

THE RESOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: *The study has attempted to explain several issues, namely, the causes of religious and ethnic conflicts that occurred in Indonesia, the history of the success of Islam in decreasing conflict by developing tasamuh and various social-religious approaches that can be used as an effort to resolve religious conflicts. This research was library research by interpreting several references for collecting information related to the background of the conflict in Indonesia. The findings showed that there are several points which are worth noting. First, that religious conflict in Indonesia is triggered by social, economic and political problems. Second, the presence of religious texts that tends to produce radical meaning, such as the interpretation of jihad and infidels. Third, the existence of religious teaching integration into the culture. This study offers three forms of conflict resolution: The first, resolution is that create religion as a form of reconciliation as it was the practice of tasamuh at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Second, develop the theology of religious pluralism. The last is that understand religious reality with a multi-method approach including the history of religion, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and psychology.*

Keywords: conflict, religion, ethnic, multicultural, socio-religious.

المخلص: تشرح هذه الدراسة عدة مواضيع هامة بما في ذلك الأسباب المختلفة للصراعات الدينية والعرقية التي حدثت في إندونيسيا. ثانياً: شرح تاريخ نجاح الإسلام في الحد من الصراع بتطوير التسامح الإسلامي. ثالثاً: مختلف النهج الاجتماعية - الدينية التي يمكن استخدامها لحل النزاعات الدينية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة طريقتان وهما دراسة مكتبية وتاريخية فالأولى تستخدم في بيان شكل عدة الصراعات التي وقعت في إندونيسيا. ودراسة تاريخية تستخدم لتحليل معلومات حول خلفية النزاع في إندونيسيا. بعض النتائج التي توصلت إليها هذه الدراسة هي: أولاً ، أن الصراع الديني في إندونيسيا ناجم عن مشاكل اجتماعية واقتصادية وسياسية. ثانياً: معنى النصوص الدينية التي تميل إلى أن تكون جذرية ، مثل معنى الجهاد ، ومعنى الكفار وما إلى ذلك. ثالثاً: إضفاء الطابع الرسمي على التعاليم الدينية في الثقافة. ومن أجل التغلب على أنواع الصراعات المختلفة ، يقدم هذا البحث ثلاثة أشكال لحل النزاعات ، وهي أولاً: جعل الدين شكلاً من أشكال السلام ، كما كان ممارسة تساموه في زمن النبي محمد. ثانياً: تطوير علم اللاهوت للتعددية الدينية. ثالثاً: فهم الواقع الديني بمقاربة متعددة الاتجاهات بما في ذلك تاريخ الدين والأنثروبولوجيا وعلم الاجتماع والفلسفة وعلم النفس.

Abstrak: *Kajian ini menjelaskan beberapa topik penting di antaranya, yaitu pertama berbagai macam penyebab konflik agama dan etnik yang pernah terjadi di Indonesia. Kedua, menjelaskan sejarah keberhasilan Islam dalam meredam konflik dengan mengembangkan tasamuh Islam. Ketiga, berbagai pendekatan-pendekatan sosial keagamaan yang dapat dijadikan sebagai upaya dalam menyelesaikan konflik agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kepustakaan berupa beberapa referensi tentang konflik yang pernah terjadi di Indonesia. Referensi tersebut digunakan untuk menggali informasi tentang latarbelakang terjadinya konflik di Indonesia. Beberapa temuan penelitian ini adalah: pertama, konflik agama di Indonesia disebabkan oleh masalah sosial, ekonomi dan politik. Kedua, Pemaknaan atas teks-teks agama yang cenderung radikal, seperti makna jihad, makna kafir dan sebagainya. Ketiga, formalisasi ajaran agama kedalam budaya. Maka untuk mengatasi berbagai macam konflik tersebut, penelitian ini menawarkan tiga bentuk penyelesaian konflik, yaitu pertama, menjadikan agama sebagai bina damai, sebagaimana praktek tasamuh pada masa Nabi Muhammad Saw. Kedua, Mengembangkan teologi pluralism agama. Ketiga,*

