

Muslim and Christian Relations in The Field of Education After The Ambon-Maluku Conflict (The Biggest Religious Conflict in Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT

Through the Malino II agreement on February 12, 2002, there was a peace agreement between Muslims and Christians who were involved in the Ambon-Maluku conflict that had occurred since 1999. The efforts of various parties to find solutions so that Muslim and Christian religious leaders can have a dialogue have always failed. In the end, through the cultural-based reconciliation approach of *pela gandong*, this religious-based civil conflict can be ended even though it is not completely resolved. *Pela gandong* is a system of brotherhood for the Maluku without a problem with religion. The problem after reconciliation is the damage to religious relations. Therefore, the transformation of *pela gandong* is carried out to be applied in the field of education and is called *panas pela* of education. The purpose of this study was to describe the relationship between Muslims and Christians between students from SMPN 4 Salahutu Liang and SMPN 9 Ambon City through *panas pela* of education. This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The data was collected by means of literature study, document analysis, interviews and field observations. The results of the study reveal that there has been a brotherly relationship between students from the two schools. This can be seen from the existence of integrated social science learning with peace education. *Panas pela* of education activities consisting of scouting activities, *Porseni* (sports and arts), Iftar, Christmas and student council activities together. The establishment of Ambon-Maluku as a peace laboratory and tolerant city in Indonesia is evidence of the results of efforts to improve relations between Muslims and Christians.

KEYWORDS: *Ambon Conflict, Conflict Reconciliation, Education, Pela Gandong, Relationship.*

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1. Introduction

The Ambon-Maluku conflict ended in symbolism through a Malino II Agreement on 12 February 2002. A peace agreement is substantively said to be strong if it is supported by a broad-based consensus, involving various parties so that it has a strong political legitimacy base, and therefore various parties feel ownership and are committed to supporting it. The Malino II agreement brought together Muslim and Christian religious leaders to find a way of peace. Malino is located in the province of South Sulawesi, a natural tourist attraction that has extraordinary appeal. In the tourist area of Malino itself, there is a tourist forest, in the form of tall pine trees lining the hills and valleys.

The Ambon conflict has been declared over by the government together with religious leaders from both Christian and Muslim religions. However, there are still issues that could trigger similar conflicts in the future. Namely, the relationship between Maluku people who are Muslim and Christian has been damaged. As a result, it raises negative prejudice and suspicion of each other. This is very dangerous in an effort to build peace which is still being pursued (Hasudungan, Sariyatun, Joebagio, et al., 2020). In fact, the challenge of maintaining peace that has been fought for so long must remain amidst the storm of polarization of the Maluku people because of the politics of identity and populism.

The general elections for the president and vice president of the Republic of Indonesia in 2014 and 2019 are not only a party for the people to freely elect the desired president and vice president. However, the party was infiltrated by thieves and vandals, namely rotten politicians who have used religious and racial identities to gain support for the people's voice, which is actually heterogeneous and multicultural. What this rotten politics does is called identity politics and populism. Their aim is only to satisfy the lust for power without thinking about the impact that occurs, namely, the destruction of religious relations and the creation of polarization based on religious and racial identities. If this is allowed to do so, if there is a trigger and it is added to the current condition, it is certain that a similar conflict will occur again. There are two reasons to explain it, first, the negative prejudice that has been buried in people's minds and if there is a trigger that is a provocateur, this will also support the reoccurrence of conflict. Second, the breakdown of relations between religious adherents. The Ambon-Maluku conflict that has ended has resulted in the destruction of relations between residents who are diverse in Islam and Christianity, two religious groups that have been both perpetrators and victims of conflict. In

fact, in the city of Ambon, settlement segregation based on religion has been created (Hasudungan, 2020).

This research examines the efforts of various parties such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with Maluku national and local institutions such as Convey Indonesia, Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (Islamic University which belongs to the Indonesian State), and Ambon Reconciliation and Mediation Center (ARMC) Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ambon in restoring relations between religious communities in Maluku.

The form is the integration of peace education based on local wisdom of the local *pela gandong* in the subject of Social Sciences and holding *panas pela* of education. *Pela gandong* is a brotherhood formed by the people of Maluku in the past without differentiating between religions (Islam and Christianity). *Panas pela* of education is a new form of *pela gandong* and is integrated in the field of education and seeks to re-warm (*panas*) the long-established brotherhood (*pela*). It aims to expand the reach and influence of its benefits. This is because the local wisdom of *pela gandong* has proven to be successful at the time of peace reconciliation, a reconciliation based on local wisdom (Hasudungan, Sariyatun, & Joebagio, 2020).

