MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN POLARIZATION
IN THE POST CONFLICT SOCIETY-AMBON

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Abstrak

Polarisasi antara Muslim dan Kristen di Ambon, telah tertaman sejak pemerintah Belanda menancapkan dominasinya di Maluku pada abad tujuh belas. Polarisasi agama ini berlanjut hingga pada masa pasca kolonial. Polarisasi ini semakin terlihat dengan munculnya segregasi pendudukan dan diskriminasi berdasarkan agama. Hal ini menjadi bermasalah dan penting untuk dibahas mengingat polarisasi termanifestasi pula dalam kepentingan-kepentingan partai politik, pendidikan dan birokrasi. Karena itu, artikel ini melihat dinamika polarisasi Islam dan Kristen. Tujuan dari paper ini adalah untuk melihat sejarah panjang dari identitas keagamaan yang berbeda yang termanifestasi dalam ranah politik dan kehidupan sosial. Disamping itu, artikel ini membangun refleksi untuk sebuah kebijakan publik untuk bagaimana membangun kompetisi yang positif di tengah keragaman keberagamaan.

Keywords: Polarization of religion; Religion and Politics; Religious Competition.

Introduction

Identity of religions will be one of the triggers that cause clash and polarization. Huntington argues that religious identity is much stronger shown up than economics needs. It is since human being needs the identity to dignify self-conception. While during the modern era, economic wealth cannot guarantee to meet human dignity. As a result, spiritual resurgence also leads to the religious polarization (Barber, 1996. Huntington (1996). At the local level, polarization based on religion also happens in post conflict areas such as in Ambon, Eastern Indonesia. Religious polarization is obviously indicated by the large-scale migration; customary land tenure struggles based on ethno-religion territorialisation in which displaces communities based on religious differences and livelihood choices (Adam, 2008, 2010; Kadir, 2008; Parera, Setijanti, Purwadjo, 2010, Subair, 2008). Religious polarization also comes along with political interests. The tension of polarization usually increases during the the general and local election, in which most of the voters choose their leaders based on the religious background (Hiariej, 2007; Ratnawati, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed account about the religious lives happening in Indonesia, especially during the current democratic era. This paper also proves that religious polarization can inhibit development project run by the government and hamper the fluidity of social interaction among people. In addition, this paper can be a reference for studying religious and politics polarizations occurring in other areas of

Indonesia. Polarization of religion is important to discuss since the religious tension and conflict is most of the time started from the long history tension and hostility among different adherents.

The Historic Views

Ambonese Society and its Embedded Polarization

Polarization based religion is not a new fact for Ambonese society. Wars between local residents with the Portuguese and the Dutch army occurred repeatedly since the mid-sixteenth century (Knaap, 1991: 106). These tensions and conflicts led to segregation and the strengthening of identity in each settlement, which is based on religious background and clan affiliations (Hoek, 1995). Polarization of the Ambonese society was worse since the period of Dutch occupation. The emergence of polarization in the late nineteenth century, precisely in 1882, when the number of Muslim inhabitants on the islands of Ambon (Haruku, Saparua, and Nusalaut) reached 28.3% or numbering a total of 16,693 Muslim from 58,893 total population (Hulsboch 2004: 129). The Dutch still marginalized Muslim community even though they increased rapidly in numbers. The marginalization led Ambonese Muslim to keep tightly their traditional values. Muslim also became more conservative in keeping their interpretation toward religion and in viewing other people. The Dutch did not introduce educational system and modern division labour to the Muslim community. Compared to Christian, Muslims hardly knew the patterns of a modern life happe(Chauvel, 1990: 35-8; Hulsboch, 2004: 106).

Unlike Islam, those who embraced Christianity was more modern. Most of native Christians had easier access to education, and they also implemented sanitation programs. They lived closer to the Dutch government systems. Until the 19th century, Christianity flourished rapidly. Churches grew and organized well (Cooley, 1961: 143-4; Bartels, 1979: 287). For urban Ambonese, being a Christian had more political and pragmatic aims than to be a religious reflection. By choosing Christianity, the Moluccans believed they became more capable of transferring Dutch power (Bartels, 1979: 287; 2003: 12). People who embraced Christianity, native Moluccans got the highest privilege that was more than any other ethnicity such as Javanese, Makassarese and Butonese. They also secure from the aggression of other ethnic groups who did not embrace Christianity. It was because the Dutch government provided more protection and power to native Christians.

