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A RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN INDONESIA: A CASE STUDY OF MALUKU

By

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Presented to the Faculty of
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ABSTRACT

A Religious Conflict in Indonesia: A Case Study of Maluku

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Master of Arts

with major in

Language and Culture Studies

The Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, June 2017

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As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, Indonesia has both strengths and weaknesses towards accommodating a harmonious environment and maintaining national stability for its people. As the majority religion, Islam has shaped the nation's history, political arena, and socio-cultural dialog while at the same time it has marginalized other religions. This thesis examines the religious conflict between Muslims and Christians in Maluku.

The conflict erupted in 1999, a year after the fall of Soeharto, who ruled as President for thirty-two years. This was the first conflict during the Indonesian reform era. This thesis describes the root cause of the religious conflict, the national intervention which resulted in its resolution, the importance of encouraging understanding between Muslims and Christians at the theological level, and steps which contexts where Muslims and Christians are in frequent contact might take to prevent the same violence from reoccurring, for the benefit of all Indonesians.

DEDICATION

To Taeyoung Cho, Subin Cho, and the people of Indonesia.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 History of Islam and Christianity in Indonesia

One well known historian of Indonesian civilization has characterized Islam's arrival to the Indonesian islands as peaceful, not as a result of conquering invasionary forces (Schwarz 1994: 165). It is widely believed that Islam was brought by traders from outside. Muslim merchants from Arabia, Persia and the Indian subcontinent frequented the harbor cities of the archipelago, where they engaged not only in trade but also in the transmission of Islam to the native populations (Azra 2004: 2). Some of the Muslim traders also intermarried with the Indonesia empire's descendants contributing to Islamization (Ricklefs 2001; Baiti 2014).

The spread of Islam into the Malay Archipelago¹ is thought to have occurred throughout the 11th century (Muller 1990; Azra 2004). One leading scholar suggests that the contact between Islam and Indonesia had already been established since the 7th century, as evidenced in a Muslim *kampong* (village) found and dated by archaeologists in the Palembang region of South Sumatra (Hashim 1999: 2). The latter notion is possibly related to the inscriptions of the Sriwijaya Kingdom which were also found near Palembang (see

¹ The Republic of Indonesia was officially established in 1945 with the Declaration of Independence on August 17, 1945 by two claimants: Soekarno and Hatta. Both served as the first President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia. Islam, historically, came far before the nation was formed. Malay Archipelago is used to represent the area of Indonesia, which at that time also include the area of Malaysia, Brunei, and the Southern Philippines.

Casparis 1975: 24-26). It should be noted however, that Hindu and Buddhist religious communities still flourished during this era of Indonesian history.

The position of this thesis is the common belief that Islam was brought via two different routes or “gates”, Western and Eastern. The Western gate constituted a direct line from Mecca in Saudi Arabia to the Gujarat region of India, then to Aceh Indonesia. The Eastern gate followed a path from Mecca to Canton, China to Phang Rang of Vietnam, then to Brunei before finally reaching Leran of East Java (Mohd et al 1990: 13, as shown on the map below). These two routes of the spread of Islam resulted in massive conversion to Islam all along the archipelago (Cho 2012: 85). First in Sumatra, Java, then to the rest of the archipelago (Benda 1958: 9-31).

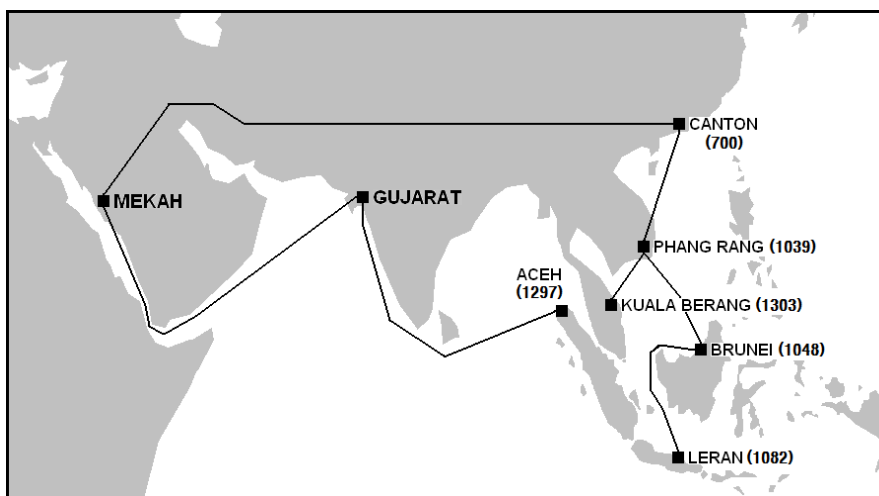


Figure 1: The track of Islam to Indonesia (Cho 2012: 84)

Indonesia, therefore, is extraordinary in that its Islam had been enculturated several times in very different populations before it arrived in the archipelago. Harry Benda writes that since Islam reached Indonesia not from its Middle Eastern heartland, but from India,

“Indonesian Islam had filtered through the religious experience of India, and studded with mysticism, until finally well prepared in Hinduized Java” (Benda 1958: 12; see also Drewes 1955). The penetration of Islam into the archipelago, however, was carried out less by Muslim traders than by wandering Sufis and scholars, who came in increasingly large numbers to the area from the thirteenth century onwards (Azra 2004: 2). Certainly the historical records from this point on, being far more numerous, give us a solid basis for understanding the pre-modern conditions of Indonesian Islam.

There are two highly significant artifacts to consider in regard to the arrival of Islam in the archipelago. The first is an inscription found in Brunei dating to 1048CE. This was an Arabic language text written in Arabic script. Mohd. et al. (1990: 7) translated it to Bahasa Indonesia as: “*Prasasti ini dibuat untuk berkabung atas kematian seorang ratu bernama Makhdarah dari Sultan Abdul Majid Ibn Muhammad Al-Sultan, raja di kerajaan Brunei.*”² The second, an inscription found in Aceh in 1297, was also an Arabic text written in Arabic script. It was a gravestone found within the cemetery of Pasai Kingdom, again translated by Mohd et al (1990: viii) as “*Seorang Sultan bernama Malik Al-Salih wafat pada tahun 1297.*”³ These artifacts indicate that although Islam had established contact in

² (“This inscription was made to mourn the death of Queen Makhdarah of Sultan Abdul Majid Ibn Muhammad Al-Sultan, King of the Brunei Kingdom,” translation mine).

³ (“A Sultan named Malik Al-Salih died in the year of 1297,” translation mine)

the archipelago by the 11th and 13th century, it had not yet assimilated with the local cultures as both inscriptions were in Arabic, not Malay, the lingua franca⁴.

Christianity, on the other hand, was also introduced by other outsiders, mainly Portuguese and Dutch colonists. The arrival of the Europeans is a matter of greater historical knowledge since it is more recent and had far reaching colonizing effects. It is essential to note that the Portuguese introduced Catholicism, while the Dutch through their VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* – United East Indies Company) introduced Reformed Protestantism (see Benda 1958; Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008; Azra 2004; Sumanto 2013). The first Portuguese contact in Maluku took place in 1511 and by 1522 regular trading voyages were established (Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008: 17). The invasion of the Portuguese was deeply motivated by their policy of *feitoria, fortaleza e igreja*, translated as “(trading) outpost, (military) strength, and the church” (Abdurrachman 2008: 4). Historians such as Louis Wright (1970: xiv), have described how these European explorers rallied under a motto of the 3Gs (Gold, Glory, Gospel), signifying that they were hungry for material wealth, passionate for their glory in the Renaissance, and desired to serve God as the one and only world sovereign. For the Portuguese, the Catholic faith was one of their reasons for expansion to the non-European world (Sumanto 2013: 70).

⁴ One historical record to track back the proof of Malay as lingua franca was inscriptions of Sriwijaya Kingdom (683, 684, 686AD) found near the city of Palembang, South Sumatra that were written in Pallava script but conveying Old Malay (Casparis 1975: 25). It shows a great possibility that Malay had become the lingua franca since the 7th century.

Before occupying Maluku, the Portuguese had established a base in Malacca of the Malaysian peninsula in 1511 (Wright 1970: 129). The Portuguese viceroy in India Alfonso de Albuquerque sent a powerful fleet to Malacca, where two Portuguese men, an excellent navigator Fernao de Magalhaes – known outside Portugal as Ferdinand de Magellan – and a former page of King Joao II, Francisco Serrao joined the team. They were involved in a war, where Albuquerque himself led the assault on Malacca from India in order to capture that place. He knew that Malacca could be the door opener to Japan and China (Wright 1970: 119). This war ended in victory.⁵ The occupation of Malacca became a significant ploy in the efforts to dominate trade in the Indies and to enter Maluku, the source of spices. These two men were influential in the process of entering Maluku, although Serrao and several of his companions were the ones who successfully reached Maluku (Wright 1970: 119-130). By establishing a base in Malacca, the Portuguese controlled trade in the Indies for years (Wright 1970: 119).

The Portuguese moved quickly to the Maluku islands once they discovered that it was the true source of cloves and nutmeg (Muller 1990:22). Maluku was already well known as the “Spice Islands” long before Indonesia was officially established as a republic. A historical record notes that possibly the term may have first been used by the Portuguese

⁵ In 1509, Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, a Portuguese expeditor visited Malacca but was forced to leave. Explaining this earlier contact, Wright (1970: 119) states “To prove that Portuguese power had come to the East to stay, Albuquerque himself led the assault to Malacca and supervised the fortification of this strategic gateway to the Farthest East. While at Malacca, he sent a mission to Siam [Thailand] and opened friendly relation with that nation... Albuquerque’s agents collected information about many islands of the region that we know now as Indonesia, particularly about Java and Sumatra. The whole East beckoned, and the day would soon come when the Portuguese would reach even China and Japan.” (Parenthesis mine)

during Europe's Age of Discovery in the 15th century (see Muller 1990, Wright 1970). In addition, Kal Muller writes, "... the tiny Banda Archipelago [Maluku is located in the Banda Sea] produced the entire world's supply of nutmeg and mace; and Ternate and Tidore, two specks off Western Halmahera, were the source of every clove that flavored every roast served in the castles of Europe (Muller 1990: 22, parenthesis mine, see Figure 2).

Maluku's richness in spices such as nutmeg and clove had long been a valuable attraction for the European explorers for a trade site. Wright (1970: 130) describes Maluku as a dream destination, stating "No sixteenth-century sailor could have found a more idyllic spot on which to be marooned. The island was fruitful, the climate benign, and the women beautiful." All these attractions made the place an irresistible destination for trading, living, and evangelizing.

As the Portuguese lived on the Maluku land, they began to spread Christian ideology to the locals. Although the impact of the Portuguese in Indonesia was minor, their most significant contributions can be seen by their history of establishing colonies in East Timor, the southeastern part of Indonesia, and Maluku (Lim 2008: 271). Most of the local Indonesians practiced their traditional religions, particularly during Portuguese colonization in the sixteenth century and continuing to the seventeenth century under the rule of the Dutch. For the most part, East Flores and its offshore islands became Catholic, whereas the greater part of Maluku, the Minahasa in the region of North Sulawesi, and the Batak region in North Sumatra became Protestant (Schroter 2010: 10).

However, it is important to note that the indigenous people in Maluku were also animist (regardless of which religion they were affiliated with) as they believed in ancestral spirits that surround them. Their traditional religion is known as *Agama Ambon*, which later is described as *Nunusaku Religion*⁶ by anthropologists (see Bellah 1967; Bartels 1977). Therefore, it is quite popular to recognize the syncretistic practice among its societies, which symbolize the blending of animism and religion. Subyakto (1985: 179) writes:

“Mereka masih percaya akan adanya roh-roh yang harus dihormati dan diberi makan, minum dan tempat tinggal, agar supaya tidak menjadi gangguan bagi mereka yang [masih] hidup di dunia ini.”

“They still believe in the existence of spirits that need to be respected, fed, and provided space, so that they [the spirits] will not threaten living people”
[Translation mine]

Based on the explanation above, this thesis proposes that the coming of both Islam and Christianity to Indonesia followed markedly different paths. Urs Bitterli, a Swiss historian, in his work *Cultures in Conflict* (1989), categorizes cultural encounters between Europeans and Non-Europeans in the pre-industrial period of European expansion overseas into the three categories. These are “contacts”, “collisions”, and “relationships”. “Contacts” entail two cultural interactions at the surface level only, vividly exemplified by the Portuguese as they travelled along the west coast of Africa and round the Cape of Good Hope in the 15th century. These contacts were noted by their casualness and limited

⁶ This religion believes that all Ambonese originated from the Banyan-mountain. Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008: 409) explains that elements of Islam and Christianity can be found in this religion as it identifies the Banyan mountain as where Noah’s ark landed and where the Last Judgment will take place.

duration and although communication took place and presents were exchanged, it was “only to help bring the two groups together, not to create the kind of mutually required agreement for a trading relationship” (Bitterli 1989: 21).

The second type, “collisions”, refers to contact that develops into a clash. An instance he gave of this was the Spaniard Luis Baez de Torres in the 17th century, who discovered the north-eastern Australian straits. When Aboriginal natives tried to reach him with peaceful intentions he opened fire on them (Bitterli 1989: 22).

And lastly, “relationships” speak of an advanced interaction that benefits the two cultures. One example is when Giovanni da Verrazzano and his comrades reached the shore of the St. Lawrence River in North America in the 16th century and found the Indians surrounding them with torches on fire. They were relieved when they found out that the Indians helped to dry out their clothes and fed them meals. As years passed, both groups established a good relationship with one another (Bitterli 1989: 27-28). Bitterli adds that these three types of cultural encounter never stand independently, rather they blend and infiltrate to one another (1989: 20).

These three types of cultural encounters indeed are not only suitable to describe the contact between Europeans and Non-Europeans alone, but also can be applied to analyze Islam and Christianity in Indonesia as they represent the actual history of how these two religions had contact and further developed throughout the archipelago over time. Based on the discussion above, this thesis asserts that the coming of both religions had different

starting points. Islam came to the land through contacts and relationships, while Christianity applied the second type, collisions.

So far, there has not been a clear record of specific Muslim theological responses to the Christian arrivals who made contact with Indonesian indigenous people. At the time the reception was entirely pragmatic in nature and hardly influenced at all by a particular theological viewpoint. The warm attitude of Indonesian Muslims began to change slightly, however, when Muslims found themselves quarreling with the Dutch in the area of trade. The Dutch were perceived as economically unfair and led to the bankruptcy of a number of Muslim merchants. Their presence in the archipelago was still seen by most indigenous inhabitants as only a cultural nuisance in which the former were labeled as greedy competitors. Nevertheless, the response was directed at the Dutch attitude not their religion (Ropi 1998: 218).