Pela gandong is a value that has been institutionalized and has become local wisdom, as well as being a reference or guideline for the community in the interaction between people. This local wisdom has crossed various territorial differences between islands, tribes, ethnicities and religions and has been the glue for centuries (Solissa, 2014). While the government and other groups were trying and even had difficulty finding the right formula to bring together religious leaders and Maluku people to jointly resolve the bloody conflict, *pela gandong* was able to facilitate it. In the end, the local wisdom of *pela gandong* is present as a unifying medium so that religious leaders and the community can meet. So that a solution can be found, so that the biggest and most destructive conflict after the collapse of the New Order (President Soeharto's regime) in 1998 can be ended. The Ambon conflict disrupted stability and caused great damage, segregation and radicalization (Dewi & Kwik, 2019). It is even called the Maluku war (Goss, 2000). *Panas pela* of education whose main objective is to restore relations between the Maluku people who are Muslim and Christian and also supported by religious, educational, community and government leaders in Maluku. Efforts to restore relations between Maluku residents who are diverse, Muslim and Christian, who are actually *basudara* (brothers) also have an impact on

reducing negative prejudice and suspicion that has plagued the minds of the Maluku people after the Ambon conflict. The difficulty of rebuilding peace is not only due to complex social, economic, political and religious factors, but also rooted problems such as distrust and hatred between groups (Dewi & Kwik, 2019).

2. Method

This research was conducted at SMPN 4 Salahutu Liang (Junior high school), Central Maluku Regency and SMPN 9 Ambon City (Junior high school) in January 2018 then continued in November 2019. This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Rahardjo (2017) explains that the Case Study is limited to a narrow (micro) area, because it examines behavior at the individual, group, institutional and organizational levels. The cases are limited to certain types of cases, in certain places or locations, and within a certain time. Due to its narrow coverage area, case study research is not intended to draw general conclusions or derive generalizations, because it does not require a population and a sample. The hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy that also enhances the credibility of the data. Data were collected by means of interviews, literature study, direct participatory observation and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with religious figures, both Muslim and Christian, community and government leaders, educational figures, peace activists, students, teachers and school principals from SMPN 4 Salahutu Liang and SMPN 9 Ambon City. Data were analyzed using an interactive model from Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Turnbull et al., (2021) explained that in conducting case study research, triangulation is an important technique to be applied to research designs. With the triangulation technique with the source, the researcher compared the results of the interviews obtained from each source or research informants as a comparison to check the truth of the information obtained. In addition, the researcher also checks the degree of trust through the triangulation technique with methods, namely by checking the results of research with different data collection techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation so that the degree of confidence in the data can be valid.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Brief review of relations between Muslims and Christians

Harmonious relations are the main key to creating a peaceful life in a multicultural and heterogeneous society. The world is very diverse, consisting of many religions, including Islam and Christianity. In one country, religion is part of the state and government system, at least it is not possible to rule out religion in the life of its people like Indonesia. In Indonesia, Islam is currently the majority religion and is followed by Christianity. This condition has an impact on the rivalry of Islam and Christianity in all aspects of life. A factor complicating Christian-Muslim relations around the world is the fact that almost everywhere the two communities live in a relationship characterized by an imbalance in their status as majority or minority, access to power, and perceptions of independence or vulnerability. This reflects the shared perception between the two groups that, if left unchecked, the two communities have historically not found it difficult to live together, nor would there be tension and conflict today if intrusive forces, commonly denoted by political terms, had not intervened. This pervasive perception demands more attention to see precisely, what is meant by intrusion factors which complicate and often destroy Christian-Muslim relations (Michel, 1997). Cooley (Zainuddin, 2013) concluded that the political aspect is the dominant factor affecting the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Indonesia. Politically, the position of Christianity as a religion brought about by Dutch colonialism gave an unfavorable image to Muslims. Thus, Christianity is identified with the colonizers.

More than thirteen centuries of Christian-Muslim relations have been very complex and difficult regarding interfaith understanding and interpretation of the birth of Jesus, life, and crucifixion can lead to emphatic truth claims made by both parties (Hidayati & van Doorn Harder, 2020). In relation to non-Muslim groups, the attitude of the Qur'an is actually contextual. The attitude of the Qur'an towards non-Muslims depends on their attitude towards Muslims. Categorically, the Qur'an shows three attitudes: positive, neutral and negative. A positive attitude, for example, is illustrated when the Qur'an states that Christians are those who are most closely friendly with Muslims. A neutral attitude, for example, is shown in the Qur'an when it states that God will decide fairly against all religious and group disputes in this world. The negative attitude is shown in the context that some of the People of the Book change the holy

book for their (Christian) interests, exaggerate in religion or show enmity and betrayal of the Muslim community (Jafar & Amrullah, 2019).

