



PEACE IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE: ANALYZING THE ROLE OF ELITES IN PRESERVING PEACE AND HARMONY IN MANADO

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Abstract

The study attempts to look at the existing inter-religious peace and harmony in Manado. The focus is an attempt to compare between Manado and Ambon which are similar in terms of demographic composition, historical background, political and cultural values but at the same time both are different; the former was in conflict, while the latter was an area of peace during the conflict escalation that engulfed some parts of East Indonesia. This study also tries to look at the strategy of Christian and Muslim communities in both cities in dealing with social tensions. In addition, this article specifically tries to explain factors that contribute to the presence of peace in Manado and its absence in Ambon. Subsequently, attention is also paid to the impact and mechanisms used by the elite in maintaining peace in Manado. This study uncovers some interesting findings. First, there are five elements that support the existence of peace in Manado: education, cultural values (local wisdom), economic situations, spiritual understanding, and the role of the elite. Second, inter-religious peace and harmony can exist in Manado, because of the synergy and cooperation of these three levels of leadership. Third, although the theory of Lederach seems to suggest that top-level leaders are the most dominant element of the elite, it is found that the role of grassroots leaders including leaders of congregations (imam, ustadz, clergymen, and priests) is more vital as their more directly involved in the daily activities of society. Fourth, the mechanisms of these elites seem to be various in every stage of leadership.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat perdamaian antar-agama yang harmoni di Manado. Fokusnya adalah upaya untuk membandingkan antara Manado dan Ambon yang mirip dalam hal komposisi demografis, latar belakang sejarah, nilai-nilai politik dan budaya tetapi pada saat yang sama keduanya berbeda; yang pertama adalah dalam konflik, sedangkan yang kedua adalah daerah damai selama eskalasi konflik yang melanda beberapa bagian Indonesia Timur. Penelitian ini juga mencoba untuk melihat strategi komunitas Kristen dan Muslim di kedua kota dalam menangani ketegangan sosial. Selain itu, artikel ini khusus mencoba menjelaskan faktor-faktor yang

berkontribusi terhadap kehadiran perdamaian di Manado dan ketiadaan di Ambon. Selanjutnya, perhatian juga dibayar untuk dampak dan mekanisme yang digunakan oleh elit dalam menjaga perdamaian di Manado. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan beberapa temuan menarik. Pertama, ada lima unsur yang mendukung keberadaan perdamaian di Manado: pendidikan, nilai-nilai budaya (kearifan lokal), situasi ekonomi, pemahaman spiritual, dan peran elit. Kedua, perdamaian dan kerukunan antar umat beragama bisa eksis di Manado, karena sinergi dan kerjasama dari tiga tingkat kepemimpinan. Ketiga, meskipun teori Lederach tampaknya menunjukkan bahwa tingkat atas pemimpin adalah faktor yang paling dominan elit, ditemukan bahwa peran pemimpin akar rumput termasuk pemimpin jemaat (imam, ustadz, pendeta, dan para imam) lebih penting sebagai mereka lebih terlibat langsung dalam kegiatan sehari-hari masyarakat. Keempat, mekanisme elit ini tampaknya berbagai dalam setiap tahap kepemimpinan.

Introduction

This study looks deeply at factors of inter-religious peace in Manado, while at the same time focuses on the role of the elite in the establishment of inter-religious peace and harmony as it is the core of this study. Admittedly, inter-religious peace and harmony in the latest decades shows conducive symptoms. In some regions of Indonesia, ethno-religious nuanced conflict occurs. If there is no any attention to these conditions and efforts to solve these problems, it could break the construction of the nation-state. Religious nuanced conflict undoubtedly does not appear spontaneously but there are some factors that contribute to it. These factors can be social, economic, political, or probably religion itself.

It is evident that all religions teach their adherents to bestow kindness to other people and live in peace with other believers. As a matter of fact, in understanding and implementing religious teachings and doctrines; clashes, gaps, and conflicts often occur between religious communities. Rivalry and competition often develop and become social conflict that sometimes transform to social riots using religious symbols. Conflict inevitably results in victims and great financial loss, either lives or wealth.

Indonesia is not only a great country which has a population in excess of 200 hundred million people, but also a multiethnic state which has about 656

ethnic groups.¹ That is why there is a need to learn characteristic differences between tribes and regions in Indonesia. In this study, Manado is the object of research as it differs from Ambon and Poso in terms of conflict. Although they seem similar in historical and demographic structure, they are different in social circumstances, especially in the period 1999-2003. Ambon was in conflict, while Manado has witnessed peace and harmony.

Factors of Inter-religious Peace in Manado

1. Educational Considerations

Since Dutch colonialism, North Sulawesi, in particular Manado and Tomohon were famous as education centers in East Indonesia. Many teachers and government officers studied in North Sulawesi.² Senior teachers from different ethnic groups and religions proudly acknowledged their academic experience in Manado's educational institutions, especially Catholic institutions. In addition, there is a surprising fact that illiteracy was extremely low in North Sulawesi. According to Arifin Assegaf³, a social and religious figure in Manado, and Stevanny Kumaat,⁴ Catholic youth figure in Manado, since the independence of Indonesia, Minahasan people, have been highly educated people. This can be seen from the minimum number of illiterate people in that period. Arifin Assegaf, even confidently stated that illiteracy among the Minahasan was zero percent. This is seemingly in line with the data

¹ According to *Wallace Line*, Indonesia is divided into two patterns of area; West Indonesia and East Indonesia. The Wallace Line is based on the characteristic of flora and fauna in both areas. Of 656 ethnic groups, 109 ethnic groups are found in West Indonesia, while 547 groups are in East Indonesia. It is why; Tomagola assumes that most social conflicts happen in East Indonesia. See Tamrin Amal Tomagola, *Anatomi Konflik Komunal di Indonesia: Kasus Maluku, Poso, dan Kalimantan 1998-2002*, in Moh. Saleh, Isre (Ed.), *Konflik Ethno Religius Indonesia Kontemporer*, (Jakarta: Balitbang dan Diklat Keagamaan DEPAG RI, 2003), pp. 43-44

² Yong Ohoi Timur, *Beragama dalam Masyarakat: Antara Rinduan Gelisah*, (Jakarta: Garba Marina, 2004), p. 24-25

³ Interview with Ust. Arifin Assegaf, Religious and Social Figure in Manado, February 27, 2007.

