

Experience Of Living With Islam-Christianity In North Maluku, Indonesia

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Abstract.

The article starts from the experience of living with Islam-Christians in the North Maluku province of Indonesia in facing the threat of the spread of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This religious community, which had a conflict in 1999, has a different way of dealing with the spread of COVID-19 with other regions in Indonesia, both regarding the views of positive Covid-19 patients who care for sin and reward, Islamophobia, and physical worship. continues in buildings of worship during the pandemic. These incidents occurred in the North Maluku province of Indonesia as a border area with a distinctive social, cultural and political context, so the field tracing used was a case study. This is in line with the empirical reality of the spread of COVID-19 which is still ongoing, so research was conducted intensively participatory in the Muslim-Christian community in North Maluku province. In the process of investigating data, informatory are needed, but the question of how the Muslim-Christian community in North Maluku continues to care for life together amid the COVID-19 pandemic is the main question of this research. Of course, many research articles on COVID-19 have been published, but there has not been a single study on Islamic-Christian relations during the pandemic, let alone a case study of the Muslim-Christian community, which once fought to the point of casualties and is now facing non-natural disasters. The answers to the main research questions will be a contribution of thought for anyone who has the desire to care for their community that supports each other. So that a case study of the Muslim-Christian community who has been in conflict and inhabits the coast of eastern Indonesia and is now facing the threat of COVID-19 is an important agenda and closeness. The value premise of this study is to learn the pattern of relations in the community after the riot between Muslims and Christians and religious communities, this non-natural disaster along the spread of COVID-19. As far as the author's knowledge, this study is the latest study on the Muslim-Christian community in North Maluku in the face of COVID-19. These two communities are able to get through difficult times of horizontal conflict, this study will study how the two religious communities can face the challenges of COVID-19 and become a strong generation after all of this has passed.

Keywords: Disaster, Experience, Islam, Christian, Covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

This article stems from the reality of the lives of Muslims and Christians in Halmahera, North Maluku, which responded differently to the government's appeal that all religious activities during the Covid-19 pandemic be carried out online or in their respective homes. The author then made preliminary observations, it turns out that the response of Muslims and Christians to the Covid-19 pandemic is very complex, let's say that Muslims who have died confirmed Covid-19 cannot be put in coffins, as well as Christians who die without funeral services causing a commotion in society. These two concrete examples lead the author to the question, is it because of the experience of horizontal conflict in 1999-2001 which shaped people's behavior in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic? This question was raised because the attitude of Muslim-Christian communities in other parts of Indonesia during the Covid-19 outbreak held worship services online or in their respective homes, so that places of worship such as mosques and churches were closed during the pandemic. Of course, this question does not intend to seek technical answers to the implementation of the convention, but carrying out a service involving many people during the Covid-19 pandemic is a risky act.

Then, why did the people dare to take such risks? The search results show that similar research has been carried out to map three problems: (a) Indonesian government policies in response to the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia; (b) how this policy affects the life of religious communities in Indonesia; and (c) how religious communities in Indonesia respond to the Indonesian government's public policies regarding the Covid-19 outbreak (Sukanto and Parulian, 2020:173-183). [1] Apart from that, research in a field which is analyzed from the perspective of a particular religious community can also be seen as in the article *Moderatisme dan Problem Konservatisme Beragama di Tengah Pandemi Global Covid-19*, [2] and the last one is the article about *Respon Orang Kristen terhadap Pemberitaan Televisi mengenai Covid-19* [3] and *From Theodicy and Anthropodicy to Theo-anthropodicy: Loving God and Loving Others Amid the COVID-*

19 Pandemic. [4] The writings mentioned above discuss the response of religious communities in Indonesia regarding the spread of Covid-19 in general, but are not specific to the locality of the people in certain contexts. In fact, Indonesia with its various religions and cultures and its distinctive contexts is a social realism that is not easy to generalize, so the peculiarities of this paper - which therefore distinguishes the three writings above - lies in its locality in Halmahera, North Maluku where the people are the people after the disaster of the 1999-2001 Islamic-Christian riots. [5] Conceptually, the relationship between traumatic experiences that occur in a particular person or community in psychological studies has been found, although the determination of an event can be categorized as a traumatic experience is subjective.

