among others in Kulur, Sirisori Islam, Iha, Pia, Haria, Sirisori Kristen, Ouw, and Ulat on February 3, 1999. Conflict also occurred in Haruku Island. On 1-2 March 1999 conflicts again occurred in Batu Merah and Mardika. On March 5, 6 and 10, conflict occurred in Ambon City between Muslim and Christian village borders. The conflict started to decline in mid-April 1999.

Second period (July-December 1999)

The conflict at Poka Housing started from a commotion between residents that occurred on the night of July 23, 1999. The conflict started by the stone throwing at the houses of residents of the Poka housing estate. It was not clear who started, who threw and who was thrown. The conflict in this area was very surprising, because this area was known for its high solidarity among its citizens of different religions. On July 27, 1999, riots occurred again in Ambon city and on the outskirts of Ambon City as in Lateri I and III. On July 28, 1999, conflicts occurred again in Kampung Pisang, Batu Gong, and Hutumuri.

On August 3, the situation heated up again at the border between Batu Merah and Mardika. The tension was triggered by the news circulating in the community that two Muslims from Batu Merah were killed. The tension continued and eventually culminated in mass clashes between the two villages on August 10. On August 19, the conflict escalated again into an open conflict when the marines shot down a Muslim mob. As a result, five people died and 10 people were injured. Entering September to October, the situation in Ambon was still in a tense situation. The situation heated up at the end of October and lasted until December which finally peaked on December 26, 1999.

The conflict that occurred on December 26, 1999 began when the Silo church in Ambon City was burned down by the community without any significant prevention from the security forces (Leirissa, 2001: 38). Military assistance to the Muslim side, however, was insignificant in shifting the balance of strategy to Muslims. The destruction of the Silo church was only 300 meters from the al-Fatah mosque, and the soldiers seemed to show their partiality. The destruction of the Silo church was a symbolic blow for Christians (Jihan, 2017). Yet Muslims remain trapped in a narrow slum near the city port. For the destruction of the Silo church, Christians retaliated by burning the An-Nur mosque. The burning of two religious symbols of the two communities, namely the Silo Church and the Masjid an-Nur near the Trikora monument bordering Muslim and Christian villages in Ambon City, was a sign that the conflict really was a the conflict between religious believers.

Third Period (April 2000).

The third period of conflict had occurred since April 26, 2000. Conflicts occurred again on April 30, 2000 in Batu Merah and Mardika. The cause was due to the bombing and burning of houses in Mardika near Batu Merah. Following on May 16-17, 2000, conflict broke out again in Batu Merah and Mardika near Pos Kota Jl. AM. Sangaji. At least 13 people died and about 50 people were injured. Most of the victims were due to modern gunfire. On 16-18 May 2000, conflict occurred in Ahuru, Karang Panjang. Following May 20, 2000, conflict broke out in Laha near Pattimura Airport. An estimated 13 people were injured. The conflict in this period was more like modern warfare because heavy weapons circulated freely on Ambon Island. This conflict was especially controlled by Laskar Jihad, where Christians were pushed back and attacked by Muslims who were supported by the jihad forces. If the conflict in the first and second periods of the Christian community was relatively dominant, then in this third period, the Muslim community was more dominant because it was supported by Jihad troops who came from outside Ambon City.

The arrival of laskar jihad from Java in May 2000, the balance of the Muslim strategy was parallel with the Christian side. Christians described the arrival of Laskar Jihad as a serious escalation of war, but Muslims often welcomed them because they promised security (Klinken, 2007: 173).

The conflict in Ambon was protracted owing to the lack of readiness of the security forces to handle the riots as they were due in "war" between their own groups within the military (Suaedy, 2000: 173). On the one hand, there was a military group known as the green

military, allegedly close to Islamic groups, while on the other hand, there was a group known as the nationalist military, known to be close to the rainbow group, a term for a combined "colored" group. There had been a belief that TNI and police were involved, or at least not neutral, in that conflict, giving rise to the widespread development of the conflict within the society. In fact, the Maluku community's distrust of the TNI and police in overcoming the Maluku conflict was overwhelming. There has been a growing attitude of rejecting the army, especially the army. Meanwhile, on the Muslim side, an anti-Polri attitude developed. Such attitude cannot be separated from the reality of the role and performance of the TNI and police during the conflict handling (Trijono, 2001: 105).