⁴ Interview with Stevanny Kumaat, Catholic youth, March 03, 2007

issued by the center Bureau of Statistics in 2005 that almost 60-70 % of Manadonese people are graduates of Senior High Schools.⁵

It means that citizens of Manado, on average, have obtained formal education. This is essential, because good education could broaden horizons needed to respect and appreciate other people of different identities. The better the quality of education in the society is, the better the quality of democracy in that society where primordial sentiments could be tackled. According to Yong Ohoi Timur, educated people think rationally. They can differentiate between the positive and the negative impact of their deeds. They also consider advantages and disadvantages of their attitudes. Therefore, he further explains, as educated people, the Manadonese people do not want to be trapped on issues which could endanger their social life. They usually think for the sake of the public and not for the sake of the group, ethnicity, or religion.⁶

In line with Assegaf and Ohoi Timur, Pasiak also argues that the most important point of the existing harmony and peace in Manado is the maturity of Manadonese people. The maturity is built through strong levels of education and information.⁷

2. Cultural Factor

A Manadonese superiority (strength) in comparison with other societies is openness. The openness and innovation of Manadonese provide strength to maintain tranquility and security as the foundation of inter-religious peace and social harmony. Manadonese people, especially Minahasanese people are very open to other culture and values. Different from other societies, for Manadonese, there is no difference between the native and the foreigner. The issue of non-native people does not have a place in Manado. Those who come from Java, Ternate, Gorontalo, and others are always considered to be

⁵ According to Zubaedah Albugis, the Head of BKMT, North Sulawesi, most Manadonese people finish senior high school. Interview with Zubaedah Albugis, February 27, 2007.

⁶ Interview with Yong Ohoi Timur, the Professor in Seminari Pineleng Manado, March 1, 2007.

⁷ Interview with Taufik Pasiak, the head of Muhammadiyah Manado, March 02, 2007

Manadonese. For those who come from Java, for example, are called as Manadonese who were born in Java. Identity bound which is strong is identification of someone based on his/her religious identity not on his/her origin and ethnicity. Identification based on religious identity can be found among public servants in terms of recruitment and promotion for positions in the bureaucracy in both district and provincial levels.⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising if someone argues that even though Manado city is seemingly peaceful and secured, Manado still stores latent threat for social conflict because of structural conditions and discrimination.

However, it has to be admitted that local wisdoms of *Mapalus* (mutual help) and *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* (make other people smart), and symbolization of jargon *Torang Samua Basudara, Baku-Baku Bae, Baku-Baku Sayang, dan Baku-Baku Inga* (We are all family, to have good relationship, to love each other, and to remind each other) also give contribution to the creation of security and peace in Manado. This culture is strongly embedded in Manadonese life. As a consequence, social intercourse between the native and the non-native does not face any problem. Conflict between the natives and the Tionghoa ethnic group, for example, rarely occurs in Manado. The issue is very sensitive in some regions. In the colonial era, Muslim warriors like Kyai Mojo and his companions were isolated to Minahasa for two reasons (death and extinction). Conversely, Minahasan people welcomed them warmly; they (Minahasan) even allowed their daughters to get married with Kyai Mojo and his followers. The generation from this marriage is called “orang JawaTondano”.⁹ Jawa derives from the motherland of Kyai Mojo, whereas Tondano is taken from the place where Kyai Mojo was isolated. Another example is the formation of Kampung Arab¹⁰ and Kampung Islam¹¹ in

⁸ Interview with Yong OhoiTimur, the Professor in SeminariPineleng Manado, March 1, 2007

⁹ Yong OhoiTimur, *BeragamadalamMasyarakat: AntaraRindudanGelisah*, (Jakarta: Garba Marina, 2004), p. 24-25

¹⁰ Kampung Arab is situated in downtown. The Kampung was established by foreigners from Arab, mostly Yaman (Hadramaut). As they were traders, they preferred to live close to downtown.

downtown as centers for Islamic Dakwah which is readily accepted by Manadonese because of the culture of openness. The former governor E.E. Mangindaan with the jargon *TorangSamuaBasudara* then popularized this openness. The slogan appeared when inter-religious conflict escalated in Ambon and Poso and threatened the endurance of culture and security in Manado city.

In addition to the culture of *Mapalus* and *Si TouTimouTumouTou*, there is culture of embarrassment and prestige that deeply exist in Manado. It can be seen, for example, from the fact that there is no demonstration of Manadonese people for the reason of hunger.¹² Djitro Tamengge, member of House Representative from PPP (United Development Party), argues that Manadonese people are happy to be praised and always think of their prestige. That is why, he continues, when conflict escalated in most areas of East Indonesia, Manadonese people were deeply mindful of their prestige to get involved in such conflict.¹³

3 Economic Situations

Manadonese society has a better educational background compared to Ambon and Poso. This makes it comparatively easier for the Manadonese to secure employment. A survey taken from BPS Manado city in 2005 shows that the percentage of job seekers in Manado is 4.82 % or around 22,000 people. With the development of industry and infrastructure in Manado, job absorption would automatically improve. Moreover, most Manadonese are educated people. In the economic sector, interdependence of Manadonese people is very evident. Christian Minahasan people, who are farmers and breeders, for example, are not accustomed to sell their products in traditional markets. Foreigners from Gorontalo, Java, and Sumatra who are Muslims and have good

¹¹ Kampong Islam is situated in Molassubdistrict. This village was named Islam, because the first ulamawho came to Manado and spread Islam, lived in that area. That's why the Mosque which is built in that place called *AwwalFathulMubien* which means the first real victory of Islam in Manado.

¹² Interview with AbdiBuchari, M.Sc, vice mayor of Manado, March 06, 2007.

