From Conflict to Cohesion: Unveiling Ambon's Journey Through Collective Memory Analysis and Post-Conflict Reconciliation

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Abstract

This article delves into the religious conflict that transpired in Ambon from 1999 to 2004, with a specific focus on elucidating the formation of collective memory as a pivotal mechanism for fostering post-conflict reconciliation. Employing a methodology amalgamating literature review and in-depth interviews, this research scrutinizes the intricate dynamics of the conflict, delineating the roles played by both Muslim and Christian communities, not only as victims but also as perpetrators. The principal findings underscore the shared responsibility of both groups in instigating the conflict, resulting in egregious acts such as assaults, homicides, and property destruction. The article accentuates the imperative of mutual acknowledgment regarding each community's role in the conflict as an indispensable stride towards reconciliation. It posits that an accurate and all-encompassing collective memory of the conflict serves as a catalyst for communities to critically assess their religious practices and fosters a climate of receptivity to broader religious understandings. The research underscores the significance of cultivating a nuanced collective memory in upholding peace and harmony within a diverse post-conflict society.

Keywords: Collective memory; Conflict; Peace; Reconciliation.

Abstrak

Artikel ini menyelidiki konflik agama yang terjadi di Ambon dari tahun 1999 sampai 2004, dengan fokus khusus untuk menjelaskan pembentukan ingatan kolektif sebagai mekanisme penting untuk mendorong rekonsiliasi pascakonflik. Dengan menggunakan metodologi yang menggabungkan tinjauan literatur dan wawancara mendalam, penelitian ini meneliti dinamika konflik yang rumit, menggambarkan peran yang dimainkan oleh komunitas Muslim dan Kristen, tidak hanya sebagai korban tetapi juga sebagai pelaku. Temuan utama menggarisbawahi tanggung jawab bersama dari kedua kelompok dalam menyulut konflik, yang mengakibatkan tindakan-tindakan mengerikan seperti penyerangan, pembunuhan, dan perusakan properti. Artikel ini menekankan pentingnya pengakuan bersama mengenai peran masing-masing komunitas dalam konflik sebagai langkah penting menuju rekonsiliasi. Artikel ini menyatakan bahwa ingatan kolektif yang akurat dan mencakup semua hal tentang konflik berfungsi sebagai katalisator bagi masyarakat untuk secara kritis menilai praktik-praktik keagamaan mereka dan menumbuhkan iklim penerimaan terhadap pemahaman keagamaan yang lebih luas. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya menumbuhkan ingatan kolektif yang bernuansa dalam menegakkan perdamaian dan harmoni dalam masyarakat pascakonflik yang beragam.

Kata Kunci: Memori Kolektif, Konflik, Perdamaian, Rekonsiliasi.

INTRODUCTION

The religious conflict that occurred in Ambon between 1999 and 2004 was a typical example of how deep religious tensions could escalate into violence and widespread social disruption. This period was marked by a series of violent confrontations between Muslim and Christian communities, which profoundly changed Ambon's peace social structure. Klinken (2007) described this conflict not only as a religious clash, but also as a complex mix of socio-political and economic grievances, in which religion acted as a key identity marker. This perspective was in line with Bertrand (2003), who argued that the

roots of conflict did not only lie in religious differences, but also include issues of political marginalization and economic inequality. The conflict caused significant loss of life, property damage, and deep psychological scars on communities, as documented by Tadjoeddin and Murshed (2007). Ambon's transformation from a mosaic of religious coexistence into a battlefield highlights the fragility of social harmony against divisive narratives, and emphasized the importance of an effective reconciliation process.

Collective memory plays a crucial role in the lives of community groups, especially for those who have gone through traumatic experiences, such as what occurred in the religious conflict in Ambon. Collective memory had not only functions as a record of past events, but also as a pillar in forming solidity and solidarity within a group. Fowler (2007) in his work "The Obituary as Collective Memory" emphasized the importance of memory as the main factor in the existence of a group. According to him, controlling of collective memory makes it possible to control the dynamics of society's life. Fowler's idea was rooted in Halbwachs' notion's which emphasized that collective memory is maintained through memories of places or locations, and through the social construction of important and sacred events for a particular group.