[6] However, there is no other reason that is good enough to deny the fact that the experience of the Islam-Christian horizontal conflict in North Maluku was unheard of that happened in 1999-2001 classified as an event that gave rise to communal bereavement. This traumatic experience becomes a collective memory with the people of North Maluku which can be repeated and therefore has the potential to divide the community. [7] Collective memory like this in interdisciplinary studies belongs to declarative memory which includes semantic memory, where facts are connected with the conceptual information that underlies human knowledge about the world. On this basis and learning from disaster-to-disaster experiences, what is the tendency of the knowledge and attitudes of religious communities, especially Muslims and Christians in North Maluku province, to face the Covid-19 pandemic? The answer to the main questions of this research is important because the Islamic-Christian relationship in North Maluku province, which was strained due to the 1999-2001 horizontal conflict, was again tested amidst the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. The experience of Muslim-Christians managing trauma and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemic is important to explore to see how to deal with disasters and networking opportunities for human solidarity. It is for this purpose that this study was conducted, with the hope that, although it is small and limited, hopefully it will be of benefit.

II. METHODS

Considering that there are many studies on the Covid-19 pandemic including various interpretations of it, this research uses a participatory approach to be prepared directly by Muslim-Christians in the North Maluku province of Indonesia in responding to Covid-19. The results of participatory research discussed the policies of religious institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as ministries related to religious affairs and saw organizational policies that were substantial and offended the responsibility of religious communities or were only technical based on self-regulation of the virus.

Of course, in order to answer how the tendency of religious knowledge and attitudes, especially Islam and Christianity in North Maluku province, facing the Covid-19 pandemic requires data techniques, but because of the large number of societies, respondents who can be as far as the quality of the information are seen as representing those who are approached. Information from respondents was also enriched with local media reports related to the research topic to enrich research information. [8]

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

North Maluku in Context

Halmahera Island has a land area of 918,000 km², with the coordinates of Halmahera Island located between 1270 East Arc (TB) and 1290400 East Longitude, 20,590 North Latitude (LU) and 10530 South Latitude (LS). Topographical characteristics consist of brown forest soil, Mediterranean soil, latosol soil and rendzina soil. On Halmahera Island, there are also two active volcanoes, namely Gamkonora and Dukono. Air temperature (temperature) average per year ranges from 25.60 C - 26.10 C with an average annual rainfall between 2,138 mm - 3,693 mm. Administratively, Halmahera Island is included in the administrative area of North Maluku Province, Indonesia. [9] Masinambow in his socio-linguistic research mapped two sub-ethnic groups on the island of Halmahera, namely First, the non-Austronesian groups that occupy the northern part of Halmahera which consist of the Tobelo, Galela, Tobaru, Loloda, Sahu, Waioli, Pagu, Toloiku, and Modole sub-ethnic groups. Second, the Austronesian groups that occupy the central and southern parts of Halmahera, which consist of Buli, Maba, Patani, Sawai, Weda, Gane, Kayoa, and Makian

ethnic groups. Along with the openness of transportation access and other sub-ethnic migrations in Indonesia, Halmahera Island has also been inhabited by the Sangir sub-ethnic group from North Sulawesi, Bugis and Buton from South Sulawesi, Javanese, and of course Tinghoa which has long roots in Halmahera. [10]

Historically, Halmahera Island and its surrounding islands in North Maluku province are historical islands, where this place is one of the routes of silk roads that are rich in spices. Traces of Portuguese and Spanish heritage are found in this area, including Catholics who were the first baptismal benchmarks for Catholics in Indonesia, as well as the Dutch and their famous trading fleet Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (20 March 1602) with a Calvinist-Protestant heritage. The Catholics and Protestants who were brought in encountered the local religion of Halmahera and Islam which is unique to Moluccas, in which the Sultans took an important role in it. In this era, the spread of Christianity coincided with the expansion of the spice market, so that Muslim-Christian relations in North Maluku went up and down. [11] It did not stop there, in the era of World War II, Halmahera Island and the surrounding islands also became a battlefield for America and its allies against Japan, the Light of Asia. The legacy of this historical event is easy to find, even the great relic of General Mc Arthur which is still in use today is the runway at Pitu Island, Morotai Airport. During the second world war era, Christians from the legacy of Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands were severely discriminated against, forced to return to their tribal religions, and missionaries were detained in refugee camps.