Minyeok Seo (2013: 44) explains that during the Dutch rule, local Indonesians (those indigenous to Maluku in particular) who converted to Christianity were granted privileged position in the Royal Netherlands-Indian Army. This has become one of the many reasons Christianity was assumed as the ally of colonialism. In the context of local Ambonese, for instance, those who were Christians during the Dutch rule owned higher social status not only from the view of the Dutch, but also in the eyes of fellow non-Christian Ambonese. They were even called “*Belanda Hitam*”, literally meaning “Black Dutch” (Subyakto 1985: 178). During the first decades of VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* – United East Indies Company), the Ambonese Christians were allowed to

participate in the *landraad*, which was the highest body of the colonial administration (Knaap 2004: 53). The Ambonese Muslims, on the other hand, were not permitted to participate in government since they were considered rebellious and untrustworthy (Knaap 2004: 107). These distinctions of opportunity made the Muslims second class citizens during the colonial period in Ambonese society (Chauvel 1980).

It is also important to highlight that Christian education in Indonesia began in the 1540s in the Maluku islands, where Christian teaching was intertwined with missionary activities (Kelabora 1976: 231). The Dutch also took over as the dominant foreign power in Indonesia and under its control foreign Christian and Catholic missionary⁷ efforts were initially restricted (see Steenbrink 2008). During the Dutch rule, Catholic workers were not allowed (Steenbrink 2003: 7). Later, the Constitution of the Netherland Indies (*Regerings-Reglement*) of 1854, article 123, allowed missionary work while at the same time reinforced the distinction between Protestant and Catholics by giving churches exclusive rights to work only in certain areas (Nyhus 1987: 20). The island of Flores and the provinces of South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi were only open to Catholic missionaries, while Sumba (East Nusa Tenggara) and Batak area such as Tapanuli of North Sumatra were restricted to Protestants (Kantor Waligereja Indonesia 1975: 25).

One important thing to consider is Dutch Islamic policy. This policy was proposed by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, A Dutch Arabist and Islamologist, who was appointed as

⁷ Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2004: 658) suggest that the term *Nasrani* was formerly used in Indonesia only to refer to Catholics, while the Protestants were called as *Masehi*, which is the followers of Messiah, but the term now is used to refer both groups.

the Adviser to the Dutch East Indies. Benda (1958: 19) writes “In the nineteenth century, many Dutchmen, both at home and in the Indies, had great hopes of eliminating the influence of Islam by rapid Christianization of the majority of Indonesians.” They also believed that conversion to Christianity would be easier to do at the village level.

Dutch Islamic Policy focused on three main substantial fields. First, it advocated tolerance towards Islam, which should be done by respecting Muslims’ religious life and practice. The second point was to pay high respect to Indonesian local *adat*⁸ (system of local customs), since it was the most powerful value of the locals. And the third point emphasized religious neutrality. According to Benda, Hurgronje insisted that the enemy was not Islam as a religion, but Islam as a political doctrine (Benda 1958: 23-25). In the education field, prior to 1890, the Dutch denied requests to subsidize Christian mission schools in order to avoid any suspicion from the Muslim community (Shihab 1995: 245).

1.2 Soeharto Regime

Soeharto was the second president of the Republic of Indonesia. His era was also known as the New Order and he ruled for 32 years. Soeharto was formally confirmed as President in March 1968, and re-elected by unanimous consensus of the people. He was appointed to the one thousand-member *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (People’s

⁸ *Adat* can be perceived as an ideological, moral, and worldview of local Indonesians which set the social expectations of an ideal society (see Davidson and Henley 2007; Li 2007). It is substantial to note that each ethnic group in Indonesia has their own *adat* that ties everyone into that set of local customs. People who are not genealogically and/or territorially tied, do not possess this *adat* and they do not belong to the indigenous community (Adam 2010b: 405). In the context of Maluku, however, their *adat* symbolizes an outcome of link between local practices and colonial (pre and post) domination since the 16th century (see Brouwer 1998).

Consultative Assembly or MPR) six times — the last time in March 1998, just two months before he resigned as president (Vatikiotis 1998: 2).

It was during the Soeharto regime that a public campaign against communism and in favor of religion was established, encouraging atheists and animists to adopt one of the world religions (Smith-Kipp 1995: 867). The strategy was based on the belief that “the making of believers was the unmaking of Communists” (Thomson 1968: 8). In the late 1960s, President Soeharto encouraged citizens of Indonesia to affiliate with a religion, “otherwise we will give PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia – the Indonesian Communist Party) the opportunity to grow again” (Departemen Penerangan RI 1968: 30-32). According to Crouch, Soeharto appealed for help from established religions to unite against PKI (Crouch 2014: 18).

During the 1970s, Soeharto assigned religious association in order to establish and to maintain harmonious relationships among the five officially recognized religions (Porter 2002: 62). The associations were Indonesian Council of *Ulama* (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* – MUI)⁹, the Communion of Indonesian Churches (*Persatuan Gereja Indonesia* – PGI), the Indonesian Catholic Council of Bishops (*Majelis Agung Wali-Gereja Indonesia* – MAWI), the Indonesian Association of Hindu Dharma, and the Representation of the Indonesian Buddhist (*Perwakilan Umat Budha Indonesia* – WALUBI). For an advanced approach to bring these five religious associations together, or indeed to anticipate any potential for religious conflict, the regime created Forum for Inter-Religious Consultation

⁹ The MUI is the association of the Islamic group.

(*Wadah Masyarakat Antarumat Beragama – WMAB*) as a religious dialog forum, where each of the five religions sent chosen spokespersons (Porter 2002: 62-67).

Although the five religious associations were established, the key body that represents the entire Muslim community within the Ministry of Religion, the Indonesian *Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia – MUI)*, is strongly supportive of efforts to implement laws based on Islam, which, are often exercised in a way that compromises minority rights (Crouch 2014: 45).

The Soeharto regime was popular for its strict banning on several issues, particularly ones that could trigger conflict among ethnic and religious groups.

Soeharto's New Order Policy banned discussion on ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations (known as SARA [*Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar-golongan*]). People were frightened to talk about SARA issues. The reason given for the banning was that discussions on SARA issues might lead to conflicts and destabilize the unity of the Indonesian nation. It is understood as gate-keeping policy to set social, economic, and politic environment under control. (Husein 2005: 93, italics mine)

One important mark of Soeharto's regime was migration and Islamization; although the two were always intended to be one conjoined mission. According to Bertrand (2004: 91), migration disrupted the local balance of numbers between Christians and Muslim, and resulted in a rise of tension. Policies of economic development were accompanied by intentional and unintentional migration throughout the archipelago. Economic inequalities between migrants and local indigenous peoples often fueled conflict, but they appeared to be worse where combined with differences in religious identity.

The Islamization of the late New Order increased tensions between Christians and Muslims. The trend toward a greater role for Muslims in government, and the simultaneous marginalization of Christians signaled that past practices were gone and a new basis of power was being created (Bertrand 2004: 90). Through the government transmigration program during Soeharto's era, outmigration from the predominantly Muslim Java had seen some 730,000 families relocated to Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Irian Jaya, particularly in areas with a large Christian population (Kuipers 1993: 85-86).

Maluku particularly was seen as an attractive point to place the migrants from Sulawesi (mainly Buton, Bugis, Makassar ethnic groups). However, Muslim migrants who came to live there were seen as a challenge to the local Christians. What distinguished Maluku from the rest of Indonesian migration destinations was that it was predominantly a receiver of spontaneous migrants (Loveband & Young 2006: 147). Maluku had dealt with migrants with cultural differences since the sixteenth century, as the Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese, and British traders had operated in the area (Ricklefs 1981: 20-29). Therefore, the riots in Maluku surprised many parties because this place was widely known for its religious and ethnic tolerance. Also, it was the home of the *pela gandong* system, an *adat* of embracing peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians (Loveband & Young 2006: 147).

Pela is a relationship system that carries and unites two or more villages into brotherhood. It originated in Central Maluku but it influences the other part of the islands as well. Its function is to restore and reconcile conflict and other forms of broken

relationships (Al Qurtuby 2016: 96). *Gandong* means “womb” which is a tie based on genealogical lineage. Although in practical life, the definition of lineage here is not purely genealogical, rather more on the state of being together for a quite a while, sharing the same land for a better life. Al Qurtuby (2016: 94) writes that as both Islam and Christianity entered the land, they formed *gandong* to safeguard and help each other as family members. The pledge that comes with *gandong* is “*darah satu darah semua, hidup satu hidup semua*” (“The blood of one is the blood of all, the life of one is the life of all,” translation mine).

Al Qurtuby continues:

During the Portuguese and Dutch conquests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *pela* system was utilized to resist foreign intruders and to help each other in times of need. [Therefore] *pela* is not natural as given by God, but cultural as created by local societies to minimize social disorder and stabilize social order. (2016: 97)

Ironically, it was under Soeharto’s leadership that the *pela gandong* system seriously declined. Al Qurtuby asserts that one of the downsides of Soeharto’s New Order was the centralization policy and cultural uniformity, which turned into the abandonment of local systems, including the *pela* system of Maluku (2016: 100). This claim is not without base. In 1979, *Undang-Undang Pemerintahan Desa No. 5/1979* (Government Decree of Village System), issued by Soeharto’s government, led to the abolishment of all *adat*-based systems, replacing them with Javanese village system instead (Al Qurtuby 2016: 101).

As President Soeharto approached the end of his sixth term in office in 1998, the national debate about the future political order in Indonesia was under way. For the

remainder of the 1990s, Indonesians would debate what kind of nation Indonesia should be and what kind of political system it should have. Questions about the legitimacy of President Soeharto's government, the relationship between Islam and the state, the role of armed forces in politics, potential for democratization, the transition to a post-Soeharto era, and the nature of economic development, would dominate political discourse (Ramage 1995: vii).

1.3 Research Questions

Both Islam and Christianity are missionary religions, in that each of them claims to have the only path for salvation. Muslims treat non-Muslims as evangelism targets, while Christians target Muslims for their mission accomplishment. Therefore, a clash is unavoidable (Mujani 2007: 25). Although both groups start from different theology, the core issue between the two religions, as already mentioned in the earlier sections, is never purely religious, but involves economics, ethno-communal affiliations, and politics (Rudiansyah 2015; Barron et al. 2016). Therefore, this thesis focuses on the following research questions:

1. What were the non-religious issues that triggered the Maluku conflict?
2. How did the national government's intervention and local stakeholders' role in the conflict lead to resolution?
3. What was the implication of the theological issues between Islam and Christianity in the Maluku conflict?

1.4 Preview of Chapters

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the background for this study and the research questions which are addressed. It also provides a preview of subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 is a literature review of works related to the research questions of this thesis. Chapter 3 describes the methodology that is applied in the analysis portion of this thesis. Chapter 4 deals with a discussion of the conflict chronology, and the national government's intervention in resolving the conflict. Theological dialog between adherents of Islam and Christianity regarding what these two religions promote and what their Scriptures communicate in regard to their relationship to one another will be presented. Chapter 5 summarizes the results and implications of this thesis. It also discusses how the same conflict could be prevented from reoccurring.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Maluku Conflict and Root Cause

There are several scholars who have done field research and written academic literature on the Maluku conflict in the past two decades. Sumanto (2013) conducted his field research over fourteen months in Maluku. He finished his dissertation on the same topic titled ‘Interreligious violence, civic peace, and citizenship: Christians and Muslims in Maluku, Eastern Indonesia’. As an Indonesian himself, his work presents more of a factual experience of an insider. In his dissertation, Sumanto investigates factors that triggered the communal violence between Muslims and Christian from the year 1999 to 2004 (Sumanto 2013: 6). He underlines, however, that his work goes beyond the popular question as to why the conflict blew up to why conflicts in some places last longer than others, what factors motivate people to jeopardize themselves in the continuous fighting, and what reasons inspire people to either promote or refuse peacebuilding efforts (Sumanto 2013: 7).

Sumanto elaborates how both Muslims and Christians were already involved in competition and violence since the colonial occupation times (2013: xi). He also contrasts the Maluku case with the application of either Islamic Law in Aceh or Christian Law in Papua, stating that “the question of religious law did not figure prominently in Maluku” (2013: xii). For this last point, this thesis applies a different approach to the analysis as this

thesis only focuses on the Maluku case without comparing and contrasting it to other areas of Indonesia.

Sumanto's dissertation also provides a great discussion on the theological dialog. The approach of theological analysis is also applied in this thesis, however, the direction differs from Sumanto's. Sumanto discloses theological aspects each side held before and during the conflict, and how these religious doctrines were interpreted and used to only worsen the Maluku conflict (2013: 140-202). This thesis on the other hand involves theological analysis which focuses on the scriptural narratives from both the Bible and the Qur'an, the framework of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, and how the concept of pluralism has made an excellent contribution to the modern Indonesian scholastic perspectives.

Another scholar who wrote an academic dissertation on the topic of Maluku prior to Sumanto is Jeroen Adam. His dissertation mainly concentrates on the island of Ambon, Maluku, which was probably the site with the worst violence and the highest number of victims during the conflict. Adam discusses *kerusuhan* Ambon (Ambon unrest) in more of an ethnographic type of research, providing his work with local perspectives from both sides evenly. He also analyzes case studies on certain Muslim-Christian conflicts in particular areas in Ambon, such as Hila, Kaitetu, and Waai (Adam 2010a: 74-83). Throughout these case studies, Adam discloses a deeper perspective on how the Maluku conflict was heavily impacted by economic and power motives, land and access to space (Adam 2010a: 83).

Although it may be easy to confirm from the beginning of the dissertation that Adam might support the notion that the conflict in Ambon was driven by more of an economic motive, one should be careful not to jump to conclusions, because later in his work Adam states “I believe that competition for access to the informal economy was not the cause of the violence but should be understood as part of the ongoing rationale within the violence” (Adam 2010a: 85-86). At the end of his work, Adam provides a claim that the *kerusuhan* had not only created sufferings for the Muslim immigrants mainly ethnic Buton, Bugis, Makassar, but also the indigenous Ambonese themselves (Adam 2010a: 245). To conclude, Adam’s dissertation has contributed much information on what happened on the ground during the conflict in Ambon for the development of this thesis.

The work of Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (2008) provides a historical account on how Christianity came to Indonesia in general. Aritonang is an Indonesian citizen educated in Utrecht University in the Netherland, where he earned his PhD. He is a well-known pastor and Christian scholar in Indonesia. Steenbrink is a professor of Intercultural Theology in Utrecht University as well. One of the chapters in this book also discusses how Christianity reached the Maluku islands, how the churches were established, and the violent conflict in 1999 that lasted for four years (Steenbrink & Tapilatu 2008: 383-418). This book of almost a thousand-pages combines a good amount of insider-outside perspectives as well as a great account of historical data on the account of Christianity in the Indonesian archipelago.