Moderation in Religions

All religions have extreme teachings, both the extreme right and the extreme left. But on the other hand, at the same time all religions have moderate teachings (Umar, 2019; Mas'ud, 2019). In the following, we will present the moderate teachings of each religion that is recognized in Indonesia and has followers in Ambon City.

Moderation in Islam

The essence of Islamic teachings is rahmatanlil 'alamin (mercy for all nature) or "Wamaarsalnakaillarahmatanlim'alamin" (QS. Al-Anbiya / 21: 107). Furthermore, Allah SWT wants convenience for mankind, as His words: QS Al Baqarah verse 185: "... Allah wants convenience for you, and does not want trouble for you."

Verses that discuss Islam as a moderate community (wasathiyyah) can be found in the QS. Al-Baqarah / 2 verse 143: "And in the same way We have made you (Muslims) the" middle ummah "so that you will be witnesses to human (deeds) and for the Prophet (Muhammad) to be witnesses to your (actions) ..."

At first glance, this verse teaches to behave properly (moderately), fairly, well, moderately and with balance in making a decision. Moderation in Islamic thought is to prioritize a tolerant attitude in terms of openness to accept differences and diversity, both in mazhab and religion. Differences do not prevent us from cooperating with the hope of humanity. Believing in Islam to be the truest religion does not mean that you have to insult other people's religions. So that there will be brotherhood and unity between religions as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina.

According to Alwi Shihab (1999: 41), the concept of inclusive Islam is not only limited to recognition of the plurality of society, but also its actualization in the form of active involvement in the reality. In that sense, the attitude of inclusivism in Islamic thought is to provide space for diversity of Islamic thoughts, understandings and perceptions. In fact, this understanding considers truth not only in one group, but also in other groups. This understanding is the instrument of the belief that basically all religions carry the teachings of salvation. The difference from one religion that a prophet carries from generation to generation is only sharia (Darlis, 2017).

Departing from the above paradigm, in turn, it will open up positive interactions and dialogue between religions. Both Muslims and other religions are obliged to uphold their respective teachings. The existence of an open attitude will create harmony in the community, so that everyone involves themselves in the form of tolerance towards differences in beliefs, and avoids self-righteousness and extreme blame for others (Harizah, 2012: 43).

Moderation in Christianity

Religious moderation in the perspective of Christian faith is revealed in the Book of Psalm 133: 1: "David's Pilgrimage Song. How good and beautiful it would be if you were

together and harmonious! ". In the biblical text, moderation must be endeavored, because the word "abide with" is an active endeavor (Oentoro. 2019: 110). Furthermore, Oentoro (2019) explains that moderation to reconcile or unite is one of the biblical models of moderation and thus becomes one of the dimensions of moderation in the perspective of Christian faith.

Religious moderation, leading to harmony if Christians continue to hold onto the teachings of the faith of Jesus, is the teachings of love. The doctrine of love can be found in Matthew 22: 37-39:

37. Jesus answered him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38. That is the greatest and first commandment.

39 And the second commandment, which is the same as this, is: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Love is meant here is to demand an attitude of heart that respects and appreciates God so that we really long for fellowship with Him, strive to obey Him on the surface of this earth, and really care about His honor and will. Thus, love for God is a love that is wholehearted and that dominates all of us, a love that His love awakens for us that causes Him to send His children for our benefit. Believer's love for fellow believers, fellow human beings and enemies must submit to, and be governed and controlled by love and devotion to God.

Moderation in Catholic

At first Catholicism was so closed, Catholic only acknowledged that it was the only religion as a savior, outside of Catholicism there was no salvation. Catholic openness occurred at the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* or statements about the relationship of the Church to religions that are not Catholic Christian. One of the documents of the Second Vatican Council was approved by the bishops in a vote of 2,221 to 88 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965. After this Second Vatican Council, Catholic thinking changed 180 degrees.