Reviews Revealed

Besides relying on historical document on the the birth of polarization, the approach on oral historical tradition is emphasized in this paper. The emergence of religious rift between Muslims and Christians, the birth of *pela* and other forms of social relationships always started from

individual myth, until eventually it developed into communal truth. Oral history of the emergence of Islam and Christians in Ambon has different story with the historical written version. Oral history has no accurate time in the description the coming of Muslim and Christian and the time of proselytization. Instead,most of the narrations is fully described metaphorically of metaphor. On the contrary, written history has the exact date of description about the emergence and the spread of Islam or Christianity.

Religious Polarization on Oral Tradition

In the oral tradition, the Ambonese believed that the origin of Christian and Muslim split was based on the folklore of two brothers and one woman landed in a cave at the back of the mountain, now called the region of Hila. The two brothers decided to leave the cave and be acquainted with the people living around the islands. These two brothers were lost and they could not return to the cave. While the youngest sister left the cave and eventually stranded in one area of the Lei Timor Peninsula, which is now known *Hatiwe Besar*. The two brothers tried to persuade their sister to join in the area where they had established. But the sister rejected since she already felt comfortable in the area where she stayed. Furthermore, two older brothers had embraced Islam and their youngest sister converted to Christianity. Since then, they have lived separately based on their own different religion.

This sort of oral history is ongoingly reproduced in interpreting conflict origins between Muslims and Christians. People commonly assumed that the dissent relationship between individuals can lead to communal conflicts. As an example was the origin of the conflict in 1999. It was in the evening, January 19, 1999; a group of young Muslim from Kampung Batumerah, intercepted Jopie Saiya for asking some money. Jopie was a driver of a public transportation, from Mardika, a Christian Kampung beside Batumerah. Jopie. As a driver, he had to pay security fare to some *preman* (thugs), but one time he refused to pay extra bill to other thugs who coming from the Muslim community. As a result, the thugs stabbed Jopie by a sharp weapon. He then ran home, reported the incident to their relatives in Mardika. By hearing the story, Yopie's angry relatives agreed to go to Batumerah, their neighbor Kampung. They intended to ask why Jopie was badly treated. However, by seeing the Christian people of Mardika came with machetes in hand, Muslims from Batumerah was of course very mad. Let alone young men who have previously asked for the extra bill to Jopie, shouting to make situation became rowdy. Instead of solving problems, Batumerah residents chased Jopie and his relatives. The chase continued until Mardika gate. Due they cannot catch Jopie, Muslim Batumerah residents changed the target by burning other homes in that area. Since then, clashes have begun to spread vastly to entire cities, islands, and provinces. This narrative is a myth developed as the origin of emergence Muslims-Christians conflict, which has the similarity with the oral history of

emergence *pela*; origins split between Muslim and Christian villages. Conflict origins myth between Batumerah Muslims fighting Christians of Mardika has arisen since Ambonese has a stronger belief toward oral tradition than other kind of written reports.

Post Colonial Polarizations

Tension and split between Muslim and Christian politics during transition in revolutionary period was worse than before. Each of politicians brought their notion and political stakes. Christian political figures saw that by joining to a new state that so called "Indonesia" would threaten their prior political privileges that had well settled under the Dutch colonial period. On the contrary, Moslem political figures welcomed to the new nation idea of Indonesian state. A note from the army of NICA (*Nederlandsch Indië Civil Administratie*) was reported:

> The real Ambonese villagers, both Christian and Moslems, have remained loyal to *adat* (adat) authorities and our administration. Although the Christians, through their greatest advancement and their closer relations with our government, have been more forthcoming in their expressions of support for our authority, it would mistake to think that the Muslim villagers have been less reliable. This must be rejected as definitely false (A.H Ruibing' report via Chauvel, 1990: 211)

This report was reversed to Luhukay's account which tells the high level tension between Christians and Muslims during the period of Japanese occupation in which Muslims truly pampered while Christian were not. For that reason, the combined allied forces and the Indonesian army thought that the Muslims would react strongly against their arrival. In fact, Muslims were the most enthusiast communities in joining with the nationalist army (Luhukay via Chauvel, 1990: 211).