Another substantial work this thesis cites is by Fatimah Husein (2005) which concentrates on Muslim and Christian relations during the Indonesian New Order era, a period under the lead of President Soeharto. In the introduction chapter, this thesis brings up the fact that the New Order era banned discussion related on SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar-golongan*, translated as ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) in order to protect and control potential conflict among the citizens. In Husein's book, discussion on SARA policy is well presented (Husein 2005: 93-99). Her book also discusses the theological framework of the Christian in classical Islam that later links the development of the exclusivist and inclusivist paradigms in Indonesia (Husein 2005: 39-42). She argues that the birth of inclusivist perspective is related to the New Order, as the regime presented a harsh attitude towards political Islam (Husein 2005: 278). She does not however, conclude that modern Indonesia is heading toward an inclusivist Islam when it comes to Muslim-Christian relations. Husein's conclusion does not present proposals that can be taken to better Muslim-Christian relations in modern Indonesia.

Didit Rudiansyah (2015), contributes a paper on the Maluku conflict as well. He argues that there are several factors that escalated the conflict in Maluku, particularly in its capital, Ambon. Those were economic, cultural, political, and race. First, the Ambonese depended on neighboring islands for their supply of rice, since they did not produce it (2015: 167). The Ambonese, therefore, were already vulnerable in terms of their own economic needs. The second factor, the cultural dimension, came to play in this conflict because distinct values and norms had been established by the Ambonese Muslims and Christians.

These were strongly influenced by religious teachings that had been converted into their customs and culture (2015: 167). Interestingly, Rudiansyah links the third factor, political, to ethno-political conflict where he claims that ethnic differences were heavily politicized by the government elite (2015: 168). He does not, however, elaborate clearly who and for what reason these elite politicized the local ethnicity during the rage.

The last factor, race, was tightly influenced by a rapid growth of the Muslim immigrants (BBM, stands for *Buton, Bugis, Makassar*) population in the Ambonese society. This phenomenon apparently did not please many Ambonese Christians (Rudiansyah 2015: 169). This claim is not without basis. The 1971 census and inter-census survey of the Ambonese in 1995 reported a very significant increase of non-natives in Maluku from 5.2% in 1971 to 14.1% in 1995. To compare-contrast this number to Maluku at the provincial level, the immigrant population in 1971 was 1.6% and by the year 1995, they reached more than double, constituting 3.7% of the whole provincial population (Rudiansyah 2015: 170). The core narrative therefore is that the rapid growth of the non-Maluku ethnic population added a significant impact to the Maluku conflict.

As proposed by these authors, this thesis also holds that the Maluku conflict in was not caused by one single root cause, rather it was a blend of several aspects such as economic, ethno-communal affiliation, politics, and religion that had mounted far before the conflict (possibly suppressed during the Soeharto regime) and violently blew up during the riots. This thesis agrees, therefore, that it would be a mistake to claim that the root cause was only one single factor, religion.

In terms of conflict narrative, in the chapter titled 'Defining Enemy' David Keen (2008) makes a distinction between bottom-up and top-down violence. According to Keen, bottom up violence is embraced by ordinary people, and then blows up to a bigger audience at the national level or even higher. Top-down conflict, on the other hand, is constructed by political leaders who deliberately use religious, ethnic, and other social lines to mobilize their interests (Keen 2008: 73-89). In response to this, Jeroen Adam argues that the two distinct directions of violence that Keen is referring to should not be treated as completely separate entities, but rather that the bottom-up and top-down often reinforce each other (Adam 2013: 156). However, this thesis agrees that the Maluku conflict has proven to be a bottom-up one. Although there might be the possibility of top-down conflict during the lead-up to the resolution, during the riots there was no evidence of a prevalent top-down pattern.

Scholars have shown that violence often emerges during two significant periods. The first is when an authoritarian regime falls (see Snyder 2000), the second is when there is an economic decline (Chua 2004; Cramer 2006). The Maluku conflict certainly belongs to both of these categories for the following reasons. First, the Soeharto regime was an authoritarian regime that lasted for thirty two years. Donald Porter discussed the characteristics of authoritarian systems as follows: "Authoritarian systems are short on responsive and accountable government (and commonly suffer from endemic corruption of the bureaucracy), lack a transparent legal system, and tend (in varying degree) to infringe citizens' liberties and rights" (Porter 2002: 8). This description certainly characterizes the

Soeharto regime. Second, in the middle of 1998, the Indonesian economy was at its worst period in history. Inflation reached 80% during the whole year (Ricklefs 2001: 408). The rupiah, Indonesian currency, was worth up to 15,000/US\$.¹⁰ It was estimated that 113 million Indonesian were under the poverty line (Ricklefs 2001: 409).

In line with this, Barron et al. (2016) claim that the violent conflict in the post-Soeharto regime in Indonesia was tightly related to the significant transition from authoritarian control to democracy, from centralized to decentralized polity, and a great turbulence following the Asian financial crisis (Barron et al. 2016: 194). These three factors constituted a heightened potential for conflict in the Maluku case.

2.2 The Dutch to the Japanese: Significant Transition

Tracking back to the Dutch colonization, Kathleen Turner (2006) asserts that Muslims and Christians had demonstrated different political orientations based on their access and support by the Dutch administration. Ambonese Christians supported political affiliation with the Dutch government, while the Muslims on the opposite side were committed to support integration within a unitary Indonesian nation as a protest against the Dutch colonial bias (Turner 2006: 108).

One thing that deserves acknowledgment is the influence of Japanese occupation during World War II after the Dutch left. The Japanese occupation (1942-1945) had

¹⁰ For comparison, before the economic crisis hit the country, the rupiah was strong to US\$ bottoming only 2,000/US\$.

contributed a significant change in the Muslim-Christian relations in Maluku, Ambon in particular (Sumanto 2013: 94), although, it is clear that both the Japanese and the Dutch intended to control Indonesia for their own interests (see Ricklefs 2001: 249).

Benda writes that Islamic resistance played an important part in the modification of some aspects of Japanese Islamic Policy, which resulted in more cooperation with Indonesian Muslims (Benda 1958: 121). Therefore, the Muslims benefitted more from the Japanese¹¹ than they did from the Dutch. The Christians, on the other side, suffered under the Japanese.

Dalam masa pendudukan Jepang itu, orang-orang Kristen banyak yang menderita. Tidak kurang dari 60 orang pendeta Kristen Protestan dipancung karena dianggap kaki-tangan Belanda. Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM) mengalami kesulitan-kesulitan besar. Mata-mata merajalela terutama di awal pendudukan Jepang. Setiap orang yang mereka tuduh sebagai kaki-tangan Belanda pasti akan mengalami nasib yang sial. Tidak saja orang-orang Kristen yang tertentu yang menderita karenanya, juga tokoh-tokoh pimpinan masyarakat. (Lapian 1982:106)

During the Japanese occupation, the Christians greatly suffered. Not less than 60 Protestant pastors were beheaded because they were considered to be puppets of the Dutch. The Maluku Protestant Church (GPM) experienced tremendous difficulties. Spies were everywhere particularly during the early Japanese occupation. Every person the Japanese accused of being Dutch puppets would have misfortune. Not only Christians suffered, but also the leaders of societies. (Lapian 1982: 106, translation mine)

This circumstance may have come about because of the Japanese policy towards Indonesians, which had two main priorities: to wipe out Western influences and to mobilize

¹¹ The Japanese experience with Islam dates back to the mid 1920's. "It was patently motivated by the expansionist plans of Dai Nippon, since only a few hundred Muslims lived on Japanese territory at that time" (Benda 1958: 103).

Indonesian in the interest of Japanese victory (Ricklefs 2001: 249). Since the Christians were seen as Dutch puppets, they experienced despair during three and half years of Japanese occupation.

The relationship between the Japanese and Indonesian Muslims was not trouble free. In the beginning of the Japanese occupation in the archipelago, they had difficulties convincing Muslims to cooperate with them. Benda explains that the Japanese concept of themselves as the “Chosen Race”, superior to all others, was difficult for Indonesians to accept. The racial superiority arrogantly exhibited by the Japanese embittered Indonesians (Benda 1958: 122). Further, Japanese insistence on the divinity of the emperor, in particular, clashed head-on with the Islamic faith. The Japanese bowing in the direction of the imperial palace was widely resented, as this ceremony very closely resembled the prayer bow to Mecca performed by Muslims (Benda 1958: 123). This situation, however, did not last long. The Japanese soon realized the importance of gaining popularity from the Muslim side. In Maluku, the Japanese supported Ambonese Muslims as they believed such support would be an important phase to gain sustenance and also because the Muslims were relatively isolated under the Dutch power (Sumanto 2013: 95).

It is possible for the reaction of Moluccan society to the Japanese victory to be divided into three groups: first, Muslims welcomed the Japanese as liberators and thought the Dutch as oppressors. They welcomed the Japanese with gratitude which was expressed through the help they gave to destroy the Dutch collaborations in the area. Second, Christians saw the arrival of the Japanese as a great misfortune for their souls and security. The loss of the Dutch was the loss of their protector and supporter. Third, the nationalists received the Japanese cautiously. But they used the opportunity to reorganize themselves. (Chauvel 1980: 69)

The transition from Japanese occupation to the proclamation of Indonesia's Independence on 17 August 1945 was deeply regretted by Muslims in Ambon who were treated most favorably by the Japanese in stark contrast to the authority and power imparted to Ambonese Christians by the Dutch (Turner 2006: 110). It is important to note that even though the Muslims in Maluku benefited from the Japanese occupation more than the Christians, one should not conclude that the Muslims did not experience suffering during the occupation. This thesis argues that although the Japanese occupation played a significant role in Maluku during pre-independence time, it does not serve a direct relation to the post-Soeharto Maluku conflict that lasted four years from 1999 to 2002

3 METHODOLOGY

Data for this thesis is taken from library research in both English and Indonesian resources. As this thesis covers three main components (history, the Maluku conflict, and theology), data taken can be also categorized into three parts. Data for the history section involve books and journals that trace the coming of the Portuguese and the Dutch to the Indonesian archipelago. For the Maluku conflict, books, journals, articles, and newspapers are collected from the year when the conflict erupted in 1999 to 2016. This is done to ensure that the collected data are updated before they were analyzed. The last category, theology, involved library research of resources that were published from the pre-Soeharto regime up to the present time. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the Soeharto regime banned publication on SARA as a way to control conflict potential among religions and ethnic groups (see Ch. 1 for detail). In the post-Soeharto regime, many writings from the most radical to the most pluralistic were published.

In terms of data selecting regarding the conflict, this thesis focuses on books, journals, and dissertations whose authors did their field research in Maluku and in Indonesia. This is to ensure that although this thesis applies full library research, the data taken are field-based. Therefore, it is hoped that the analysis will provide objective results of the actual events, implications, and resolutions on both the local and national level.

Data is also taken from national newspapers as they represent daily facts during the conflict, including government efforts at resolution. Newspapers that are selected as sources for this thesis are independent newspapers, not affiliated with the government, and newspapers which are considered objective when it comes to religious narrative (not pro-Muslims nor pro-Christians). As described by Ashutosh Varshney (2008), newspapers have been known as reliable resources, particularly when it comes to gathering violence data in Indonesia. However, data from provincial newspapers do not act as the dominate source for this thesis as they often under-report levels of violence (Barron et al. 2016: 196). This thesis therefore hopes to provide an objective overview of the history, the conflict, and theology discussion.

This thesis is mostly based on deductive coding when it comes to the content analysis. It starts with a hypothesis before starting the coding (Bernard 2006: 493). The coding or frequently repeated themes from selected sources contain keywords such as Maluku, conflict, Muslim, Christian, and resolution. They are then analyzed based on its content, mainly to test and to prove whether the hypotheses in the beginning is correct.

This thesis employs the naturalistic generalization methodology proposed by Robert Stake. Naturalistic generalization is a product of human experience as it derives from tacit knowledge on how and why people feel and react about things that surround them (Stake 2000: 22). The Maluku conflict is marked by a long divided social status (economic, ethno-communal affiliations, political, and religious identity) that shaped people's experience with one another, while at the same time aggravated the trigger issue

between the two religious groups. By focusing on this case study, this thesis implements what Stake refers to as generalizations about a case in a particular situation, but they are generalizations that regularly occur all along the way in the case study (Stake 1995: 7). This generalization is used to project and to avoid the same potential conflict from reoccurring in another place in Indonesia.

4 THE MALUKU CONFLICT: FROM HISTORY TO THEOLOGY

Large multi-ethnic societies are a challenge for states (Bertrand 2004: 214). Indonesia definitely belongs to this category. Having achieved its independence in 1945, Indonesia is home to a variety of religions and over 700 distinct indigenous languages (Lewis et al. 2016). The country has become a role model for neighboring nations on how to embrace differences while at the same time living peacefully amidst them. In Indonesia this is done by living under the umbrella of *Pancasila*.

Pancasila is a set of five principles enunciated by the late President Soekarno in June 1945 in an attempt to fend off demands for an Islamic state and to reconcile the cultural diversity of the embryonic Republic of Indonesia. (Ramage, 1995: vii). These Five Principles are *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (belief in one God Almighty), *Keadilan yang Beradab* (just and civilized humanity), *Persatuan Indonesia* (Indonesian unity), *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh Khidmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan dan Perwakilan* (democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultations), and *Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia* (social justice for all the citizens of Indonesia).

Although *Pancasila* has been adopted as the philosophy of the nation, it does not eliminate the potential of conflict among the ethnic and religious groups. According to Seo (2013: 5), Indonesia needs to pay extra attention to its sociological aspect for three major

reasons. One, it is the most populated Muslim nation on earth. Therefore, minorities' religions must not be marginalized. Two, it is a country based on Law and Constitutions. It is not an Islamic nor a secular state. Violence in the name of religion would greatly threaten the unity and viability of the Indonesian state. Three, religious conversions both from Islam to Christianity and vice versa have revealed that they are not purely religious, but are the consequence of interactions between religion and politics. For this third point, she emphasizes that religious conversions should not be seen as a personal decision alone, but also strongly influence the political situation in states and societies (Seo 2013: 8).

The Republic of Indonesia acknowledges five official religions for all Indonesians, they are Islam, Christianity (Protestantism), Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In terms of the institutionalized Christian church, the Indonesian government under the Ministry of Religious Affairs only officially recognizes seven denominations: National Communion of the Ecumenical, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Orthodox church, the Seventh-Day Adventist church, Salvation Army, and Indonesian Baptist communion (Seo 2013: 27). The first three hold more influential roles due to the number of their followers.