Halbwachs, as quoted by Fowler (Fowler, 2007), stated that collective memory functions to imaginatively recreate past events. In the context of post-conflict reconciliation in Ambon, this collective memory was important in re-establishing social integrity and supporting the reconciliation process. Collectively shared memories could help communities to recognize past mistakes and shaped a shared awareness of a more peaceful and inclusive future. Therefore, this research explored how collective memory could be directed to support reconciliation and rebuild social harmony in post-conflict Ambon.

There have been some studies on collective memory related to the Maluku conflict in general, and the context of Ambon city in particular. Lestari and Parihala (2020) paid attention to patterns of fraternal relations before and after the conflict. Therefore, Lestari and Parihala (D. T. Lestari & Parihala, 2020) noted the Islamic-Christian relationship as a *Tampa Garam* (Salt Cellar) relationship. According to them, these relationship patterns became a collective memory that could encourage peace in Maluku. Apart from that, Lestari also conducted studies related to collective memory as a way to transform religious conflicts, but by looking at the function of local music (D. T. Lestari, 2019, 2020). These authors did not discuss acts of violence committed by Muslims and Christians, as the content of the collective memory related to this social conflict. This is still a historical burden because assessments regarding victims and perpetrators of conflict are still biased in society's assessments. This would be a burden for the next generation, who did not directly experience the conflict, but they only heard the stories from their parents.

In his article entitled Legacy of Conflict and the Challenge of Reconciliation, Hanry Tapotubun argued that generations who did not experience conflict, but heard narratives about conflict from their parents. However, the partial stories that spread in the society are speeches that did not help to strengthen reconciliation in the city of Ambon (Tapotubun & Ahnaf, 2019), because both Muslims and Christians each considered themselves as victims. The book, entitled 'Caring for Peace: 20 Years of the Maluku Conflict', was a study related to peace in Maluku after the humanitarian tragedy that occurred 20 years ago. This book noted that one of the serious problems left behind by the 'conflict' in Maluku is the collective stigma which is quite heavy in relations between Muslims and Christians in Maluku (Fitriati, Gunawan, Nulhaqim, & Irfan, 2019). The story passed down to the younger generation, who have never experienced conflict, is that 'we' were victims; 'they' were perpetrators. Therefore, 'feeling' of being a victim of the 1999 - 2004 conflict is a collective memory that exists among both Muslims and Christians.

After the social conflict, there were many trauma healing actions for the community, both carried out by the government, religious institutions and non-governmental organizations. However, these processes had not fully helped the communities to have a shared perception of what actually happened

and what triggered the conflict. This leaves a big 'hole' for the reconciliation that is already in the society. Moreover, there were different perceptions regarding the contents of the Malino 2 Agreement, which was an agreement between two warring groups to end the 'conflict'. The different perception caused problems in various sectors. In 2011, there was a commotion in the process of new student enrolling at Pattimura University (Unpatti) Ambon. Some students demanded 'balance', both in admitting students, educational staff and hiring lecturers. In a protest that took place at Unpatti, Ambon, Monday (4/7/2011), students urged the Rectorate to review the results of the Unpatti entrance selection and demanded balance in the campus environment, both students, staff and lecturers (Insyani, 2011). Moreover, in 2018, during the election processes of regional administrations, the concept of 'balance' was raised again by a central legislator from Maluku. This was reported, among other things, in the online news Intim News: Eastern Indonesia News Protal, 23 February 2018, with the title "Regarding the Balancing of Regional Heads in the Malino Agreement. Edison Betaubun: Please ask the Vice President, Jusuf Kalla." This online news discusses the speech delivered by Betaubun, who said in his political speech about the balance of regional heads and the position of Maluku Regional Secretary which was ready to be occupied by members of the GPM (Maluku Protestant Church). This speech raised pros and cons in society. But he said: "what he announced regarding the balance of Regional Heads was a fact that should not be covered up" (Intim News, 2018).

The emergence of the idea of the 'balance' both in the educational sphere and in the bureaucratic sphere is a sign that we should be wary of its negative impact on the reconciliation that is already being built in society. Understanding differently the contents of the Malino 2 agreement is not a positive thing for the reconciliation that had been established, because Malino 2 had a major contribution to the reconciliation. Apart from that, different stories related to conflict that were inherited from parents to the younger generation, who did not experience conflict, indicated negative nuances. Another fact that still needs attention was the fact of religious-based residential segregation in Ambon. Sadly, after the conflict, religious-based residential segregation could also be noticed in Masohi, the Central Maluku (Puttileihalat, 2020). This segregation is among other things, which according to Ismail, was hidden Prahara or *Prahara Yang Terselubung* in the society (Ismail, 2017). The title of this book implies that according to Ismail, social conditions of Ambon City still had problems that should be addressed seriously.