Memahami realitas keagamaan dengan pendekatan multimetodik diantaranya sejarah agama, antropologi, sosiologi, filsafat, psikologi.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural nation with different ethnics, customs, skin colors, cultures, religions and languages. According to Parsudi Suparlan, multicultural is rooted from “culture”, functions as a parameter for human life. In term of the development of a nation, now, multicultural has formed an ideology which is called multiculturalism.¹

On the strength of diversity, colonial believe that Indonesia becomes a valuable nation for the new concept of diversity in society.² It is emphasized on ethnic groups and customs. In Indonesia, as the characteristics of the society in general, every ethnic group has a hereditary territory that is acknowledged as their home where they take absolute rights to exploit the resources available to survive.³

Ethnic diversity initially exists when Indonesia became as a center of plurality to people from Asian. They are Arabian, Chinese (Muslim and non-Muslim), Indian, people who believe about animistic, Christian, even delegation from Japan.⁴ Therefore, unsurprisingly, according to the history, Javanese is adjustable to integrate one value to another different system to adapt and design a Javanese civilization into *Indic*. Unsurprisingly, as we can see that the Buddhism temple and Hinduism temple stand side by side and the kings in the past were called “*Siwa-Budha*” as the representation of two different civilizations, Hindu-Buddha. Afterward, Islam made its entrance to Indonesia. However, it doesn’t affect the life structure of people who

¹ Ali Maksun, *The New Paradigm of Pluralism and Multiculturalism of Islamic Learning in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Aditya Media, 2011), 143.

² As an administrator and writer of politic in England, J.S. Furnivall introduces the idea of plural society. According to Furnivall, plural society is society that consists of two or more elements or social organization living side by side but refuses to act in one unit of politic. Robert W. Hefner, *Politic of Multiculturalism* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2007), 16.

³ Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, ‘Multi Ethnicity of Indonesia and Potential Conflicts’, in *Mediation and Resolution of Conflicts in Indonesia, from Religious Conflicts to Judicial Mediation*, ed. Musahadi (Semarang: Walisongo Mediasi Centre, 2007), 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31

live in tolerance. Values in Islam essentially enrich the social-cultural repertoire in society, moreover, enhance diversity.⁵

And this is happened in Indonesia, because of the incapability in managing social capital, Indonesia has been experiencing a number of problems such as instability politic, social and conflict that leads to violence since Indonesia declared its freedom in 1945. Violence in Indonesia is like a proverb whatever broken will grow back, whatever lost will be replaced. In reality, divergence among ethnics/ religions continuously occurs in Indonesia for example, in Sambas, Sampit, Maluku, Poso, Ambon, Aceh and Papua. It shows how fragile the national multiculturalism in Indonesia is.⁶

Pancasila as the ideology to bring this nation together cannot recede the social problems in this county. Failure to understand Pancasila as closed-ideology of nation occurred in The New Order (Orba). Due to the statement of non-reformer and the word Pancasila tends to be evaded obviously in curriculum, the authority of education uses the term PKN (Civics Education) instead of Pancasila.⁷ Perception about national values Nationalism Values in culture diversity in Indonesia changes in meaning since reformation proclaimed in 1988 as well as an end of regime of The New Order.⁸

Actually, national multiculturalism in Indonesia hasn't been completely realized by all people as something destiny of *God*, not

⁵ Masdar Hilmi, *Islam Profetik : Substansi Nilai-nilai Agama dalam Ruang Publik* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008), 190.

⁶ A numerous of conflicts in multicultural society indicate the lack of Nationalism in Indonesia. There are six factors that indicate the situation. *First*, the globalization that happened hurriedly degrades the identity of nation. *Second*, the implementation of region autonomy in lots of places triggers the primordialism-based exclusiveness that is challenging the creating of the community-based nationalism. *Third*, globalization that brings in liberated culture and value start discrepancy, especially in economic sector. *Fourth*, inequality of development causes disparity in economic sector that forms economic polarization. *Fifth*, accumulation of economic polarization occurring for years leads to polarization of social, politic and culture. Sixth, polarization of economic, social, politic and culture is followed by exclusivism in all living aspects such as residences, education, public places and life style. Lalu Mara Satria Wangsa, *Developing Indonesian Human Resources, The Collection of Aburizal Bakri's Speeches* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2009), 40.