In 1997, Indonesia was in a state of flux. The Asian financial crisis forced millions into unemployment and poverty, triggering nation-wide protests. In turn, the protests led to widespread demands for political reform, culminating in President Soeharto's resignation in May 1998 (Wilson 2008: 29). It remains one of the worst periods in Indonesian history. A year later, conflict between Islam and Christianity blew up in Maluku

resulting in the death of thousands of people. Most scholars argue that the Maluku conflict was a culmination of tensions, which were intentionally covered during the New Order era.

In Maluku, where Christians had been slightly more numerous than Muslims, immigration during the New Order brought the proportion of Muslims to 56.8% by 1990, according to official government statistics (Bertrand 2004: 92). For comparison, below is the data from the Maluku Province Statistical Bureau on how Islam outnumbered Christianity in the rural area based on their census in the year of 2000, only one year after the Maluku riot.

Table 1: Population of Maluku Province based on religion (BPS 2000)

Religion	Urban	Percentage	Rural	Percentage
Islam	124,918	43.1	439,117	51.0
Protestant	145,055	50.0	343,576	40.0
Catholic	19,325	6.7	69,252	8.1
Other	661	0.2	7,995	0.9
Total	289,959	100.0	859,940	100.0

This alone has triggered a potential conflict between the two religious groups. The locals were threatened by the fact that they were outnumbered by the outsiders, who upset the balance of religion. Ironically, there was nothing they could do to send the outsiders back or simply slow down the increasing size of the Muslims migrants' population, since their economic welfare was so dependent on them.

Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008: 11) agree that the conflicts between Islam and Christianity were clearly motivated not only by religion but also by political and economic

interests. Minyeok Seo (2013: 4) supports this idea, stating that many scholars described both Islam and Christianity as the core factor behind the violence although they also agree that other factors played significant role to promote such violence.

According to Tarmizi Taher, former Minister of Religion (1993-1998), the potential conflict between religions in Indonesia mainly occurs due to one of the following situations: One, when proselytization is aimed at gaining converts from adherents of another religion; two, when places of worship are built without permits; and three, when a person insults another person's religion (Taher 1997: 16-17). These three issues are also of central importance to countries across the globe, as nations grapple with the challenges of religious pluralism (Crouch 2014: 8). In this sense, religious pluralism is considered more as a challenge than a productive perspective.

Maluku had long been portrayed as a role model for both religious and ethnic harmony before the violence. Sadly, this characterization was not accurate. According to the International Crisis Group (2000: 2), mini-conflict had always been a part of the Muslims and Christians interaction in the region. Particularly in Ambon, the capital of Maluku, each neighborhood was often involved in conflict ranging from stone-throwing to occasional murders between *kampongs* (villages) from time to time.

4.1 The Conflict Chronology and Resolution

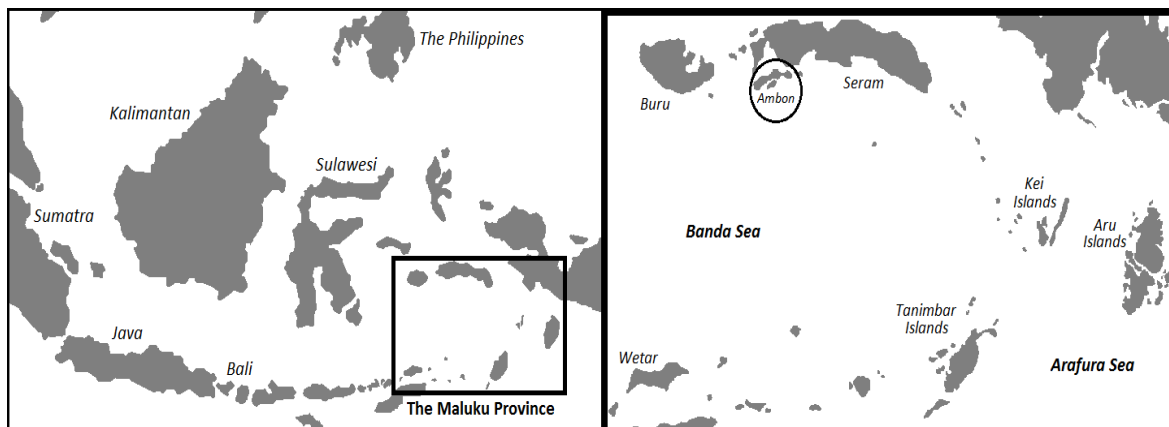


Figure 2: The map of the Maluku Province¹²

The violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians erupted on January 19, 1999 and lasted for four years. Sumanto Al Qurtuby reports that the violence happened between Calvinist Protestants affiliated with the Moluccan Protestant Churches and Muslims, who were both locals and immigrants.

The outburst of communal violence in the region was sparked by an incident on a bus terminal in Ambon city between an Ambonese Christian minivan driver named Jacob Lauhery (nickname, Yopi) from Mardika and a Bugis Muslim passenger named Nur Salim from Batumerah. While Batumerah is renowned as Ambon city's main Muslim stronghold, Mardika has been the center of Christian population in the town since the Dutch colonial era. Ambonese informants told me that interpersonal and intergroup fighting between people from these two religiously-divided areas was common and was normally easily resolved by the local authorities and community or religious leaders. But this time it was different. What set this fight apart was its rage, the speed with which it rapidly spread to other parts

¹²The map on the left is all of Indonesia, while the right side is the enlargement of the Maluku province. Ambon is circled, to identify the capital of the Maluku province.

of the city and the archipelago, the way it targeted religious symbols, and the way it used religious identity. (Al Qurtuby 2013: 251)

Only one day after this triggering incident between Muslims and Christians, on January 20, 1999, early in the morning, two local stalls were intentionally set on fire in the area of Batu Gantung in the city of Ambon, Maluku capital (Van Liere 2011: 329). A BBC reporter writes: “On the northern side of the neighborhood, some of the Christians were singing a song over and over as they moved from the secretariat of the Indonesian Christian Student Movement office toward the Rehoboth Church where many of the attackers were gathering. The words, as noted by a Muslim, were ‘We will not retreat, we will not, we will not, we will not. We have won with the blood of Lord Jesus, We have won with His blood.’”¹³

During the first month of the conflict, the fighting was almost completely driven by local people, including their religious leaders. Although the number of fatalities were high, the weapons they used were usually either knives or machetes, or homemade guns (International Crisis Group 2000: 5). In early February 1999, different places on the neighboring islands of Seram, Haruku, and Saparua were affected by deadly violence. The Ambonese Christians forcefully removed Butonese Muslim settlers, particularly in the region of Leitimor, a Christian dominated part of Ambon Island. In addition, many market kiosks and tricycle taxis –owned by Butonese Muslim were destroyed, in majority Christian neighborhoods in Ambon, such as Kudamati. Many of the Butonese left the

¹³ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a7f6c.html> (accessed 9 February 2017).

province of Maluku once and for all. By the beginning of March 1999, after the first intensive round of rioting, a conservative estimate put the death toll at around 160 (Human Rights Watch 1999: 2).

On July 27, 1999, another conflict emerged in Ambon involving stone-throwing between Muslim and Christian youths, developing till hundreds of stalls and even homes were destroyed. The Maluku military commander issued shoot-on sight orders and in a few instances troops did fire on mobs (*Jakarta Post*, 30 July 1999).

In the opinion of Jeroen Adam (2013: 158), the violence in the capital of Maluku was not only the most bitter, but also the first brutal conflict in post-New Order Indonesia. Adam classifies the Maluku conflict as “high intensity and protracted”, due to the enormous number of direct killings.

The work by Gerry Van Klinken (2007: 96-106) illustrates how in the first stages of the conflict, local Ambonese elites with obvious political affiliations were instrumental in instigating the initial violence in the town of Ambon through what he calls ‘patrimonial networks’ (mosques and churches). Adam pointed out that the Maluku conflict was not by any means uncoordinated. After the first attack, both Muslims and Christians established coordination centers. The Christians had theirs at Maranatha church which was located just beside the Maluku’s governor’s office, while the Muslims had theirs at the Al-Fatah mosque. This mosque served as more than just a coordination center, but also as a hospital for wounded civilians (Adam 2010a: 35-6).

The second stage of the conflict erupted with the joining of *Laskar Jihad* in May 2000, which proved to worsen the conflict radically with a larger number of new fighters from the Muslim side (Adam 2013: 160; Aditjondro 2001). Islam *garis keras* or hardliner Muslims, are found across a wide spectrum around the archipelago (Lindsey 2011: 2). *Laskar Jihad* belongs to this category. One substantial distinction is between Muslims who are willing to use violence, and those who are not (Crouch 2014: 47).

Laskar Jihad is grouped under the umbrella of *Yayasan Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, a Java-based Salafist¹⁴ Islamic group whose missions were known to combat Christianity (International Crisis Group 2000: 13; International Crisis Group 2002: 6). The *Laskar Jihad* was formed in January 2000. Its leader, Ja'afar Umar Thalib, announced on April 6, 2000 in Jakarta's Senayan Stadium that they would invade Maluku in order to help the Muslims fighting back the Christians. It is estimated that more than 3,000 members of *Laskar Jihad* operated in Ambon when the conflicts were raging (Adam 2010a: 42; International Crisis Group 2002: 6).

Prior to the *Laskar Jihad*, one of the perceptions of the conflict was that it was a religious war between Christians and Muslims. Turner claims that this was strongly provoked by the *Laskar Kristus*¹⁵ (Army of Christ) movement during the month of March

¹⁴ Wiktorowicz (2006: 207) points out that Salafist ideology acknowledges one legitimate Islamic interpretation; therefore pluralism does not exist. Salafi believes the blending of Islamic tradition and local culture is a dangerous challenge to Islam, constituting a strong doctrine that culture is the enemy to pure Islam (Wiktorowicz 2006: 210).

¹⁵ According to Sumanto (2013: 296), there were significant number of Christian groups who denied the use of the term *Laskar Kristus*.

1999. Led by Agus Wattimena, *Laskar Kristus* presented a war which was often described as a crusade-like mission against the Muslims (Turner 2006: 193). Turner states as follow:

The *Laskar Kristus* or army of Christ claimed to be warriors defending the faith as God's soldiers. Despite Wattimena's claim of a 'popular army' consisting of approximately 20,000 members, there had been widespread controversy regarding support for this movement on the basis that Wattimena recruited units of young children to serve as front-line Christian soldiers. Some adolescent Ambonese Christians expressed fervent enthusiasm for militant action but many Christian leaders and members of the Moluccan churches wished to focus instead on local efforts to restore peace and condemned the militant action. (Turner 2006: 193)

According to Mulyadi (2003: 76), *Laskar Kristus* was established in 1998 as an attempt to save the indigenous Maluku people who were involved in violence against the Muslims. Mulyadi asserts that the Army of Christ was established to defend Christian faith.

He states:

... Laskar Kristus juga memahami peperangan dengan kaum Muslim sebagai memiliki makna keagamaan; bahwa ia merupakan satu panggilan agama. Oleh karena itu, segala bentuk tindak kekerasan – bahkan termasuk membunuh pihak Muslim – bukan hanya diperbolehkan secara agama, tapi bahkan dipahami sebagai tugas suci yang diperintahkan Tuhan. (Mulyadi 2013: 76)

... Laskar Kristus also acknowledged the war against Muslim as a religious account; which is a form of religious calling. Therefore, all forms of violence – including the action of killing Muslim – was seen as not only religiously allowed, but also was understood as a sacred mission given by God. (Mulyadi 2013: 76, translation mine)

This account of the *Laskar Kristus* also appeared on Presidential Decree No. 38 2002¹⁶ on the establishment of a national investigation team for the Maluku conflict.

¹⁶ This presidential decree was issued under the leadership of President Megawati Soekarnoputri. The decree was issued on June 6, 2002, four years after the first conflict erupted on January 19, 1999.

Article 2 in that decree mentions a command to find out the root causes of the conflict, including issue of the *Laskar Kristus*.

It is also essential to note that before the coming of *Laskar Jihad* in May 2000, the Muslims were more on the defensive side mostly because they were seen as the immigrants, not indigenous people. They were even forced to move near the harbor. After the arrival of *Laskar Jihad*, however, the narrative turned to almost the opposite, providing the Muslims with better support; physically, mentally, and logistically (International Crisis Group 2000, Goss 2000). Their arrival also brought new energy for the Muslims to fight back (Noorhaidi 2005: 205). It is worth noting that although the *Laskar Jihad* was not the cause of Maluku's conflict, they were indeed the greatest instigator of the bigger scale of violence throughout the conflict period. Their continued presence in Ambon only led to more killings, more destroyed villages and even more refugees (International Crisis Group 2000: 12). In line with this, George J. Aditjondro¹⁷ states:

Mereka membawa senjata modern dan bersekutu dengan personil militer Muslim yang berjumlah 80% dari pasukan yang ditempatkan di kepulauan rempah-rempah itu. Perkembangan ini secara total menghancurkan keseimbangan sebelumnya, dan menciptakan perimbangan kekuatan yang menguntungkan orang Muslim. (Aditjondro 2001)

They (the *Laskar Jihad*) brought modern weapon and became allies with Muslim military personnel which constituted 80% of the total army who were sent to that Spice Islands. This has totally destroyed the balance, and has created equal power that benefited Muslim side. (Aditjondro 2001, parenthesis and translation mine)

¹⁷ This is an unpublished paper. However, the complete writing in Bahasa Indonesia can be accessed through the following site <http://www.michr.net/orang-orang-jakarta-di-balik-tragedi-maluku.html>

The narrative of cooperation between the *Laskar Jihad* and military became a popular thing during the conflict. International Crisis Group asserted that the military themselves had joined the conflict by renting and selling their weapons to the combatants and also participated in the battle. This resulted in a devastating situation during the conflict (International Crisis Group 2000: 19).

The two communities believed in two substantially different stories as to how the riot began. For the Christians, the reasoning centered on national plots to introduce Islamic law and to wipe them out of the province, essentially Islamization. For the Muslims, the focus was on an international conspiracy (it is not clear which countries they were referring to) aimed at creating a Christian state in the center of Indonesia; in other words, Christianization. Ironically, the local politicians did little to disseminate actual news about the situation and possibly they did not even realize the dangerous effects of this. These broken chains of communication meant there was no accurate version of the riot nor trusted source of legitimate information, particularly when it came to inflammatory rumors (International Crisis Group 2000: 5).

