

## **The Everyday Peace: An Ambon Ex-Combatants Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*Ambon conflict has ended 15 years ago; nevertheless, the citizens are still struggling to seek true peace in the everyday life. This study focuses on the reality of Muslim Ambon 1999 ex-combatants with regards to harmonious life in their daily life. This study adopts qualitative research model with a phenomenology of social-world theoretical frame developed by Schutz. The result exhibits peace practiced by Muslim Ambon ex-combatants referred to as "everyday peace" in that there is a will to work together despite the existing injustice and gap. The Muslim Ambon ex-combatants were able to be open to "the-others" (non-Muslim) and to get along with the "old enemy", despite their anxiety and caution towards the present situation, though in a "guarded" behavior where verbal and non-verbal contacts were performed in such manner. The ex-combatants are reluctant to plunge into others' rituals and beliefs, even strongly decline religious pluralism principles which equalize the truth of all religions. The established relationship exhibits that Moslem ex-combatants sincerely are longing for tranquility in life as well as expecting to understand and willing to initiate a dialogue and tolerance as far as no intervention toward their religious rights and faith.*

**Keywords:** Everyday Peace, Relationship, Dialogue, Tolerance, The-Others

### **1. Introduction**

The 1999 Ambon conflict (located in Province of Maluku, Indonesia) was the most massive and sporadic occurrence which killed thousands of people, destroyed houses and offices, damaged Mollucans city life who was once known as civilized and religious. Gerry van Klinken named this massive occurrence as "the theatre of the most shocking violence in Indonesia" since the communist incident, G30S/PKI 1965-1966 (Klinken, 2007:88).

Base causes and factors of this conflict were under long dispute. One of the most significant factors was religious fundamentalism, which was claimed as the key factor, generating as well as prolonging the conflict (see Goss, 2000; Klinken, 2010). The evidence exhibits after Malino II Peace Agreement in 2002, the situation in Ambon continued to plunge into chaos. Several consecutive conflicts occurred one after another. It was strongly believed that many fundamentalist groups were the mastermind behind those conflicts.

Barron et al. (2012) suggested 3 factors causing the occurrence of the consecutive conflicts; (1) Elite motivation, (2) people motivation, (3) supporting environment. The elite combatants had proven to set the conflict as the economic-political incentive. Whereas the people (the villain) continued to maintain the relations with the elites to be mobilized (Barron et al., 2012:48). This situation was upheld by the surrounding police and military officers who were quite tolerant toward violence.

In line with Barron, Braithwaite (2010) stated that Malino II reconciliation process potentially generate new apprehensions, due to its incomplete and not thorough result. Braithwaite called the Malino peace agreement as "non-truth reconciliation", and it was affirmed by Klinken (2007), exhibiting the uneasiness of Ambon people to be truthful in regard to the conflict. To Klinken, a hypothesis on Ambon conflict key source could only be answered by Ambon people. The untruthfulness will only preserve apprehensive potentials in the future.

However, despite the uneasy situation after Malino II, Ambon-to Braithwaite and Klinken-suggested that it still have the prospective of establishing peace in the long run, considering the efforts generated by the government, societies, local citizen as well as international organizations which have proven to be effective in minimizing massive conflicts.

Several positive evidence of Ambon city situations, according to the experts, was exhibited from the following facts: the return of the refugees to their hometowns, the availability of shared public spaces among religious communities, and growth of economy life. This positive situation is basically in line with the ten principles of Johan Galtung (2003) on positive conditions which he claims as factors that can strengthen peace building.

So, instead of refuting the above facts, this writing affirms them by giving a slight difference of emphasis, particularly on a unique relationship model established among individuals of different religions in Ambon city, based on Muslim ex-combatant's point of view. The relations include a model of tolerance and dialogue, as well as friendship and brotherhood among them. This phenomenon is unique and distinctive. It's even relatively different from concepts formulated by theorists, including Galtung.

## **2. Method**

This writing was composed based on the result of the phenomenological study, adopting Alfred Shutz key concepts such as meaning, lifeworld, knowledge, action recipes, and the-others as study frame. Written notes of Muslim ex-combatants' daily life were the primary data source, specifically taken from a deep interview and participant observation. The analysis of everyday life phenomenon, including relation, companionship, and brotherhood of the Muslim ex-combatants with non-Muslim individuals in Batu Merah village, Ambon city. It is an area with a Muslim majority and situated in a direct border with a neighboring village with a Christian majority, that is, Mardika and Belakang Soya. This Batu Merah village is also the culmination spot of the massive conflict in 1999.