⁷ Ahmad Baedowi, *Calak Edu Esai-esai Pendidikan 2008-2012* (Jakarta: Alvabet, 2012), 170.

⁸ Mohammad Baharun, *Islam Idealitas, Islam Realitas* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2012), 230.

human-made. That every human being was born in one condition to another, with different characteristic physically and non-physically, is a common idea that we can find in our daily life. People's point a view about national multiculturalism is still co-opted by logo-centrism of hegemonic interpretation that is loaded with full of prejudice, suspicion, bias, heartedness, and reduction to the other groups.⁹

According to Nurcholis Majid, Moslems in Indonesia need to be awaked of the culture continuity/harmony. If Moslems in Indonesia want to contribute the cultural values that are relevant to nowadays-Indonesia, the most important thing that is necessary to understand is the continuity of Islamic culture with its great civilization in the past. Islamic culture is a culture that favors universal bond of civility.¹⁰

Various conflict resolutions have been carried out, but permanent resolution of conflicts is very difficult to realize, including offers of conflict resolution with the approach of interfaith dialogue offered by Muhammad Abu Nimer, which has been used as a means to create peace in the world. With dialogue, according to Abu-Nimer, humans can avoid hostility and violence in the name of religion.¹¹ Interfaith dialogue has been carried out since the 19th century, but dialogue between faiths is not effective in resolving conflicts, this is because followers of each religion believe in the truth of their religion.

In research on Muslim relations with non-Muslims the perspective of Ulama in Bugis. The study concluded that in order to build dialogue and cooperation, ethics plays an important role. Ethics are universal teachings of all religions. Through the door of ethics, religious people universally encounter the same diverse humanitarian challenges. Every religion in the world has typical values that are only found in each religion. This value is called particular values. Every religion also has a common value that is believed by all religions. Such values are called universal values. In building dialogue, what needs to be developed is the universal values of each religion, not its particular values. Dialogue is carried out proactively and continuously

⁹ Hilmi, *Islam Profetik : Substansi Nilai-Nilai Agama dalam Ruang Publik*, 186.

¹⁰ Nurcholish Majid, *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 134.

¹¹ Akhmad Rizqon Khamami, 'Dialog Antar-Iman Sebagai Resolusi Konflik, Tawaran Mohammed Abu-Nimer', *IAIN Ponorogo, Al-Tahrir* 14, no. 2 (2014): 249.

to maintain good relationships.¹² The reality today in religion is to emphasize typical values, rather than particular values. Adapting typical values is considered an obligation that must be maintained by each religion.

Wasisto Raharjo Jati researched about *Kearipan Lokal Sebagai Resolusi Konflik Agama* wrote about local wisdom Pela Gandong as a resolution of the religious conflict in communities after the Maluku conflict. In this article, the potential for conflict at the root of society can be reduced through the values of local wisdom Pela Gandong has an important role in reconciliation by reuniting community solidarity that was divided during the conflict.¹³ However, according to Toni Setia Budi in his research, Pela Gandong is apparently not able to maintain harmony.¹⁴

Understanding the characteristics of each religion is very important in resolving conflicts in religion. Peter Connolly in the book approaches to the study of religion can be used as a formulation in resolving various religious issues. Ninian Smart in the book states that to overcome the religious problem, she offered a poly methodic approach, an approach that uses many methods. This requires the development of a generalist view. Therefore resolving religious issues is not enough with a single approach but with a variety of approaches at one time.

Ninian Smart has been argued that religious studies is a poly methodic discipline, and that the student of religion should be familiar with the approaches of the major disciplines concerned with understanding the nature of religion, not least because the approach adopted has profound influence on the phenomena chose for investigation and the conclusions reached. This book is presenting each of the significant approaches to religion in an informed manner, the book brings together experienced researchers from feminism,

¹² Muhammad Yusuf, 'Hubungan Muslim dan Non Muslim Perspektif Ulama Bugis', *IAIN Ponorogo, Al-Tahrir* 14 (2014): 271.

¹³ Wasisto Raharjo, 'Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan', *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Keagamaan* 2 (November 2013): 393.

¹⁴ Toni Setia Budi, 'Resolusi Konflik Agama di Pulau Ambon', *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional* XIV, no. 3 (Desember 2009): 51.

anthropology, sociology, phenomenology, psychology, philosophy, and theology¹⁵.