Although the Ambon conflict can be divided into two obvious stages which were before and after the coming of *Laskar Jihad*, the tragedy in Ambon itself was seen in four different riots, from January 1999 to June 2000. Van Klinken (2006: 131) asserts that the first riot was the incident on January 19, 1999 – as mentioned earlier in this thesis. The second happened on July 24 in the same year in the suburb area of Poka. The third riot once again blew up in Ambon just one day after Christmas (also known as *Natal Berdarah*,

Bloody Christmas). The last riot happened in June 2000, in which fifty people were reportedly killed. Therefore, the Maluku conflict should not be seen as a period of constant warfare but rather should be acknowledged as a communal conflict that prevailed in different waves at different places (Adam 2010a: 29).

Adam points out that the conflict, particularly in Ambon, continued because none of the parties from either sides (insiders – outsiders) could chase the other out (Adam 2010a: 8). In line with this, Van Klinken (2007) discerned certain particular characteristics of the Ambonese political economy which underpinned the explosion of religiously inspired violence in 1999. The Indonesian Foreign Minister at that period stated that “conflict in Maluku is basically not a religious conflict but more an inter-communal conflict driven by local economic disparities, instigated by certain forces bent on destabilizing the country” (Briefing by the Foreign Minister, H.E. Alwi Shihab to Foreign Ambassadors in Jakarta on Aceh, Maluku and Irian Jaya, Jakarta, 7 July 2000). Adam concludes “The Ambon conflict is about much more than a mere Christian-Muslim divide, but village, clan and family identities came into play which lead to a much more nuanced and refined micro-genealogy of the conflict which does not simply follow this religious master-narrative” (Adam 2013: 169).

Although it is hard to avoid the claim of religious conflict in the Maluku case, ethnic origin was certainly a significant factor in the first periods of fighting, with anger directed at what were widely known as BBM, for *Buton*, *Bugis*, *Makassar* ethnic groups (International Crisis Group 2000: 5). According to International Crisis Group, most of the

Christians in Maluku had lived in the land for a long time, while Muslims migrants from ethnic *Buton*, *Bugis*, and *Makassar* (all from Sulawesi) migrated to the land of Maluku in the last 30 years. The Muslims immigrants were seen as more aggressive and commercially stronger than the local Christians. They also had made enormous economic strides. Not to mention, towards the last period of Soeharto, those who dominated the bureaucracy were Muslims. This alone made the Christians in Maluku feel that they were being overwhelmed. Therefore, the conflict of Maluku is a layered one, which not only served as a religious conflict, but also economic and political competition between local interests (International Crisis Group 2000: 4).

By the year of 2001, the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnasham) has estimated that at least 5,000 people have been killed and 570,000 are internally displaced (Komnasham 22, 2001: 5). The number of the dead is estimated to reach up to 9,000 victims according to other sources. Tempo for instance, one of Indonesia's daily newspapers, states that the Maluku conflict resulted in the death of around 9,000 people. More than 29,000 houses were burnt, and 45 mosques, 47 churches, 714 stores, 38 government offices, and 4 banks were destroyed.¹⁸ This confirms how destructive a religious conflict can be and how strongly it affects national stability, although Indonesia is labeled as a democracy.

¹⁸ <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/news/2015/05/21/078668047/konflik-yang-dipicu-keberagaman-budaya-indonesia> (accessed 10 December 2016)

In terms of the conflict resolutions, the Indonesian national government certainly played a significant role. Sadly, their intervention took three years to fully come to an agreement to stop the conflict. The International Crisis Group spreads the blame as follows:

There is a long list of puzzling failures that led to the current situation: Indonesian religious leaders, constrained by their own bias and the bias of their constituencies, did not condemn the violence. The military did not defend communities, and has not yet formulated a comprehensive strategy for ending the conflict; Indonesia's politicians preferred to avoid tackling the problem, often voicing the hope that it would 'work itself out'. The *Laskar Jihad* should have been restrained on Java, and police heads should have rolled for failing to restrain them. The Attorney General should have quickly investigated and assigned teams of prosecutors. (International Crisis Group 2000: 16)

The national government was hugely criticized for being reluctant to take actual action on the Maluku conflict reconciliation. President Abdurrahman Wahid (President of the Republic of Indonesia during that period), Jakarta politicians, and other powerful persons did not place Maluku at the top of their emergency priorities. To note, President Wahid, shortly after his election, delegated leadership of the reconciliation of the conflict to his vice president, Megawati Soekarnoputri. It was far from her top priority, either, as she chose to celebrate New Year's vacation in Hong Kong while the riots in Maluku were violently raging (*Jakarta Post*, 6 January 2000). This neglect only prolonged the time of the crisis, along with the weak civilian leadership on the regional and provincial level (International Crisis Group 2000: 17). The same protest came from Indonesian Muslim Student Association (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*, KAMMI) which demanded that President Wahid pull out the mandate for Megawati as she was considered incapable of protecting Muslims in Maluku (*Kompas*, 6 January 2000).

President Wahid finally took the responsibility of declaring a state of civil emergency on June 27, 1999 for Maluku. In Indonesia, ‘civil emergency’ is just one step below ‘military emergency’ which results in authority being fully transferred to the ruling military commander. In the first two weeks of the civil emergency, at least 100 civilians were assassinated (International Crisis Group 2000: 10). Wahid emphasized, however, that the Maluku conflict could only be fully solved by the indigenous Maluku themselves (*Kompas*, 30 June 2000).

Both the intensity and the enduring nature of the conflict took everybody by surprise. At first, it also appeared that the riots could be resolved relatively quickly. At the beginning of March 1999, things appeared to return to normal and civil servants started returning to their work (*Suara Pembaruan*, March 3, 1999; *Kompas*, March 19, 1999).

Local stakeholders took part in terms of local peacebuilding based on their indigenous value. As mentioned earlier in Ch. 1 of this thesis, the *pela gandong*¹⁹ system played a significant role in a good reconciliation between the two religious groups. There are four main elements that constitute a *pela* according to Dieter Bartels (1977). First, villages in a *pela* relationship help each other during the time of crisis. Second, one partner village, if requested, has to help the other in establishing a project such as a house of worship or a school. Third, when an individual pays visit to one’s *pela* village, food must

¹⁹ Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008: 410) state “Through this *pela*-system, Muslims and Christians fostered the conviction that they were of the same origin, from the same *Upu* (ancestor). This can sometimes be seen in the names of villages like Siri-Sori Islam and Siri-Sori Kristen or in identical names for one clan that has Muslim and Christian members. The *pela* rituals and obligations were very successful in making the religious differences subordinate to the common genealogy.”

not be denied. The last one is that all members of villages in a *pela* relationship are considered as one blood (Bartels 1977: 29).

However, this *pela gandong* system was re-established after the conflict, not while it raged. As Al Qurtuby (2016: 103) writes “whereas much of the traditional *adat* was crumbling, *pela* has been experiencing a great revival in post-violence Maluku, and became an *adat* institution whose rules are followed the most.” After the Maluku conflict, religious leaders, government officials, intellectuals, and even politicians sounded the idea to reactivate *pela gandong* to go beyond the village level, in order to reestablish ethnic unity (Al Qurtuby 2016: 103). They even modernized and formalized it into an integrated force in order to heal Christian-Muslim relations. This whole idea was proposed by M.G. Ohorella, a Maluku Muslim law scholar who suggested that the *pela* be enlarged to encompass all governmental elements from sub-regency to provincial level and that this whole process be given the force of law and sanctioned by the Maluku provincial government (see Bartels 2003: 128-153).

In terms of conflict resolution, Aritonang (2004: 554) writes that the conflict resolution had been done in Jakarta on January 17-18, 2000 where both Muslim and Christian (including Catholic) signed *Dokumen Persetujuan Pengakhiran Konflik* (“Document of Ending the Conflict Agreement”, translation mine). This document shows that an approach for peacebuilding had been achieved by the two groups. Aritonang (2004: 554) adds, however, that even after this document was signed riots continued in Ambon with the coming of the *Laskar Jihad*, the burning of the *Universitas Kristen Indonesia*

Maluku, UKIM (the Christian University of Indonesia in Maluku), the damaging of Pattimura University, and some churches. In other words, this agreement failed to reconcile both Muslim and Christian sides.²⁰

Two years later, the national government put some efforts to answer the overwhelming demand to end the conflict in Maluku by the signing of the Malino II agreement. One year earlier, the government had signed an agreement called the Malino agreement²¹ to end the communal conflict in Poso, Central Sulawesi in November 2001. The Malino II agreement was dedicated to setting up a meeting to end the Maluku conflict by inviting 70 delegates from Maluku to meet in the town of Malino, South Sulawesi. The names and affiliations of the delegates²² from both groups are cited by Sumanto (2013: 294).

²⁰ As suggested by Barron et al, areas previously caught in a severe destructive violence will experience transition to a new phase where large-scale violence is absent yet small-scale violence remains unabated, often taking new forms (Barron et al. 2016: 192).

²¹ It was later called 'Malino I' when the government decided to name the peaceful agreement of Maluku with Malino II, as both agreements were conducted in Malino region of South Sulawesi.

²² The Muslim representatives were KH Abdul Wahab Polpoke (MUI Maluku), Thamrin Ely (BIMM Maluku, the Muslim chair of the delegation), M.Nasir Rahawarin (BIMM Maluku), Idrus Tahutey (Muhammadiyah Maluku), Lutfi Sanaky (KAHMI), Hasan Ohorella (Satgas Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar), Abdul Azis Fidmatan (FPIM), Husein Toisuta (FPI), Daud Sangadji (BIMM Ambon), Yusuf Laisow (BIMM Ambon), Hasullah Toisuta (IAIN Ambon), Hadi Basalamah (Yayasan Al-Hilal), M. Amin Polanunu (King of Wakasih), Effendy Latuconsina (King of Hatuhaha), Abd. Razak Opier (King of Liang), Abuya Rumakefing (a community leader of Seram), Abdul Karim Rahayaan (community leader of Air Salobar), Yunus Serang (leader of Banda Ely), Yusran Salmon (community leader), H.A. Latif Hatala (Batumerah), Djafar Tuanani (Kailolo), Taib Madura (community leader), Husein Tapitapi (Talake), Mahmud Rengifurwarin (Southeast Maluku), Abubakar Hehanusa (Airkoning), Lapone Kasman Salamun (Posko Celebes Bersatu), Hanafi (Posko Baguala), Usman Slamet (Posko Kebun Cengkeh), Amir Kiat (youth leader in Batumerah), Jalil Wasahua (Pemuda Diponegoro), Daud Sialana (Pemuda Leihitu), Aly Salampessy (Pemuda Air Besar), Ahmad Leawara (Pemuda Salahatu), and Hasan Usemahu (Pemuda Jalan Baru).

The Muslim representatives included heads of Muslim groups, kings of certain islands or villages, youth leaders and other community leaders. The Christian representatives included church leaders from both protestant and catholic churches, a professor and other academics from Pattimura University, the king of Ambon town, and other community and religious leaders. They concluded the Malino II agreement on February 12, 2002. Two of the most important figures in this peace agreement were Jusuf Kalla (Minister for People's Welfare), who had been involved in the first Malino agreement, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Minister for Political and Security Affairs). As described later in this section, the agreement contains 11 articles. It states that both parties agree to end hostilities and aim to uphold the rule of law.

The Malino II agreement fueled what Adam calls "a sense of optimism and hope among many Ambonese" (Adam 2010a: 53) or what Jon Goss (2004: 28) claims as the major and most momentous stage in an attempt to compromise interreligious conflict. From the local perspective, the Malino II peace agreement signified an integrated effort from those who were in conflict, the local stakeholders, religious leaders, and the national

The Christian representatives were Rev. I.J.W. Hendriks (chair, GBH. Sinode GPM), Tonny Pariela (professor at University of Pattimura, the Christian chair of the delegation), Rev. S.J. Mailoa (BPH Sinode GPM), Bishop P.C. Mandagi (Diocese of Amboina), Rev. Henry Lolain (PGPI Maluku), Rev. Ricky Hitipeuw (BPD GBI Maluku), P. Simon Weneben, Pr (Diocese of Amboina), J. Maspaitella (FKYM), Ety Dumutubun (PMKRI Abon), Raja Waraka (Latupati of Amahai), Emus Dia Raja Ema (King in Ambon town), Fr. Agus Ulahay, Pr (Catholic Crisis Center), Etta Hendriks (GPP), Raja Tuhaha (Latupati of Saparua), J. Ajawaila (academic), T. Leatemia (academic), Ipi Litaay (academic), O. Lawalata (academic), Fileo P. Noya (academic), Alo Futunanembun (community leader), Edy Hukunala (community leader), Silas Ratuank (community leader), Sr. Brigitta Renyaan (GPP), John Ruhulesin (AM GPM), Ferry Wattimury (youth leader), Emang Nikijuluw (grassroots leader), Femmy Souisa (grassroots leader), Yanes Risambessy (grassroots leader), Elvis Talapessy (grassroots leader), Yongkie Siahaya (grassroots leader), Kris Timisella (grassroots leader), Rev. Jacky Manuputty (religious leader), Rev. Jahn Salahessy (religious leader), Benedictus Tawurururun (Latvuan village chief), Hengky Hattu (NGO).

government, to reintegrate the Maluku people in unity, regardless of their religious identity.

Following is a direct quote from a former chairman of Maluku Protestant Church (GPM):

Some people said that involving the government in the peace process in Maluku is useless since it was part of the conflict. But for me, neglecting the role of government had resulted in efforts of reconciliation processes in pre-Malino period fruitless. If the government is part of the problem, then, it must be involved in its solution. In Ambon, religious leaders, civil society associations, and the government worked together to create reconciliation before and after the Malino II peace pact. (Rev. I.J.W. Hendricks as cited in Al Qurtuby 2016: 147)

Indonesia therefore has taken part by signing a peace accord in Malino as the result of tireless attempts of Muslims and Christians who worked side by side with moderate factions of the government and civil society (Al Qurtuby 2013: 349). Interestingly, Al Qurtuby claims that the initiation of peacebuilding, most of the time genuinely came from people who were actually affected by the strife, not by the contribution of religious conflict experts (2013: 350). What became known as the Malino II Agreement was signed at a Maluku Meeting in Malino. The original 11-point agreement was written in Bahasa Indonesia. The English translation below is from Sumanto (2013: 292-293).

The Maluku conflict which has undergone for more than three years has resulted in thousands of people losing their lives and properties, caused sufferings and difficulties, endangered the unity of the Republic of Indonesia, and darkened the future of the Moluccan society. Accordingly, by the Grace of God Almighty, we the Muslims and Christians of Maluku, with the open soul and kind heart, with the intention to live under the nation's "Unity in Diversity", together with the government of the Republic of Indonesia, agree to bind ourselves into the peace concord as follows:

1. End all forms of conflict and violence.
2. Erect the supremacy of law fairly, explicitly, honestly, and neutrally, with the support of the whole society. The law enforcement officers, therefore, should be professional in conducting their duty.

