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## Chapter 11

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# Traditional Leaders in the Reconciliation of Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Moluccas

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### ABSTRACT

*It has been known that leaders play key roles in the reconciliation of intergroup conflicts. In Indonesia, during 1999-2003 of Muslims-Christians conflicts in Moluccas islands, the role of traditional leaders was essential in the reconciliation process. In this chapter, the authors aim to describe the efforts of conflict reconciliation in the Moluccas that happened in 1999-2003 in Indonesia. The chapter will (1) explore the pre-conflict condition to explain factors that triggered the conflict, (2) explain what occurred during the conflict as well as the condition, and (3) explain the process of how the traditional leaders got actively involved in the reconciliation process.*

### INTRODUCTION: TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE MOLUCCAS AND THEIR ROLES IN THE RECONCILIATION OF MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONFLICTS 1999-2003

In this chapter, we want to describe the efforts of conflict reconciliation in the Moluccas that happened in 1999-2003 in Indonesia. The purpose of this writing is to (1) explore the pre-conflict condition to explain factors that triggered the conflict; (2) explain what occurred during the conflict as well as the condition; (3) explain the process of how the traditional leaders got actively involved in the reconciliation process.

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## Overview

The conflict in Ambon, located in the Moluccas, first occurred on 19 January 1999, which was triggered by a fight between a Muslim youth and a Christian youth. The fight triggered a conflict between two religious groups, the Muslim community and the Christian community in Ambon. It should be noted that based on the population census in 2000, the population in the Moluccas was approximately 1.15 million people with the number of Muslims at 49.1% and the number of Christian Protestants at 50.2%. The conflict continued until January 2000 and resulted in thousands of deaths.

Going into the year 2000, the conflict in the Moluccas especially in Ambon continued and entered a new chapter, which was an armed conflict including bombing (Panggabean, 2004). During this stage, the conflict involved fighters from both sides. Many Muslim fighters came from outside of the Moluccas, especially from the island of Java supported by a militant Muslim organization that established *Laskar Jihad*. Facing that situation, in June 2000 the government declared a condition of civil emergency in the Moluccas and deployed thousands of soldiers and police in this province (Brown & Wilson, 2005). Several officers who were deployed in this conflict were not neutral, but the presence of military troops seemed effective when the violence subsided in 2002.

The Moluccan conflict is a conflict with the biggest scale in Indonesia viewed from coverage of the conflict, damage to infrastructure and the large number of casualties (Yanuarti, 2003). The conflict occurred between two groups who identified with the two-big religion in Indonesia, namely Islam and Christianity. Bar-Tal (2000) mentioned that conflict involving identity is a conflict that is difficult to resolve (intractable conflict) and there is little hope of it being resolved. The characters of intractable conflict according to Coleman (2006) are: a history of domination and unjust situation in the past; changes in dominance; complex issues interrelated between economic, politics and culture.

## Sources of the Moluccan Conflict

In general, the cause of the conflict in The Moluccas in 1999 is still vague for the people in the Moluccas themselves. Muluk and Malik (2009) study revealed a consensus that the fight between the two youths of the different religion in Ambon triggered the conflict. When closely observed, the fight between the two youths was only an accumulation of the real source of the conflict, which was far more complex, as well as related to the history of the relationship among the communities in the past.

Based on our analysis, the cause the Moluccan conflict can be understood by revealing the factors which contributed to the rise of the conflict. First, in the 1600s, the people of The Moluccas were highly involved in the spice trade. Hence, the Dutch wanted to conquer the island of the Moluccas by using the method of *divide et impera* (the politics of division). The Dutch tried to divide the unity of the people by supporting one group while discriminating other groups.

In the beginning, the Portuguese conquered the northern part of the Moluccas (Ternate Island) which at that time was led by a Muslim king known as the Sultan of Ternate. The Dutch offered help to the Sultan of Ternate to drive away the Portuguese from Ternate. After successfully driving away the Portuguese, the Dutch had a hidden agenda, which was to conquer Ternate Island.