The aforementioned "Phenomenon" was not generally seen as obvious facts akin to a natural phenomenon: exceptional occurrence; miracle; facts; realities; unforgotten incidents. Here, the phenomenon is entirely acknowledged to be in the theoretical frame of philosophical phenomenology. Edmund Husserl called it as "Lebenswelt"; Alfred Schutz called it "life-world", or Erving Gofman as "everyday life" (See Duranti, 2010; Overgaard & Zahavi 1996; Thompson 2005; Ritzer 1975). This everyday life occurrence, concurrently, confirms that there is no trivial and meaningfulness occurrence. Every single occurrence is primary and meaningful (Overgaard & Zahavi 1996).

### **2.1. Phenomenological Approach**

A phenomenology is an important approach as only through an authentic and thorough understanding of phenomenology could everyday life experience be discovered. The philosophy of Phenomenology itself generally aimed to study human phenomenon without questioning its causes (Overgaard & Zahavi, 1996: 4), where "life-world is principally the basic meaning which has been forgotten by science" (Wilson, paper, 2002). The phenomenologist ordained for "zurückzu de Sachenselbst" or "to the things themselves", or command to rediscover the authentic lifeworld (Overgaard & Zahavi, tt.:1).

Alfred Schutz, one of the theorists of this subject, emphasizes on individual aspects because the life-world is the world of man with conscious experience of cognitive actions and perception, and method to gain value or aesthetically appreciated. To Schutz, social reality is basically enfolded with subjective individual experience.

Existing social realities within individual's conscience deliver us to popular ideas stated by Schutz regarding stock of knowledge and typification. The stock of knowledge is a set of rules, social action recipe, proper behavior, and other knowledge, which later functioned as the basis reference of actions in the social world. From this stock of knowledge, individuals portray the reference outline or orientation, which enabled them to interpret ongoing occurrence in their life.

Thus, typification is a process of forming types of understandings and behaviors to simplify meaning and actions. However, typification is not merely about perception and behavior but also about meaning observation. From this process of typification, a human common sense is generated through language communication and social interaction which creates a sort of system of a relevance of togetherness.

By utilizing typification, direct knowledge from others is easier to be recognized and in turn, making establishing relation easier, which Schutz called as "contemporaries", "predecessors", and "successors", or those who never have experienced togetherness. The relations established may as well be direct (face to face) or indirect, as what the contemporaries may have but never been encountered, or with the ancestors and predecessors.

## **2.2. Ambon Muslim Ex-Combatant as A Subject**

Barron (2012) categorized figures in Ambon conflict as subjects fond of violence and pursue materials benefits. This combatant is classified into elite type. Yet, Baron also mentions another type of combatant – non-elite. Factually, Baron emphasizes more on the elite type of combatant, resulting in the simplification of all subjects of ex-combatants. However, this paper focused more on what Baron has neglected, which is non-elite ex-combatant according to the researcher's term and understanding.

In my research dissertation entitled *Fenomena Damai di Kota Ambon* (2016), I said that Ambon ex-combatant was not a public figure, not from elite bureaucrat, nor military trained. Before the 1999 conflict, their life with non-Muslim people was quite harmonious. In their "stock of knowledge", Muslim ex-combatant personified the Christian as the good neighbor, best friend, or even a family. This memory formed both rational and positive relational, which framed the togetherness of their everyday life (Farid, 2016).

Yet, the January 1999 incident has devastated Muslim ex-combatants' mindset, by witnessing the massive destructions. The situation arose in the conflict have constantly suppressed their state of mind and belief, and even threatened their families, in a way causing them to take action in defending their families. The aggressive behaviors such as assault, murder, and incinerate, were a "rational" action at that time since there was no other "option". It could be an act of self-survival to survive death threat.

In time, after the tension was gradually lightened, when lives were no longer threatened and faith was no longer disturbed, the Muslim ex-combatants made an effort to reflect the meaning of their way of actions toward others (non-Muslim). This reflection influences every actions and behavior in their everyday life, which in turn, transform them into an easygoing and friendly person in engaging with others.

