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Peace Education in Religious Conflict Prone Areas in Ambon & Poso

1. Background

Diversity is actually a distinguishing characteristic of Indonesian society and one of the factors making such diversity is religion. However, religion along with any religious matter are frequently to be a sensitive issue. By the name of 'truth' the religion doctrine is often used as justification for destroying, burning, attacking and even killing others having different faith. Recently some incidents of arson and destruction of worship buildings had occurred in Indonesia and the impact was bad as those occurred in Ambon and Poso.

Ambon and Poso are frequently used to be examples and topics of discourses on horizontal conflicts based on religious issues.¹ Ambon is known as an area that has different strong religious followers, particularly Moslems and Christian. Besides, Poso of Central Sulawesi has similar experience with Ambon. Many know that the conflicts were actually more economic and even political² but they were wrapped by religious issues for such issues were very sensitive and even irational.³ It will always be easily manipulated to recruit, aggregate, and move people (conflicting actors).

2. Urgency to Implement Peace Education

The world is getting younger in which one in every four people is below the age of 25 today. The young people, however, not only engaged in creating movement to promote positive change in their communities, but also had been manipulated towards violence.⁴ Ironic as what was said by US President Herbert Hoover "Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die." Therefore, it is now the time for youth to declare peace and lead their communities towards non-violence and reconciliation. They have the credibility, the resources and the social capital to positively influence their society.

Realizing religious diversity could be easily manipulated to be a source or seed of social conflict, what so-called "peace education" should be organized and given to the whole Indonesian society, especially for young people. Peace education can be provided in formal schools as well as the non-formal ones to lead a common understanding of the multiculturalistic Indonesian people that every body should take part in creating and keeping

¹ Horizontal violence in third world countries especially due to two elements, which are often joined and eventually became the trigger of a continuing conflict. The elements are the identity element namely people mobilization in communal identity groups based on the differences of race, religion, culture, language etc.; and the distribution element mainly caused by the issues of economic requires distribution, social jealousy and political conditions in a society, see Bengt Save Soderberg, in Peter Harris and Ben Reilly (ed), Democracy and Deep - Rooted Conflict: Options for Negosiators, Sweden: IDEA,p.v.; see also M. Tito Karnavian, 2008, Indonesian Top Secret: Membongkar Konflik Poso, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, pp. 74-75.

² Robert W. Hefner, 2007, *Politik Multikulturalisme-Menggugat Realitas Kebangsaan*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, p. 490

Wasisto Raharjo Jati, *Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan*, 2013, p. 393, available at: http://journal.walisongo.ac.id/index.php/wali/article/view/109/108, downloaded on 30 June 2015

⁴ http://srilankaunites.org/why-reconciliation.html, downloaded on 30 June 2015

⁵ http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0393885/bio, downloaded on 30 June 2015

peace within society. Such education should be well and comprehensively managed and implemented so that the results will meet expectation and do not leave some new problems. It is important to invest young people to participate and ensure their energies in channeling towards sustainable peace. They are the greatest resource to implement peace education in achieving reconciliation by fostering dialogue and mutual understanding that cuts across ethno-religious lines, which serves to transform conflict into sustainable peace.

In Ambon and Poso, there are still trauma and prejudice remaining among the communities⁶ that even involve students as young intellectuals. It is bad because they are supposed to be agents of change, agents of development. Based on this fact, restoring the role of students as pioneers of living in harmony in diversity and within their respective community is urgent. Moreover, the conflict resolution of Ambon and Poso that was not done in a comprehensive manner had left fairly complicated issues. The conflicting parties emphasizes peaceful settlement instantaneously without understanding that peace should be dynamic, participatory, and long-term. This means peace requires justice and the rule of law and order. One of the thorny issues faced by today Ambon people is residential segregation; they are groupped into two, namely Muslim's and Christian's residential sites.⁷ The segregation was more intensified after Maluku conflict in 1999 that made the the spaces of interaction between the groups minimalized. In other words, there is a lack of public space for the two group to make interaction, to create cross-cutting affiliation, etc. If this situation is not smartly and wisely corrected, it will bring a potential of further conflict outbreak. This means the people of Ambon has not yet reached a strong and primary level of social integration and this alls means that other conflicts will potentially happen in the future.

Although the societal segregation based on religious beliefs has existed since the Dutch colonial era to make the Dutch more easily control the people of its colony,⁸ the segregation once got fading out, particularly at the points of central of economic and political business. However, segregation problem then arises again after the conflict which is either intentionally or not done in order to create instant peace. Such a segregation has unconsciously arised an impact of long term latent danger, especially if not handled and monitored properly and seriously. Until now there are only two remaining regions as sites where Muslims and Christians could live together, namely the region of Wayame and the region of Rindam XVI Pattimura Military Command in Negeri Suli Atas.