Most nationalists came from Muslim society and their politician figures and[1], where Christian groups were still loyal to the Dutch. *Persatoean Pemoeda Indonesia* (PPI) founded on 15 February 1946 was youngsters who were raised and educated by the Japanese. This youth group welcomed to the emergence of new Indonesian nationalist movement. Branch of this movement were many scattered in various rural areas in Muslim

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[1] Nevertheless, there is exception in seeing Maluku's future in the post revolution. A Muslim king who supported the idea of separation or federalism joining with Papua is Raja Sialana from Morella. Raja Sialana believed Moluccas integrated with the Papua, given its richness of natural resources was the same as that Maluku had. Consequently, Maluku should not be afraid for not joining NIT, Indonesia or the Netherlands though. Raja Sialana opinion was delivered in a meeting with the leaders of the majority Christian GSS and the old soldier (Chauvel 1990: 240; Manuhutu, 2005).

communities. It was reported that out of thirteen youth activists in PPI, only four were Christian. While Christian political figures agreed to the idea of *Moluccan commonwealth* and rarely got supported from Islamic Communities. Three leaders of the *Perkoempoelan Kebangsaan Maloekoe* (RJ Metekohy, MP and JS Harmusial Patty) proposed the idea of this commonwealth to the Sultan of Ternate, which then the Sultan rejected the idea (Chauvel, 1990: 217). Political Groupings based on religious communities have existed long before the period of revolution. In general, Christians were behind the colonial government, while the Muslim communities were in crisis of trust against the government policies in the colonial period.

Distrust upon colonial government led many Muslims put their hope to a new form of government. When PIM (Partai Indonesia Merdeka) was founded on August 17, 1946, they received many supports from Muslim communities. At the first meeting in Ambon, from 1,500 in attendance persons, three-quarters the attendance were Muslims. Although Christian figures led PIM such as the EU Pupella[2] and Pattimaipau, but those who maintained financial were mostly Muslims like Hamid bin Hamid and Moh. Abukasim. They had close links with Arab and Chinese business /persons in Ambon city. This linkage was useful for financing PIM. Muslim from various underground movements such as PPI, PRIMA, and Pasoekan Terpendam also supported PIM predominantly those living in Muslim villages.

In 1946 and 1948, PIM won the vote in Dewan Maluku Selatan (DMS) (Chauvel, 1990: 222). A.B. Latuconsina, a figure leader from South Moluccan Council (Dewan Maluku Selatan) argued that the South Maluku should continue to merge with the NIT (Negara Indonesia Timur) due Maluku was not able to stand alone, but depended on other areas within the Eastern Indonesia framework such as Papua, Bali and Minahasa. In addition, Latuconsina believed that the purpose of merging with the East Indonesia was the best solution for the benefit and progress of the Muslim community as well (ibid, 245). The relationship between religion and political encouragement was very strong. Muslims in the grassroots level were parallel with nationalism supporter while Christians were parallel with their loyalty to the Dutch Crown.