3. Reject, oppose, and punish all forms of separatist movement threatening the unity and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, such as that of the Republic of South Moluccas (*Republik Maluku Selatan* or RMS).
4. As part of the Republic of Indonesia, all Moluccan people have legal and equal rights to live, work, and run business in the whole area of the Republic of Indonesia, and so as the other Indonesians, they have legal and equal rights to live, work, and run business in the area of the province of Maluku by being aware of and follow the local cultural values and keep security and peace.
5. All types of illegal armed organizations, units, groups, or militias in Maluku are prohibited. They also need to surrender their weapons and/or be stripped, and legal actions will be taken over them according to the law. The outsiders bothering Maluku need to leave the region.
6. Form a national independent investigation team to investigate the incident of January 19, 1999, the FKM (*Front Kedaulatan Maluku* – the Moluccan Sovereignty Front), the RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan* – the Republic of South Moluccas), the Christian Republic of South Moluccas (*Kristen RMS*), the *Laskar Jihad*, the *Laskar Kristus*, forced conversion and other forms of human rights violation in the name of the supremacy of law.
7. Return the refugees to their former places without any pressure, and return their civil rights gradually.
8. The government will help people rehabilitate psychological and social conditions, economic infrastructures, and public facilities such as education, health, religious facilities, and houses.
9. In order to maintain stability and security of all areas in Maluku, a harmonious military and police forces is needed. Along with this need, the Indonesian military and police forces facilities should be developed, equipped, and functional again.
10. To uphold relationship and harmony among Maluku's religious followers, all forms of *da'wah* or religious preaching should respect the plurality of society and pay attention to the local cultures.
11. Support rehabilitation of *Universitas Pattimura* (Unpatti) under a principle of development for all, and hence, recruitment system and other policies are run transparently with paying attention on the principle of justice together with fulfillment of qualification required.

This treaty was made with sincerity and the intention to follow up the points consistently. Those who break the rules and do not put into practice these eleven points will be punished according to the existing law.

Malino, February 12, 2002

By the beginning of 2002, soon after the Malino II agreement was signed, there was a belief that interacting with each other was more fruitful than physical fighting (Adam 2010a: 30). The overall situation was improving and from late 2003 onwards, the first people started to enter each other's area (Adam 2010a: 54).

To provide local viewpoints, it is important to examine how this Malino II agreement was implemented on the local level as well. The contribution of the Maluku government was tremendously encouraging and influential. Al Qurtuby (2016) explains that the mayor of Ambon (2001-2002) Marcus Jopie Papilaja played an essential role in post-Malino II. Mayor Papilaja continued his efforts for reconciliation at the grassroots level, dealing with ordinary people himself. In 2003, a year after the Malino II, both Muslims and Christians grassroots built a peace monument in Kudamati area, which is remembered as one of the most terrifying sites during the bloody conflict (see Al Qurtuby 2016: 159).

Another significant and long-remembered result of Mayor Papilaja's effort was the withdrawal of the *Laskar Jihad* from Ambon in 2002. The Mayor sat together with the leader of the *Laskar Jihad* Ja'afar Umar Thalib to discuss the possibility of reconciliation between the two religious groups. Ja'afar agreed to leave Maluku under one condition: there would be no more Christian attacks on Muslim neighborhoods. The Mayor promised to safeguard Muslims, and this resulted in the disbanding of the *Laskar Jihad* in October, of the same year (Al Qurtuby 2016: 159-160).

On the provincial level, the acting Governor of Maluku (2002-2003) Sinyo Sarundajang played a similar important role in the peacebuilding effort post-Malino II. According to Al Qurtuby (2016: 161), Governor Sarundajang approached both Muslim and Christian militant leaders, offering them jobs and positions. One of the offers was made to Muhammad Attamimy, a commander of Ambonese radical jihadists (Al Qurtuby 2016: 161). The Governor offered him a position as the rector of a state Islamic college in Ambon. Attamimy accepted the offer and since then his orientation as totally anti-Christian has loosened and he became more open to building relationship with Christians, individually and Muslim-Christian relations in general (Al Qurtuby 2016: 161).

The Maluku story therefore is not only about conflict, as commonly represented by many social scientists and commentators on Indonesian politics and societies, but also about integration. “The Maluku story was not merely about a terrible war but about a terrific peace as well. Christians and Muslims in Maluku in general were not only involved in the fighting but were also engaged in the peace process” (Al Qurtuby 2013: 354).

Adam (2010a: 8) proposes a notion that due to the religious framing of the Maluku conflict, the rest of the Indonesian citizens felt related to it. In line with this, Sidel (2006: 182-184) agrees that the communal violence in Ambon made many Indonesian Muslims and Christians in other parts of Indonesia, aware of, and concerned for their religious peers there.

4.2 Scriptural Narratives

In examining Muslim-Christian conflict, religion is indeed not the only triggering ingredient. Suad Joseph (1978: 1) believes that the first question to ask regarding Muslim-Christian conflict is not about Islam and Christianity, rather the people who identify with these faiths, including social elements such as economics, politics, and culture. According to Joseph, conflicts between the two religious groups have involved people from different cultural backgrounds, and classes, including forms of social life, which later makes it impossible to judge it from a religious lens alone. Joseph states “Christianity has not been of one piece and Islam has had different forms and meanings. Neither the ideology nor the people can be abstracted from their historically specific social, political, and economic contexts. The conflicts must be seen in this light” (Joseph 1978: 2).

Joseph is not the only scholar who admits that the blending of religions to other social elements is certainly unavoidable. According to Mona Siddiqui (2006: 338), the narrative of Muslim-Christian conflict from the Islamic point of view lies on Muslim fanaticism as an anti-western expression. The Muslim-Christian polemical relationship further is not only rooted on the theological level, but also the political. The hatred toward Islam is ironically based on so little knowledge of Islam as a faith.

From the Muslim point of view, Christians are deeply familiar with the western world where religion and politics are completely separated (Siddiqui 2006: 338). In line with Siddiqui, Joseph exposes even deeper arguments mentioning the Muslim-Christian conflicts analysis relate to modern politics, both ideologically and structurally. He adds

that studying the two religious groups' conflict can inform us about political processes (Joseph 1978: 16).

Does the instruction of religious politicizing get its root from the Qur'an itself? Siddiqui (2006: 341) argues that the idea of both political institutions and authority does not exist in the Qur'an, rather it was formed during the experience of the faithful in the early Medinan communities. From Islamic historical record, the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina held a tremendous significance to the birth of Islam as not only a religion of faith, but also what the Muslims believe as the religion of truth. Gabriel Said Reynolds (2012: 32) writes that the key moment in Islam's emergence was not the birth (570 CE) or the death (632 CE) of Muhammad, or the year in which he was given the revelation by God (610 CE), but rather his arrival in Medina (622 CE). The Medinan period therefore was crucial to the historical movement of the birth of Islam.

The account of politics in the Bible is certainly not as obvious as it appeared in Medinan suras. This notion has become one of the biggest distinction between Islam and Christianity from the scriptural point of view. Mainly because the Bible, which came centuries before the Qur'an, does not address anything about the Muslims, while the Qur'an speaks quite harshly about Christians. Christianity was politicized by the Romans when they made it the religion of the state.

Even disregarding scholastic arguments such as Joseph's and Siddiqui's, one cannot entirely separate religion from its relation to human social elements, nor its relation to theological understanding. In the modern world, questions concerning the possibility of

dialog between Muslims and Christians have gained a new focus. The idea of inter-religious dialog is not new, for since the earliest Muslim-Christian encounter this type of religious dialog has taken place and it has become a crucial instrument for developing better understanding of other religions (Sirry 2005: 361).

From a theological point of view, both Islam and Christianity base their theology on Scriptures, of what they believe to be the Book of Revelation from God. Islam is based on the Qur'an and Hadith (tradition of the Prophet Muhammad), while Christianity is rooted in the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

Qur'an as the core of Islam is the ultimate source of revelation for Muslims. It does not only serve as the Book of guidance, but also the foundation of knowledge. The narrative of Qur'an in regard to other believers is one major point to discuss since the Qur'an provides both affirmation and opposition toward those who are claimed as People of the Book and how the Muslims should treat them. "People of the Book" is the term used to designate Jews and Christians as believers in a revealed book. This signifies that both Jews and Christians had a revealed Book from God, which in the Qur'an is referred to as Torah and the Gospel.

He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel. Before, as guidance for the people. And He revealed the Qur'an. Indeed, those who disbelieve in the verses of Allah will have a severe punishment and Allah is exalted in Might, the Owner of Retribution. (Q 3:3-4, Sahih International)

Ali Asani (2002: 54-55) states that the occurrence of the term *ahl al-kitab* (People of the Book) encapsulates Qur'anic beliefs in the truth of the Judaic and Christian tradition,

confirming peoples who have received revelation in the form of Scriptures. It brings the Qur'an to a stage where those who believe in earlier Scriptures are also part of the Qur'anic historical account itself, or in Qur'anic terms, they are called the People of the Book. The term occurs fifty-four times in the Qur'an, which conveys not only a declaration of both Jewish and Christian existence during Muhammad era, but also invokes the earliest Muslims interest in the text of the Jewish and Christian Bible (Griffith 2013: 175).

Qur'an 5:48 reveals "Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you, in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return altogether, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over you used to differ." It is clear that Qur'anic language allows Muslims to compete in good conscience with believers of other religions. In fact, it was Allah's intention to create multiple religious groups, instead of one single religion.

Another Qur'anic verse that promotes the freedom of religion is Q. 109:6 "For you is your religion, for me is my religion." It legitimatizes the message of respecting other believers as a responsibility for Muslims. The concept of loving one's neighbor in Islam also exists loudly in the hadith. One of them is narrated by Bukhari, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should either utter good words or better keep silence; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbor with kindness and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest."²³ According to

²³ See Bukhari, vol. 8, bk. 73, no. 47. The hadith can be accessed through www.sunnah.com.

Abdul Jabbar Ajibola (2010: 118), this hadith tells what Muhammad states on generosity to neighbors only, but its implication is meant for universal application.

The Biblical narrative conveys a similar message, considering Matthew 5:43-44 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy’. But I tell you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Despite the peace message between the Qur’an and the Bible, the history of conflict has always been a part of the relationship between these two religious groups. Nirenberg and Capezzone (2015: 518) write “...Christianity and Islam have all used to imagine, contest, and represent relation both proper and improper between and among created beings and divine creator.” However, dialog between the two religions has never been easy, “proper relations among created beings”, rather most of the time it has been contested. Bulliet (2015) suggests that both Islam and Christianity have scriptural validity about the Oneness of God and therefore a respectful relationship needs to be maintained in the context of both religious and social dialog. The greater the understanding of a sibling relationship between Islam and Christianity, the better the prospects will be for peaceful coexistence in future years (Bulliet 2015: 109).

Theologically speaking, both Islam and Christianity consider their teaching and revelation to come from God for all people in the universe. Not surprisingly, proselytization has become a core principle in the battle between the two religions. Ismatu Ropi for instance, states, “Relations between the two communities have been shaped through the

dialectic of both co-operation and conflict, tolerance and hatred, dialog and debate throughout Indonesian history” (Ropi 1998: 217).

The theological and religious debate on the topic of war and peace also occurred within Muslim communities. Among favorite verses of the Qur’an quoted by these pro-war parties was Q 2:120 “And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, “Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance.” If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper.” They also quoted Q 2:190-193 as listed below:

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and *fitnah*²⁴ is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Haram until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Fight them until there is no [more] *fitnah* and [until] worship is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors.

Not only limiting their source from the Qur’an, they also referred to the Islamic historical accounts of Muslim resistance against the Christians. Local narratives of the Muslim opposition to Ambonese Christians and the European colonizers, particularly Portuguese and the Dutch, whom they saw as a representation of “foreign infidels” were tremendous influences in the Maluku conflict.

Similarly, pro-peace Muslim groups linked their peacebuilding initiatives and nonviolent actions to authoritative religious texts in the Qur’an, Hadith, and exegesis of

²⁴ The word *fitnah* is derived from Arabic, translated as slander.

Muslim jurists, especially those having to do with Islamic ideas of conciliation, arbitration, tolerance, pluralism, and nonviolence (Al Qurtuby 2013: 353).

Ropi (1998: 218) explains how the early Indonesian Muslims already had a stereotype for viewing Christianity as a completely different religion from Islam. For instance, he includes Nuruddin al-Raniry's work (d. 1658) on the Bible, which mostly completely degrades Christianity. Al-Raniry pointed out that the Bible as well as Buddhist and Hindu scriptures contain no religious value at all, as a result of falsification. In al-Raniry's piece of *Sirat al-Mustaqim*²⁵ he discusses the issue of purification using Bible pages as toilet paper, while explaining that the paper can be used as long as it does not contain the name of God on it (Ropi 1998: 218). The original quotation of al-Raniry is as follows:

It is not permissible to use something for purification which under the terms of Islamic law (*shar'*) is forbidden such as bonds and unclean animal skins, [but] it is allowed to use for cleansing [oneself] the Old and New Testament as well as the other scriptures such as the Sri Rama and Inderaputra and others which have been changed from their original states, except if the name of God is written on them. (Steenbrink 1988: 89)

Ropi claims that al-Raniry's purpose of degrading the doctrine of Christianity to the Islamic public was not to assure non-Muslim audiences of the originality and flawlessness of Islam in order to convert them, rather to reinforce his own public religious belief and to consolidate internal socio-political strength (Ropi 1998: 220).

²⁵ For detail account of this writing and al-Raniry's historical background in the 17th century Malay-Indonesian, see Azra (2004: 52-69).

Another substantial point that Ropi makes is the influence of the missionary in the Christianization of Indonesia during colonization of the Dutch. He explains that missionary activities were very much related to colonial government religious-political cooperation. The central government in Holland supported many churches in Indonesia as well as granted them with a cash bonus for every new convert, leading to a wave of premature conversions of many Indonesians (Ropi 1998: 221).

However, large numbers of Indonesians resisted Christianity. Their resistance was engendered by both cultural and theological considerations. Ropi argues that being a Christian means losing one's cultural identity. For this particular reason, many Javanese converts refuse to be baptized in order to maintain their pure Javanese character (Ropi 1998: 221).

A person worth mentioning in relation to sentiments of Indonesian Muslims towards Christianity is Hasbullah Bakry (1959: 167-8), who published *Jesus Christ in the Qur'an, Muhammad in the Bible* with a purpose to embrace and engage the two religious groups. He particularly advised Muslims parents whose children live far away from them but are easily exposed to Christianity. He also tried to prove that Jesus did not originate the teaching of Trinity and that he is only a prophet who was sent by God for the Israelites.