¹³ Interview with DjitroTamengge, the head of MPP PPP, March 16, 2007

talent and entrepreneurship fill this vacancy.¹⁴ This mutualism goes a long way back. Not surprisingly, when violent conflict emerged in Ambon and Poso, Manadonese people were not agitated and not involved. Manadonese people realize that living peacefully side by side is the true and expensive meaning of happiness.¹⁵ Yet, according to Fauzi Nuraeni, what makes Manado secure and peaceful is because foreigners do not dominate the economy and bureaucracy.¹⁶

4. Spiritual Understandings

Admittedly, Manadonese society has a good religious life. Whoever lives in Manado would agree that societal life is replete with religious activities. Religious rituals and prayers can be seen and heard almost everywhere. At the time of conflict and riots in several areas in Indonesia, rituals and prayers are regularly performed in the hope that these activities would eradicate the feelings of resentment and anger and that violence would not spread to Manado. In addition, the presence of many houses of worship in Manado is an indication that Manadonese society is a religious society; a society that is not only obedient to perform rituals and prayers but also obedient to religious teachings and norms, and listens to religious figures.¹⁷

Therefore, the positive role of religious figures could not be diminished in the establishment of peace and social harmony in Manado. However, it should be noted that the level of crime in Manado is also considered high.

¹⁴Interview with Ust.ArifinAssegaf, social and religious figures in Manado, February 27, 2007

¹⁵ According to some informants, Manadonese people have “good social solidarity”. It has been argued that when refugees from conflict areas such as Ambon, Poso, Maluku, Timor-Timur, came to Manado, Manadonese people and the government go hand in hand to show their social solidarity by helping them without paying attention to their ethnic groups and religious identities.

¹⁶Interview with KH.FauziNuraeni, the head of MUI of North Sulawesi, February 26, 2007.

¹⁷Interview with Ust.Arifin Assegaf, Social and Religious Figures in Manado, February 27, 2007, and interview with Yong OhoiTimur, the Professor in SeminarPineleng Manado, March 1, 2007, and interview with Stevanny Kumaat, Young Catholics activists, March 5, 2007, and interview with Mgr. Suwatan, The Bishop of North and Central Sulawesi, March 3, 2007, and interview with Drs. H.A. HalilDomu, M.Si, the Head of Department of Religious Affairs (KakanwilDepag) of North Sulawesi, March 06, 2007.

Gangsterism, drunken, gambling, and stealing frequently occur in Manado. Other crimes like fighting between young people also frequently occur in the downtown area. These incidents often happen because Manadonese people, generally its young people consume copious amounts of alcohol. That is why; Manado is often identified and called as the city of *Cap Tikus*, a traditional drink that could make its drinkers unconscious (drunken). According to RidwanSofyan, the head of Walubi, the relationship between inter-religious harmony and criminality is different. Even though Manado is relatively a peaceful city, the problem of security and the extent of criminality are still high.¹⁸

5. Factoring in the Impact of Elites

As explained in previous chapter, elites in this discourse mean what Lederach classifies as—top-level leaders, middle-range leaders, and grassroots leaders. Elites' involvement in maintaining peace and harmony is a great contribution. In the period 1998-2003 when conflict erupted in Ambon and Poso, the local government with the support of religious and social figures in BKSAUA¹⁹ held meetings and inter-ethnic and religious dialogues. These dialogues also involved all components of Manadonese society, from academicians, youth activists and social organizations, up to social and traditional figures (*tokoh adat dan masyarakat*). Trans-religious dialogues are evidently effective in dealing with social inflammation. To be more precise, I illustrate below the impact and mechanisms of the elite in maintaining and disrupting peace.

¹⁸Interview with RidwanSofyan, the head of Walubi (Buddhism) of North Sulawesi, March 03, 2007.

¹⁹BKSAUA operates in Manado under support and financial assistance from APBD (Governmental Budget). Further explanation on BKSAUA can be found at Appendix 1.

Impact of Elites in Promoting Peace

The explanation of the impact of the elite in Manado, as defined previously, will apply the theory of Lederach.²⁰ In addition, this part also explains players at each level, their role and mechanisms used to prevent conflict and to maintain peace in Manado.

1. Top-Level Leadership

Peace building at the top level of leadership should be envisioned as a process of broadening and formalizing the political, bureaucratic, and social services for fair and responsive representation of a community's need. At the top level, this would include religious, military, political or other well-known elites, who Lederach explained, are highly visible, are locked into their positions and goals, and have, or are perceived to have, significant levels of power and influence.²¹ In the context of Manado, these leaders have been politicians and religious figures. Politicians are represented by the governor, the vice mayor, and activists of political parties, while religious figures of BKSAUA are represented by the head of MUI, the head of Sinode 'Am, the head of bishopric in North and Central Sulawesi, the head of Parisada Hindu, and the head of Walubi Buddha.

Admittedly, the impact of the governor—as the provincial leader—and the vice mayor—as the city leader—is extremely crucial in eradicating social tension. In 1995, the Governor, EE Mangindaan (1995-2000) introduced the slogan *Torang Samua Basudara* meaning “We all the Family”. The message of this slogan was the most crucial statement of the governor's commitment to

²⁰ The theory of Lederach has also similarities with the framework of conflict prevention proposed by Alice Ackermann. See Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997)

²¹ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 38-40. In line with Lederach, AzyumardiAzra, the director of School of Graduate Studies of UIN Jakarta, suggests that the emergence of conflict and violence is actually based on three factors: *first*, strong distrust among the people; *second*, workable dialogues between religious leaders in the mid level and grassroots level are not implemented; and *third*, the power of state (police) does not work properly and effectively. See AzyumardiAzra, *Kekerasan Atas Nama Agama*, *Kompas*, July 27, 2007 .

diversity as it preceded the downfall of Soeharto and the continuing instability. The slogan of *Torang Samua Basudara* remains visible throughout the city on billboards as well as in the local newspapers and is often recalled in public speeches or comments.