The Dutch monopolized trade in Ternate, and they also spread the religion of Christian Protestantism to the people who had embraced Catholicism and Islam. In addition, the Dutch were also successful in converting people of the Moluccas who had not embraced any religion to believe and embrace Christian Protestantism. Using the strategy of *Divide et Impera*, the Dutch succeeded in dividing the people of the

Moluccas by giving special treatment to those who embraced Christian Protestantism and discriminating against those who embraced Islam.

For centuries, Muslims and Christians were divided into separate villages, and each village was led by a “King” who was often called *Raja* or *Latupati* (Cooley, 1962). The condition made it easy for the Dutch to divide the unity among the Moluccans. During the colonial period, local conflicts among Christians and Muslims sometimes occurred (for example, the War of Banda in 1609-1621; the War of Kapaha in 1636-1646).

The change in the political structure during the Dutch colonial period was a second factor causing the Moluccan conflict. The Christian community lost their rights and privileges in political, social, and economic sectors, which depended on the *Divide et Impera* instituted by the Dutch. Their hatred was based on the fact that most of the power in economy and politics shifted to newcomers from Java and Sulawesi Island. The political decision of President Suharto which was known as greening (Islamization) was imposed in the mid-1990's, by appointing a Moluccan native to be the first governor of the Moluccas. He also appointed Muslims in key positions in all sectors of government in the Moluccas. The structural inequality made Christians have a weak political power (Brown, 2005).

The early years after President Suharto came down from his position, became the third factor which might contribute to the Moluccan conflict. In 1997, Indonesia was hit by an economic crisis. The crisis gave rise to competition among different ethnic and religious groups in pursuing economic resources. Hence, the economic crisis contributed to intensifying the tension. This condition created political, social and economic uncertainty which contributed to the rise of the conflict. With the diminishing influence of the military due to the change, the uncertainty regarding the future role of military in politics was also viewed as an important factor in explaining the Moluccan conflict.

The fifth factor which triggered the conflict was related to several provocateurs who gave their political support by attempting to create unrest in the Moluccas. Several days before escalation of the conflict occurred, several hoodlums who originated from Ambon but were in Jakarta at the time were mobilized in the Moluccas province. The mobilization was related to the competition between the incumbent governor who was a Muslim with the challenger governor candidate who was a Christian. On the other hand, the Suharto regime, especially the army, continued to find ways to get back into the world of politics.

Human Rights Watch (1999) reported three conspiracy hypotheses concerning the cause of the Moluccan conflict. First, the conflict is believed to have been triggered by factions among the military and national elite, who strived for the military to get back into controlling the politics in Indonesia. Second, the conflict was triggered by people from the Christian group who tried to reassert their dominance in economic and political sectors by supporting separatist movement, RMS (Republic of South Maluku), and by attacking Muslim migrants. Third, several local military officers were also mobilizing RMS, with the purpose of gaining an advantage from the counterattack from Muslim groups. The counterattack was expected to create destabilization so that the army would come to save the nation and they would be able to regain their political power.

### Condition and Effort to Resolve the Conflict

When the Moluccan conflict occurred, all public agenda was focused on the conflict. Almost all the Moluccan people were involved in the conflict, both to defend themselves and to counterattack the opposition. All age groups, men and women, even children were involved in the conflict. Government employees, traders, lawyers, unemployed people, even the police and the military were involved in the



Moluccan conflict. Almost all the community became victims as well as perpetrators of the conflict. The Moluccan people were divided and segregated into Islamic group and Christian group (Muluk & Malik, 2009).

Several efforts were made to resolve the conflict; some failed, while others were successful. But, most of the efforts which failed were peace efforts made by the government. The slow response from the central government in handling the conflict in the Moluccas was because the Indonesian government was in a transition period after President Suharto resigned. Although it was late, government effort in forming military security was effective in stopping the armed conflict in the Moluccas.