These facts need to be addressed seriously, especially within the framework of maintaining the reconciliation that has been developed specifically in the Ambon city. One of the ways offered by this article is the need for a shared collective memory of this very heartbreaking human tragedy. Therefore, the question of this research was what contents of the collective memory of the 1999 - 2004 conflict that Muslims and Christians in Ambon have to memorize, so that the reconciliation that has been built in society should be well maintained. To find the necessary data, the research method used is qualitative research with the type of literature study. Therefore, this study relied heavily on articles published in journals, books and online news related to reconciliation in the post-conflict cities of Ambon and Maluku. Therefore, in order to answer this research question, this article will discuss three important topics, namely: what collective memory is. This first part was a theoretical concept related to collective memory, followed by a discussion of the topic of Awareness and Recognition of Christians and Muslims as Victims and Perpetrators, then the topic of Hating Other Religions, Spreading Death; Not Life. The two topics written last were the content of collective memory that needs to be shared regarding the conflict in Ambon city in particular, and Maluku in general.

This research aims to formulate and crystallize the contents of collective memory relating to a series of events during the religious conflict in Ambon between 1999 and 2004. The main focus was to identify

and document the shared experiences faced by Muslims and Christian communities during that period. This goal was based on the belief that appropriate and inclusive collective memory can be a driving force for both communities to live their religious lives more critically and reflectively. Thus, this research not only seeks to reconstruct past events, but also to understand how these experiences can influence current religious practices and strengthen the foundations of reconciliation that had been existed in society. Through this approach, the researcher hopes to contribute to enriching interreligious dialogue and supporting the development of a more harmonious and sustainable Ambon society.

RESEARCH METHODS

In conducting this research, the qualitative approach was undertaken to understand and formulate the contents of collective memory related to religious conflict in Ambon. The main methods used were literature studies and in-depth interviews with individuals directly involved in the conflict, both Muslims and Christian communities. A literature review was conducted to collect historical and contextual data about the conflict, as well as theories related to collective memory and reconciliation.

In order to obtain personal perspective, in-depth interviews were used as the tool. It was also tools to get perspectives and narratives from participants, including their experiences during the conflict, their current perceptions of these events, and their understanding of ongoing reconciliation. The sample of participants was selected through a purposive sampling technique, with a focus on those who had direct experience of the conflict and subsequent reconciliation process.

In addition, this research also utilizes content analysis to identify themes and patterns that emerge from interview data and literature. All data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, with the aim of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) in the data. Research ethical measures, including informed consent and participant anonymity, were prioritized throughout the data collection and analysis process. It was hoped that the results of this method would provide a deeper understanding of the role of collective memory in the reconciliation process in post-conflict Ambon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collective memory

General, there are two types of memory namely: individual memory and collective memory or group memory. The focus of this paper is on collective memory. Magdalena et.al (2017), in the article Collective Memory: How Groups Remember Their Past, explained that collective memory refers to the memory that is owned and shared by one group and these memories are very important for the group identity. According to James V. Wertsch and Henry L. Roediger III, collective memory is a form of memory that goes beyond individual memory and is owned by a group. Collective memory is often used interchangeably with the terms "public memory" and "cultural memory." The same perspective, especially regarding the public aspect of collective memory, is expressed in an article entitled Collective Memory from a Psychological Perspective. The article emphasizes that collective memory is symbols that are publicly visible, which are also maintained or guarded by a society (Hirst, Yamashiro, & Coman, 2018, p. 438). These articles emphasize that collective memory is memory held by a group of people, regarding events experienced together as a group; not as an individual or individual person. This means that collective memory is a shared memory as a group of people, of shared experiences, whether those experiences are good experiences or bad experiences.