After 20 Years of Horizontal Conflict and the Outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic Until 2017 data in the Central Statistics Agency of North Maluku Province showed the percentage of religious communities in this province included: 73.34% Islam, 23.96% Protestant, 0.68% Catholic, 0.01% Hindu, and 0.01% Buddha. From a long historical record, conflicts most often occurred between Muslims and Christians, and one of the most heartbreaking occurred in 1999-2001 when Muslims and Christians were involved in riots and claimed lives. [12]

Up to twenty years later, recovery efforts were continued in various ways to anticipate the occurrence of the same conflict. The book *Caring for Peace: 20 years of the Maluku conflict* is one of the government's concrete efforts to restore community relations traumatized by this devastating incident. Looking at the opening pages of this book where Vice President Jusuf Kalla's remarks, followed by remarks from the Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, the National Police Chief indicated the government's seriousness in restoring public relations.

"History shows that the Malino I and II peace agreement does not guarantee that the conflict will subside in a short time. The ripples of conflict continued after the Malino peace agreement was signed. This implies that maintaining peace is more difficult than attaining it."

[15] In the midst of efforts to restore relations between religious communities due to the 1999-2001 riots, exactly twenty years after the conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak broke out throughout the world. Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), which is designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic, has spread in Indonesia since March 2, 2020, along with the discovery of two people who were confirmed positive for COVID-19 in Depok, West Java Province. After this initial discovery, a number of cases continued to be found in other provinces in Indonesia, [13] including North Maluku province, which for the first time, a confirmed case of COVID-19 was found on March 23, 2020. [14] After one year had passed, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia on March 2, 2021, 1,347,026 people tested positive, 1,160,863 recovered, and 36,518 died. Meanwhile in North Maluku province, data as of March 2, 2021 shows a positive number: 3,987 Healed: 3,403, and Died: 113. The following are the responses of two faith (Muslim-Christian) communities in North Maluku. [15]

The Response of the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH)

Based on the results of savings on one of the largest Christian communities in North Maluku, namely the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera "*Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera (GMIH)*" which in 2019 had 270,000 members of the congregation, 462 pastors consisting of 256 female pastors (55.29%) and male pastors male 207 (44.71%). These pastors serve 48 service areas and 452 independent congregations spread throughout North Maluku province. [16]

During the Covid-19 pandemic, GMIH has issued a Pastoral Letter for GMIH congregations to continue worshipping while following health protocols. The letter from the GMIH Synod Board was opposed by the Covid-19 Task Force of the local government, but efforts to stem the worship of the church were not achieved. The Synod again issued a Guidebook for Church Service in the midst of the Corona Outbreak. This Church Service Manual consists of nine sections, each of which discusses: (1) Faith, Corona, and Hope; (2) Concern and Social Concern; (3) Healthy Living Medically; (4) Improve Mental Health Through Self-Therapy; (5) Healthy Living Economically; (6) Cross-Sector Cooperation; (7) Worship in an Emergency Situation of COVID-19; (8) Pastoral Assistance for COVID-19 Emergency Situations; (9) Faith and Ethics of Special Servants. This book ends with an Epilogue on the Spirituality of Biodiversity in the Middle of Covid 19. [17]