With the entry of Laskar Jihad (Islamic fundamentalist militia) from outside of the Moluccas, the conflict continued into the second stage. It seemed that the government initiative to prolong the Civil Emergency status did not help much in stopping the conflict because the animosity and hatred between the two groups seemed to exacerbate it. In this stage, there was no discussion at all concerning peace between the two communities because the Moluccas province was truly divided between the sides of the Muslims and Christians. Many government facilities in the Moluccas were burned down, which made coordination between the central government and the Moluccan government difficult. At that time, peace was identical with surrendering to the opposition. That was why the government initiative seemed to fail.

Along with escalation of the conflict, the scope also became greater. Military personnel were trapped in a community hit by the conflict between Muslims and Christians. Even the troops in Ambon were frustrated and had difficulty because they were unable to effectively handle the chaotic situation. It became worse, as reflected by the increasing number of civilians who were killed and thousands who were displaced. In the beginning, President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2000) made a statement that the Moluccan conflict can be only be resolved by the Moluccan people themselves. He got many criticisms and even condemnation due to the statement. Finally, he did several interventions, specifically using a security approach consisting of intensive patrol system with the purpose of stopping illegal supply of weapons. The central government also deployed 16 military and police battalions to assist in resolving the conflict.

During the period of President Megawati (2000-2004), another initiative was introduced <sup>12</sup> Coordinator Minister of Social Affairs, Yusuf Kalla (currently Vice President), and Coordinator Minister of Politics and Security, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (currently former President). The initiative was known as Perjanjian Damai Malino II (Peace Treaty of Malino II). Both coordinator ministers realized that the security approach was not enough to resolve the conflict; they understood that the community must be brought to a negotiating table. The central government wanted the groups to resolve the conflict and sign a peace treaty. Under a hasty preparation, the government invited 35 representatives from the Christian and Muslim groups to the meeting. Within a short time, they documented 11 endpoints (Pieris, 2004). The declaration supported the central government initiative and program to end the conflict by applying law enforcement to those who violate human rights and the sovereignty of Indonesia. However, in the two weeks following the signing of the declaration, another conflict erupted, in ever increasing form. Later, it was revealed that many of the representatives who were invited were chosen because of their political affiliation with the current government.

Another effort made by the Moluccan Provincial government was by forming The Community Center for Reconciliation (Lessy, 2005). In the beginning, the community consisted of six individuals originating from three communities: Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim. Each team member had the task of approaching religious leaders with the purpose of stopping the conflict because at that time most people considered the conflict was based on religion. As a result, the effort was greatly rejected by the

community. The failure was caused by the limited knowledge of the selected people in the team and a period of pre-consolidation that was too short.

In addition to forming The Community Center for Reconciliation, the Moluccan Provincial Government also arranged a limited meeting of 13 Muslim and Christian Latupati (traditional leader), but the meeting only covered the Leihitu region. This was the first and only meeting initiated by the provincial government. However, the meeting failed as expected because the Latupati forum asked the community to stop the mobilization of people from the Leihitu region, instead of to stop the escalating violence. This forum also asked the community to stop the burning of Pattimura University because this area was proposed as a neutral zone.

Another conflict resolution effort originated from a local non-governmental organization (NGO). The first effort originated from Wayame Team in February 1999, one month after the Ambon conflict erupted (Lessy, 2005). This team intended to protect the Hamlet Wayame community where vital installations such as government-owned oil installation and airport were located. Although covering only certain locations, the team succeeded in protecting the area from an attack of rioters, because the team mobilized each Muslim and Christian group to protect it from rioters from their own group. There was a unique policy by the Wayame Team which prevented military personnel from entering the protected area. Another effort by a local NGO was done by Baileo Foundation. The team's intention was to empower people who were displaced due to the conflict (Trijono, 2001). This effort was important in reducing the bad consequences caused by the conflict, but it did not focus on reconciliation with the purpose of resolving the conflict in the Moluccas.