THE CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS CONTRAVERSITY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IN INDONESIA

After studying variety of researches about controversy, the problems related to ethnics in Indonesia affected by several factors. They are as follow:

1. Tendency to radicalize the appreciative of religious text.

Noticing the religious activity of modern Moslems, there is a tendency to understand Qur'an and Hadits textually, but rather stuffy. As a matter a fact, it creates unexpected behavior e.g. riotous, intolerance and destructive. Doctrine of Jihad, pragmatically, is often accepted as a holy war to assault and force others parties that have unusual notion. This case indeed generates a bad reputation of Islam that originally promotes veneer and peace.¹⁶

The doctrine becomes contradictory with the origin of Islam that proposes theory of humanity that is appended by wisdom as the result of the openness/flexibility of Islam civilization itself. Because of this trait, Moslems are able to adapt easily in all kinds of cultural manifestations and perceptions originated from various civilization for centuries.¹⁷

The wisdom arises from the mutual influence of civilizations, at that time, known in the Islamic region, which ensures higher development in Islam as stated by historian Arnold J. Toynbee as *oikumene* (judicial world) of Islam or Islamic judiciary.¹⁸

2. Formalization of Islamic teachings in nation's cultural manifestations.

Formalization of Islamic teachings appears to be an "alternative culture" for all forms of cultures in this country. Therefore, "Islamic law" is applied as an ideal benchmark to assess cultural

¹⁵ Connolly Peter, ed., *Approaches to the Study of Religion* (New York: Cassel, 2001), 11.

¹⁶ Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman al-Qur'an dan Hadits* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2011), 2.

¹⁷ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Universalisme Islam dan Peradaban Kosmopolitanisme Peradaban Islam, dalam Nurkholish Majid, Islam Universal* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), 2.

¹⁸ Wahid, 2.

manifestations in general. Islam tends to be the ideal stereotype of all kinds of local cultures to which Indonesia goes.

This stereotype, by Abdurrahman Wahid, considered inappropriate because normative teaching derives from the God. Islamic teaching needs to be accommodated to the local cultures without losing its identities. Arab-adaptation or the process of acquiring Middle Eastern characteristics only set us off out of our origin identity as Indonesia and apparently is not suitable with the circumstances and needs.¹⁹

3. Inequality of welfare brings conflicts among ethnics.

Researched by Timo Kivimaki stated that inequality of welfare in Indonesia is the main feature that created tension between groups in Indonesia. There are two habitual notions that can start warfare. A notion puts emphasis on motivation and inadequacy of life that force a conflict evoked by a party and a notion that describes violence regarding to disappointment.

Based on the East Timor tragedy, inequality of welfare shows perfectly clear. As part of systems in Indonesia, East Timor was left behind comparing to other provinces. Monetary crisis in East Timor towards the end of 90s got even worse than the other provinces in Indonesia.

The effect of this crisis can clearly be seen by comparing the whole data of import and export activities in all regions in Indonesia. Inequality of welfare of society in Jakarta, West Java and East Timor, which is getting worse as the result of the monetary crisis, justifies the commotion in Java. Moreover, people barely have any confidence in government anymore as the way they inadequately coped up with problems in East Timor.²⁰

World Bank research accomplished by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler explains that conflict befalls because of greediness rather than dissatisfaction; people involved prefer to be ambitious to have a benefit when the economic condition is unstable rather than together they resolve the situation that leads them to misery.

¹⁹ Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan, Nilai-nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007), 341.

²⁰ Timo Kivimaki, 'Penelitian Konflik Suku dalam Masyarakat Multi Budaya', in *Konflik Kekerasan Internal, Tinjauan Sejarah, Ekonomi-Politik dan Kebijakan di Asia Pasifik*, ed. Dewi Fortuna Anwar (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), 117.

Sabian Utsman describes about conflict between the traditional fishermen in coast of Kumai (Sakates region) with fishermen out of Sakates. His study elaborates the characteristics of the local fishermen from Sakates, the reasons why the conflict emerges, the Sakates fishermen's solidarity during the conflict and the social condition afterward.²¹

THE RESOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

1. The Use of Religion as The Source to Bring Peace and Non-Violent Action

According to Louis Kriesberg, constructive conflicts; From Escalation to Resolution, he seeks ways to limit the destruction associated with conflicts by employing intra-religion mechanism, inter-religion mechanism and extra-religion mechanism.