The next governor of North Sulawesi, Governor A.J. Sondakh, sought to continue the public pronouncements of Governor Mangindaan. Sondakh issued a series of annual proclamations declaring the *Tahun Kasih* (Year of Love) in 2002; *Tahun Kasih tanpa Kekerasan* (Year of Love without Conflict) in 2003; *Tahun Kasih dan Pengharapan* (Year of Love and Hope) in 2004; *Tahun Kasih dan Rahmat* (Year of Love and Mercy) in 2005. The Manadonese people seem especially aware of *Tahun Kasih*, evidenced by the stickers on the front doors of homes and windows of public transportation buses across the province. These campaigns were conducted to symbolize and to encourage social cohesion and harmony of the region. Some scholars argue that the campaigns were promoted as ways to legitimize the value of Christian Minahasan political and social institutions at a time when Islamic groups were calling for the establishment of *Syariah* (Islamic Law) at the national level. Like the New Order campaign, these campaigns of Mangindaan and Sondakh, were created in the framework of shaping public opinion. The slogan of *Tahun Kasih* recall the myth of Toar and Lumimuut and the promise of Graafland denote that Christianity would unite the region and use these traditions to legitimate the present provincial government.²²

During the administration of Sarundajang, social and religious life in Manado suffered a few tremors when control over street vendors occurred in 2006. In the period of the control over street vendors, the issue of religious discrimination was very strong and threatened inter-religious peace and harmony in Manado. This was because most street vendors are Muslims²³ and

²² Karen P. Kray, *Operasi Lilindan Ketupat: Conflict Prevention in North Sulawesi, Indonesia*, (unpublished MA thesis), (USA: Ohio University, 2006), p. 41

²³ Abdi Buchari, referring to the survey conducted by the local government notes that 96% of the street vendors in Manado are Muslims, but about 60% of them do not possess identity card of Manado, which means that they are not Manadonese people and do not deserve to complain about

because the seats of governor and mayor of Manado city are occupied by Christians. However, according to Abdi Buchari, the vice mayor of Manado, the issue of social tension as a result of the control was used by some political elites who were disappointed with the result of the mayoral election in 2005. Furthermore, the policy of control over the street vendors was made and decided during the previous administration.²⁴ This means that the present mayoral administration only implemented the regulation and policy of the previous government that also participated in the mayoral election 2005 and was the rival of the present government.

In contrast to Buchari, Benny Ramdani, activist of PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party for the Struggle), argues that the local government does not have a clear concept of the control of street vendors. He even accuses that there was a ‘genocide’ and ‘ethnic cleansing’ during the implementation of the control, as the government did not provide sufficient areas for the vendors. According to him, Bersehati market can only accommodate 800 street vendors, whereas the number of street vendors—according to the data of street vendors association—is about 2000 people. Furthermore, he points to the emergence of political identity of *sepiring sate babi* (a plate of roasted pork) to symbolize the termination of the domination of Muslim traders.²⁵ In line with Ramdani, DjitroTamengge, the activist of PPP (United Development Party), mentions that the support of the administration of North Sulawesi to the separation and establishment of Gorontalo as a new province was a strong indication how the provincial government wanted to expel the Gorontalo people—who are predominantly street vendors in Manado—out of Manado.²⁶

facilities provided for the Manadonese street vendors. Interview with Abdi W. Buchari, the Vice Mayor of Manado, March 5, 2007.

²⁴ Interview with Abdi W. Buchari, the Vice Mayor of Manado, March 5, 2007.

²⁵ According to Ramdani, peaceful and safe conditions of Manado can be maintained because of three factors: first, the synergy between the elites by building commitment that Manado must be peaceful. This can be seen from the financial support of the government to BKSAUA and *Jajak* (will be explained next). Second, the nature of particular leadership. And third, programs that involve the society and the government in one forum. These include the establishment of BKSAUA and *Jajak*. Interview with Benny Ramdani, member of local house representative, March 22, 2007.

²⁶ Interview with DjitroTamengge, member of local house representative, March 16, 2007

The top-level leadership also includes BKSAUA (the committee for Inter-religious cooperation).²⁷ While it is not acting as policy maker, its members are the top representatives of the five religions in the province. During the violence of the late 1990s and early 2000s, BKSAUA strengthened its information networks throughout the province using religious congregation to spread intelligence and directives relating to violence and threats to people in the region. BKSAUA frequently delivered statements condemning the actions and reminding the greater North Sulawesi community of the need to be cautious.

Admittedly, religious leaders play an important role in society. According to Fauzi Nuraeni, the head of MUI, there are at least four roles taken by religious leaders: to conduct meetings, to be involved in inter-religious dialogue, to visit (*silaturahmi*), and to build peace through media both mass and electronic media. The implementation of these roles would influence the maturity of Manadonese people.²⁸ The control over street vendors (*Penertiban PKL*) in Manado was an example; when the city government wanted to control and the street vendors, the issue of religious discrimination came up to the public. The issue arose because the first target of the orderliness operation was traders in *Bersehati* market and *Pasar 45*, who are predominantly Muslim. However, the situation of Manado city generally remains peaceful; as religious figures of BKSAUA issued a statement that the orderliness operation was not linked to the issue of ethnic and religious discrimination. Small riots between

²⁷ Further related information about BKSAUA on its organizational structure, programs, and activities can be seen in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

²⁸ Interview with KH.FauziNuraeni, the head of MUI of North Sulawesi, February 26, 2007. According to KH FauziNuraeni, the tension during the orderliness operation could not be separated from the involvement of political elite (political resentment of those who were inferior in the mayoral election). In addition, the implementation of the policy of the orderliness operation was regulated by the previous administration; therefore, the present administration only executed the regulation. KH.Fauzi argues that the operation was also related to the ambition of the government to establish Manado as the city of tourism and as the host city of WOS (World Ocean Summit). However, he also admits that the city government does not have brevity to be transparent about the development strategy of Manado, specifically the construction of Street Vendors Plaza (*Plaza Kaki Lima*) and some other infrastructure development projects, because the city government (the Mayor) is worried if the projects could not be finished and realized, he would be prosecuted.

street vendors and *Satpol PP* (civil service police) have often occurred during the period of the orderliness operation. The Manadonese people, particularly Muslims, were not tempted to get involved in the riot using religious issues, though in the early period, the operation did not target to control the vendors in Lily Liyor and Karombasan markets, which are predominantly Christian. It has been argued that the orderliness operation in Lily Liyor which was intentionally conducted last. This treatment did not mean that the government was inconsistent, but it rather constituted different stages and processes of the operation.²⁹