The opponent of PIM, which was dominated by Muslims, was the organization of the kings (*regentenbond*), priests and the old army. Christian

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[2] Eliza Urbanus Pupella (1910 – 1996) born on Hila village, in Ambon Island. He plunged into politics and was active in "Yong Ambon" and "Sarekat Ambon" and the Party of Indonesia Raya (Parindra) that fought for Indonesian independence. Pupella fired by the Dutch government as the official government and moved to Bali in 1930. In 1934, he studied at the National University "Taman Siswa" under the supervision of Ki Hajar Dewantara in Yogyakarta. Returning to Ambon, he was again active in politics. He led "Sarekat Ambon" and struggled with his colleagues at the institute of "Ambon Raad" against pro Dutch socio political organizations. In the days of Japanese occupation, Pupella appointed by the military government of Japan to manage Ambonese public affairs due he had a good influence on both Christian and Islamic communities.

felt threatened due the selection of DMS leader was based on the democratic representation system. It terrorized their special positions in rural areas in which the priests and soldiers, during the Dutch occupation had been enjoying various facilities, policies, prestigious position, and influences in many areas. If Indonesia came as the new state, they would have the disadvantage in bureaucracy and other special privilege positions. After PIM won the election, among "loyalist" (borrowing Chauvel's phrase) established *Gaboengan Lima Serangkai* where the majority are Christian organizations, i,e, Inlandsche Leraarsbond (Native Teacher Association), Onderwijzersbond (Teachers Association), Christian- Jongelingsbond (Christian Young Man Association), Goeroe Djemaat and included Old-Soldier's organization, Setia pada Pandji Nedherland. The Latter group asserted themselves to support Dutch by attacking their Muslim compatriots and Non Ambonese resident in 1946. Later, after extended to several groups joined, the groups became *Gabungan Sembilan Serangkai* (GSS). In discussing their future against both offerings of nationalism from Indonesia and federalism from the Dutch, the first meeting held on 25 January 1947 attended more than 2.500 people, largely were Christian and senior soldiers (Chauvel, 1990: 229, 231, 236). PTB (*Persatoean Timoer Besar*)[3] later supported GSS's intention claimed that the people of Ambon, just as the Minahasan, Timorese and Papuanese was entitled to determine the fate and his own decision to determinate their future. The alliance was because they felt they have same bond based on one common origin, race, history; and languages. In addition, most importantly they had a common majority Christian population.

After experiencing a long of political strife, finally most Christian political elite decided to establish a Moluccan independence movement that popularly called *Republik Maluku Selatan*/RMS (South Moluccan Republic). Tensions between Muslims and Christians were more escalated. Since the capture RMS guerrillas on Seram Island, RMS, whose member was majority Christian, who firstly hated only to the non-native Ambonese, began to generalize to hate all Muslims of Ambon. RMS guerrilla members suspected Muslims had assisted to the Indonesian national army and caused them to catch. RMS alleged that their Muslim colleagues had betrayed the struggle for Moluccas independence. As an expression of Christian anger, they began to set fire to a mosque in Hualoi, a Muslim village. The burner perpetrators were a Kariuw man, and six other men were from Aboru and Booi. These third regions were Christian villages that had a *pela* relationship with Hualoi. This incident ultimately harmed *pela* relationship between Christian and Muslim villages generally.

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[3] PTB is an Eastern Indonesian political association, which primarily were members of Ambon, Timor, and Manado. The organization was struggling to gain its own status but still within the bounds of the Netherlands Crown. Delegation member consisting of PJ De Fretes; DJ Kaihatu and AR Wua submitted a petition to Queen Wilhelmina by expressing their loyalty to the Netherlands and refused to join Indonesia or the Indonesian Federation state.

This paper analyzes that political parties adjust to the situations where religion and ethnicity royalty is very strong. Therefore, political consolidations in Moluccas were based on religious polarization that has existed previously. Islamic communities tend to belong to Islamic parties like Partai Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Masyumi), Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII), Partai Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), and Islamic traditional party Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Popular figures such as Such as Abdullah Soulisa, M. Amin Elly (Masyumi) and Ismail Umarella (NU) significantly shaped religious consolidation. Most of the Muslim voters were also based on the outside of Ambon city. While Christian communities unified into Partai Kristen Indonesia (Parkindo). The voters were mostly resided in Ambon city.

Several years later after tension between nationalist Muslims and loyalist Christians (1946-1952), the religious sectarian phenomenon was more sharpened as a consequence from the strengthening of political stream (*politik aliran*) under Soekarno era (the first President of Indonesian state) (Latukau, 2010). The first democratic general elections, held in 1955, showed that each of the regions has their own religious characteristic. Parkindo (Indonesian Christian Party) reached 43, 7 % voters in the Christian region, while Muslim, represented by Masyumi and PSII only reached 38, 4 % elector in Islamic borough.