Intra-religion mechanism is the cultivation of manners and new spiritual in religion that supports peace and resolves conflicts by non-violent action. Inter-religion community mechanism, in this context, is interaction in daily life associated with Muslim and others followers consisted of the main point to foster reconciliation. Families from different background can interact and socialize each other. While, extra-religion mechanism is an interaction amongst the religion communities externally such as the delegations meet to seek alliance and negotiate for resolving conflicts.

The three mechanisms in Islam recorded in theory of *Tasamuh*. *Tasamuh* is suggested to perform in Islam to create harmony not only to people around but also to environment, plants and animals. It is stated in Quran that impulsive action in religion is not to be justified,²² and it is prohibited to force someone to accept religion.²³

Islam advises to "live together" in peace with a wide range of different parties and different interests of religion, social being, economy and the so that strengthen the attitude towards the strengthening of demanded charter. The word "together" was stated by The Prophet

²¹ Sabian Utsman, *Anatomi Konflik dan Solidaritas Masyarakat Nelayan, Sebuah Penelitian Sosiologis* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), 13.

²² QS. al-Baqarah: 256.

²³ QS. al-Ghasyiah: 21-22.

in the charter script of collective narration in the period of Mecca and known as justice, justice against slavery, paganism, centralization of biased reign. In Medina period, the prophet included the charter script about society and nation. It was represented in famous Medina Charter.

To practice charter contents into the daily life can be accomplished by interacting and communicating with others, not only amongst people in one group but a wide range of society. This will increase the aptitude in mediation, negotiation and paralegal meetings.

The way how the prophet Muhammad Saw accepted Jews and Christians showed that how tolerant and pluralist Islam is. The prophet held a meeting with the Jews and Christians in Nabawi Mosque, in Medina. He even afford an opportunity for Jews and Christians to practice their prayers in the mosque. The occasion occurred when 60 delegations of Christians, led by bishop Najran, came to Medina to wage a conflict with the prophet. However, the prophet welcomed them kindly. Before the meeting, the delegations notified that it was time for them to pray and the prophet let them do their religious practices in the mosque.²⁴

The most popular *Tasamuh* during Umar bin Khattab period is the Aelia Agreement created,²⁵ also known as Jerusalem Agreement. The agreement stated that Jerusalem had been conquered by Islam and people were guaranteed to practice their religion. On the top of that, Umar assured the Jews to stay and live in Jerusalem in harmony whereas Christians prohibited them to settle in since Constantinople overpowered. Christians insisted that the Jews are not allowed to be

²⁴ Ja'far Subhani, *Ar-Risalah* (Jakarta: Lentera, 1996), 648.

²⁵ Aelia or Illiya' (as quoted by Fauzan Saleh from Adolph Wismar's book, *A Study in Tolerance*) is pseudonym of Jerusalem given by Emperor Hadrian. The city was seized by Umar Bi al-Khattab in 636-637, However, the old bishop, Sopronius, the ruler of Jerusalem at that time required Umar to come, as the leader of Muslims, in person directly to Jerusalem to claim the city. The bishop preferred to hand over the capital completely to Umar rather than to one of the generals. The manuscript of agreement was written by Umar, according to Historian al-Thabari, the manuscript written as: "this is the agreement given by Umar, the servant of Allah and the leader of Muslims (Amir al-Mu'min) to Ailia's people. He ensures to put forward sanctuary for them, their life, property, churches, criss-cross and all religious members. Their churches would stand still, and wouldn't be destroyed or reduced. Their criss-cross and belongings wouldn't be untouched. Fauzan Saleh, *Theology of Regeneration: The Discourse Changes of Sunni Islam in Indonesia In the XX Century* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), 351.

mingled with them. In the end, territories to settle in for the Jews and Christians were allocated.²⁶