## **BAKU BAE MOVEMENT**

Peace effort with the purpose of "conflict resolution" finally appeared in the year 2000, which was called Baku Bae movement. In the beginning, several NGO activists and academics met to discuss the situation in the Moluccas. Several formal and informal discussions involving academics, NGO activists, and even professionals were conducted to discuss every detail on the progress of the Moluccan conflict.

Coordinating with Yayasan Huolopu (Huolopu Foundation), a local NGO, Ichsan Malik and Eliakim Sitorus (two prominent NGO activists at that time) went to meet with the conflicting parties in the Moluccas. They were accepted in some places, while rejected in others, their motives questioned. At that time, their only strategy was trying to bring together leaders from both parties and discuss with them concerning peace. They also visited other respected individuals who had influence in the community, such as village leaders, intellectuals, and religious leaders.

The first step of Baku Bae movement was by conducting internal consolidation among elements of society who supported the movement. The consolidation invited activists, various groups, including representatives from Yayasan Hualopu-Ambon, Tirus Tania Thenu, humanity intervention coordinators, and a Protestant leader. The meeting was considered as an important prerequisite to convincing people concerning the possibility of stopping the conflict, where all parties in the conflict are viewed as "victim".

The difficulty came from activists from Komando Jihad and Laskar Jihad. They specifically did not want to end the war because they believed that the war is a way of *Jihad* in defending Islam in the Moluccas. Ichsan Malik visited those activists in June 2000 in Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, and organized several informal discussions. Once again, patience and persistence were important in convincing that

the war in the Moluccas was “a useless war” because the benefits of the conflict were reaped by “other people” and not the community.

One important meeting which proved to be a milestone in the movement was a national movement facilitated by Boedhi Wijarjo and Dadang Trisasongko, from Yayasan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation), and Munir and Munarman from Commission for Missing People and Victims of Violence. By utilizing the national and international reputation of these two NGOs, Baku Bae movement was promoted to the community (Malik, 2003).

After this meeting, a series of workshops were conducted to stop the conflict. These workshops invited six leaders (consisting of leaders of guerilla warfare, village leaders, and religious leaders) from both parties. Afterward, continued efforts were made, which succeeded in stopping the conflict in the Moluccas. The following is a summary of the steps of Baku Bae movement, cited by Muluk and Malik (2009):

1. Conflict Transformation Workshop for Intellectuals

From May 2001, Baku Bae conducted a series of workshops for Moluccan academics to facilitate their concrete contribution to stop violence and to reconstruct the development of education in the Moluccas.

2. Youth Workshop

**18** On 9-11 July 2001, Baku Bae organized a workshop for 21 Moluccan youths focusing on how to understand the dynamic of the conflict and to establish peace in the Moluccas.

3. Conflict Transformation Workshop for Religious Leaders

On 23-28 July 2001, Baku Bae organized a workshop for Muslim scientists, Catholic and Protestant pastors. After some long debate, the participants concluded that the conflict in the Moluccas was not a conflict between religions but rather a conflict involving religious people. Religious symbols had been exploited and protected in certain ways by these elites.

4. **Lobby:** Leaders of the Moluccan Protestant Church/Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM)

On 30 October 2001, Baku Bae activists met with the synod, head, and coordinator of Crisis Center of the Moluccan Protestant Churches, to discuss the possibility of organizing a convention involving strategic parties interested in stopping the violence in the Moluccas.

5. **Lobby:** Head of Imarat Council of Maluku Muslims (BIMM)

On 7 November 2001, Baku Bae met with Ustadz Ali Fauzi, head of the Imarat Council of Maluku Muslims, to discuss the convention agenda.

6. **Meeting:** Governor of the Moluccas M. Saleh Latuconsina

On 9 November 2001, Baku Bae met with the Governor of the Moluccas to suggest that he becomes a key person in that convention, along with GPM and BIMM.

#### 7. **Meeting:** Intellectuals

On 22-26 October 2001, Baku Bae organized a meeting for educators and intellectuals to discuss their role, position, and effort in stopping the violence and to establish peace in the Moluccas.