This transformation process was described through Shutz' concepts of stock of knowledge, typification, and recipes, where Christian individuals were once known as "enemy" during the conflict, typified into someone who should be treated well. Formulate action recipes which were considered proper and meaningful for others who live in the same era (contemporaries). From here, Muslim ex-combatants tried to be open and establish a relationship and build their everyday peace among others.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1. The Everyday Peace**

The term "everyday peace" reflects peace relation which was built by ex-combatant is basically a sample of real life without any pretensions. "Peace" to Muslim ex-combatant was not merely entailed upon individual awareness but more on the ability to know and acknowledge "others" in their everyday life. As Schutz (1997) suggested, the meaning of life world was formed not only from subjective awareness but also from the result of peoples' action (Shutz, 1997; 1973; Flick, 2004:68). This inter-relation was named intersubjectivity. The meaning of peace, was indeed, never personal, but it presents together with "the other".

The everyday peace by Muslim Ex-Combatants first looked to their views of "the other"; who are Christian individual exactly? Based on their understanding, tolerance building, dialogue, friendship and brotherhood relationship was built towards "the Other" in their everyday lives (see Farid,2016)

### **3.2. Friends with an "Old Enemy"**

"Others" to Muslim ex-combatants are individuals who are always "stalking", restraining freedom, and even potentially bring destruction. These are the things instilled within their "stock of knowledge" due to a traumatic experience in the prolonged conflict 15 years prior. The past has shown that freedom of existence idealism was merely a dream or fantasy; his freedom was once in captivity, his rights were manipulated, and his presence was unwanted, even almost be annihilated. Yet, those past incidents didn't make him paranoid of others. On the contrary, his self-consciousness had never parted from the others. His self-consciousness was always with his best friends, even with strangers. A Muslim ex-combatant, no matter how exclusive he could be, he could still be open on the possibility of making friends with his "old enemy", as long as he does not suffer objection nor intervention (see Farid, 2018:1489-1490).

The Muslim ex-combatant is an individual who lives his life with full determination on one side, but vulnerability on the other side. He desires freedom of his existence, yet, at the same time, anxiety has always haunted him. Anxious upon the worst reality that may happen at any time. Anxious upon his own future, possibility of the destruction of his life, children, and families. He could feel complete and intact only when "the others" are willing to understand him. As Shutz described that the basic anxiety of individual is death, considering his great and ultimate expectations upon himself to live harmoniously with others, his best friends.

### 3.3. Relationship

As religious people, Muslim ex-combatants are open the possibility to have relation with "the other" (Christian individuals), even in its most unique pattern of relationships. In their cognitive awareness, "the others" were perceived as a best friend, partner, or even brother. But, due to the past conflict, the Muslim ex-combatants are still subjective-negatively perceiving "the others" as "untrustworthy people" or those who have potential to "harm themselves". Nevertheless, this subjective assumption didn't directly underestimate the others or put an act of anti-social toward them. Muslim ex-combatants may still doubt all kinds of cooperation or teamwork built among them, for quite some time.

Other peoples' perception of "victimize myself" making it similar to Sartre's concept of Other which is known as a figure who has "always oppress and dominate me" which ends up in "losing patience". For this reason, Sartre called others as "hell to me" ("hell" referred to other people). Nevertheless, this assumption is not necessarily understood as generalization upon all *others*, but to be seen with the great responsibility of "I" upon others. Though the presence of others may be perceived as 'hell' to the Muslim ex-combatants, people have to realize that their sense of responsibility was actually sourced from the presence of others (Sartre, 1965:803).

It is clear that the relation built between Muslim ex-combatants and Christian individuals opens the possibility of establishing such a close and deep relation, though it's seemingly conflicting, as long as they are not being intervened or targeted as an object. Despite the assumption of feeling threatened by Christian presence or not wanting of their presence, yet, that perception is actually setting up moral responsibility toward the Christian individuals and necessarily despising them.