Yadin Dudai (2002, p. 51) emphasized that the term collective memory refers to 3 basic things, namely: a body of knowledge, an attribute, and a process'. Body of knowledge is an event that has occurred, which has a major influence on a group of people. An attribute is a typical holistic image of the past in a group. The process is the continuous evolution of understanding between individuals and groups; because individuals can influence and change the group's memory, and groups can change the individual's understanding and awareness as a member of the group. Dudai's identification of these 3 things helps people who are bound by a pain event in the past to properly realize the influence of the collective memory of that painful event on people's lives at all times. Groups as subjects who remember past events and what is remembered. So, collective memory refers to the contents of a group of people's memories of an event experienced together as a group.

Memory is something that exists in human's life. Memory is the human potential to store everything that happens in one's life. The handling of cases of violence that occur has made many people admit that what a person experienced in the past will greatly influence their life in the future. These bad events are stored in the human subconscious, and will appear in bad actions too. Therefore, it can be said that collective memory also plays an important role in directing human life. In short, collective memory in a social conflict greatly influences a community. Memory is so important in human life, especially in directing human actions, that memory is also connected with morals. Humans have a moral responsibility to speak correctly about the memories they have, especially group memory or collective memory.

Collective Memory: Muslims and Christians as Victims and Perpetrators

Generally, in a reconciliation process after a violent incident occurs, victims and perpetrators are clearly identified. Victims would fight for their rights which have clearly been taken away by force by the perpetrators. Perpetrators of violence are required to admit their mistakes and be ready to get punishment. One clear example of this was the reconciliation process in South Africa regarding the Apartheid system.

The violence that occurred in Ambon city in 1999-2004 had different characteristics. Muslims and Christians both commit and experience violence. Muslims and Christians were the perpetrators and victims of that 'conflict'. Based on strong religious sentiment, they attacked each other, killed each other, burned houses and other public facilities (Iwamony & Relmasira, 2017). The violence that occurred strengthened religious-based residential segregation in the city (Iwamony, 2020), which had previously been established. For Nelson Kalay (2020, p. 57), residential segregation can develop into segregation of perspectives or points of view. Until the violence stopped, a pattern of mutual attacks and killings developed as a reaction to the information received.

The fact that Muslims and Christians are both victims and perpetrators of violence expresses a tendency that is very often found in social life in general in Maluku. In Maluku, including in the city of Ambon, group solidarity is very strong. Groups can be ethnic groups, sub-ethnic groups, religious groups and regional groups of residence. When an individual experiences an unpleasant action, the group of which the individual is a part of, will take the same action against that person or group. Unpleasant actions are not addressed in different ways, but in the same way: generally taking violence. Negative energy is met with negative energy. Because of this violence pattern, retaliation occurs, until one party gives up or is no longer able to retaliate. This tendency, among other things, caused the 'conflict' in the Ambon city to last for approximately 4 (four) years

At a certain point, the retaliation pattern becomes weak and almost non-existent. Both Muslim and Christian developed a pattern of avoiding attacks from unknown parties. This pattern contributed to the

cessation of violence in the Ambon city. This is an important source of learning for society that horizontal conflict can be stopped, when society develops a critical attitude by not being trapped in a pattern of retaliation for violence. One party needs to determine an attitude that is in favor of life, by stopping violence.

Recognition as perpetrators needs to be done by Muslims and Christians so that they have awareness that the violence occurred was partly caused by them themselves. Moreover, this violence is carried out by groups as perpetrators, where the level of destruction is more devastating and deadly. This would enable Muslim and Christian for not pointing to other parties as perpetrators. They both committed violence against each other, just because 'you' are Christians and 'we' are Muslims. According to an interviewee, they had to move to another place, so that they could continue their study at Senior High School (TF, Personal Communication, December 10, 2023). Recognition as a perpetrator is a commitment of oneself to be responsible for all the consequences of the actions that have been carried out during the violence. Recognizing oneself as a perpetrator opens up space for Christians and Muslims to strip themselves completely. Find and record actions that have been carried out to destroy life together, such as: killing, burning hospitals, universities and people's houses. This action causes children to lose their parents and the younger generation to lose their future because their education is disrupted. Reacting to the impact of the past conflict toward young generation, an interviewee said: "as new generation, we had to learn from the pain past not to commit the same thing; we had to create our own history" (TF, Personal Communication, December 07, 2023).