Pdt. Jan Sumakul, the head of Sinode 'Am mentions that Christian churches are the partners of the government, while at the same time they take position as a tool of control and supervision over the government if policies are detrimental to the benefit of Manadonese society. It means that Christian leaders especially Protestant clergymen always make an effort to establish peace and harmony through partnering the government.³⁰ The Archbishop Suwatan, the head of bishopric in North and Central Sulawesi, thinks that the impact of religious and social leaders is so significant; however, he also admits that religious, political, and ethnic discriminations still exist within Manadonese society. Therefore, according to him, these discriminations can be eliminated if the promotion of position and recruitment of new civil servants are based on quality and qualification, while at the same time religious leaders should take neutral positions. However, he also acknowledges that to deal with 'exclucivism' within society, religious leaders should have academic quality and good morality.³¹

In contrast to Suwatan, Suryono, the head of Parisada Hindu, thinks that Hindu people do not feel any discrimination within Manadonese society; they even admit that they get special treatment. The ease in obtaining administrative

²⁹ Interview with KH.FauziNuraeni, the head of MUI of North Sulawesi, February 26, 2007

³⁰ Interview with Pdt. Jan Sumakul, the head of Sinode 'Am, March 01, 2007.

³¹ Interview with Mgr. Suwatan, head of bishopric in North and Central Sulawesi, March 03, 2007

permission in building a temple is an example. To him, the Manadonese people are people of tolerance. The high tolerance of the Manadonese people can eliminate exclusivism from society.³² However, it is quite possible that Hindu people do not experience any discrimination, as they are only a small part of the population and do not threaten Christian power.

According to Ridwan Sofyan, the head of Walubi of North Sulawesi, religious leaders are the motors of moral movement to motivate religious people to prevent conflict and to live peacefully. Furthermore, Manadonese society still listens and obeys their religious figures. The moral movement can be done through promoting universal values including justice, human rights, and equality, etc. However, he mentions that the role of religious figures is not much different from that of a “fire extinguisher”. When there is a strong indication of conflict between two religious communities, the role of religious figures becomes extremely important. Through the symbolization of meeting between religious leaders of two communities, socio-religious gap and misunderstanding can be eliminated.³³

According to Halil Domu, the head of Department of Religious Affairs of North Sulawesi, his department is also responsible for the establishment of peace and harmony. Hence, Department of Religious affairs has functions related to the above objective; *First*, to strengthen social harmony; *second*, to create an obedient and submissive society to religious teachings and state regulation; *third* to develop and expand religious horizons of Manadonese society. Its functions are done through the orientation of multicultural discourse, inter-religious discussion, establishment of BKWAUA (the Committee for Inter-religious Tenacity of Women) and BKPAUA (the Committee for Inter-religious Communication of Students) social service.

³²Interview with Suryono, the head of Parisada Hindu, March 02, 2007.

³³Interview with Ridwan Sofyan, the head of Walubi Buddhism, March 03, 2007.

2. Middle-Range Leadership

One of the most important factors at this level is the network for the work of Love (*Jaringan Kerja Kasih, Jajak*). Like BKSUA, *Jajak* was created on February 14, 2001 by the government, which at the time was led by Governor AJ Sondakh.. In addition, the provincial government also supports *Jajak* financially. Membership of *Jajak* also includes five religious representatives at the second level. Members of *Jajak* operationally have good access to the governor (top-level leader) as well as grassroots leaders.³⁴ Rukmina, for example, is a member of *Jajak*. She represented Muslim women activists and intellectuals in Manado as she is a lecturer of STAIN Manado. In addition, she manages and takes care of *Assalam* Islamic boarding school for girls (*PesantrenPutriAssalam*), one of the largest Islamic boarding schools in Manado. These positions inevitably enable her to have better communication not only to the top-level leadership but also to the grassroots leadership. Although it has financial support from the government, *Jajak* seems to operate like other non-governmental organizations that work for the promotion of peace and pluralism through inter-faith dialogue, conference, and education development.

Another crucial element—probably the most important element—of this level is the GMIM church and the Minahasan Protestants. According to Ohoi Timur, a Catholic intellectual, the spirit of exclusivism still exists in Manado, as it can be seen from the provincial and mayoral election in which a Christian Protestant must be the governor as well as the mayor. Moreover, the previous and present governors and mayors have been Minahasan people as well as Christian Protestants. In addition, as explained before, the promotion of someone's position in the bureaucracy either provincial or city/district level, often depends on his/her position in the board of the GMIM church.³⁵ This

³⁴ Some youth activists of PMII and HMI (*anonym*) criticize that some members of *Jajak* are not popular in the society and do not possess any influence and impact. Like members of BKSUA, members of *Jajak* talk too much in the meetings and discussions, but they do not work and have much influence at the grassroots level.

³⁵ Interview with Yong Ohoi Timur, the Professor in Seminari Pineleng Manado, March 1, 2007

condition may refer to the fact that the GMIM church and Minahasan Protestants have—from the early days of the church—accepted Graaflands conviction that Christianity will unite the region. This explains why the Christian Protestants apparently dominate the region politically. With this power and status, Minahasans and the GMIM church are sensitive to the damage massive communal violence could bring, and to mitigate this potential loss of power and prestige, the GMIM network has been a leader in promoting inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

At this level, youth organizations are also important factors. Youth organizations such as GAMKI (Indonesia Christian Youth Movement), HMI (Muslim University Students Association), and IMM (Muhammadiyah Students Association) and other religious organizations whose membership consists of university students and graduates, have been very active and progressive in the post Soeharto period. These organizations often conduct regular discussions—on peace and conflict—, conflict prevention training, and leadership training. In addition, they also host some educational programs that focus on social issues and pay attention to issues of drugs, smoking, alcohol, and HIV/AIDS. According to Billy Lombok, the present chairperson of GAMKI, one of the strategies of GAMKI to build peace in Manado is through the implementation of cultural defense (*Ketahanan yang berbudaya*). By this, he means that local values like *Mapalus* should be encouraged and brought to the forefront as the basic tools of the process of peace building in North Sulawesi in general, and Manado in particular.³⁶