#### 8. **Lobby:** Head of the Moluccan Military Command, Brigadier General Moestopo

On 12 November 2001, Baku Bae met with the head of the Moluccan military to suggest that he becomes a key source person for a meeting between the army, police, and civilians.

#### 9. Conflict Transformation Workshop for the Army, Police, and Civilians

In November 2001, Baku Bae facilitated two workshops for the army, police, and civilians; one among the Muslims and another in the Christian area. The workshop was intended to develop mutual awareness regarding SWOT analysis on efforts to stop violence in the Moluccas.

#### 10. Conflict Transformation Workshop for Lawyers

On 19 January 2002, Baku Bae organized a workshop for lawyers with the purpose to challenge them to strengthen the legal process for victims of the Moluccan conflict.

#### 11. Conflict Transformation Workshop for Latupatis (Village Head)

In July 2002, Baku Bae organized a workshop attended by 16 village heads (eight from Muslim villages and eight from Christian villages) to reflect on their role and position in planning the future of the Moluccas.

#### 12. Latupati Convention to Embrace the Future of the Moluccas

On 9-11 January 2003, Baku Bae and Pattimura University organized a convention for Latupatis to stop the conflict and to discuss the future of the Moluccas. The conference was attended by 148 participants – 79 Latupatis and 69 intellectuals, lawyers, reporters, religious scholars, NGO, refugees, and youths.

Oxfam Great Britain in Indonesia evaluated the Baku Bae movement in January 2003. In their unpublished internal report by Indrian Tagor Lubis, it was revealed that the effectiveness of this movement was based on their innovation in revitalizing and re-establishing the social wisdom of the community and empower local leaders in their approach. The evaluation also documented that Baku Bae had increased the awareness and expectation of the people of the Moluccas for peace in the future.

### **Role of Traditional Leaders in Resolving the Moluccan Conflict**

There were many efforts to resolve the conflict in the Moluccas. Efforts that had been done by the government in 1999 were not able to resolve it. However, from the many unsuccessful conflict resolutions, one approach was considered effective, which was conflict resolution through Baku Bae movement by empowering traditional leaders as actors in putting an end to the conflict. The Baku Bae movement was



different to programs developed by the government. In trying to resolve the conflict in the Moluccas, the Indonesian government used legal approach, security politics approach and economic approach which tended to ignore the identity division of the people who were in the conflict. Those who were involved by the government were political and religious elites. Such reconciliation approach is called a top-down approach which was considered a failure (Bar-Tal., 2009; Van der Merwe, 1999; Wessels, 2009).

Reconciliation efforts by Baku Bae Movement in the Moluccas was initiated in the middle of the year 2000. This movement did not involve political or government elites. This approach is better known as a bottom-up reconciliation (Muluk & Malik, 2009; Van Der Merwe, 1999). The Baku Bae Movement involved the participation of the grassroots or the middle to lower class who became perpetrators and victims of the conflict, one of which were the Raja. The Raja are leaders of villages who are considered as an important figure by the people of the Moluccas.

Prior to peace reconciliation efforts, the Raja joined the fight in defending their own groups. However, by the Baku Bae activists, the role of Raja who originated as perpetrators of conflict was changed into agents of peace. Raja or usually called traditional leaders were viewed as very important in the reconciliation process. According to their observation, in the Moluccan culture, the presence of traditional leaders is something that is inevitable. As a head or leader in a community, institution, organization, or even nation, oftentimes history cannot be separated from the presence of a leader (Gordijn & Stapel, 2008; Feldman & Valenty, 2001).

The people of the Moluccas experienced confusion during the conflict because on one side they were perpetrators of the conflict and on the other side, they were also victims of the conflict. Hence, it required figures that can break the deadlock and confusion. Here, the Baku Bae activists suspected that traditional leaders could become a bridge and a bond for people of the Moluccas who were divided into Muslims and Christians during the inter-religious conflict. Moreover, after further exploration, the role of leaders in Muslim and Christian communities in the Moluccas showed that they not only acted as village head but also had the authority to manage religious activities. The findings emphasized that traditional leaders in the Moluccas could really bridge the reconciliation of Muslims and Christians.