The results of the field investigation of GMIH residents showed that 91.2% of GMIH residents agreed that worship should continue to be held in the Church by following health protocols. In line with that, 94.7% of church members are not afraid of Covid-19. Regarding the causes of Covid-19, church members have various answers, because of 19.1% of sin, 3.9% of God's punishment, and 44.3% of human consequences. [18] Apart from the survey results above, the results of the interviews also strengthen the data above. In the interview, church members who refused to worship online because they felt awkward and faith could not grow in front of a laptop or cellphone. For members of congregations in archipelagic and remote areas, they refuse online worship because of the unavailability of internet facilities. Regarding not feeling afraid of Covid-19, members of the congregation are of the opinion that human life and death are determined by God, not by humans and moreover by Covid-19. Specifically regarding the cause of Covid-19, the congregation members answered variously, there were those who argued that the cause of Covid-19 was due to human sin and therefore was punished by God, but many members of the congregation also thought that Covid-19 was a result of human activity. [19]

The response of the Muslim Community

Studies on the Official Attitudes of NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI concluded that there were at least 12 official decisions of Islamic religious organizations regarding Social Distancing, 4 of which were issued by Nahdatul Ulama (NU), 3 by Muhammadiyah, and 5 by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). In general, the attitude of this Islamic organization answers the questions of the people which practically allude to technical matters of congregational prayer, silaturahmi, recitation, and a number of socio-religious activities. [20] In general, Muslims know the fatwas from MUI and NU regarding worship and agree to stay away from exposure to Covid-19 by maintaining distance, not shaking hands with other people, and maintaining healthy living habits. In line with that, respondents also recognized the government's call to study from home, work from home, and worship at home. In practice, congregational prayers on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr 1441 Hijri are held by strictly following health protocols.

Regarding the question of the Covid-19 outbreak, it is a sign that God is angry with humans, showing various answers. A number of people agree that the Covid-19 pandemic is a sign of God's wrath against humans or as a punishment for humans due to actions (mistakes) against God, even though there are some responses that reject this theological assumption. Interestingly, some people also agree that the Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder of God's love for his people to improve their relationship behavior with others, healthy living habits, and foster solidarity with others. Even so, the frustration of the people due to social restrictions and the economic impact resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be contained, it is even more severe for people who have been confirmed positive for Covid-19. From a number of incidents in the field, it shows that Covid-19 patients are desperate to run away from isolation places, travelers who go berserk to be tested for Covid-19, even the provincial Covid-19 Task Force is overwhelmed with patient behavior so that they return them (patients) to their home districts. [21]

Regarding the reporting of the bodies of Covid-19 patients, there has been a prolonged debate. Some people agree that the burial of the bodies of Covid-19 victims will be carried out according to standard health protocols. However, the phenomenon of refusing funerals by following health protocols also occurs among rural communities, especially Muslim victims who have to be put in coffins. Respondents stated that they

were not ready for family members to be buried in unusual ways, even though a number of guidelines have been issued by religious organizations.

IV. CONCLUSION

Interfaith Cooperation Through Covid-19 Pandemic

The choice of the attitude of the religious community cannot be equated because each religious community and its geographic location affect how to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. Even so, the choice of attitude among Muslims is often interpreted differently, generally agreeing that fiqh is pro-life, so that the act of breaking the chain of transmission of COVID-19 is in accordance with the premise of the value of benefit. Ahmad Subekti emphasized that: "The Covid-19 pandemic is a concrete and tangible example of the times and social changes. Therefore, in resolving actual problems like this where there is no syara 'argument, either from the text of the Koran or as-Sunnah, we need to use references / arguments about the general benefit that exist in the rules of fiqh: dar' u al mafasidi muqaddamun 'ala jalbi al mashalihi (rejecting harm, takes precedence over attracting benefit). " Therefore, invitations to continue to make efforts and be patient and multiply prayers, remind each other and help one another. Likewise, the Indonesian Christian community forum known as the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) also has a similar attitude to the way Islamic organizations respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the first case was announced on March 2, 2021, the day after that, to be precise on March 3, 2020, PGI issued an Appeal consisting of 9 (nine) points, all of which are technical in nature to avoid transmission of COVID-19 and invite people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The attitude of PGI is different from that of the GMIH as one of its members (PGI), especially regarding the implementation of worship services at home and at church. PGI appealed to all congregations to worship at home and GMIH to continue to carry out worship services in the Church by following health protocols.