During the New Order era, Soeharto (the second President of Indonesia) fused political parties as he argued that too many parties did not effective for a development project. Soeharto fused several Islamic and Christian parties into just three political parties, PDI (Nationalist Party, where mostly Christian belongs) PPP (Islamic Party) and Golkar (Development Party). This fusion was effectively confused Christian communities, since they had no longer political reference based on their own faith. Eventually, political party fusion split Christian voters to choose a nationalis party, either Golkar or PDI. This political fusing also inevitably weakened Christian political basis in the city. Since then, the force of Christian dominating in bureaucracy and political sectors also decreased sharply.

The peak emergence of the Muslim middle class was in 1992. Akib Latuconsina, who was from Pelaw Island, was elected as governor of the Moluccas. Since he led Moluccas, he changed a lot the structural compositions in the government bureaucracy. Akib recruited human resources especially from OPEK area (Ori, Pelauw, and Kailolo). These are Moslem regions where he was born and grew up. The next governor in 1997 was Saleh Latuconsina. Saleh came from the same Island with Akib, that is Pelaw. This concentration of Islamic power led jealousy among the Christian middle class. Many analysts then consider that political polarization and the decline of Christian power is one of the triggers of the religious conflict occurred in Moluccas in 1999-2003 (Aditjondro, 2001; Bartels, 2003; Van Klinken, 2007).

Even though religious conflict had ended in 2003[4], it did not reduce Islamic power to be in government elite. Another Islamic elite who are still sitting in the significant bureaucracy come from the same Island, Pelaw, was Muhammad Abdullah Mehmed Latuconsina. He was a vice governor in 2003. Prior, he was the head of the office of the provincial government budget (Dinas Pendapatan Daerah Maluku). In addition, other upper elites in the provincial and municipal level are also came from the Pelaw Island. In 2006, the chairman of the National Youth Organization KNPI (Komitee Nasional Pemuda Indonesia) on the provincial level was Olivia Latuconsin. He is from the same Islands where most of the Islamic elites come from. In the next of his career, he was elected as vice mayor of Ambon town. There is also Abdullah Tuasikal came from Pelaw, he was re-elected as head of the Central Moluccan district (Bupati Maluku Tengah) in 2007. Christians communities and people coming from other Island envied to the success of Muslim politicians from Pelaw Island surrounding Ambon. Because of the rapid emergence of Muslim communities in the upper level of bureaucracy and education, competition between these two adherents has tougher from time to time.

Recent Development

In 2003, national government introduced the *Malino* peace agreement[5]. Nonetheless, this agreement did not automatically erase the conflict. There had still several small clashes happened. Here is the pattern of the conflict. First, mostly small wars occur because of the old revenge that has been entrenched since the big conflict happened in 1999. Second, individual conflict at the beginning will stimulate to the mass mobilization. Wars and conflict among people is always followed by throwing rocks, blocking roads, damaging and burning vehicle and finally people will evacuate themselves to the more save area for few days. In Ambon city, conflict began in the dense areas, such as Simpang Tiga Trikora, Mardika and Waringin. Conflict also happened in Batu Merah, a kampong located in

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[4] During the conflict, a military Muslim coming from Kailolo, Suaidi Marasabessy also have significant role in solving conflict in 1999. He was the chief of staff of the Indonesian Military (Kasum TNI). It shows that Moslem is not only capable in civil bureaucracy, but also successfully led in army base.