### 3.4. The Multiple Tolerance

With such life background, the Muslim ex-combatants have built a unique and typical nature of tolerance toward the non-Muslim in Ambon city, which the researcher called as "a multiple tolerance". The tolerance model possesses two different aspects; 1) cognitive- negative aspect and 2) affective- positive aspect. The first aspect relies on *over generalized beliefs* toward the outside group, where non-Muslims individuals are perceived as unreliable people and ultimately possessing a false belief. The second aspect was based on everyday actions which exhibit openness or welcome to non-Muslim and social empathy. It means ex-combatants still possess stereotypes and prejudices toward the non-Muslims yet those remains on the level of mindset, ideas and not derogative, moreover unpleasant gesture/attitude toward Christian individuals directly (direct non-interference).

Tolerance model of Muslim ex-combatant is unique compared to the western perspective of tolerance. In the sense that they always try to be open, accept differences, make friend with "old enemy", yet, remain cautious and stay within the boundaries of all the possibilities that may arise. The anxiety of another succeeding conflict has been swathing all their entire life. However, their attitude resemblance with "*tasamuh*" or tolerance is not mainly caused by their Muslim belief, but also due to the past traumatic experience with the non-Muslim that leaves a scar influencing their everyday interaction with the non-Muslims.

### 3.5. Dialogue

The dialogue model of the ex-combatant was built upon the basis of strong and firm religious values and principles, in which, they are willing to open themselves to interact with non-Muslim individuals, yet, persistently maintaining their belief as the one and only truth.

Several ideas are drawn from religious dialog model of Muslim ex-combatant; first, dialog based on the belief/faith to Allah. Islam faith and belief is absolute and could not be traded for anything else. Nevertheless, this absolute faith doesn't ultimately reject the existence of other religion.

Second, dialog based on the submission toward Allah's command. This submission has become the basis of the dialog between religions for Muslim ex-combatant in the form of executing Allah's command (*amar ma'ruf*) and avoiding Allah's prohibition (*nahimunkar*). One of the ways to perform Amar Ma'ruf is basically intent on establishing a dialogue with other individuals from different religions, in particular, the Christians.

Third, dialog established from experiences, reflections, and a variety of life problems. The ex-combatants are relatively open to any humanitarian dialogs. Inclusively, all sort of positive and constructive relations among individuals of different religions, leading to establishing a more mutual complementing and understanding.

Several studies have shown that the dialogs' topics between ex-combatants and Christian individuals were mostly revolved around professions and friendship. Hardly ever touching the topics around religious issues.

Yet, some cases also showed that ex-combatants ever joined Christmas celebration mainly due to maintaining good relations and brotherhood among them, though keeping the principle restrictions and not taking parts in a ritual ceremony. To this extent, both parties have realized that religious beliefs and rituals are fundamentals and cannot be merged with others.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The present situation in Ambon is clearly a calm condition with full caution and guard. This is the reality of peace of their everyday life. Honest gestures; where words are properly controlled, politely interact with others, and all this for the sake of establishing a harmony. That illustration is absolutely in contrast to Johan Galtung's idea about Positive Peace in his 10 principles, particularly principle number 4 – (1) free from fear, (2) freedom of will, (3) no exploitation, (4) freedom to act.

In fact, the Muslim ex-combatant was able to be open to "others" (non-Muslim), despite their anxiety and concern toward the present situation. Their concern "forced" them to wish for peace as the ultimate choice and life goal. The relation built was merely conflicting, in the sense of existing negative thoughts of others; though still being open to others. Therefore, it is clearly seen as unequal. Yet, the inequality never hindered the relation nor cooperation built. Muslim ex-combatant could even prove themselves able to accept and make friends with their old "enemy".

To Muslim ex-combatant, appreciation and respect for the uniqueness of every religion are absolute. Every religious community has the right to express their model and ways of praying, without having to cross other religion's boundaries. The friendship relation with the non-Muslim is a pure and true social relation without touching the religious basic principles.

In Ambon, a conflict has been an inseparable element of life, whereas peace is indeed everybody's desire. The 1999 bleak memory, though possible to be suppressed, it will never be forgotten. A Muslim ex-combatant has proven to be able to mingle and make peace with people who are different from him, as long as his belief and pride is not being intruded. The relation was established with ultimate caution. A Muslim ex-combatant is always longing for an everlasting peace, and conflict is never to recur. Despite their constant anxiety of their peaceful life, they relentlessly strive to "guard the peace" today in Ambon.

#### **Acknowledgment**

This study received the support from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Research Grant, Young Lecturers Incentive Grant, Code: GGPM-2018-031. Thanks to Research Centre for Theology and Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

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