Currently Ambon is in a conducive state but it remains having latent sensitivity to appear volatile. Small frictions between citizens will be able to trigger conflict between bigger groups, a small incident can easily erupt into major conflict. The refugees flowing at the conflict time has made a spatial pattern of mono ethnicity and mono religion instead of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious settlement before the conflict. The post-conflict policy classifying people's settlements based on their ethnicity and religions will potentially appear unexpected social impacts.

3. Peace Education Based on Local Wisdoms

⁶ Mohammad Hasan Ansori, 2014, Segregasi, kekerasan, dan Kebijakan Rekonstruksi Pasca-Konflik di Ambon, Habibie Center, Jakarta, hln. 20

⁷*Ibid*, hlm, 4

⁸ *Ibid*, hlm. 28

The values of living together in diversity have existed for hundreds of years in Ambon and Poso and have been maintained by generations. These values are also bequeathed to the public through education, both formal and non-formal, so that the socialization of these values could continuously take place. However, in recent years these values began to erode. Poso, however, is less successful in reviving their local wisdoms to the youths, compared to Ambon, so that many young people in Poso do not recognize their own local wisdoms. Based on the fact, it is considered necessary to develop a certain model of peace education based on local wisdom that could be an effective forum to educate university students to build peace and tolerance within their respective community.

Every local community has its own local wisdoms that are usually very powerfull and influencing in guiding the community's daily life. As a consequences, it will be useful to revitalize, empower, and then insert the existing local wisdoms into peace building education. Therefore, there will be synergy of the values of peace building and local wisdoms to promote efforts in resolving the social conflicts, particularly in Ambon and Poso.

Integration and implementation of local widoms in the peace education is expected to enhance the students' understanding on the importance of local wisdoms in the context of conflict situations to initiate interreligious tolerance. A good understanding and effective peace education process are expected to encourage the students to play significant roles as agents of change in initiating, maintaining, and continuing peace efforts that have been attempted, so as to create a peaceful situation in Ambon and Poso.

Education could be an effective tool in achieving peace. One of the way to build peace is through psycho-social movement to young people. In Ambon there is an education tool named "Maluku Brotherhood Education Curriculum" (Pendidikan Orang Basudara) having the aim of changing the students' mindset about social conflict and the conflicts they have experienced some years before. This curriculum is particularly implemented in the conflicting areas of the past. The young generation, especially students, are introduced to the values of their local wisdoms and moral code, so that they will have attention about how to respect the existing values of diversity and to make the values alive in their daily life. For instance, the local wisdom of community brotherhood system, which is popularly called *pela* and *gandong* (family members and kinship relations) is actually not based on religious considerations but on social relations Maluku communities. Pela Gandong is a bond of ongoing brotherhood among all communities and it is established as a sacred covenant in which all parties are required to become blood brothers and to help each other as if they were born from one mother (one gandong or womb). Pela is a covenant relationship between one nagari with another nagari that could possibly be from different or the same island. The relationship could also possibly from different or the same ethnicity or religious groups. Pela relationship has an important effect in which all people participate to encourage togetherness and to maintain the relationships. Like Ambon, Poso has local wisdom named Sintuwu Maroso. Sintuwu Maroso was a tradition of mutual help based on the brotherhood of relatives, neighbors, friends and acquaintances who were rooted in tribal tradition Pamona (one of the tribes in Poso) when they were living as land cultivators. In addition, there was another local culture named mosintuwu meaning active mutual help and mutual posintuwu implementation that usually took forms of donating money, cattle or any goods. "Sintuwu

⁹See more at: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/03/30/peace-education-introduced-schools.html#sthash.vzPHLWEb.dpuf, downloaded on 30 June 2015

Maroso" implementation as a local wisdom is expected to be able to reduce the potential conflicts that possibly occur at the present time

This curriculum is expected to become an effective instrument of a cultural transformation process, which is pro-pluralism and pro-humanity. The contents of the Maluku Brotherhood Education Curriculum constitutes a blend of five programs, including competence-based communication skills, interpersonal relations, conflict resolution techniques, conflict problem solving and mutual understanding on diversity. 10

4. Formulating a Module of Peace Eduation

"Maluku Brotherhood Education Curriculum" (*Pendidikan Orang Basudara*) is inline with the efforts made by Soegijapranata Catholic University (Unika) in the integration of local wisdoms, universal values, and the context of the conflict situation that is formulated in a Module of Peace Education. It was expected to give more realistic pictures and basic concepts for the students that would increase comprehensive knowledge to them. Further, it also was designed in order the students will be able to give more contribution to their respective community in initiating and building peace, to provoke tolerant living within pluralistic society.