[5] Malino is a peace agreement that was conducted twice in Province of Sulawesi. Several significant Moluccans figures and leader, coming from both Moslem and Christian, attended to this conflict. This treaty contains of eleven statements. (1) Ended all of the sort of conflict and violence (2) enforcing law fairly and firmly (3) Opposing all forms of separatist movements that threatens integrity and unity of Indonesia Republic (4) Moluccans have a right to get a job in all over regions in Indonesia (5) All of the civil militia should be disarmed (6) Establishing Independent investigation team to thoroughly investigate actors and perpetrators behind the conflict (7) Returning refugee back to their former place (8) Rehabilitating mental, socio-economic and infrastructure after conflict (9) Maintaining order and security of the entire region in Moluccas (10) Maintaining harmonization among all religious communities in Moluccas (11) Supporting rehabilitation of Pattimura University and fairness in recruitment system.

the downtown. This area is notoriously known as a location where conflict mostly begins.

Current conflict happened in September, 2011. That was because a Muslim motorcycle biker (*tukang ojek*) hit a Christian. Unfortunately, this *tukang ojek* was lynched in that majority Christian area. Rumor saying that a Muslim was lynched in the Christian area quickly spread all over the Muslim regions. On the contrary, rumour stating that a Muslim hit Christian also spread rapidly to the Christian areas. This conflict led some houses burnt and more than 60 people get serious injure because of stone throwing, sent to hospital. While the sound of shooting from soldiers revive citizen's trauma and they tend to choose flee to mosque[6]. Small conflicts also happened monthly. One month after September, 2011, two conflicts occurred sequentially. On 17 November, a young man named Dani Polanunu from the Muslim neighbourhood of Waihong got serious injured and finally died in the hospital. Several Christian polices beat him in front of the Hotel Abdul Ali. This incident provoked Muslims blocking a road in Waihong and caused minor damage of infrastructures and houses. They protested and asked the involved police officers to be prosecuted.

A month after the protest, a more serious conflict happened in the midnight 12 December. The brawl broke out between Christian living in Air Mata Cina, with Muslim community from Urimeseng. The attacked one another, and shortly in a minute crowds of several dozen on both sides throwing stones. About five houses were soon in flames. Some resident got seriously wounding as they were got fire arrows. In addition, eleven people were taken to the main Muslim hospital. About 70 families took shelter in the local mosque. Two days after the conflict, in the 14 December evening, Revaldo Petta, a Christian public minibus (*angkot*) driver was stabbed in the neck in his car. The car consequently crashed to the sidewalk. This rumour spread quickly that Revaldo had been stabbed on Sultan Baabullah Street, a street located in the Muslim neighbourhood. On that day after the incident, thousands of Christian *angkot* drivers did a strike in front of the police office. They asked the provincial parliament to investigate this incident soon. This stabbing incident caused many Christian drivers were still afraid to pass through Moslem neighbourhoods. This fear and frustration happened until Christmas and New Year of 2012.

In addition, conflict also began in campus several months before happened in the city of Ambon (September, November, December 2011). Two groups of students involved in the unrest because of the dispute in the top-level faculties. Several lecturers at The University of Pattimura, a public university in Ambon, demand on the balance of structural position based on religious background. According to the last statement of Malino Peace

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[6] According to the data, in three conflict areas that predominantly Muslim Waringin, Talake and Mardhika, there were 750 households or 3,295 people were displaced, and their house burned to the ground. Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°128, *Indonesia: Trou-ble Again in Ambon*, 4 October 2011.

Agreement, there should be a balance of power in Pattimura University. Since this is a big public university and the most prestigious university in town. Due the agreement was stuck, this dissatisfaction spread to the students. In addition, some lecturers also dissatisfied with the system of recruitment. It was indicated that there was unfair in selecting new students and employee in which the recruitment system was putting privilege based on Christian adherents[7]. The dissatisfaction led to the conflict finally. The conflict led some buildings burnt, like college of agriculture and the third floor of the rectorate building (Hanafi, 2011).

Conflict happened in the University of Pattimura was not a new incident. In March 2010, dispute between Muslim-Christian students was occurred. It was because Muslim communities suspected that there was fraud in the dean election in Economic College. They demanded to repeat dean election and to revamp more fair structural balance in the college. For Muslim, they felt discriminated since most of the dean historically dominating the college is Christian. It coupled with a discriminative statement from the vice dean saying that Muslim communities have not ready yet to involve with modern bureaucracy. This statement led Muslim to strike and to stimulate tension with Christian students. After the strike, more than nine students was brought to the hospital. Several days later after the clash, students were free from any class for about a week (from 29 March to 5 May, 2010) to make the tension cooling down.

