

Towards Pluralistic Living in Ambon

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Abstract. The article tries to understand the conflict in Ambon from a psychological perspective and outlines a path to pluralistic living. Its approach is based on the assumption that constructive change requires a clear common picture of the desired future and identification of current forces that are preventing development towards that future. There is no need to understand why the current situation developed in the first place. The author identifies three obstacles that are blocking the way to pluralistic living and generates ideas to overcome them. She argues along the lines of human needs theory that violence is not a result of people being "cruel" but simply a phenomenon that occurs when people lack alternative strategies to satisfy their basic needs. She suggests mediation as a method to find an arrangement where the needs of all conflicting parties are met. As pluralistic living is more than absence of violence, the author also focuses on the process of emotional healing.

Key words: overcoming conflict, pluralistic living, human needs theory, mediation

Abstrak. Artikel ini berupaya untuk memahami konflik Ambon dari perspektif psikologi dan menawarkan kehidupan yang pluralistik. Pendekatan ini didasarkan pada asumsi bahwa perubahan yang konstruktif membutuhkan gambaran bersama yang jelas dari keadaan masa depan yang didambakan dan identifikasi kekuatan-kekuatan saat ini yang mencegah perkembangan ke arah tersebut. Tak ada keinginan untuk memahami asal-muasal situasi saat ini. Penulis menengarai tiga sandungan yang menghambat jalan ke kehidupan yang pluralistik dan mengusulkan gagasan-gagasan mengatasinya. Penulis mendasarkan argumentasinya pada teori-teori kebutuhan manusiawi, yaitu bahwa kekerasan bukan hasil sifat manusia yang memang kejam, tetapi sekedar suatu gejala yang terjadi manakala orang tak memiliki strategi alternatif untuk memuaskan kebutuhan dasarnya. Diusulkan suatu mediasi sebagai metode menemukan tatanan yang mengakomodasi kebutuhan-kebutuhan para pihak yang berseberangan. Mengingat kehidupan pluralistik bukan sekedar tidak adanya kekerasan, penulis juga memusatkan perhatian pada proses penyembuhan emosional.

Kata kunci: mengatasi konflik, kehidupan pluralistik, teori kebutuhan manusia, mediasi

Aim of Research Trip

The aim of this research trip was to acquire first hand experience of the current situation the Ambonese people are facing and to carry out an assessment from a psychological perspective. The leading questions are:

- Why are Christian and Moslem people in Ambon not living together peacefully?
- What are the dynamics of this conflict?
- What then can be done from a psychological perspective to facilitate peaceful living in Ambon?

To explore these questions, we—that is: Raymond Tambunan and myself from the Psychological Faculty of Atma Jaya University in Jakarta—identified and interviewed key persons of the parties involved in the conflict and key persons of the groups that are trying to solve it.

General Situation

Today Ambon is a divided island. Having lived together harmoniously in so-called