In contemporary Christian discourse, the topic of religious relations remains a major concern. Discussions and attitudes towards this topic appear to be more systematic by producing various three models of views and attitudes. First, exclusively superior, which leads to the execution of mission-winning souls (so there is a purpose of conversion, make people as Christians). Second, inclusion, which assesses that religion or other parties contain the same elements of truth. Third, pluralism, who accepts the existence of other parties and recognizes that other religions are the places used by God to reveal himself. So, in religions, people can know, approach and receive blessings from God (Rambitan, 2017).

The fluctuation of the relationship between Islam and Christianity has been tested over the centuries, the *basudara Salam-basudara Sarane* harmony to the *Acanak-Obet* conflict colored the phases of the centuries-old relationship between the two. The cultural harmony of peace and the pull of the political economy scatter. Since the entry of religions (Islam and Christianity) in Maluku, population differentiation based on religion has occurred. This differentiation has an effect on cultural, economic, and political competition which results in ups and downs of the relationship between the two. The ups and downs of relations are marked by conflicts and harmony that come and go and are more influenced by the pull of economic and political interests. Economic and political variables must be underlined as the main triggers of conflict and religious factors as their axes (Nuruddin, 2019). Moh. Natsir, a former Prime Minister of Indonesia from 1950-1951, said that for the Indonesian context, he frankly reminded him that Muslim-Christian relations were still not conducive. This can be proven by the existence of government regulations, such as the Ministry of Religion which was issued in succession and aimed at maintaining stability and harmony between religious communities (Arifin, 2011). In addition, the existence of a religious purification movement by means of contact with religious centers abroad has led to the emergence and tendencies of this kind which have led to problems of interreligious relations (Zainuddin, 2013).

In general, Maluku is an area with a mixture of ethnicity, socio-culture and politics between Melanesians, Malays, Javanese (Sanskrit), Arabic, Persian, Chinese, and European. Since the entry of major religions (Islam, Christianity and Catholicism) in the Maluku Islands, religion has since been accepted as an ethno-cultural and socio-political identity, although with

various faces and forms of expression. Religion first entered the Northern Territory (14-15 centuries) and transformed into a political power (sultanate), the Central Region (16-17 century)-marked by the Old *Wapauwe* Mosque and the Immanuel Church in the *Leihitu* Peninsula-which segregates the socio-political unity based on religions, and finally the Southeast Region which was penetrated by three religions (Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism) between the 18-19 centuries (Faisal, 2012). The socio-political segregation in the Southeast due to religious differences is not like in the Central Region. Islam is the dominant religion in the North, Islam and Christianity are two religions that are almost equal in the Central Region, Christianity and Catholicism are the more dominant religions in the Southeast than Islam. Prior to the Ambon-Maluku conflict, which was a civil conflict with the largest religious background in modern Indonesian history in 1999, the *Batumerah* village had lived side by side with the Muslim community and the Christian community.

Religious differences have not been a problem for a long time, they show a harmony of life. Not only are there mosques, but there are also church buildings in the middle of residential areas. Departing from the history of the formation of the *Batumerah* village, the process of integration of communities of different religions living together is part of the population arrangement since the Dutch colonial era in relation to the history of the establishment of the *Batumerah* village (Lestari & Parihala, 2020). In Kenya, the relationship between Muslims and Christians dates back to the early Portuguese colonial period (Chembea, 2017). In Indonesia, the relationship between Islam and Christianity existed before the era of colonialism. In fact, the brotherly relationship (*pela*) between the villages of *Passo-Batumerah*, which are Muslim and Christian, occurred from an accident at sea which was experienced by the *kora-kora* in the village of *Passo* which almost drowned. At that time the *Batumerah* (*hatukau*) people came to help to save people from *Passo* village, from this incident they were sworn in to become brothers (*pela*). Lestari & Parihala (2020) explains that the meaning of brotherhood between Christian and Muslim communities in *Batumerah* is also strengthened and influenced by marital relations between families of different religions. Long before the Ambon-Maluku conflict occurred and had damaged relations, fraternal relations between communities had been established because of the marriage of parents of different religions, and continued to live in harmony which was passed on to every child and grandchild.