The moderate teaching of Catholicism can be seen in Matthew 5: 38-48

38. You heard it was said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

39. But I say to you, do not fight against those who do evil to you, but whoever slaps your right cheek, you give him your left cheek.

40. And to those who complain about you for wanting your clothes, give up your robes too.

41. And whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

42. Give to those who ask you and do not reject those who want to borrow from you.

43. You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

44. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

45. For thus you will become children of your Father who is in heaven, who raises the sun on the wicked and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46. If you love someone who loves you, what is your reward? Doesn't collecting excise do the same?

47. And if you only greet your brothers, what more than other people do? Don't those who don't know God do this too?

48. Therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

The teaching of love in Catholicism can be seen in Luke 10:27 that reads "The man answered," Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your heart with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Moderation in Hinduism

Hinduism was derived from Vedic scriptures. Vedic itself consists of: 1. Reg vedic (about theology), 2. Yayurvedic (about ceremonial procedures), 3. Sama vedic (about ceremonial procedures), 4. Atharwavedic (about treatment), and 5. Bhagawad Gita (about the guidance of life).

The moderation value of Hindu is sourced from the Vedic teachings called *Ahimsa* which means no harm. Vedic book contains the teachings that reflect the religious moderation for Hindus such as: Bhagawad Gita (Pancama Veda) chapter IX-29:

Samo 'ham sarva-bhutesuna me dvesyo 'stinapriyah, yabhajantitumambhaktyamayitetesucapyaham (I am the same for all beings; to me no one is hated and loved; but those who worship me with full of devotion, they are to me and I am to them).

Besides *Ahimsa*, in Hinduism was also known the course of *Tat Twam Asi*. This teaching came from Indian-Hindu which can be seen in Chandogya Upanishad chapter 6 sloka 8 kanda 7. *Tat Twam Asi* means I am you, you are me. The philosophy is way to empathize, to feel what those around us are feeling. When we hurt others, we hurt ourselves. When we denounce others, we are reprehensible. Therefore, how to live the feelings of others, how they respond as a result of our behavior. Thus, this value should be the nature of behavior.

Hindu moderation was looking at human beings as the same creature. Hindus believed that in human beings there were two characteristics, antagonistic and the opposite of it called the nature of *godliness (daiwisampat)* which a good characteristic while violent traits, the temperamental (*asurisampat*) which was the bad characteristic. For a peaceful life, then keep trying to develop the nature of godliness.

Moderation in Buddhism

The Buddhist concept of the middle way (*Majjhima Patipada*) was found in the Sutta Pitaka, Samyuta Nikaya 56:11. *Majjhima Patipada* was first mentioned by the Buddha in his first sermon, *Dhammacakkappavattana Suta*: "These two over extreme, O, in Bhikkhus, cannot be carried out by those who have left home to lead a life without family. Following the pleasures of low lusts (*kamasukkhallikanuyoga*), which were worthless, useless, barbaric, temporarily; or self-torture (*attakilamathanuyoga*), which was painful, worthless and useless. After avoiding these over portion things, O, the Bhikkhus, the middle way (*majjhima patipada*) that has been perfectly immersed by *Tathagata*, which opens the inner eye (*Cakkhukarani*), which emerged the knowledge (*nana karani*) that brought tranquility (*Upasamaya*), extraordinary inner ability (*abhinna*), great consciousness (*sambodhaya*), achievements of Nibbana (*Nibbanaya*).

Nibbana in Pali or nirvana in Sanskrit, in the beliefs of *Buddhist*, *Nibbana* was the final destination of every Buddhist. *Nibbana* is a middle way (*Majjhima patipada*) that avoids the extreme nature of the world that inhibits moral progress, as well as extreme spirituality that weakens intelligence. This middle way consists of eight factors: 1. The right knowledge, 2. The truthful mind, 3. The right speech, 4. The sincere deeds, 5. The true livelihood, 6. True effort, 7. Sincere attention, and 8. True concentration.

Religious and Cultural Moderation of Ambonese Society post-1999 conflict.