In the daily life, people in Ambon was also frightened by anonymous texts sent to any cell phone provoking that there would be the next huge conflict just as happened in 1999 (Touwe, Agustia, 2011). Since text messaging on mobile phones is the primary way information, people were easily influenced by contains on the messages. The provocation messages made people more suspicious each other and led them not easily believed to the stranger. This happened in the mid to the late of 2010. Anonymous texts sent to any cell phone to almost all of urban Ambon is a part of small-scale conflict series that happen during 2010. This occurred several months after clash within University of Pattimura. People still worried that what happened in the campus would easily spread to the *kampung*. It was because, for ordinary people, those who are in elite bureaucracy and also university could be considered as an example of bad or good relationship builders.

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[7] Nonetheless, data from University denied the claims of discrimination upon student admission. According to the data, from 4284 applicants, there are 1804 students who are accepted in the University of Pattimura. From 1165 Muslim who are applying, there are 528 accepted which means that approximately 45.32 percent of accepted students applicants are Muslims. While from 2905 Christian Protestant students applying, there are 1196 accepted or 41.17 percent. Other applicants are Catholics. Out of 213 Catholics student, 80 people students are accepted. While Hindus applicants are only one person (Siwalima, 14 April, 2010).

Reviving of Traditions

These small tensions and wars after peace reconciliation show that people are still vulnerable and their trust among each other is still very low. People are still suspicious among others. Pattern of interaction between two religious communities is still confined in the informal meeting and merely routine in their daily life. There are still many obstacles to go further interaction. It was not easy to build a more organized cooperation such as through business associations or community that able to prevent conflict (Adam, 2008)

Although the spread of small conflicts currently is worrisome, Ambonese try to reconcile religion tensions by reviving their old tradition. The most popular custom that recently held is *Pela and Gandong*. This is a peace treaty ritual involved Muslim and Christian[8]. Several villages have tie with other villages. They revive their abandoned tradition after conflict*,* for example, *pela-gandong* relationship between people from Batu Merah (mostly are Muslim) with people from Negeri Ema (Mostly are Christian). These two areas also have pela with people from Passo (Mostly are Christian)[9]. They currently hold a *Pela* ritual that is called *Panas Pela* (to warm *pela*). *Panas pela* is usually carried out after something bad happening for instance after religious or land conflicts. The last *panas pela* is conducted by these three regions was in 1960s. In 2010, these three regions re carry out what they have abandoned for more than five decades. King of Passo region, Marthen Sarmanela and also King of Batu Merah region, Latif Hatala argue that this ritual is very useful for strengthening separated adherents among Ambonese.

Nonetheless, modernization brings *pela* looks so obsolete in solving two warring people. Reconciliation now effectively arranged by the modern

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[8] Pela-Gandong is a social relation system that ties society living outside of their self village. Pela is a vow to relate between one village with another village which has different custom and religions. One village could have more have two pela networks or more. Therefore, pela-gandong system creates network in Central Moluccas like a web. The sort of pela is divided into three (1) *pela keras* or hard pela (2) pela gandong or brotherhood *pela* and (3) pela *tempat sirih* or betel container of pela. Hard pela emerged because of bloody war, while pela gandong appeared based on kinship ties in one village that is based on some settlements. These kinds of *pela* believe that they are coming from the same ground and seed. Lastly, pela *tempat sirih* is conducted after small wars happened. This pela aims to recover and expedite trade relations. Dieter Bartels has discussed much on *pela* in his dissertation (1997)*",* and some of his articles like *"Alliances Without Marriage: Exogamy, Economic Exchange, and Symbolic Unity Among Ambonese Christian and Moslems" (*1980)