3.2.The creation of peace through educational relations

According to Maria Montessori, education is the way to build peace. Education is considered the best 'weapon' for peace (Gordillo, 2020). Furthermore, Montessori stated that peace was a goal which could only be achieved through mutual agreement, and the means for achieving unity for this peace were two conditions. First, in order to immediately resolve conflicts without resorting to violence - in other words, to prevent war. Second, long-term efforts to build lasting peace between people. Preventing conflict is political work; building peace is educational work (Duckworth, 2006). Montessori believes that education as it was then (and still exists) actually injures, rather than benefits, children by imposing limits on their limitless potential. Since childhood, children must be aware of their mission, their responsibility to build peace. Education should provide opportunities for young people to take part in social activities, to find solutions to social problems, to be responsible, to develop and to find useful goals. Children and adolescents should regularly engage in activities for the development of themselves, the perfection of their personalities, and they should be encouraged to do so without feeling constrained. Montessori argues that traditional classrooms that allow young people's minds to cram, foster vicious competition, and are now insensitive to children's needs cannot help in education for peace (Baligadoo, 2014).

Duckworth (2006) explained the results of his research that, five Montessori schools both in curriculum and policy, have shown an explicit commitment to developing international thinking in their students and staff. Students participate in discussions of peace, diversity, values and service. Teachers also work on these themes in a variety of tasks, even though writing, art, drama, student-led reflective groups. Special ceremonies are held to celebrate the diversity of the student body, such as the international school Boyd festival. Each of these schools also has ways of honoring peace, including various ceremonies and gatherings where students and faculty come together to share thoughts on this core value, and even pray for peace. Other activities are designed to help students develop an appreciation for the various cultures and ways they have gone about addressing their survival needs. Many teachers also teach conflict resolution skills, offering a 'peace table' or 'peace post' as a safe place where students can discuss differences.

A culture of peace can be a peace education approach and the end result of peace education (Reber-Rider, 2008). And *pela gandong* is a culture of peace that exists in Indonesia even today (Ralahallo, 2009). In contrast to the deconstruction of the relationship between

citizens and soldiers, from the relationship between dominance and the supplements between them, and reversing the logic of discourse, that any 'peace' is only possible through state violence (Oswell, 2006).

The integration of peace education in social sciences is contained in the social science Syllabus for Class VIII (Junior High School), specifically in Basic Competency 3.2, the results of the revision of previous documents (Attachment to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 58 of 2014). Learning for Knowledge Competencies (3.2) and Skills Competencies (4.2) as follows in class VIII regarding the Effect of Social Interactions on Social Life and Nationality.

Table 1. Social science syllabus assessing conflict

| Basic Competencies | Subject Matter |
|---|--|
| <p>Learning objectives, students are able to:</p> <p>3.2 (Knowledge) Analyze the influence of social interaction in different spaces on socio-cultural life and the development of national life.</p> <p>4.2 (Skills) Presenting the results of an analysis of the influence of social interactions in different spaces on social and cultural life as well as the development of national life.</p> | <p>The influence of social interaction (social mobility) on socio-cultural life.</p> <p>The plurality (religion, culture, ethnicity, occupation) of Indonesian society.</p> <p>Conflict and integration.</p> |

The implementation of the relationship between students from SMPN 4 Salahutu Liang with 100% being Muslim and students from SMPN 9 Ambon City with 99% being Christian / Catholic is as follows:

- The teaching-learning process uses the discussion method. Seeing students working together in discussion, tolerance and mutual respect between one another. Bradley-Levine & Zainulabdin (2020) revealed that creative teachers can change the school culture to build positive peace by using empowerment strategies that involve students.
- Social science is a social study, leading to social improvement. So, many prioritize on the patriotic spirit of the ancestors of the Maluku people. Sariyatun et al., (2019) explained

that the integration of peace education in social science learning can strengthen the social skills of students.

- Social science provides space to discuss local wisdom inserted into the core content and at the beginning of the lesson and it may lead to local wisdom. Example: Speaking in the local language, they are then taught by using other local wisdoms such as how to dress, how to greet guests.
- Social science studies conflict whereas what happened with Ambon in 1999 became a real (contextual) lesson for students. Therefore, the learning process can explain the impact and causes of the conflict. The conflict had a traumatic impact on the generation at that time. After the revitalization of *pela gandong* local wisdom, then there is no word of conflict anymore, because it has good relations with others (Hasudungan & Sartika, 2020).
- *Panas Pela* of education displays a variety of cultural attractions that both students through dance, songs and poetry, all of which lead and invite students to love each other even though they are of different religions. The brotherly relationship between the two schools has been established several years ago by carrying out a number of joint activities including sports and arts competitions (*Porseni*), Scouts, iftar, Christmas together, joint student council activities to the exchange of teaching teachers of the two schools.