The content of the module consists of 8 (eight) basic universal values that could be used as significant capital for building peace in the society. The values are adjusted and contextualized with the existing and living customs and local wisdoms, such as the culture of Pela Gandong. Such instances of customs and local wisdoms are then mixed with the values offered by the module to be the discussed and learnt, both in and out the classrooms. The values within the modules mixed with good local wisdoms will be able to lead them to be tolerant (accepting) to others who are different, in religion, ethnicity, social-economic classes, etc. The are expected to be agents who are capable to enliven the motto of the Republic of Indonesia, namely "Unity in Diversity" or *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This not only important but necessary since Indonesian society is verily pluralisitic and therefore it is easily burnt by any provocation for conflict.

5. Building Strategic Alliances

Peace education is for all, not just students of universities. Considering that a lot of young people do not go to universities but they experience their daily life within pluralistic society, it is also necessary to provide them peace education according to their own understanding. Some important ideas are to form strategic alliances with universities and some possible parties so that the module will be able to be used as a guide for peace education, both in and outside classrooms. This means the module is also possibly disseminated to some parties like the head of village, NGOs, local government, traditional leaders and community leaders that are expected to see and even to implement the module in any kind of community education activity. The content of the module is possibly inserted to the community education. Therefore, the virus of peace is spread not only within the campus but also outside (communities). Such a collaboration could be a legitimation to the make the implementation stronger and have broader prevalence.

¹⁰ B. Pattiselano, *et.al.*, 2009, *Kurikulum Pendidikan Orang Basudara Maluku*, Dinas Pendidikan Kota Ambon

It is also necessary to employ an innovative programmes to engage youth in building social cohesion and promoting intercultural understanding to foster peace and development. Some important measures should be taken to overcome the latent danger of horizontal conflicts, by having a new principle and action that is "segregation to integration". This means the notion of segregation that often causes exclusivity should be directed to a blending having inclusivity spirit. Peace-building should aim to a constructive transformation of social relations that will open not only for communication but also cooperation so that it will manifest social cohesion. The role of students and young people in general is to become very important, especially to encourage cross-group communication and to make a dialogue as a way problem solution.

Peace at Ambon and Poso really requires a strong role of students and young people in general to build confidence, diminish mutual mistrust, open dialogue in order to develop communication and intensive cooperation between interfaith groups and ethnicities.

However, young people can not let alone in this effort. The important idea is to form strategic alliances of some parties like the head of village, NGOs, local government, traditional leaders and community leaders in any kind of community education activity. Therefore, the virus of peace is spread not only within the campus but also outside (communities). Such a collaboration could be a legitimation to the make the peace building implementation stronger and have broader prevalence.

Some supporting programs are possibly designed to build social cohesion as a preventive measure to prevent horizontal conflicts. Conflict resolution based on or oriented to institution's structural development will be boosted by a forum of communication empowering "a public communication space" and to build a mutual agreement and mutual understanding based on partnership. Building a public space is really a need because in such a space communication and assimilation become possible. Activities at the public space will educate the people visiting the values of togetherness of different people but united in one nation, that is the Indonesian nation. The motto of Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity, will not then longer remain just as a slogan but it is really alive because it is being revived.

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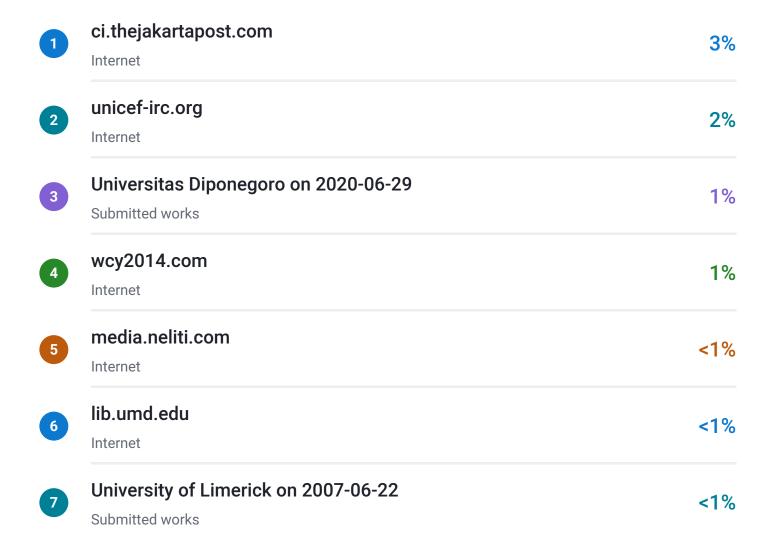
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