It is important to underline, that Raja or village leader was the most important part of the grassroots in the Moluccas. This fact showed that they could be expected to maximally influence the realization of reconciliation in the Moluccas. This was because traditional leaders were still heard by the community when the conflict was in progress; they became role models for the community. When the conflict was in progress, they were also the ones present in the frontline to defend their own group.

Especially in the Muslim community, figures, leaders, or village heads can also become an imam (leader) of a mosque. In the Christian community, the Raja share their power with priests. After understanding this cultural context, and to prevent religious conflict, in 2006 the Moluccas Latupati Council (house of Latupati representatives in the Moluccas) was developed to strengthen the position or role of leaders in the Moluccas in the Muslim and Christian communities. It was agreed upon that the representatives will not be used as an instrument and play in politics to seek power, but will act as a liaison or mediator between the government and the people of the Moluccas (middle power).

The participation of the Raja in reconciliation effort was made as an example/model in which the people were expected to take part in the reconciliation effort. In the process, the Raja can play a role in providing an understanding to their community that peace can happen. This is because the Raja is a figure who is highly respected and heard by their people. Every attitude and behavior of the Raja become a model and a reference for the attitude and behavior of their people. In addition, the Raja are

prototypes of their own people, so it is easy to build trust and obedience from their respective people. With the desire for peace from the Raja, this would ease the reconciliation process of the Moluccan people at the grassroots level.

## TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND SOCIAL IDENTITY OF THE MOLUCCAN PEOPLE

According to a study by Putra, Satriyanto, and Meinarno (2011), a great event cannot be separated from the figures or leaders present at that time. The active role of the traditional leaders in the Baku Bae movement became a central figure in encouraging the Moluccan community to embrace one social identity namely “The Moluccan community” and no longer divided into two groups which are “The Moluccan Muslim community” and “The Moluccan Christian community”. This is in line with what was said by Moscovici (2001) and Moscovici (2008) that common social identity will establish the same memory and understanding (Moscovici, 2001, 2008).

According to Tajfel (1982), social identity is part of an individual self-concept originating from their knowledge concerning membership in a social group along with the value and emotional significance of the membership. Social identity is the knowledge possessed by a member of the group about his group which is deemed to be in accordance with the identity that is in him (Tajfel, 1982). Its existence in groups will form an emotional bond between member and the group.

Social identity is related to involvement, care and pride from membership of a certain group. To explain social identity, there is an important related concept, which is social category. Turner (1985) and Tajfel (1982) and Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (2002) defined social category as the division of individuals based on race, class, job, gender, religion, etc. An individual is a member of various categories and social groups at the same time (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Categorization is a cognitive process to classify objects and events in certain meaningful categories (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Turner, 1985).

Moreover, Hogg and Reid (2006) articulated the role of norms in the perspective of social identity as the basis for many apparent communicative phenomena, explaining how the group norms represented as cognitive depend on the prototype context that captures the peculiar nature of the group. The same process that governs the psychological significance of different prototypes, and thus results in normative group behavior, can be used to understand the formation, perception, and diffusion of norms, as well as how some members of the group, for example, leaders, have a more normative effect than others.

According to the theory of social identity, a group is called “exist” psychologically when there is a group of people with the same self-concept as the main characteristic of the group’s social categories. The representation of this group is a group prototype or group of traits that defines the equations in the group and the group’s differences with other groups, especially those involving belief systems, attitudes, behaviors, and feelings. The group prototype is designed in such a way as to maximize group differences and minimize differences within the group (Hogg, 2004). In a group that has a clear and powerful prototype, a person with characteristics very similar to his group prototype will easily influence other members to perform activities that are in accordance with that person’s vision.