Middle-range leadership also includes individuals including Taufik Pasiak and KH ArifinAssegaf. TaufikPasiak is an author of several best-seller books on brain development, a lecturer of Samratulangi University in Manado, and the head of Muhammadiyah Manado. His articles on inter-religious relations have often been published in local newspapers including the *Manado Post* and *Posko*. According to him, there are, at least, three elements of building peace and harmony; the spirit of egalitarianism; non-discrimination of

³⁶ Interview with Billy Lombok, the chairman of GAMKI, March 15, 2007

political elite as in the discrimination of public servant recruitment; and the spirit of togetherness. He further classifies peace and harmony into three categories; *first*, political harmony including the use of slogan *Torang Samua Basudara*; *second*, ideological harmony including inter-faith dialogue—this category refers to the most substantive aspect of harmony but it has marginal influence—; *third*, sociological harmony which includes marriage between native Manadonese and non-natives.

Surprisingly, though he admits that social harmony in Manado has resulted from the synergy of political harmony and sociological harmony. He points out that social harmony in Manado constitutes pragmatic harmony because it is used by non-governmental organizations and the government as a project to get millions and billions rupiah either from the central government or international funding agencies. He further observes that the impact of elites, either political or religious, is quite limited. The elites are the second factor after the maturity and “adulthood” of the society. Neither policy nor regulation that specifically explains about inter-religious harmony, support his statement above. Using the theory of medicine, he exposes that there are three factors of peace as well as conflict: *first*, predisposition factors that constitute latent factors, such as discrimination; *second*, enabling factors, such as religious plurality; and *third*, triggering factors such as fighting between villages and riots. Social tension that exists within the society in relation to the maturity, suggests that predisposition factors are not handled well.³⁷

Additionally, at the middle-range leadership, there are, at least, four important religious groups: *Brigade Manguni*, *Legium Christum*, *Militia Christi*, and *GP Ansor*. These groups except the last (*GP Ansor*) were established during the period of conflict in Ambon and Poso. *Brigade Manguni*³⁸ draws upon the legacy of *Permesta*, using the name of a band of

³⁷ Interview with TaufikPasiak, the head of Muhammadiyah Manado, March 02, 2007.

³⁸ At the present time, *Brigade Manguni* is considered as a political bargain of its members in the political arena of the region. Its previous function to protect the region from *jihadi* infiltration and from the eruption of conflict seems to have changed as the situation in Ambon and Poso gradually becomes more conducive and peaceful. *Brigade Manguni* also expands to Balikpapan and some other cities in East Indonesia. According to Michael Jacobsen, thousands of

local soldiers participating in the rebellion. It received much support from the former governor Sondakh and the GMIM church to protect the region. *Legium Christum* was formed in 2000 as a rapid mobile response force. It is estimated to have over 5,000 members, and youths are recruited for membership after being released from jail. While there is no formal cooperation between this militia and the Catholic church, there are priests who serve as spiritual advisors.³⁹

Like *Legium Christum*, *Militia Christi* represented evangelical protestants, though there is no formal cooperation between this militia and the protestant (GMIM) church. However, this militia was supported by the youth organization of *Pemuda GMIM*. With the end of conflict in Ambon and Poso and the advent of the Malino Peace Agreement, *Militia Christi* was disbanded. According to Billy Lombok, the purpose of breaking up of the group is to avoid internal frictions especially between members of *Militia Christi* and members of *Brigade Manguni*, as both groups were supported by the GMIM church.⁴⁰

Middle-range leaders also include the local offices or local partners of international non-profit organizations. There have been a number of important trainings conducted in Manado since the outbreak of violence in Poso and Ambon. In 2000, the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, with grant money from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), hosted a training session on how to

men, supplied at various degrees of readiness with guns, explosives, and intelligence, were willing to deploy across the province and into Central Sulawesi or Maluku. See Michael Jacobsen, "To be or what to be: that is the question" On factionalism and secessionism In North Sulawesi province Indonesia." *Working Paper Series No. 29* (Southeast Asia Research Center: City University of Hongkong, 2002). Arianto Sangaji also found evidence that members of Brigade Manguni have been involved in illegal arms sales and shipments to Central Sulawesi. While it is not clear who the source of weapons for members of these militias was, Sangaji reported that retired military officials, police and local security forces have been accused of trafficking small arms in and out of Central Sulawesi. See Arianto Sangaji, "Peredaran Senjata Api di Sulawesi Tengah". *Yayasan Tanah Merdeka*, Position paper no. 4, Retrieved online on November 11, 2005 at <http://ytm.or.id/pdf/kertasposisi4.pdf>.

³⁹ Michael Jacobsen, "On the question of contemporary identity in Minahasa, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia." *Asian Anthropology*, vol. 1, 2002, p. 31-58.

⁴⁰ Interview with Billy Lombok, the chairman of GAMKI and Pemuda GMIM, March 15, 2007.

engage civil society in the peace building process. In 2001, the Consortium for Assisting the Refugees and Displaced in Indonesia (CARDI) conducted workshops for local young people and IDPs⁴¹ as an opportunity to confront the tensions and stereotypes of the two groups (Muslims and Christians).

3. Grassroots Leadership

In urban Manado, the role of *lurah* (head of village/*kelurahan*) is very crucial in implementing and socializing government programs at the grassroots level and maintaining stability of their areas. They get involved in most daily activities of their people. In Manado, *Pala* (the name for the head of neighborhood) is usually not responsible for this problem. Therefore, the residents of villages in Manado get their identity cards processed directly through the *lurah*. The role of *lurah* is also evident in community building methods of conflict prevention, such as *Mapalus* (mutual help). Similar to the Indonesian concept of *gotong-royong* where the community works together to finish a project, *Mapalus* is often used in the context of preparing for wedding party, community festival, voluntary societal service (*kerja bakti*), and in the construction of a new home.