The efforts in anticipating the re-occurrence of conflict in the community have emerged a number of studies and solutions from experts, including the need for a cultural approach by strengthening local philosophy or local wisdom filled with noble advice and peace (Santosa, 2007; Idham, 2018). Nevertheless, the solution did not stand alone without a proper and wise religious comprehension. The role of religious advice was still something expected become the advices and supports to the community in behavior. As a fanatic society, this nation must campaign for religious understanding in accordance with the culture of society (Yunus, 2017), particularly Ambon and generally Indonesia as a multicultural nation.

Cultural and religious diversity which become the identity of Indonesia contains a strategic value in the international scene. As a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious nation, this was considered a wager. If the diversities become the aspects in strengthening social relations between elements of the nation, then the world will see Indonesia as the *main reference as an ideal type* (ideal example) in the management of diversity (Faiqah, 2018; Sulaeman, 2019).

In this context, religious moderation in all religions becomes important. Religious moderation does not mean to confound the reality and eliminate the identity of each religion. However, religious moderation is about accepting that out of certain religions, there are other religions that need to be acknowledged and respected. Thus, these beliefs would lead to an attitude of acceptance, tolerant, and flexibility in behavior. Developing justice to others without looking at religious background, race, ethnicity, and language. That is the essence of religious and cultural moderation.

Segregation as a threat or an opportunity

Segregation based on religious settlements in Ambon is a historical heritage (Ismail, 2017; Rahman et al, 2020). The segregation was a colonial heritage. It was also an evident that this area was often involved in conflicts. After the Ambon conflict, segregation became clearer. Abidin Wakano saying that:

Segregation of this settlement, this one, one compulsion, one by design, Then I say what is this one, this is ballaun has might be the term, it became balla because city community should be multicultural, should not be segregated. But he was good at that time, if there was no segregation then people would be killed.. (Abidin Wakano interview, 2/17/2020).

The informant's statement made clear that segregation was a compulsion, if it was the otherwise, then the community would be killed. Psychologically, one contradictory community would not feel safe living side by side with its opponents. Naturally, They would look for their own group.

Even though the settlement segregation occurred in Ambon City as implied by the informant previously, Ambonese society had a warmer inter-religious relation after the improved conflict. There was no more reluctance to visit each other or to live in different religious communities. This has become their own strength, therefore the anxiety about settlement segregation affected the segregation of thinking among the people in Ambon city of different religions could be denied. Moreover, nowadays there are public spaces that allow intense encounters between communities such as schools, colleges, work places, supermarkets, malls, sports venues and playground. Nowadays, there are also many interfaith and cross-cultural activities involving both children and youth as people who born in times of conflict and raised in homogeneous areas of certain religions and ethnicities, as well as activities in professional groups, and citizens generally in villages

or in sub-district of Ambon City, which at the time of conflict those citizens of different religions faced and killed each other.

Conflict Resolution

The sociological and cultural reality of Ambonese society was multicultural with all forms of problems that lasted since colonial times. The threat of disunity was a negative tendency of multicultural society. The existence of various tribes with segregative life was an unavoidable inevitability in the history of People in Maluku generally and especially Ambon city (Ismail, 2017: 80).

Ambon city had experienced conflicts with inter-community in different religions. Although religion was not the major factor in determining the conflict, but because of religious issues were politicized to be dominant, then most people called it as religious conflict (van Klinken, 2002: 2007). Thus, the conflict in Ambon is inseparable from the conflict between all believers, even though there were many people who disagreed on this issue. The fact was found trauma and grudge especially for those who experienced it, but over time along with various initiatives, people succeed in developing self away from the downfall that had been experienced.

The conflict of Ambon, in the end people said that it is not a matter of religion. I said in sociological studies we must admit, people said that it was not a religious conflict but religion was involved in justifying it ... (Abidin Wakano interview, 2/17/2020).

Religion and Culture

The cultural aspect is one of the important things to be noted (Castells, 2010; Sullivan, 2012) in the context of the Ambon conflict. The intended culture was not a culture that merely a historical heritage, but an adapted culture to the reality context that concern to historical aspect as well as current conditions.