Afterward, Amr bin Ash with his troops welcomed by the Egyptian. They put their hope up in Islam that their Mazhab would not be insulted as the christian goverment in Constantinople did. That is one of the reasons why Coptic Christian in Egypt still exists. In the event that, Muslim having the intoleran like christian, coptic destroyed. In Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and all of Islamic region. We have been found christian and Jews, except Saudi Arabian.²⁷ In Spain, muslim have fowerfull during 800 years, 300 years have crisis. But during 500 years be stability region and stabil and home town three religion live in peacefull. Muslim as leader, Jews as judge and christian Catholic as community.²⁸

A muslim is expected to be wise in accepting diversity and to be loving as stated in Quran, Allah the Entirely Merciful to all of His creatures, to the believers or disbelievers. Allah proves His merciful by creating the sun, the earth and all to benefit all of His creatures. A muslim is required to encourage hospitality and friendliness to all parties and community and do good things to them.

2. Developing Theology of Pluralism in Religion

Theology of pluralism, in Budi Munawar Rahman's perspective, he initiates the other religions than his own as it is stated like '*other religions are equally valid ways to the same truth* (John Hick); *Other*

²⁶ Nurcholis Madjid, *Dialog Keterbukaan, Artikulasi Nilai Islam dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), 229.

²⁷ Madjid, 229. In the lineage of Arabic-Islam, we can see the map of plurality of nations including Arabian; Kurds, Barbarian, Arman, Armani, Suriani, Turkman, Syarkas, Turkey, Oiran, Nubrun, Negro, Western Jews etc. This plurality includes syari'ah and sects such as Greek, Orthodox Roman, Nestorian Asyur, Orthodox Coptic, Roman Catholic, Catholic Roman Suryan, Cathollic Roman Arman, Catholic Roman Coptic, Catholic Roman Kaldan, Catholic Roman Maronit, Protestant, Evangelists, Orthodox Rabbani Jewish, Qurain Jewish, Samiri Jewish, Shabiah, Yazidiah, Syawabik, Bahaiyah, religions of Negro etc. See Muhammad Imarah, *Islam dan Pluralitas dan Kemajemukan dalam Bingkai Persatuan* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1999), 289.

²⁸ Imarah, *Islam dan Pluralitas dan Kemajemukan dalam Bingkai Persatuan*, 230. Nurcholis Madjid stated that all religion is Islam in the point of submission to tha God. It's only Islam that acknowledges other religions exists. No doubt that it proves that Islam is supreme and absolute because of the ability in embracing other religions. *Mushaddiq-an li ma bayn yaday-hi wa muhaimin-an alaihi...Muhayminan* means protecting other religions.

religions speak of different but equally valid truths (John B Cobb Jr); *Each religion expresses an important part of the truth* (Raimundo Panikkar).

The point is theology of pluralism believes that all religions have the same purposes. In other hand, theology of pluralism is defined as “the only one God, praises in different ways”. To strengthen his opinion, Munawar cites Rumi’s term: different religions do exist, but the goal is just the same. Don’t you know that there are many way to go to Ka’ba? The theology of pluralism denies the ecalusivism because of the tendency of oppressive towards other religions. Theology of exclusive is formulated as an idea that there is only one true religion. This clearly leads to fanatic, dogmatic and authoritative.

Rene Guénon (m.1951) in theosophy movement and *Freemason* cited that all religions are real and band together to the point of truth. One of the successors of Guénon’s concept Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) enforced the old metaphysical principles, explored esoteric dimentions of religion, went through the mythological forms and religions as well as criticized modernity. He pinpointed the differences between exoteric dimentions of religion and esoteric and at a time disclosed the metaphysical point in all orthodox beliefs. He explained that God is the only final reality, absolute, unlimited and flawless. He suggested that all human beings should devote themselves in God.²⁹

3. Religious Conflict Resolution through Developing the Social Sciences Approaches

In contemporary study discourse, the phenomena of human variety could be viewed from some angles. It is not only viewed from the angle and the aspect of merely the teaching sourced from inspiration even though this is the main characteristic of any religion, but also viewed from the angle related to personal historical understanding and interpretation or that of a group especially on the norms of religion and the model of practices of the religious teaching in daily