In the Indonesian context, therefore, Muslim-Christian relations involve a strong theological background where the two attack each other to answer the need of defending one's own religion. Ropi agrees to this claim stating that "one of the biggest responsibilities of Indonesian Muslims is to put prevention from Western influence, particularly when it

comes to colonial hegemony” (Ropi 1998:225). As much as one would like to detach the relationship of Christianity and the West, it may not be possible to do so in the case of Indonesia. The same perspective remains alive in the present time.

4.3 Theological Implications in the Maluku Conflict

Religion, particularly a foreign Western religion such as Christianity, was perceived as a force that must be consciously controlled in order to maintain and advance political power in a majority-Muslim country (Crouch 2014: 14). According to Taher (1997: 139), “There has been much concern in the Muslim world about an aggressive campaign to missionize and convert Muslims to Christianity, more so because the campaign was seen as funded and backed by foreign powers and the means and methods used to preach Christianity were hardly Christian.” Muslim opposition to Christianization has increased since 1998 due to the twin processes of democracy and decentralization, combined with a historical narrative of resentment towards Christian mission activities (Crouch 2014: 7).

Of all the conflicts which occurred in Indonesia, the religious conflict in Maluku – beginning in 1999 – was the most appalling in terms of the scale of death and destruction. The Canadian political scientist Bertrand (2004) reported that the Maluku conflict was Indonesia’s first ever experience of Christian-Muslim violence post-Soeharto regime (Al Qurtuby 2013: 350).

Lucien Van Liere (2011: 322) examines the use of religious language and symbol to understand the Maluku conflict. He found that both Muslims and Christians had

successfully framed the conflict into a substantially religious battle with the highlight of an important religious meaning. As a result, traditional theological language was applied to signify the victimhood of the in-group and at the same time to justify violence towards the out-group (Van Liere 2011: 323).

The conflict in Maluku was hugely transformed into even larger scale with the influence of *Laskar Jihad*, *Laskar Mujahiddin*, *Hizbullah*, and *Jama'ah Islamiyah*, Java-based jihadist groups who came to the land in the mid-2000s. Whereas the majority of Christian fighters were natives of Maluku associated with the Moluccan Protestant Church, the Muslim jihadist came from both natives and migrants (Al Qurtuby 2013: 253).

Does killing in the name of Christianity exist? The Maluku conflict probably can address this question with a loud answer, yes. After the coming of the *Laskar Jihad*, the Christians were on the defensive during the first few years of the conflict. One of the key figures amongst the Christians militant was Agus Wattimena, known for his position as the leader of *Coker* (*Cowok Kristen*, Christian Boys), a gang based in the Kudamati region of Ambon. Wattimena states: "This is a real religious war and we have to protect ourselves. Sometimes protection means attacking first. We have a plan, and when the time comes, we will wipe them out" (International Crisis Group 2000: 15). In the Halmahera region, North Maluku, Christians that participated in massacres sometimes described themselves as "Laskar Jesus," obviously to counter-act the massacre done by *Laskar Jihad* (International Crisis Group Interview 2000, in International Crisis Group 2000: 15).

For the *Laskar Jihad*, a person like Wattimena was a key provocateur and they insisted that he and his gang members needed to be arrested before both sides could sit together and talk peace. On the other hand, on Wattimena's side, they were deeply convinced of a national conspiracy to drive Christians out of Maluku (International Crisis Group 2000: 15).

Church leaders did not speak out against violence as much as they should, and *Coker* members remained regularly visible around the headquarters of the Protestant churches in Maluku, which was the Maranatha Church in the city center of Ambon (International Crisis Group 2000: 15).

Van Liere (2011: 323) brings up an important notion on how Jesus became the figure behind the fighting during the Maluku conflict. This is quite a rare notion to point at, since most of the literature on the Maluku conflict concentrated on what triggered the conflict and how the conflict ran, not on the role of Jesus in particular, fueling the conflict from the Christian side. He argued that the Christians' suffering during the conflict reflects the suffering of Jesus, which communicates victory over death. To Van Liere, the influence of religions in the Maluku conflict translated the conflict into a religious discourse.

Abe, a Christian bodyguard on Ambon, fought Muslims during the riots. When a journalist asked him why he was fighting, he answered: "We fight for Christ, not for ourselves" (Lingsma 2008: 23). One BBC reporter, Jonathan Head writes: "a young man leaped in front of me waving a huge, rusty cutlass and shouted "For Jesus!" He ran to join

his friends in a rousing chorus of “Onward Christian Soldiers”, sung in Indonesian, as they pressed up against the line of police officers, who were nervously fingering their guns.”²⁶

It is worth noting that those who supported the war intentionally demonized their opponents, while those who advocated peaceful relations indeed hoped to be reconciled to their rivals and at the same time looked for ways to prevent the same violence. Both sides competed over religious ideas and texts in order to seek a theological foundation and Scriptural legitimacy for their actions.

For instance, militant Christians who supported the war against Muslims tried to legitimize their acts of violence by quoting verses from the Old Testament that narrate the glorious wars of the Israelites and their commanders, such as Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as pointing to particular events in history that sustain the just war tradition. Meanwhile Christian leaders who supported peace and peace-building relations tended to retrieve the narratives of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, as cited in the New Testament, focusing on those that teach love, forgiveness, and peace. Jesus’ injunction to “Love your enemy” (Matthew 5:44) was influential among this group to legitimize their nonviolent movements (Al Qurtuby 2013: 353).

²⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/287057.stm (accessed 9 February 2017).

4.4 Exclusivism, Inclusivism, Pluralism

The tripolar typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism was firstly introduced by Alan Race (1983) in his book “Christians and Religious Pluralism” on a Christian theology of religions discussions. This tripolar typology has raised many objections from different scholars. Some criticize it for its narrowness, while others criticize this typology as being too coarse, abstract, and even misleading (Schmidt-Leukel 2005: 14). This thesis, however, uses this typology to frame and precede the discussion on pluralism which appears on the next section. It is important therefore to acknowledge how the three aspects of this typology connect to one another and how they are distinct from each other.

Various definitions are given by scholars to this particular typology. For instance, Gavin D’Costa (2005: 627) writes:

Exclusivism: only those who hear the gospel proclaimed and explicitly confess Christ are saved; Inclusivism: Christ is the normative revelation of God, although salvation is possible outside of the explicit Christian church, but this salvation is always from Christ; Pluralism: all religions are equal and valid paths to the one divine reality and Christ is one revelation among many equally important revelations.

In line with this, Perry Schmidt-Leukel interprets this typology by adding one more element to precede the tripolar typology, which is atheism (2005: 17). Although, later he states that the atheist category can be removed from theological options since “it rests on the denial of a transcendent reality” (Schmidt-Leukel 2005: 18). His work on the tripolar typology emphasizes that exclusivism (or Christian exclusivism) would deny that salvation

can be found outside Christianity. Christian inclusivism, on the contrary, acknowledges salvific life outside Christianity while at the same time does not deny that all salvation is through Christ alone. Christian pluralism, however, claims that all religions share the same core of authenticity as well as a similar salvific message.

Although the threefold typology was originally designed to discuss viewpoints of other religions from a Christian lens, it has been developed and has been used for the purpose of religious studies across different religions, including Islam. The argument of exclusivism versus pluralism from Muslim and Christian points of view by no means exists without protest. Todd Johanson (2016: 35) criticizes this view by claiming that exclusivism in both Islam and Christianity would never result in pluralism, since theoretically the two could never be seen as purely equal. He explains that pluralism will never work in seeking reconciliation between Muslim-Christian because it requires refusal of both sides' doctrinal truths and also traditions (Johanson 2016: 35). He emphasizes that religious dialogs between the two should not be pushed toward pluralism, which too often results in compromising dogma and principle of both religions. Rather it must be seen as an ethically-based approach that focuses on being and living together (Johanson 2016: 36).

From the Indonesian perspective, Fatimah Husein contributes clear elements on which the terms Muslim and Christian exclusivist and inclusivist can be applied. She proposes that Muslim exclusivists share the following characteristics: they apply a textual approach to the Qur'an and Sunna; they conclude that Islam is the only way to salvation; they heavily emphasize that Islam and state should not be separated; and they have a

tendency to believe that the Indonesian government has a conspiracy with Christians to weaken the power of Islam in the country (Husein 2005: 29-30).

The Muslim inclusivists, on the other side, have these characteristics: they consider Islam to be an evolving religion, emphasizing *ijtihad*²⁷ in reinterpreting the Qur'an and Sunna; they believe Islam is the best religion; and they argue for Islam and the state to be separated (Husein 2005: 31). Husein adds that many Indonesian Muslims belong to the inclusivist position although the level of their inclusiveness differs among adherents of this position (2005: 241).

Earlier in this thesis, the role of one particular Islamic Salafi group was mentioned, the *Laskar Jihad*. This organization is one of the exclusivist Muslim organizations in Indonesia. However, it is important to understand this group is more concerned with Muslim-Christian relations than acknowledging Christianity from its theological level (Husein 2005: 157).

4.5 Pluralism in Indonesia

This section will mainly discuss pluralism in Islam rather than in Christianity for two reasons: 1) Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia and therefore they have a bigger responsibility in establishing peaceful relationships with minority religions; 2) One of the main distinctions between the two religions is what their scriptures say about pluralism.

²⁷ *Ijtihad* is individual inquiry to redefine Islam based on certain issues.

The Bible is clear about loving one's neighbor as loving oneself (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31), with the preaching of Paul to the Romans summarizing this command:

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does not do wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10, ESV)

While the Qur'an also provides the same account on loving each other, it also asserts that Christians are trapped in the wrong dogma, associating Jesus with God and that the Christians have not obeyed the commands of Allah as illustrated below.

They [the Christians] will not harm you except for [some] annoyance. And if they fight you, they will show you their backs; then they will not be aided. They have been put under humiliation [by Allah] wherever they are overtaken, except for a covenant from Allah and a rope from the Muslims. And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allah and have been put under destitution. That is because they disbelieved in the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed. (Qur'an 3: 111-112, Sahih International)

Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but he forgives what is less than that from whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin. (Qur'an 4: 48, Sahih International)

By implementing Qur'anic references, early Indonesian Muslim writers faulted Christians for proclaiming false doctrines with special reference to the teaching that Jesus was the Son of God. They centered their polemics especially on the corruption of the Holy Scriptures, and the belief that the original version of the Bible had been altered by Christians (Ropi 1998: 218).

It is substantial to note that although the Qur'an provides opposition against Christians' doctrines, it also contains a teaching on the importance of acknowledging and respecting others. Rooted in Q 5:48 "to each of you We prescribed a law and a method", the Qur'an confirms that pluralism is undeniable. This verse affirms that God creates different people with different laws and customs, therefore the message of unity in diversity is heavily rooted in the Qur'an. In fact, it is the one unifying element of human life. The discussion of pluralism in this thesis, refers to the acknowledgment and affirmation that various spiritual paths are capable of guiding and saving their adherents.

The core of the relation between the Qur'an and pluralism is that "Muslim scriptures capture the real experience of the early community as it struggled to balance tolerance with exclusive truth claims that provided the nascent Muslim community with its unique identity among a community of the faithful" (Sachedina 2006:291). Sachedina speaks loudly about humanity as one community, rather than one religion only. Pluralism therefore constitutes a reality that God created us equal but different, or vice versa, different but equal. Thus, living in a pluralistic environment is one of the main aspects of the Qur'anic teachings.

Interfaith dialog particularly between Islam and Christianity has become one major focus. One important occasion is what it is known as “A Common Word”²⁸. A Common Word was issued as a response to what the majority of Muslims experienced as Christian pressure, particularly on the occasion of a speech by Pope Benedict XVI in September 2005. In that speech, Pope Benedict speaking about the relationship between religion and violence in general, stated, “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.” This statement made Muslims around the world feel denigrated (Volf 2010: 19). In line with this, Nasr argues that this Common Word means not only the acceptance of the Oneness of God but also the command of loving others, no matter what backgrounds they come from, believing that everyone comes from One God and will be returned to Him alone (Nasr 2010: 110). The following verse may explain Qur’anic confirmation of the diversity of people, “O mankind! We have indeed created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may come to know one another. Truly the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing among you. Truly God is Knower, Aware.” (Q 49:13, Sahih International)

²⁸ “A Common Word Between Us and You” was launched on October 13th 2007 initially as an open letter signed by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals to the leaders of the Christian churches and denominations of the entire world, including Pope Benedict XVI. It proposes a significant teaching, based on verses from the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Bible that Islam and Christianity share the same importance of loving God and loving each other. This religious movement is calling for peace and harmony between the two religious groups worldwide. Three years later, religious scholars published a book title “A Common Word”. For the complete works of these scholars, see Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad & Melissa Yarrington. 2010. *A common word: Muslims and Christians on loving God and neighbor*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

According to Ajibola, this particular verse explains two things: one is that the calling to faith and belief in One True God is a Muslim's duty; two that a believer should live in plurality of a multi-race and multi-faith world (Ajibola 2010: 119).

In terms of a religious pluralism discussion, the big question is not how to promote the value of pluralism within both religions, but where should religious pluralism go and what is the limit? Siddiqui (2006: 339) argues that "religious pluralism is often promoted as a social and ethical value which gives the impression of good democratic environment, not fundamentally as a theological imperative." One example of this is what followed after the publication of *The Satanic verses*. Siddiqui (2006: 340) writes:

The Rushdie Affair, following the publication of *The Satanic verses* in 1988, again brought dramatic images of Islam on to our screens when the world saw books being burnt, Muslims dying in clashes, the publishers Penguin facing threats and, most importantly, the global consciousness of a new Islamic term *fatwa* (opinion of a jurist-scholar on an ethical or legal matter). Again, the zeal and passion of those who wanted to kill Rushdie meant that Islam came with the most violent images and extreme language. The word *fatwa* bounced off in all directions, hijacked by Media which failed to understand that *fatwa* was only a legal opinion, not a death penalty, and by the Muslim masses both Sunni and Shi'i who were not concerned with religious debate or legalities but only punitive action against the blasphemer. It did not matter that the word was being misused even abused; all that mattered was that the grievance had to be projected.

Who then is responsible to keep the unity of Islam? Daniel Brown (2004: 114) states, "Al-Mawardi knew that it was not the caliph who maintained the unity of the Islamic world in the face of its apparent political disintegration. The real source of unity was the broad agreement of the community on certain ideals and principles – ideals and principles that found their finest expression in the institutions of Islamic Law. The caliph as it turned

out, was not the most important protector of the Prophet's legacy; rather as the tradition so eloquently testifies, 'The scholars are the heirs of the Prophet.'"