In the reconciliation process, identifying accurately the threats experienced by victims, and cruel acts committed by perpetrators helps strongly. In general, the threat experienced by victims is their status and power (status and power); while the threat faced by the perpetrator is in the moral aspect and social acceptance (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008, pp. 116–132). In the Ambon 'conflict' case, the perpetrator and victim were the same party. Therefore, they both face the same threats: status and power, as well as morals and societal acceptance. As perpetrators and victims, Muslims and Christians in Ambon created a situation where they destroyed each other's authority and moral values of the religion they believed in and promoted.

Recognition as a perpetrator strengthens reconciliation because by confessing, the perpetrator consciously positions himself as a subject who is willing to be actively involved in seeking reconciliation in society. Recognition of the group as the perpetrator is the result of an honest self-introspection process regarding an action that has been carried out together. The perpetrator's recognition of the crime that has been committed is an important stage for self-change. In the Christian theological perspective, when the perpetrator admits his crime, then at that point there is space for repentance.

Recognition of both Muslim and Christian as perpetrators indicates awareness that they were not only completely victims; They were also the perpetrators who must be responsible for the violence that occurred. One expression of the responsibility is working together to create reconciliation, so violence does not happen again. This is very important because the violence that occurs in society is caused, among other things, by perpetrators who never admit to the violence that has been committed. According to an interviewee, in Ambon city there are many ethnic groups, namely Ambonese, Bugis, Buton and Makasar. The violence was caused by an ethnic domination which made the other ethnic groups wanted to take revenge (AM, Personal Communication, December 09, 2023). This was implicitly expressed justification to the violence as a way for the inferiors to speak up. This stressed also that they were victims of the social ethnic domination.

Recognizing all groups as the perpetrator is a way to control oneself so that they don't do the same thing again. Strong self-control is needed by people whose group solidarity is very high. In the framework of collective memory, each individual in the group has a sensitive reminder to act critically in response to each event. Likewise with the group to which the individual belongs. With collective memory, groups have shared norms as a guide to action, including group solidarity. Group solidarity is essentially positive, if the group circle does not become a point of rejection outsiders. The circle point of the insider should be a stepping point for meeting other groups. Sadly, after the social conflict, the frame of thinking of insiders and outsiders is stronger than before. "We cannot let the outsider to be our leader" (BW, Personal Communication, December 13, 2023). It should be that by remembering the difficult time during the conflict, the society will embrace their differences, including ethnical differences. Therefore, through collective memory, each individual in the group is directed by the group to see past events from the same perspective. In collective memory, past events are accepted as part of a dark shared history, carried out by them alone. That the darkness of history is a shared responsibility, which should not be carried out again by the next generation. Therefore, through collective memory, Muslims and Christians walk together to jointly shape a shared future that is better than the past.

Collective memory also functions as a filter for Ambon society in building a critical attitude towards all kinds of issues circulating in society. Muslims and Christians remember together that they committed violence against each other because they allowed themselves to be controlled by hoaxes. These shared memories become a true filter to prevent the same violence. Therefore, collective memory not only has elements of learning material, but also transformative power towards ways of seeing and behaving. This is what Dudai mentioned, namely that collective memory has elements of a body of knowledge and process (Dudai, 2002).

Remembering that 'we' are together as victims and perpetrators is needed by the Maluku community in general, and specifically the people of Ambon city, so that 'we' can pass on the same story to the younger generation. Even though having the same perception is not an easy thing, it needs to be done together by the generation who directly experienced the 'conflict'. This is intended so that they pass on history that is close to the truth to the younger generation who have not experienced the 'conflict'. Having the same shared story is necessary for a society that has experienced conflict, especially when both are perpetrators and victims.

Passing on sectarian statements and pointing fingers at each other will create pending grudges that are maintained in the subconscious, and emerge when triggered by things that are very likely unrelated to them. Several facts during the Ambon conflict confirm this idea. The crusades and terrorism emerged at that time. This shows that history that is not straightened out transparently tends to be used as a reference to continue wrong things in the past.

Collective Memory: Hating Other Religions, Spreading Death

One of the undeniable facts of the 'conflict' that occurred in Ambon city was that Muslims and Christians insulted each other, attacked each other and killed each other. This should not be covered up or ignored, but should be a source of learning for all religious people. Even if there are other factors that cause this violence, the undeniable fact is that religion is the main and strong motivation for this terrible violence.

