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**The Politics of Pemekaran:  
Some Preliminary Observations from Northern Sulawesi**

By Ehito Kimura  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Political Science  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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## Introduction



Let me begin on a tangent. Recently, the University of Sam Ratulangi in Manado, North Sulawesi hosted an unusual event, a seminar-fashion show. Billed as an academic conference on Minahasan culture, it began normally enough with three speakers who spoke on issues of local culture, colonial history, and more specifically about the history and revival of traditional Minahasan textiles. However, after a shortened question and answer session, the full second half of the event consisted of beautiful men and women sauntering down a makeshift runway to booming techno music, wearing ethnically inspired clothing from a well-known Jakartan fashion designer, Thomas Sigar.

The event fascinated me on several levels. First, it reflected a larger process of Minahasan cultural revival. We might argue that these cultural artifacts were either suppressed under the Dutch or simply lost their significance in the march towards modernity and further discouraged in the post-colonial era under the Indonesian state's centralizing tendencies. Only since the implementation of regional autonomy has the revival become possible. We might expect this process of revival to be occurring both across different fields (fashion, music, art, literature) and across space (Sumatra, Kalimantan, NTT, etc).

The structure of the event was also interesting. We could talk about how the academic part of the conference with its panel of experts on Minahasa represented the formation of academic capital that then infused the traditional cloth with a kind of authenticity. This authenticity in turn is critical for making the cloth legitimate and thus marketable on the national and global designer market. Thus we might think of this as the juxtaposition of academic scholarship and global capitalism brought together by local culture.

Lastly –and this is the point that interests me the most- I noticed that the organization promoting this clothing line, Himpunan Seni & Budaya Minahasa (HIMSA), is a Jakarta-based organization. Also, all the models in the fashion show were ethnically Manadoese (a point reiterated over and over) but all living and working in Jakarta. The academics at the conference too had built their careers outside North Sulawesi and had spent long bouts in Bandung (ITB) and Jakarta (LIPI). Thus the event blurred the lines between “center” and “periphery” in the efforts to create, revive, preserve, and promote Minahasan identity in the periphery.

This last point parallels to my own thoughts on local politics in Indonesia. The point here is that cultural revivalism is not an isolated process occurring just in the locality. Instead, the phenomenon is intricately connected to the so-called center, albeit in very different ways. Similarly, I want to understand local politics in Indonesia, not only as a localized phenomenon resulting from regional autonomy. We can also investigate what interactions of power are taking place between center and periphery, how those relationships have been transformed, and what the implications are for understanding the Indonesian state.

## **Research Question**

In this paper, I want to address these issues by looking at one particular aspect of decentralization and local politics, namely the process of pemekaran wilayah, or the multiplication of districts, taking place in Indonesia today. I suggest that we should understand pemekaran as a form of elite mobilization after a devolution of power.

Pemekaran is important for several reasons. First, in the context of regional autonomy and decentralization, a great deal of power has shifted to the local governments and therefore there is an increasing importance of local political actors. Second, because pemekaran wilayah is often based on ethnic or sub-ethnic lines, it may represent the ethnification of Indonesia, particularly of the outer islands. Third, pemekaran is putting fiscal and administrative pressures on the central government so much so that recent revisions to the decentralization laws have tried to curb its incidence.

There are two broad questions that we might ask about pemekaran wilayah. First, what are the causes of pemekaran wilayah, why is it taking place? Second, what are the impacts of pemekaran wilayah? The main topic I will address here is the causes of pemekaran wilayah as it is still premature to look comprehensively at its effects. But understanding the causes may also help us to understand its effects, and vice versa.

This paper will focus on observations from Northern Sulawesi based on field visits over the course of 2004 and 2005. The area provides an ideal case because of the diversity of the high incidence of pemekaran taking place at multiple levels. The area is also quite diverse in terms of ethnic and religious groups and allows us to see the relations between those groups in the context of pemekaran.

The case of North Sulawesi also illustrates how pemekaran is concentrated largely on the “outer islands” of Indonesia. Notably, pemekaran has not occurred at the same levels on Java and remains almost completely absent in Central and East Java. When doing research, I think it is important also to understand the non-case, where the event being investigated does *not* happen. Java provides an interesting non-case. Thus, as a subset of the question about the causes of pemekaran, this paper will also explore the sources of variation. Why is pemekaran so concentrated on the Outer Islands?