²⁹ There are three basic principles to actualize plurality in religion pluralism agama, 1) logically, pluralism is known as one thing manifested in a number of view-transcendental reality portrayed in various ways 2. There is a condition admitted that religion is the main part of religious facts and experiences. 3. Spirituality is an identity and validity that is personally very impressive above the other religions. Harold Coward, *Religious Pluralism and the Future of Religions* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 45.

life. In general the norms of inspired teaching are build and processed and then standardized and studied through doctrinal –theologies, while the history of human variety were studied through religious social sciences which is done interdisciplinary.³⁰

Up to the present time, religion is always comprehended through doctrinal theology which is not relevant at the present time. Religion at present is not only viewed and limited to explain the connection between human and God but unavoidably should involve human group awareness (sociological study), the awareness to study of origin of religion (anthropological study), the need of developing the strong personality and psychic tranquility (psychological study) end the so. In other words, religion is full of phenomena that should be studied and approached though multidimensional approach such as from the angle of anthropology, philosophy, sociology, theology, and phenomenology.

The anthropological approach in studying religion is employed to study the origin of the religion. Big religions at present had the history how the religion developed from the beginning. In the development of religion, long historical process happened. Through this anthropological study, it is found that religion came from one same God of Inspiration.

Even though the embracers of religions with different holy books: al-Quran, Torah, and Bible believed that there were differences between the books, al-Quran supported by modern religion study viewed more in the points of similarity rather than the points of differences. Thus principally, those holy books should not be confronted from one another, but should be viewed from the point similarity. al-Quran did not see the confrontation, since this Moslem Holy Book presented itself as the consistent continuation of Bible and Torah, and even of revelation accepted by all prophets.³¹

Anthropological approach is employed to comprehend the religion and culture that reveal the study of variety in life. In this case, religion is the way of life from which human life is interpreted. Besides, religion is the pattern of action, a lives thing in human body

³⁰ Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas dan Historisitas* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), v.

³¹ Mun'im A Sirry, ed., *Fiqh Lintas Agama: Membangun Masyarakat Inklusif-Pluralis* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2004), 54–55.

that can be viewed in daily lives. In this matter, religion is a part of cultural system.³²

Based on the studies by experts who viewed religion as the part of cultural system, there were typologies in religion. Among those typologies are such as study of Islam in local context, which is categorized as the study that view the connection between Islamic tradition and locally-associated syncretism and locally-associated acculturation. The second type includes the first as had been studied by Geertz in *Abangan, Santri and Priyayi*, by Tadjoeer Rijal in *Tamparisasi Santri Pedesaan Jawa*,³³ by Nur Syam in *Islam Pesisir*³⁴ at cetera. The next is that with syncretism, such as by Erni Budiwanti in *Islam sasak, Islam Waktu Lima versus Islam Waktu Telu*,³⁵ by Andrew Beatty in *Adam and Eve and Vishnu: Syncretism in the Javanese Slametan*³⁶ et cetera.

Philosophical approach is emphasizing in the meaning of an essence, of identity crisis. For example, the focus of problem is the concept about God, where the focus is the basic faith and to believe the concept in terms of viewing other people, world and God.³⁷ The object of this study is the approach of reason and faith, the Logic of Mysticism, the meaning of God, Language interpretation and Worship, religion and ethics. The objects became the topic to argue on in the philosophy of religion.³⁸

Sociological approach according to S Northcott is the approach focusing on the interaction between religion and community. This thought is based on the concern on social structure, human experience and culture construction including religion. The objects of knowledge, the practices, and the institutions available in social world were viewed by sociologist as the product of interaction between human and social construction. Religion is one of social construction. Sociologist

³² Clifford Geertz, *Kebudayaan dan Agama* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992), 8–9.

³³ Tadjoeer Rijal, *Tamparisasi Tradisi Santri Pedesaan Jawa* (Surabaya: Yayasan Kampusina, 2004).

³⁴ Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005).

³⁵ Erni Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak: Islam Waktu Lima Versus Islam Waktu Telu* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2000).

³⁶ Andrew Beatty, 'Adam and Eve and Vishnu: Syncretism in the Javanese Slametan', *Jurnal of The Royal Anthropology Institute* 2 (1996).

³⁷ Peter, *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 106.