Maluku has many local cultural values, such as *badati*, *maanu*, *masohi*, and many other. In addition, culturally, the people of Maluku have a family bond called *pela gandong* and in this emotional bond occur the community relations despite the fact that they were different in religions (Islam and Christianity). Therefore, *pela gandong* can be used as a moral and ethical basis for the people of Ambon, although the particular dimension is maintained because *gandong ties* are limited where only certain clans are integrated or integrated in a particular clan. But this tradition is maintained for generations. *Pela gandongin* the tradition of Maluku community (Ambon) becomes a binding tool of the bond of familyhood between people of different religions, clans and villages. This tradition is still maintained despite the changing development of history and society such as after the entry of Islam and Christianity in Maluku including in Ambon City, people still maintained this relationship. This shows that the family bond in the community are maintained despite the particularity.

The phenomenon of inter-community religious relations showed that in one side of religious harmony becomes the desire of all religious communities, but on the other hand there was often suspicion, jealousy, and competition among religious communities, which if does not managed properly would potentially cause conflict. In the history of religions, specifically Christianity, Jews, and Islam or known as *Abrahamic Religions* (Rumahuru, 2019: 4). *Abrahamic Religions* are Jewish, Christian and Islamic, because this religion had the same ancestors namely Abraham (Ibrahim) who was constructed in Jewish history as the ancestor of the Israelites or who in Islamic tradition was known as Prophet Ibrahim. The three major religions of this world in the history of the journey suspected each other even competed which usually caused an open conflict or war with each other. Thus, if

these three religions were not too extreme in their religion by looking at the *Descendants of Abrahamic Religions*, this is then called as religious moderation.

Religious and ethnic identity is always constructed to be the dominant factor causing various conflicts (see Mas'od, et al. 2000; Triyono, 2004; Pieris, 2004; van Klinken; 2005; Mujiburrahman, 2006). However, religious people with diverse cultures also contributed to put an end to the conflict, building harmony and peace as well. Even though, it was often overlooked in the narrative of peace and harmony studies. Even religious views has been fused with traditional or cultural views established a genius or wisdom found in society to build harmony and peace (Mujib and Rumahuru, 2010; Brauchler, 2015).

Conclusion

Ambon City is one of the old cities since colonial times and has a strategic position in the Maluku islands. After Indonesian Independence, Ambon City was made the capital of Maluku Province. Ambon City as the provincial capital is also known as a destination for migrants. Before the conflict, the economy was one of the factors that shaped the pattern of people's lives, mapped segregatively through small and informal economic base was controlled by migrants from outside Maluku, especially those who were Muslims. On the other hand, the formal economic bases such as government and private employees are mostly controlled by locals and especially Christians. Moreover, the existence of residential segregation since ancient time. This was one of the conflict triggers such as a tragedy in 1999, which is better known as the 1999 Ambon conflict.

The 1999 Ambon conflict was actually only triggered by trivial things, but because of the involved people were different in ethnic, village and religious backgrounds. The 1999 Ambon conflict lasted for about five years with various phenomena respectively. Sometimes these tensions were emerged because of prominent ethnic sentiments, and sometimes because of the sentiments of religious believers who were very sectarian in understanding their religious teachings. This is where religious believers need to be moderate in understanding their religion.

Religious moderation becomes important for all religions. Religious moderation does not mean to confound the truth and eliminate the identity of each religious believers. However, religious moderation is about the attitude of accepting that out of certain religion, there are believers of other religions who need to be acknowledged and respected. Thus, this belief will lead to openness, tolerance, and flexibility in behavior. Developing justice to those who born in Ambon and those who come to Ambon, regardless of their religious, ethnic and linguistic background. That is the essence of true religious and cultural moderation

The religious and cultural moderation of the Ambonese people was manifested in their behavior, not only in slogans. The Ambonese community's collective awareness was evoked to respect each other's beliefs according to their religion. Faith is a very personal thing and cannot be forced to others. The existing conflict would only cause losses. The Ambon conflict, which involved two adherents of the majority religion, evoked awareness among the adherents of these religions to resolve it by exploring and reaffirming cultural values that has begun to be weakened.

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