In this framework, collective memory can be used as a source of criticism for transformation of how they understood and live their religion. During the 'conflict', Muslims and Christians took position as enemies of one another. The impact was that human lives can easily be lost, just because of religious differences. This horrific act reinforces the view that religion contributes greatly to the destruction of

human life; not the other way around. This must be considered since world history was marked by several events that showed the dark face of religions, including the Crusades and terrorist movements. Group identification with these last two things emerged during the 'conflict' of 1999 - 2004.

According to Paul Ricoeur (1992, pp. 2–3), when one understands identities as identical, what happens is a tendency to equate identities. Therefore, he talked about idem-identity or Identity Ibid. Ibid identity is a perspective that perceives oneself or a group as the ibidem of another group or previous group. As a result, a strong hierarchical pattern or structure was shaped between the group. When violence occurred, Muslims and Christians' memories of events involving religious-based groupings emerged. Crusades and terrorism are references. Christians were seen as integral part of Christians in the past who were involved in the crusades. Muslims were considered and identified with terrorist movements. In this context, past events were understood in a strong hierarchical structural relationship with these two groups.

The identity as Ambonese Muslims and Christians is not a copy of Muslims and Christians from other parts of the world. Identities as Ambonese Muslims and Christians are shaped by the context and place in where they live. They are bound to other Muslims and Christians universally, but their lives are shaped by themselves in a certain specific context. Therefore, they had no connection to crusades and terrorist movements. Moreover, it is related to actions that are essentially contrary to the values held by religion, including identity politics. Identity politics is an action that endangers the life of human civilization, it should be part or content of collective memory. In this way, the people of Ambon City, Muslims and Christians, freely maintain their community identity as a society that respects religious differences.

Another important thing related to religious life in Ambon that should be criticized is religion as a competitive process. One of the results of a research conducted in early 2022 in Ambon city and on the Seram Island, showed the informant's assessment that after 'conflict' there is a tendency to practice religion as competition (BY, Personal Communication, December 18, 2022). This assessment is based on the fact that after the 'conflict', at Ambon city, morning prayers took place in church buildings, where loud speakers were also used which disrupted Muslims' morning prayers.

In fact, living religious life as a competition is nothing new. In sacred biblical texts, narratives are found that describe competition between certain central figures. The rivalry between the characters Cain and Abel; Isaac and Ishmael; or Esau and Jacob. The unharmonious relationship between Christianity, Islam and Judaism tends to be justified by referring to the rivalry between these figures.

Jonathan Sack offered his notion that the relationship between adherents of Christianity, Islam and Judaism is not going well because of the competitive perspective or rivalry thinking that exists in these three religions. For Sack, rivalry thinking is driven by mimetic desire (Sacks, 2015, p. 87). Mimetic desire is wanting something that someone else has. One example of mimetic desire that Sack noted was God's promise to Abraham. When Christianity emerged, God's Promise to Abraham, which became one of the Jewish religious beliefs, was claimed to belongs to Christianity. Rivalry thinking appears here. Within the framework of competition, one religion tries to eliminate other religions. According to Sack, this can be seen, among other things, in Paul's perspective as written in Galatians 4:21-31: Sarah represents Christianity, while Hagar represents Judaism; Christians are free; Jews are slaves (Sacks, 2015).

Living a religion as competition creates destruction because there is competition and desire to defeat and eliminate others. Collective memory plays a role in transforming tendency to live religion as a competitive, especially for religious communities in Ambon who have experienced the destruction of their lives due to the 'conflict'. The emergence of the idea of balance strengthens the tendency to live religious

life as a competition. With the experience of 'conflict', for Muslims and Christians in Ambon in particular and Maluku in general, religion-based categories have had to be abandoned. Social life which is developed on a religion-based category, would make religion an obstacle in human real life. The impact is that religion does not create freedom and joyful in human life. In contrary, it shapes frightening and tearfulness. As long as religion becomes one of the criteria in running the life of a society, the society itself is creating a poison that kills togetherness.

Through collective memory, Muslims and Christians create historical narratives that boldly emphasizes that when religious people run their religion singularly, the religion becomes a source of inspiration to take the lives of the others. A religion that does not have courage to accept the existence of other religions is a religion that inspires its followers to destroy the others. Therefore, religious communities are challenged to promote embracement of the other religions. Thus, religion brings grace and joy to the universe; not death. Principally, religions that promotes death must to be rejected.