³⁸ Martin Warner, *Religion and Philosophy* (Australia: Cambridge University, 1992), 1.

also paid more attention on the study of religious collectivity as microcosmic community in which the process and the pattern of social changes can be watched clearly since the characteristics of closed or limited religious community such as monastery and certain sects or any new religious movement.³⁹

However, with the empiric approaches, such as anthropological, philosophical, sociological approaches, theology is not merely queen of science anymore. Theology in this era should compete with other new sciences. Religion as living history not only limited to past problem in many dimensions and angle of study through empirical approaches, as not to say it is limited to normative-doctrine. In its progress however, the empirical approach passed the thresholds of authority. Theories appeared in sociological and psychological approaches, as an example, had provided projectionist views that study religion only as merely a social phenomenon and lost the secrecy and deity.⁴⁰

Amin Abdullah stated that to return the study of religion within its historical and empirical basis in order not to pass the threshold of authority, there is a solution that is developing the approach of phenomenology, the approach that describes fully the fundamental structure of human variety in general (universal, transcendental, inclusive), not the those that describe human particular-exclusive variety.⁴¹

Phenomenological approach in Amin Abdullah is relevant or even very much necessary in this era of pluralistic religious community. One thing, however, needs to mention first is that in this era of open information and cultural globalism, the any religious approaches, either of historical-empirical-critical approach or normative-theological approach could not be exhaustive, never pretend to be able alone solve the problem of religion perfectly and completely. Any approaches had the weaknesses, since the religion is complex

³⁹ Peter, *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 193.

⁴⁰ Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas dan Historisitas*, 10.

⁴¹ The Method of Phenomenology was developed by Rudolf Otto, in his thesis on "wholly other". A totally different sense, that is awesome, moving, interesting and vibrating one's religious spirit. G. Van Der Leeuw more emphasized the dependancy of religious person on the Deity with Power. Mircea Eliade underlined secrecy which is not separated from the human religion phenomenon. See. Mercia Eliade and Willard R Trask, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Harcourt: Brace & Word. Inc., 1959), 232.

and intricate. One can stand by its self without others, if researcher of religions does not want to be considered reductionist. Any approaches of religious study is surely debatable, questionable and arguable, either aspectual or dimensional, so that it is not reflecting the holistic.⁴² Besides, various approaches as mentioned above could only study something objective and rational. Those that is subjective could not be touched by the above approaches.

In phenomenological approach, truth claim that is the specific characteristic of theological thought, relatively, could be reduced in order to be forced and could also be left behind. It is still truly realistic that theological approach is featured with that. While phenomenological approach itself is not reducing the religious phenomenon and only touched the social symptom.⁴³

The approaches discussed above were showing inclusive characteristic of religion. They are means of how to solve sacred and holy problems, and the guideline on how to solve the embracers problems. Religious problems consisted of a lot of conflicts. The conflict appeared since there is no point of solution of some religious and tradition problems. Those problems may be solved through the methods available in modern sciences.

CONCLUSION

The study proposed the point that conflicts in the multicultural community may be resolved if religion used as the front guard in the cultivation of noble values of religious character, which can be used as an solution for problems in religion. For example, Tasamuh is a teaching that needs to be developed. Exclusive, radical thinking has become a trigger factor for the creation of inter-religious conflict. A narrow understanding of religion and formalism has also played a role in creating clashes of beliefs.

From the text above, it is clear that the causes of religious controversy in the multicultural society in Indonesia such as 1) Tendency to radicalize the interpretation of the religious text. 2) Formalization of Islamic teachings in the nation's cultural manifestations. 3) Inequality of welfare brings conflicts among ethnics. The Study makes several of important contribution in the

⁴² Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas dan Historisitas*, 12.

⁴³ Abdullah, 38.

resolution of religious controversy in the multicultural society such as 1) the use of religion as the source to bring peace and non-violent action. 2) developing theology of pluralism in religion. 3) religious conflict resolution through developing the social sciences approaches.

Islamic teachings do not violence of any kind. Therefore, to create tolerance, pluralism, moderate, pluralist and inclusive thinking are required in the midst of society along with a variety of ideas derived from approaches in the social sciences (multi and interdisciplinary) such as anthropology, philosophy, sociology, theology, and phenomenology.

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