[9] The birth of *pela* and *gandong* relations among these three regions started from an oral history. After sending levy to the Kingdom of Ternate in the northern area, the traditional ships (Arumbae) of Ema-Passo people stuck in a stormy wind and almost sank in unknown bay. Luckily, at that time, Batumerah people passed through and soon they helped these people. However, most of the stuff brought by people of Emma and Passo was sunk. Hence, people of Batumerah shared their food such as sago, dried fish, and coconut. Since then, they vow to be relative and forge *Pela* and *Gandong*. People of Passo then considered themselves as a younger brother of Batumerah people. To strengthen this vow, three of them raise and flip the rock until their palm blood as a mark of a brotherhood.

apparatus, such as military, police, or the courts. People also started to rely them to solve daily conflict, personal violence up to massive riots. The government considers relying only to *pela* in solving problem between Christian and Moslem will thwart unless assisted by state apparatus.

On the other hand, state also promotes local ancient philosophy that is called *siwalima*[10]. Siwalima is a local philosophy about group alliance based on different custom and religion. Recently, the government redefines *siwalima* and they claim *siwalima* the capital of multicultural. The government considers that this philosophy is important to cope polarization not only is between Christian and Muslim, but also between native people and migrant living in Ambon. However, society suspiciously regarded that promoting local philosophy in coping conflict is an elite project merely from government to get funding from central government. People in the grassroots level feel they are not involved in in this project. Therefore, several traditional elders (*tetua adat*), head village (*bapa raja*) and other traditional prominence heads (*upu latu*) criticized the recent redefinition and revivalism *siwa lima*.

In November 2009, the office government together with The Highest of Moluccan Indigenous council (Majelis Latupati Maluku) bestowed Indonesian president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) with the title of "Upu Latu Rat Maran Siwa Lima" (Big King of Moluccas). People living in the grassroots and periphery pessimistically regarded this award is only for "licking up" (*menjilat*) the president. Many high-ranking officials tried to draw attention (*sengaja cari muka*) to president in order to get promotion to the higher-level job. In fact, for Ambonese, SBY was deemed did not give any contribution to solve religious problems in Ambon. Conflicts ended up because of society's awareness of its conspiration from outside, not because of government initiatives to solve the problem. Therefore, it was very odd to give the president an honor that in line with indigenous dignity (Kadir, 2012). People in the grass root level also considered that some high official from governor bureau had persuaded high custom assembly (*majelis adat latupati*) that led by A. Malawat (Bapa Raja Negeri Mamala) to give honor to SBY. Therefore, giving an award to the president shows that actually the idea to promote revivalism of local philosophy still has bias bureaucracy interests since it did not come from a consensus among people in the grass root level yet.

After conflict, people have pessimistic though about government's policies. People have learnt how to self-regulate themselves without state interference. Therefore, when the high custom assembly gave an honor to SBY, people felt upset since they did not see the efforts and roles of the state to cope the conflicts. Instead people assumed that state apparatus were the one that actually provoked the emergence of conflict at the first time.

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[10] The meaning of *Siwalima* comes from two words. *Siwa* means nine and *lima* means five. This terminology means separation or division society becomes two different social groups. Group of nine is Christianity and group of five belongs to Muslim (Kadir, 2012)

Conclusion

Although big religious conflicts were over in 2003, religious tensions the small escalation of wars are still happening. Almost all of the conflicts have a connection to the religious issues. Ambon city remains segregated, suspicions among others and violence still can happen frequently. The conflict could be stirred up by the most trivial of causes. In addition, the potential conflicts that still exist today, among others are the problem of refugees. Settlements are still separated by the religious block of communities. Recruitment of public officials is mostly also based on the religious background. The weak of law enforcement and regional autonomy also stimulates inter-village tensions.

Although government tries to cope with the endless conflict by promoting *adat* (custom), there are still much pessimistism from the grass root level. They do not felt engaged in almost every government's policy regarding *adat* as the problem solver. Instead, government used *adat* just for symbol of peace in the sort of building museum and monument, but not practically carried out in the real life. In addition, supposedly *adat* can be a mediocre to solve tension has been seen out of date, since people living in Ambon city now are more diverge than before.

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