Admittedly, youth leaders have public roles in conflict prevention. Since 1999 (after the incident of church bombing in Manado), young people have often been involved in guarding religious ceremonies. For instance, Christian youth—mostly belonging to *Brigade Manguniand Militia Christi*—and Catholics—who are predominantly members of *Legium Christum* to guard mosques during IdulFitri and IdulAdha prayers, while Muslim youth, who are members of *GP Ansor* and *PemudaMuhammadiyah*, to guard churches during Christmas and other Christian ceremonies. To some extent, in some villages in Manado, the cooperation between Muslims and Christians continue in the commemoration of religious holy days until date. Muslims become the committee for Christian ceremonies, such as Christmas, while Christians form

⁴¹ IDPs stands for Internally Displaced Persons. They were characterized as lazy because they accepted government assistance and international aid while they were able to purchase televisions or hire other residents to wash their clothes.

the committee for Muslim ceremonies including *Halal-bil Halal*. This cooperation is known as *Operasi Lilin dan Ketupat*.⁴²

However, in some respects, a lot of members of *Brigade Manguni*, *Legium Christum*, and *Militia Christi* are *preman*, most commonly translated as gangsters or gang members. In general, *preman* are youth, and are often criminals who run private security businesses, control markets, parking and bus terminals, pubs and discotheques, prostitution, and other underworld enterprises. It is rare, however, for elites or other individuals who utilize *preman* to acknowledge this relationship. It is unclear if the elites in Manado (North Sulawesi in general) have chosen to use the role of *preman* because they fear security forces (policemen) are incapable of protecting the city, or they have taken control as means of preventing violence.

The present government of Manado also recruits a lot of *premans* as members of *Satpol PP* (police of civil service) to guard Manado. It is commonly assumed that members of *Satpol PP* are generally the former members of *Militia Christi* or *Brigade Manguni*.⁴³ Therefore, as mentioned earlier, during the control over street peddlers in Manado, tensions and violence often occurred between street peddlers—who are predominantly Muslims—and members of the *Satpol PP*, mostly former *premans* and Christians.

Leaders of congregation also play an important role within religious communities at the grassroots level. The impact of leaders of congregation including Imam or Ustadz, clergymen, and priests is much significant than the two mentioned above. Both Manadonese Muslims and Christians are very obedient to their Imam/Ustads and Clergymen. They regularly lead daily prayers and deliver religious teachings and doctrines to their congregation. They also interact more often with the people, because they usually become

⁴² The ground of *Operasi Lilin and Ketupat* (Candle and *Ketupat* operation) is based on the tradition that *Lilin* is often used during the commemoration of Christmas day, and *Ketupat* (rice cake boiled in a rhombus-shaped packet of plaited young coconut leaves) is often prepared during IdulFitri day.

⁴³ It is understandable because the rumors—difficult to prove—indicate that the present mayor of Manado (Jimmy RimbaRogi) was also former member of *premans*.

life consultants of their congregation. Whatever the problem the congregations have, they would ask and consult with their Imam/ustad and priests. Therefore, the leaders of congregations possess detailed knowledge about condition of members of their society.

Elite Mechanisms in Maintaining Peace

According to Lederach, the mechanism used by top-level leadership in the peace building process is high-level negotiation and mediation. In the context of Manado, the most common mechanism used by the elites (top-level, mid-level, and grassroots leaders) is dialogue that involves the major stakeholders of the society. Governor Sarundajang with experience in dealing with conflict area, acknowledges that the most simple way to prevent conflict is by involving the elites (religious, political, and social-grassroots elites) in dialogue.⁴⁴ Seemingly, this effort is successful to maintain peace in some conflict areas including North Maluku and North Sulawesi because during his administration in both regions, the situation was peaceful and secure.

Although it seems to be symbolic, the dialogue at the top-level leadership has a huge role to stop and eradicate social inflammation. The symbolization of dialogue at this level is greatly needed as a model for the whole society, because it involves leaders of top religious organizations including MUI, Sinode 'Am, Walubi, and Parisada. The existence of BKSAUA and Jajak— financed by the government—as a forum in which religious leaders of top organizations become the presidium is an example of how to teach society that inter-religious peace and harmony can be achieved through inter-religious dialogue. There are two kinds of mechanisms used by the top-level leadership to maintain or disrupt peace: external mechanism and internal mechanism. External mechanism is usually used by top-level leaders, specifically religious leaders to maintain communication with the government and other religious leaders, while internal mechanism is generally used by top-level leaders within their own communities. Internal mechanisms tend to be multilevel and instructive.

⁴⁴ Interview SH Sarundajang, the governor of North Sulawesi Province, March 15, 2007

External mechanisms including inter-religious dialogue and other inter-religious activities are largely symbolic. Christmas and Ramadhan safaris are an example of external mechanisms used by the government to maintain inter-religious harmony. Governor Sarundajang even admits that during his administration, he never leaves to attend the commemoration of religious holy days. In line with Governor Sarundajang, AbdiBuchari, the vice mayor of Manado city usually attends the commemoration of the Christmas day, and performs Ramadhan safari, as he is a Muslim. According to him, like religious figures, bureaucrats are also the “attendants” of the society.⁴⁵

As mentioned earlier, internal mechanisms are mostly multilevel and instructive and they also have greater implications for society. Both top bureaucrats and religious leaders seem to utilize this mechanism within their structures. The instructions and programs of the government, for example, are much easier to apply, and are much broader to influence, as they are filtered down hierarchically from the government down to the head of village (*lurah or kepala desa*). Like the bureaucrats, top-level leaders in religious institutions usually use this kind of mechanism to influence their communities. Jan Sumakul, the head of Sinode ‘Am. For example, states that there are regular meetings and dialogues within the Christian Protestant community from the level of synod down to the level of congregation (*jemaat*). The Protestant clergymen used to meet at least once a month. The Catholic Church also has its own mechanism. According to Mgr. Suwatan, the archbishop used to write “*suratkegembalaan*” (bishopric letter) which is read in Catholic churches during every religious service. While the archbishops have autonomy to deliver “*nota pastoral*” (pastoral note) to Catholic communities, they often perform *doabersama* (group prayers) of about 25-30 persons for security and peace. This is also in line with the tradition of Hindu people. According to Suryono, there are, at least, four mechanisms within the

⁴⁵ Interview with Abdi W Buchari, the vice mayor of Manado, March 05, 2007.