However, in groups that have clear prototypes, a person with characteristics corresponding to group prototypes can be a better leader than those whose characteristics are less suited to group prototypes. In a group whose prototype is less clear, the position of a leader is less strong, because there is no con-

sensus among its group members. According to Hogg (2004), to be a successful leader, in addition to having a group prototype, one must also exhibit behaviors that match the stereotype of a “leader” or leader schemas. Nevertheless, the influence of leader schemas on leadership success will be reduced if the group has a very clear prototype.

Individuals who symbolize the norms of their organization tend to be selected as leaders than other members, meaning, members whose attitude, beliefs, and tendency symbolize the group, are more likely to become leaders than others (Hains, Hogg, & Duck, 1997). Leadership that occurred in the Moluccas is in line with what was stated by Hains et al., (1997) in which traditional leaders are individuals who are customarily selected because they are trusted to symbolize the people of each village in the Moluccas. Traditional leaders are social leaders and systems rather than actual government institutions (Mthandeni, 2002).

There are, at least, four related mechanisms when leaders are native individuals from a group and those individuals also represent a unique symbol for the group, which in this discussion are traditional leaders because they are individuals who symbolize the norms of the group. First, group members consider traditional leaders to be motivated by the same needs as they are. They are more likely to believe the motive of this person (Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003). When traditional leaders express their attitude to playing an active role in the peace effort, then group members (village people) are more likely to believe the motive which becomes a goal from these traditional leaders.

Second, because of this trust, they will even accept leaders who support change. They consider the suggestions or initiatives from these leaders as a creative effort to fulfill traditional values and not as a tool to challenge these traditions. Meaning, these leaders are considered cooperative (De Cremer, van Dijke, & Mayer, 2010). When the reconciliation process was happening in the Moluccas, and these traditional leaders took an active role in the reconciliation effort, then members of each group considered the attitude of these traditional leaders in supporting the peace effort not as a tool to challenge the existing tradition, but rather as a creative effort in fulfilling traditional values.

Third, members of the group consider leaders who symbolize the group will clarify the identity of the group. Like the members, the leaders will try to distinguish the identity of other groups and emphasize the superiority of each group. In this manner, the need for individual social identity will be fulfilled (Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003) and look at the theory of social identity). Fourth, because these leaders symbolize each of their group, then they should have a positive individual attribute, such as charisma (Hogg, 2010). Hence, the social identity can be established through leaders who symbolize the overall characteristics of their members and can earn the full trust of their people; in this case, the Ras as traditional leaders.

Consistent with the social identity theory of leadership, Fielding and Hogg (1997) revealed that leaders who fit their group character are considered good by their followers, especially those who identify themselves with the group. These leaders are also considered more appropriate to their leadership position, more charismatic, and more persuasive than other leaders (Hains et al., 1997; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; Platow, Knippenberg, Haslam, Knippenberg, & Spears, 2006).

The participation of these traditional leaders in the peace reconciliation effort in the Moluccas was not without risk. These leaders were at risk of being abandoned by their followers and the greatest risk was being removed from their group or village. But, those risks were not occurred because those leaders were actively involved in the peace reconciliation effort and took the risk by showing specific goals. As



an illustration, leaders who violate the group norms are considered <sup>1</sup>effective if they sacrifice their own interest to support the status and strength of the group (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).

When the conflict occurred, people were confused on how to act, because the conflict continued to progress while they lose at the same time. The figures of traditional leaders became a solution to the confusion among the people. As described by Pierro, Cicero, Bonaiuto, van Knippenberg, and Kruglansk (2005), people are more likely to find leaders when they feel uncertain. <sup>14</sup>For example, when the decision-making process required clarity and certainty from a group, then prototypical leaders are considered more effective because they represent the expectation of group members.

## THE FUTURE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE MOLUCCAS

There are many examples in the world about traditional leaders who play an important role in the peace process in their respective regions. Nelson Mandela, for example, was recognized as a black leader in Africa who consistently fought against Apartheid politics and in 1994 was appointed as the first black president. With the example of Nelson Mandela as a traditional leader who represented black people in South Africa, he was able to guide his people to forgive the white people and to create peace in South Africa.