Educational implications are: rebuilding social relationships and social structures, helping with the process of reconciliation, in the search for truth and justice, and in rebuilding education, economies and livelihoods. Formal participation by children in peacebuilding requires adults in both the local and international community to facilitate, not dominate children's peace building activities. This facilitation can come in the form of supporting children to create groups or communities where they can meet together and discuss experiences and problems that affect them. This may involve organizing children's activities or clubs where children can talk about the transformation of conflict, their hopes for the future, and practice and develop skills of respect, independence, dialogue and peace (Huynh et al., 2015). Schwartz (Huynh et al., 2015) argues that 'in times of peace tend to lose much of the power they once held, face inadequate economic opportunities, and lack access to political forums to make their voices heard. The risk here is that a proportion of young people will become increasingly powerless and disenfranchised from society in a way that encourages them to fight against an emerging culture of peace.

Research results from (Gordillo, 2020) regarding the implementation of Lectures on Peace are very important for teachers and their impact on the future perspectives of students in Colombia. However, in order to make improvements to achieve all program objectives, namely, making Lectures on Peace for teachers as a policy. Eliasa et al., (2019) suggest that there is a need for common perceptions about the pedagogical concept of peace and peace to be created. The teacher as a peace educator thus plays an important role as a figure with a peaceful personality in the classroom and at school. The teacher as a peaceful personality consists of three components: a state of peace, attitudes, and behaviors that are consistent throughout one's life space and lifetime. In addition, schools also need to develop an educational approach in the curriculum that is synergized with educational goals and contains local wisdom values.

Harber & Sakade (2009) questions the nature of schools in regard to being able to protect young people from violence and harm. In terms of education, overwhelming evidence is that the dominant or hegemonic model is globally , with a few exceptions, authoritarian rather than democratic. In terms of education, overwhelming evidence is that the dominant or hegemonic model globally is, with a few exceptions, authoritarian rather than democratic. Violence can start from any angle in the straightforward-structural violence triangle and easily pass to other angles, including the field of education. With an institutionalized structure of violence and an internalized culture of violence, direct violence also tends to be institutionalized, repetitive, ritualistic, such as revenge. (Galtung, 1996) explains that this triangular violence syndrome must then be contrasted in the mind with a triangular peace syndrome in which cultural peace breeds structural peace, with symbiosis, equitable relations between various partners, and direct peace with acts of cooperation, hospitality, and love. This wholesome triangle will be obtained by working on all three angles simultaneously, not assuming that a basic change in one corner will automatically cause a change in the other two angles. Promoting peace education for behavior change in public secondary schools is a program necessary to promote the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to bring about behavior change that will enable children, adolescents and adults to prevent conflict and violence (Uko et al., 2015).

Salomon (2006) explains the impact of peace education programs both in the short and long term, leading to one conclusion, namely, that not all objects (students) change the same. That some are more responsive to what peace education can do than others. Isn't peace itself a

condition that is endlessly pursued? Peace is not an end in itself but a life that is dreamed of by means of which all elements of society and the state must fight for it, and built in mind (UNESCO, 2011). Goetze & De Guevara (2013) conclude that peace building must create a cosmopolitan society: only cosmopolitans have tolerance, open-mindedness, and a justice orientation to rebuild society after the conflict.

4. Conclusion

Relationships that recover from negative prejudice can prevent future conflicts. However, efforts to eliminate negative prejudice are still hampered by the absence of an appropriate way to restore relations between Muslims and Christians in Ambon-Maluku. So, the ongoing peace building is still being fought for. When adults find it still very difficult to forget the Ambon-Maluku conflict that has passed 20 years ago it is difficult to restore relations.

Therefore, efforts to restore relationships may start with students who do not experience conflict. The hope is that students can become agents of peace in the future. Finally, efforts to reduce negative prejudice were carried out by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) together with Maluku national and local institutions such as Convey Indonesia, PPIM UIN Jakarta, and ARMC IAIN Ambon by holding *panas pela* of education in 2018. Then supported by the integrated Social Science learning process of peace education based on local wisdom of the local *pela gandong*. The establishment of Ambon-Maluku as a peace laboratory and tolerant city in Indonesia is evidence of the results of efforts to improve relations between Muslims and Christians. The challenge going forward is the strengthening of the threat of populism after the case of blasphemy by the Governor of Jakarta Basuki Tjahaja Purnama in 2017 and the Presidential Election of the Republic of Indonesia in 2014 and 2019.

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