Hindu tradition: *Loka Sabha*, *Paruman*, the night of *Saraswati*, and the night of *Siwalatri*.⁴⁶

The use of the slogan “*Torang Samua Basudara*” (We All are Family) sponsored by the government, has admittedly played a significant role in developing the feeling of unity. Billboards, stickers, and banners of this slogan successfully influence the emotions and the minds of the Manadonese people. At the middle-range leadership, discussions, seminars, and trainings are seemingly the popular mechanism. As described earlier, some non-profit organizations with funding from international aid agencies conducted seminars and training sessions on conflict management and prevention during the conflict escalation in Maluku and Central Sulawesi. Religious educational institutions have often conducted inter-religious discussions and seminars. For instance, the Seminari Catholic School of Philosophy in Pineleng often invites students of STAIN Manado to attend lectures and discussions on various topics delivered by Seminari lecturers. STAIN Manado, also invites students of Seminari School of Philosophy to attend class and discussions delivered by STAIN’s lecturers.⁴⁷ Admittedly, this tradition is unique, as it does not in all likelihood not happen outside Manado city. In addition, peace journalism including mass media, bulletins, and tabloids is also a mechanism used by mid-level leaders to maintain social harmony. According to Danial Alwi, the head of STAIN Manado, peace journalism usually contains the discourse of pluralism and strategies of peace building and conflict management.⁴⁸

Some middle-range leaders including the head of Muhammadiyah Manado⁴⁹ and the head of BKMT argue that social activities such as playing sport together and helping poor people through donations without looking at religious

⁴⁶ According to Suryono, *Loka Sabha* is a five year meeting of Hindu figures of the region; *Paruman* is a one year working session in which all Hindu figures at every level gather and discuss; the night of *Saraswati* is a meeting of Hindu people once every 210 days; and the night of *Siwalatri* is a whole night discussion on various issues. Interview with Ir. Suryono, the head of Parisada Hindu, March 02, 2007

⁴⁷ Interview with M. Danial Alwi, the head of STAIN Manado, March 7, 2007 and Interview with Yong Ohoi Timur, the Professor in Seminari Pineleng Manado, March 1, 2007

⁴⁸ Interview with M. Danial Alwi, the head of STAIN Manado, March 07, 2007.

⁴⁹ According to Pasiak, there are three ways or mechanisms to maintain peace: first, building communication through dialogue and common platform; second, social activities; and third, building togetherness through sport and art. Interview with Taufik Pasiak, the head of Muhammadiyah Manado, March 02, 2007.

identity would also strengthen inter-religious bonds. Indeed, community empowerment through economic development of the poor people has a gigantic impact on the establishment of peace and harmony. According to Zubaidah Albugis, his organization (BKMT) often empowers Muslim women in the fields of education and health. In the education sector, it provides scholarships for orphans and poor people, while in the health sector; it cooperates with *Sitti Maryam* private hospital to provide subsidized health care for poor people.⁵⁰

The most interesting mechanism is *field survey* on inter-religious relations. This mechanism is usually used by the Catholic community, particularly catholic youth to understand the dynamics of inter-religious relations and to design a formula for future relations. This mechanism is probably based on the Catholic tradition of self-criticism. According to StevannyKumaat, a Catholic youth activist, the result of the survey is usually brought to the youth plenary meeting and the forum of bishops that is conducted every two months, if it is needed.⁵¹ At the grassroots level of leadership, religious speeches and day-to-day elucidation perhaps are the most evident mechanisms used by leaders of congregations to make the society aware of the importance of social harmony. These mechanisms are also effective for Imams, Ustads, clergymen, and priests to explain various incidents and programs of peace building in relation with religious teachings.

The spirit of *Mapalus* (mutual help) and *Si TouTimouTumouTou* (making other people smart) is the most applicable culture at the grassroots level. The tradition of guarding religious ceremonies by youth is an example. Unfortunately, this tradition, in my opinion, is not really rooted in society. Guarding religious ceremonies was only implemented during the period of conflict in Ambon and Poso; when the conflict passes, the tradition ceases to function. In addition, the tradition of (*kongkow*) talk and chat of young people does have a role in breaking social tensions. According to Lombok, the head of Pemuda GMIM, he and his friends from different religions regularly talk and chat (*kongkow*) in coffee shops, pubs, and restaurants. He admits that this tradition helps him very much in

⁵⁰ Interview with ZubaidahAlbugis, the head of BKMT, February 27, 2007.

⁵¹ Interview with StevannyKumaat, the activist of youth Catholic, March 5, 2007.

understanding other religious communities along with their religious teachings.⁵² Finally, this tradition helps support the spread of the discourse of pluralism as well as inclusivism.

Summary

There is no doubt that there is no single factor for the establishment of peace as well as conflict all over the world. However, out of five factors of inter-religious peace in Manado, the role of the elites is the most reasonable and dominant factor to account for the existing peace. Accordingly, the existence of inter-religious harmony in Manado cannot be separated from the impact and mechanisms of the three level of leadership as proposed by Lederach. The impact of the three-level of leadership in maintaining peace or in preventing conflict is extremely significant. While through external mechanisms like inter-religious dialogue, the top-level leaders—including the governor, the mayor, and leaders of top religious organizations—are able to get great attention and to pacify social tensions, through internal mechanisms like regular internal meetings and discussions, the top-level leaders are able to spread the result of discussions and dialogues to the grassroots level.

Undoubtedly, the pyramid theory of Lederach is applicable in the context of conflict prevention in Manado. The pyramid theory of Lederach suggests how few people at the top-level leadership could influence many people at the mid-level and grassroots leadership. In the context of Manado, the grassroots leadership seems to be the key actors in dealing with the masses (public). While the top-level leaders play symbolic roles through high-level dialogue and negotiation (BKSAUA), the middle-range and grassroots leaders in particular, play 'true' and 'real' roles as they interact with the society directly. Therefore, in my opinion, the function of grassroots leaders, particularly the youth and leaders of congregation is more determinative in the formation of inter-religious peace and harmony in Manado.

⁵²Interview with Billy Lombok, the head of Pemuda GMIM, March 15, 2007.

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