In India, Gandhi was the figure of a traditional leader who led the people's struggle to fight for Indian independence from British colonies. This gave inspiration to the people who were still colonized to fight for their right to freedom. In the process of reaching independence, people with different religions and tribes who lived in India at that time were united to help each other for the sake of the common interest, which was gaining their freedom. In 1947, the struggle of the people of India came to fruition, they gained independence. Although after that, many wanted the Hindus and Muslims to have their own country. After the independence, India broke out into two countries, namely India and Pakistan. After that, Gandhi had the chance to gain power, but he did not take the opportunity. Gandhi rejected the political office given to him by the congress. Instead he chose to spend his life in the Ashram.

While in Moluccas, the success of Baku Bae movement as an intervention in the form of peace reconciliation, as well as the important role of the Raja as traditional leaders in realizing peace, had made the Raja an important figure in the Moluccas. As a result, political parties are interested in attracting the Raja to become part of them, inviting them to jump into practical politics. This issue raises concern about the role of the Raja that can be rooted from the grassroots, because the role of the leader which is at the middle power level will vanish.

It is difficult to maintain the role of these traditional leaders as mediators between the people and the government, which should be maintained for political stability in the Moluccas. Lucrative offers from political parties in the form of wealth and fame, occasionally shook the faith of the traditional leaders to restrain themselves from joining a political party. As of this writing, the Raja are still in positive communication with Baku Bae activists. Through this communication, Baku Bae activists can still provide suggestions and views to the traditional leaders to stay between the people and the government. Hence, they are expected to not join any political party and remain as a representation of the social identity of their own group, which in this context is the people of their village.



## CONCLUSION

The Moluccan conflict occurred in 1999-2003, and various efforts were done to resolve the conflict. Those efforts were conducted by the local government, central government, local NGO, national NGO and individual experts in the field of conflict. One of the efforts which was considered successful in resolving the conflict was the *Baku Bae* movement. The *Baku Bae* movement involved the role of the grassroots, which was something that the previous movements did not do. One of the elements of the grassroots that was involved in the conflict reconciliation effort was the Raja (traditional leaders) from each area in the Moluccas.

The role of the Raja was so effective in the conflict reconciliation effort. The Raja became the bridge and the bond for people of the Moluccas which were divided into Muslims or Christians during the inter-religious conflict. The Raja provided understanding to their people that peace could happen and became the driving force for the emergence of a social identity that was lost, namely "The Moluccan community" and no longer be divided into two opposing identities which were "The Moluccan Muslim community" and "The Moluccan Christian community".

The Raja had played an important role in peace, development, administration and politics in the Moluccas. This was based on their role in representing the village and the closest authority to the community. The Raja also acted as guardians of custom or culture that symbolizes representation of group identity. The Raja were expected to be able to preserve the heritage of the group and make sure it passes down from generation to generation. Their role also included a judicial role in which they acted as interpreters of customary law and practice.

The role of traditional leaders in resolving conflicts in Moluccas can be tried in various areas where there is prolonged conflict. The role of traditional leaders can be affected if leaders are able to represent a group with very prototypes in terms of physical, attitudes, habits, values adopted, and also get more respect than the majority of group members, so that this traditional leader really describes the social identity of the community represented. Afterwards, hold meetings between traditional leaders as conflict reconciliation efforts, initially it is difficult to get conflict parties to sit peacefully at one table, but with patience, traditional leaders and *Baku Bae* with systematic steps can create peace in Moluccas.

After the success of the *Baku Bae* movement in creating peace in the Moluccas, the role of the Raja is still needed by the people to maintain peace. In addition, the Raja are respected and viewed as role models for their people. The role of the Raja as mediators between the government and the people of the Moluccas must be maintained, so that they can remain as traditional leaders who are able to accommodate the interest of their people as well as having the power to oversee government processes that take place in the Moluccas.

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