With the collective memory, Ambon society shapes its identity that is free from manipulation, helplessness and fear. Thus, religion is not lived as competition. This dark incident became a source of inspiration for them to embrace each other as friends and traveling partners; not as competitors with each other. Religion is lived as a source of basic inspiration of values that direct collective movement to shape life. In this togetherness, openness to assess and reformulate beliefs or dogmas, as part of the process of faith, is an imperative for all religions.

Moreover, it needs to be emphasized that 'conflict' in 1999 - 2004 was a good source of learning for Muslims and Christians. They learn to affirm that a religion that pays attention to itself will be a religion that does not embrace, but rejects and eliminates other religions. Self-concerned religions tended to assume the role of God; speaking in the name of Allah and even replacing Allah's will with self-will. Because of this, religious people kill each other without feeling guilty. Even in the name of religion, Allah is used as a guide and strength for religious people to kill each other. In fact, violence committed in the name of religion is caused by wrong interpretations of holy books or religious texts (Arifianto, 2021, p. 97). Frankly, all religions teach its adherents to develop peace and build a tolerant life (G. Lestari, 2021, p. 186), in a pluralistic religious society.

During the 'conflict', the 'image' of God, the Lord, that was shown by Muslims and Christians was the cruel God. But through collective memory, the image of a cruel God who hate adherents of other religions is transformed into the image of God who is full of love across religious boundaries. The 'image' of God stretching out His loving arms to embrace all religions, is easily found in the honesty of Muslims and Christians speaking together about the 'conflict'. In this way, they freely shape their identity as religious people who promote life. This is what Miroslav Volf (2021) stated, that we are not only shaped by our memories, but we ourselves also shape our memories, which also shape us. Collective and individual identities are formed from memories, so memories of negative emotions must be transformed into positive memories so that these memories can bring recovery.

Collective memory is an important factor for the continuation of true reconciliation. As part of the human existence, collective memory needs to be guarded, cared for and maintained. Therefore, facilities are needed to maintain and care for collective memory. The cultural system in Maluku generally shows this awareness. *Pela* system is an example of the collective memory in Central Maluku. *Pela* system is one of the ways created to maintain people's memories of bad events that have occurred between the *pela* participants. This emphasizes that people in Maluku tried to keep their collective memory about the past pain in order to transform their present life.

Collective memory is continuously maintained through a certain media, places or events. This media, place or event should be connected to the life of Ambon society; so that it is commemorated regularly and in a planned manner. In these ways, the story about the event is passed down well to the next generation. In Ambon city, the central government has built a Peace Gong monument. However, the Peace Gong monument has functions more as a tourist attraction than as a means of preserving collective memory.

CONCLUSION

The exploration that has been carried out on research questions, related to the collective memory that needs to be shared by Muslims and Christians in Ambon, after the social conflict found some important ideas. Muslims and Christians in the Ambon should have a collective memory that the perpetrators and victims of the conflict were both Muslims and Christians. They were victims and perpetrators because they destroy and kill each other. This happens because Muslims and Christians live their religious life as a competitive process. As the impact, competition shaped their attitude and behavior to knock each other out, even to kill. They hate people who were adherents of a religion that is different to the religion they believe in. Hating other religions gives birth to a religion that spreads death, which is also an important collective memory content for Muslims and Christians in Ambon. So that in this way, they have to transform how they live their respective religion to show God's loving face to everyone. Thus, the contents of this collective memory become a strength for Islam and Christianity to learn to accept their weaknesses; that they are the perpetrators and victims of the conflict. This collective memory also becomes an encouragement for them to maintain the reconciliation in Ambon city.

This research significantly contributes to the scholarly discourse on post-conflict collective memory by unraveling the intricate interplay of religious dynamics in Ambon. By highlighting the shared responsibility of Muslims and Christians as both victims and perpetrators, it provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities embedded in the aftermath of social conflict. The emphasis on transforming religious practices to exhibit compassion and acceptance adds a constructive dimension to reconciliation efforts, offering a potential model for other diverse post-conflict societies.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study's scope primarily encompasses the collective memory shared between Muslims and Christians, and further exploration into the nuances within these religious groups may be warranted. Additionally, the impact of external factors on the reconciliation process remains an avenue for future research. Despite these limitations, the findings underscore the imperative of reevaluating religious attitudes for sustained peace and offer a foundation for future inquiries into post-conflict societies.

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