In Indonesia, pluralism is loudly sounded by two major scholars, Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. The latter happened to be the President of the Republic of Indonesia when the Maluku conflict blew up, and the former is widely known for his liberal Islamic thinking. Both Madjid and Wahid are products of their family environments who inherited a tradition of reform (Barton 1997: 330). Their fathers, Abdul Madjid and Wahid Hasyim were distinguished figures in traditionalist Muslim society in Jombang, East Java, an important *Nahdlatul Ulama* center (Barton 1997: 330).

Greg Barton addresses the two in his very own article *Indonesia's Nurcholish Majid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual Ulama* stating:

As the Old Order gave way to the New Order, a new generation of Islamic thinkers came to the fore. Nurcholish Majid and Abdurrahman Wahid are leading representatives of that generation. Born in 1939 and 1940 respectively, these men entered adulthood as Soeharto came to power. As such their entire careers, first as student activists then as public intellectuals, were products of the development, oriented New Order. (Barton 1997: 328)

Later in the article, however, Barton criticizes Madjid and Wahid's generation stating that they had never experienced a time when society was structured around European elite, not to mention that they did not fight any wars of independence. Barton agreed, however, that their writings have hugely influenced Indonesian Muslims, describing them as both bold and confident, and most importantly about moving on, not looking back (Barton 1997: 330).

Madjid was born in Jombang in 1939, educated at *sekolah rakyat* (public elementary school), then was sent to a madrasah²⁹ to have access to religious education. He enrolled in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Gontor, East Java, which is still widely known as a progressive religious institution in Indonesia. When he reached college, during Soeharto's New Order regime, Madjid was known for his cry 'Islam yes! Islamic parties no!' an overt rejection of any form of Islamic party politics, lest they lead to the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia³⁰ (Rasyidi 1972; Barton 1997; Husein 2005). Madjid visited the USA for the first time in 1968. In 1974, as noted by Barton (1997: 332-333), Fazlur Rahman and Leonard Binder paid a visit to Jakarta as a part of a Ford Foundation funded long-term research project. They came to find an Indonesian participant to join a semester seminar program at Chicago University. Madjid was selected and arrived at Chicago University in 1978. He impressed Rahman and Binder during his time in Chicago, resulting in another offer to continue for a post-graduate program, which he accepted (Barton 1997; Husein 2005).

Nurcholish Madjid writes that although Indonesia is the biggest Muslim nation, it is the least Arabized among major Islamic countries and is the farthest major Muslim nation from the Holy Land (Madjid 2005: 221). This means the shape of Islam in Indonesia is not the same as Islam in Saudi Arabia or in other Middle Eastern countries. He explains that

²⁹ In Indonesia, madrasah is equal to middle school.

³⁰ The New York Times published an article on Madjid's death in 2005 titled 'Nurcholish Madjid, 66, Advocate of Moderate Islam, Dies'. The writer Jane Perlez writes "Mr. Madjid, known as the conscience of his nation, preached a moderate form of Islam that has come under increasing pressure in the last few years. Soft spoken but steadfast in his belief that Indonesia must remain a secular state."

God had given different revelations which led to the founding of multiple religions in order to see who is more obedient to Him (Madjid 2005: 209). He continues that Qur'anic narrative on "the way" (such as written in Q 16:125) signifies first of all that there is a "universal way", which is indeed shared by all religions of all prophets (Madjid 2005: 210).

His "universal way" has given great contribution to shape Muslims' thinking in Indonesia. Syamsul Ma'arif, a professor of religious studies at the University of Gadjah Mada, discusses Madjid's universality of Islam as emphasizing the value and message of Islam that is not limited to the followers of Muhammad only, but to human beings in general (Ma'arif 2015: 40-41).

Mun'im Sirry (2009: 429) in his paper on pluralism praises Madjid's works for his "revolutionary thinking upon pluralism" by pointing to the Constitution of Medina which served as the first political document that established the principle of religious tolerance. It is simply because within the Constitution of Medina itself, pluralism is offered and highly valued. Muslims therefore do not need to learn what pluralism is, but simply to remember how it works within social life and within their relationship to one another.

In the context of Indonesia, Nurcholish Madjid's message of pluralism echoes the need of the Muslims to have a positive mindset, actively engaging others in social life, and open to diversity when it comes to maintaining tolerance among other believers (Ma'arif 2015: 40).

In one of his books *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan* (loosely translated as "Islam, Modernity, and Contextualization to Indonesia"), Madjid realizes that secularizing,

desacralizing, and liberalizing are significantly needed for an Islamic response to the modern world, stating that he senses the obligation to define and exhibit Islam inclusively (Madjid 1987: 204-214). Madjid believed that Indonesian Muslims need to place their faith in God as the highest authority, and therefore they should not feel and act superior towards non-Muslims (Adib 2015: 47).

Nurcholish Madjid believed that the ethical value that the Prophet Muhammad had established in Medina was very modern for its era. Madjid asserts that the Muslims are ready to face modernity, which includes democracy and human rights (Nirwana 2013: 49).

Abdurrahman Wahid is famously known for his concepts of 'Islamic Universalism', 'cosmopolitanism', and '*pribumisasi*' (the word *pribumi* means native Indonesians and Wahid uses this particular word to encourage contextualization of Islam to Indonesian Muslims). Wahid was born in Jombang in 1940 and from an early age was exposed to Islamic religious study. After completing his *pesantren*, he went to Al-Azhar University in Egypt in 1964. However, he did not stay there through graduation. Barton (1997: 337) writes that Wahid quickly became frustrated with the narrowness of views he encountered at Al-Azhar. Two years later, he transferred to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Baghdad to study Arabic literature. Back in Indonesia, Wahid was elected as the Executive Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the mainstream Islamic organizations, which made him popular as a political figure rather than a scholar (Mujiburrahman 1999: 340).

Wahid proposes five basic human needs as follows: 1) the protection of oneself from any violation; 2) the protection of religion from any enforced conversion; 3) the

protection of family and future generation; 4) the protection of personal property; and 5) the protection of intellect (Wahid 1989: 85-6). According to Abdurrahman Wahid, these five basic needs cannot be reached if they are not accompanied by Islamic civilization's cosmopolitan character. In short, Islamic universal value will fail on earth if it does not interact with existing civilizations (Mujiburrahman 1999: 342).

In the case of Java, Wahid claims that *pribumisasi* is certainly not “Javanization Islam” or syncretism by any means. Instead, it is considering local needs in translating religious law without amending the law itself. *Pribumisasi* should not be interpreted as disregarding religious law for local needs, rather as an effort to consolidate those laws so that they accommodate local needs (Hamidah 2011: 88).

According to Wahid, pluralism in Indonesia was challenged by various conflicts that tore people apart. Therefore, pluralism is a value that deserves extra attention. He emphasizes that preserving national diversity is significant in order to strengthen national ties among Indonesians. Wahid also criticizes the government for not being decisive and taking a firm stance against anti-multicultural and anti-pluralist groups that disobeyed the law and constitution, as he believes these groups play tremendous impact which leads to disunity. Wahid's approach to pluralism also gained international acknowledgment. For instance, Ricklefs mentions, “He displayed his usual intelligence, joviality, casual openness, commitment to pluralism and opposition to dogmatism” (Ricklefs 2001: 408).

In the local context of Indonesia, Wahid's pluralistic thinking has encouraged Indonesian religious scholars to redefine Islam in a local context. For instance, Arifin (2015)

asserts that Wahid did not only understand Islam, but also nationalism. Wahid became the filter of radical groups that were introduced in Indonesian society (Arifin 2015: 7). He also states, “*Gus Dur merupakan tokoh atau ikon pluralisme dimana masyarakat melihat pribadi Gus Dur sebagai seorang yang paling berani ketika berbicara tentang perbedaan atau ketika membela kelompok-kelompok yang tertindas*”³¹ (Arifin 2015: 5).

In 1999, a year after the fall of Soeharto, Abdurrahman Wahid, the President during the Maluku conflict, proposed to abolish the Ministry of Religion on the premise that it constitutes government interference in religious affairs and breached the separation of state and religion (Crouch 2014: 44). In addition to this, Bernard Johan Boland (1982: 107) claims that the Ministry of Religion “offered the possibility for religions, in particular for Islam, to function as effectively as possible in state and society; and that in a Muslim country, this Ministry formed a useful middle way between a secular state and an Islamic state.” However, later Wahid’s proposal to erase the Ministry of Religion was rejected by the People Representatives and Islamic groups (see Boland 1982).

During his rule as the fourth President of the Republic of Indonesia, Wahid issued National Decree No. 6 of the year of 2000 about the determination of *Hari Imlek* (Chinese New Year) as a national holiday (Adib 2015: 45). This marked a great improvement in Indonesian pluralism, as ethnic-Chinese used to be marginalized and their holiday had never been celebrated nationally. For the historical record, ethnic-Chinese were strongly

³¹ (“Gus Dur [Abdurrahman Wahid’s nick name] appeared as a heroic figure or icon of pluralism, where people see him as the bravest when speaking about differences or when defending the oppressed,” parenthesis and translation mine)

oppressed. Husein (2005: 95) states “Within the framework of SARA, Soeharto’s New Order state had maximized the exploitation of the [ethnic] Chinese by various means”. Not only were they forced to adopt Indonesian names, the use of their language was heavily eliminated, and the celebration of their *Hari Imlek* was prohibited (Husein 2005: 96). Therefore, Wahid’s decree to set *Hari Imlek* as a national holiday was a monumental mark that communicated that Indonesia had stepped up a level higher in terms of acknowledging and treating minorities at the same level as the local indigenous people.

It is clear that for Madjid and Wahid the opportunity to undertake their studies in modern, Western learning was a vital element, along with their *santri*³² backgrounds were vital in their intellectual development (Barton 1997: 345). What these two promoted was the importance of understanding Islam through *ijtihad*³³, without undervaluing Islamic *fiqh*³⁴ status. Based on the explanation above, the spirit and practice of pluralism in the Indonesian modern society is essential to maintain national integration among Indonesians with various ethnic and religious background. Indonesian citizens therefore have the full right to live peacefully with one another by recognizing the oneness of God as the first pillar of *Pancasila*.

³² Clifford Geertz in his well-known book ‘The Religion of Java’ categorizes Muslims creed in Java in three parts: *Abangan*, *Santri*, and *Prijaji*. Geertz describes the difference as follows: “*Abangans* are fairly indifferent to doctrine but fascinated with ritual detail. *Santris* concern with doctrine almost entirely overshadows the already attenuated ritualistic aspects of Islam (Geertz 1976: 127). *Prijaji* have always been mainly of the town; in fact, one of the most sociologically interesting characteristics of modern Java is the degree to which they have stayed in them ... *Prijaji* originally indicated a man who could trace back his ancestry back to the great semi-mythical kings of the pre-colonial Java” (Geertz 1976: 229).

³³ *Ijtihad* is individual inquiry to redefine Islam based on certain issues.

³⁴ *Fiqh* is Islamic jurisprudence or the science of sharia.

5 RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the case of the Maluku conflict, religion was not the only core issue. Rivalry among societal elements competing for bureaucratic positions and economic-political resources are confirmed trigger points that supported the conflict. Religion was used as the tool to propagate the conflict, and provide moral legitimation to strike others. The history of the Maluku conflict illustrated subordination and domination relations that resulted in discrimination and marginalization amidst society (Aritonang & Steenbrink 2008: 383).

The intervention of the national government to solve the issues took four-years post-conflict to normalize the situation. One thing that has been receiving great criticism regarding the four-years of neglect was the weakness of Indonesian security forces, including the police and the military. Barron et al. (2016: 192) suggest that an improved response by the Indonesian security forces is a key. They highlight however, that although these security forces were not the sole reason for the protracted conflict, they did certainly impact the reescalation of violence. The police on the same side were heavily challenged; seemingly incapable of preventing smaller acts of violence (Barron et al. 2016: 192). Therefore, revitalizing these two security forces will help decrease potential conflict in the Indonesian archipelago.

One important thing to learn is that the same violence might happen again in Maluku. Barron et al. suggests that “areas previously affected by high levels of violence

continue to harbor specific vulnerability” (Barron et al. 2016: 192). The same conflict potential can erupt in any part of Indonesia. Scholars agree that the Maluku conflict has contributed as the awakening fire to other conflicts in the neighboring islands such as North Maluku province (see Wilson 2008) and in West Papua (see Cho 2016). Therefore, let the conflict in Maluku become a lesson learned to prevent similar incidents from reoccurring.

All the inhabitants of Maluku need to remember that the Malino II peace accord was not only about fighting, but also preserving the peace, so they should implement this agreement carefully on each of its 11 articles.

This thesis proposes steps which might be taken by Muslims and Christians who are in frequent contact to prevent the same violence as the Maluku conflict from reoccurring. One, it is vital for both groups to understand each other at the theological level. The gap between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia has already been established for centuries, and this must not be worsened by treating each other based on limited understanding of one another. This thesis is confident that encouraging Muslim-Christian dialog that is rich and healthy at a theological level will produce tremendous impact in keeping peaceful relationship between both religious groups.

Two, Indonesians need to value the importance of *adat* revivalism at the local level. With various ethnic groups and cultures, every Indonesian needs to maintain, preserve, and invigorate their own *adat*. Each *adat* contains a way to end conflict, which should not be ignored. Although scholars clearly pointed out the *adat* abolishment during the Soeharto era (see Ch. 1 for discussion on Soeharto regime), few pointed to it as one of the triggering

elements that escalated the violent conflict in that region. Indonesians must realize that each of this system of *adat* is invaluable, unique, and therefore should be preserved and revitalized.

Three, local and national government play substantial role to prevent the potential of conflict and to maintain a peaceful situation within the country. Government has the control and power to keep the nation running peacefully. Any attempt that is potentially harming the peace and harmonious relationship deserves immediate action from the government. The Maluku conflict is one example that immediate response to such sensitive issues must be resolved promptly, not in four years. These three steps will hopefully help to maintain a harmonious environment within the Indonesian archipelago.

Both Muslim and Christian groups can gain a better understanding and relationship with one another. Learning from the avoidance strategy (see Ch. 1 for detail) used during the Soeharto regime that did not solve the core issue of the conflict, Indonesian Muslims and Christians should encourage open dialog and discussion to help to get to know each other in a better way, both socially and theologically.

This thesis also emphasizes Muslims' role, being the dominant population in Indonesia, to hold a larger responsibility in terms of promoting and maintaining peaceful relationships with the Christians in particular, and other minorities' believers. The goal is to pay respect to one another to maintain Indonesia as echoed by the *Pancasila*. Based on the first *sila* "*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*", it is no longer about what religion one is affiliated with, rather ones' responsibility as a citizen of Indonesia.

Lastly, this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, advanced future research will hopefully complete and further provide better analysis on the subject of religious conflict, particularly on the Muslim-Christian relationship.

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