PGI also took an important step by conducting two surveys to examine the congregation of each PGI member church in responding to the spread of Covid-19. The first survey was conducted on 28-31 March 2020 and concluded that: "In line with the data that most respondents no longer gather with fellow church members, 95.4% of respondents said they agreed that worship was held online during the pandemic. Responding to questions related to the causes of the Covid-19 pandemic, most respondents thought it was caused by an unsanitary / healthy way of life (66.1%). Although, there are also those who think that a pandemic is a punishment from God (3.9%). In terms of pastoral care, as many as 44.0% chose prayer, 0.9% comfort, 3.1% assistance, and 43.5% a combination of the three (prayer, comfort and assistance). Meanwhile, 8.5% of respondents said they did not need pastoral care. The second survey by the PGI Research and Development Commission which was held on 6-13 June 2020 concluded that "Since the appeal for worship at home was issued, 87.2% of respondents admitted to routine Sunday worship at home, 61.5% attended Sunday worship through online services provided by the church. origin. As many as 83.3% of respondents said worship at home and in church buildings both help spiritual growth. Since the pandemic, 42.5% of respondents said they prayed more often, 39.7% helped others more often, and 31.4% read the Bible more often. More said there was no change in habits before and during the pandemic. In addition, if they are able to worship in the church building, 86.1% of respondents admitted to continuing to worship at the church (not changing church membership), 0.2% of respondents wanting to change church membership, 11.4% continuing to worship online, 1.8% of worshipping in other churches without changing membership, 0.6% don't want to worship."

In addition to appeals from religious organizations at the national level, there were also 18 (eighteen) Circular of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia issued at the start of the pandemic. In the Survey Result Report, all Circulars are of a technical nature regulating: a). preventive measures for the Covid-19 pandemic within the Ministry of Religion; b). religious arrangements during a pandemic; c). services for the blessing of marriage and funeral services; and D). temporary quarantine. By paying attention to the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic which has been addressed in a variety of ways and is more technical-procedural in nature, the work of religious communities now and in the future needs to be based and carried out with the awareness that the humanitarian crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has caused concern.

Everywhere we hear the unbearable scream of humanity. Human beings all over the world are feeling this situation, including us in Indonesia. In a situation like this, religious institutions in Indonesia and their followers, as an inseparable part of Indonesian society, should also be concerned and concerned in the midst of this universal humanitarian crisis.

In relation to interfaith humanitarian work, that the social concern and care of religious institutions in Indonesia and its members is not just a follow-up, but is a concrete form of accountability for faith and hope as fellow children of the nation who believe in God of Life, the Creator. and Sustainer of human life. Of course this concern needs to be realized in a concrete manner by developing social and humanitarian concerns that can encourage citizens in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, we must not spread news that causes others to lose hope and refuse to care about efforts to maintain a life together. In particular, in the context of North Maluku, loving our fellow brothers and sisters in the Indonesian public sphere is proof that we love God who has loved us, who is full of vulnerability and vulnerability. So, breaking the chain of transmission of the corona virus is a form of our faith in a loving God, including loving Indonesian citizens and people. Social concerns and concerns can also be manifested by implementing a protocol for terminating the Covid-19 transmission network and vaccination programs as regulated by the Government and appeals from religious institutions. Social concern and concern can also be expressed in the form of helping, by sharing basic needs, especially for members of the congregation and members of the community who are economically weak. Also by preparing volunteer medical and technical personnel in the field to deal with the spread of Covid-19.

Research Limitations

This research is limited to the locus of North Maluku province to see the response of Muslims and Christians to the Covid-19 pandemic. The author independently checks, manages, analyzes, and presents the results of the study. Of course, it also needs to be acknowledged that the limited time and space for more extensive and in-depth tracing of the attitudes of religious communities in a number of regions or city districts in North Maluku province, where the desire to examine in more detail is not possible because there is still the threat of Covid-19. These findings illustrate that respondents are limited but considered quite representative, but it must be admitted that they cannot be generalized to all regions because the level of differences in opinion and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemic is very diverse and there is a tendency to be debatable. For that reason, comprehensive and in-depth studies still need to be done to enrich the discourse of the Covid-19 pandemic and how religious people are going through it.

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