In the following sections, I will review some of the proposed explanations for pemekaran. Then I will explore how the proposed explanations fit with the case of Northern Sulawesi. I suggest that although the varied explanations do parallel the case of Northern Sulawesi, we can do better and propose a more process-driven understanding of why pemekaran is taking place. I conclude with some reflections about historical aspects of the Indonesian state.

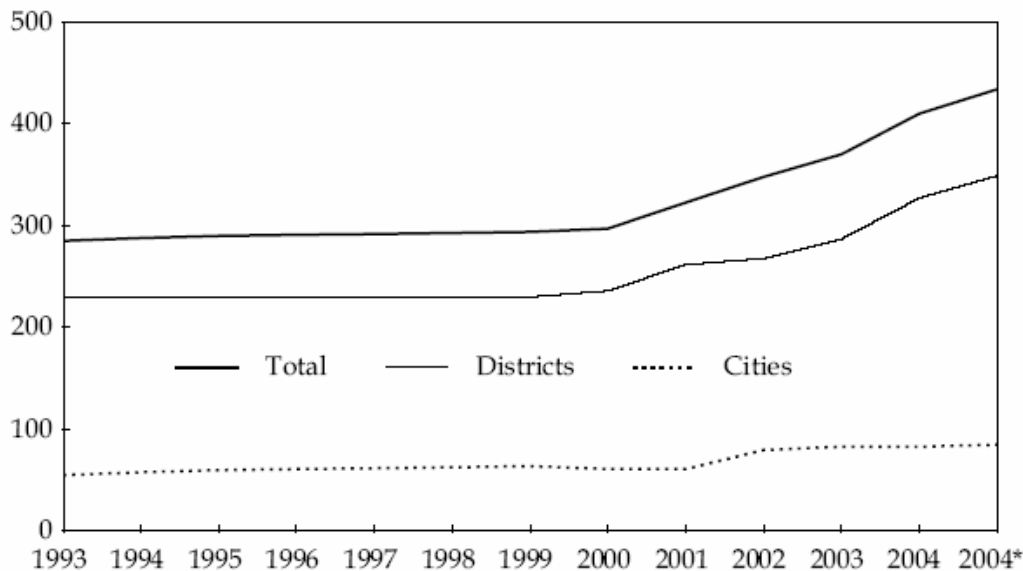
## **Background and Proposed Explanations**

“Pemekaran wilayah” literally translates into English as the “blossoming of regions.” The phrase is more appropriate than the term “redistricting” because it captures both the redrawing of territorial lines as well as the consequential growth in administrative units.

Pemekaran is happening at every level of administration from the province to the kabupaten, the kecamatan, the village, and even to the level of neighborhood units.

Pemekaran wilayah is not a new phenomenon. The carving of multiple provinces out of one large province, for example, occurred in the wake of Indonesia's independence as the government attempted to centralize and streamline administration throughout the country. However, the incidence of pemekaran wilayah has risen sharply since the end of the New Order regime in 1999 and has continued largely unabated. The number of provinces has increased from 23 in 1999 to 31 today. The number of districts (municipalities and cities) has increased from around 290 to nearly 450 over the same period. Only recently, through the revised decentralization laws of 2004 (Laws 32 and 33) has the central government tried to put a stop to the practice.

FIGURE 1 *Indonesia's Local Governments*



\*The second figure for 2004 (434) is for districts approved for 2004, the first (410) for those confirmed by law for 2004.

Source: Fitriani, Hofman, and Kaiser, 2005

A common justification for pemekaran wilayah is that it increases economic efficiency through improved service delivery. Numerous public officials including key figures in the DPR and the Ministry of Home Affairs argued that pemekaran, like decentralization brings government 'closer to the people' and thereby lets public officials know the needs of the locality.

This explanation at first seems to have some merit. The most successful regions to split off have been those that are very large in area. In Java, where the areas of kabupaten seem to be much smaller, there has been little movement for pemekaran. Gorontalo in North Sulawesi, as we shall see, was a very large administrative area occupying making up more than half of Northern Sulawesi. However, it is important to note that administrative efficiency does not explain the issue of timing. If increased public service delivery were the only reason, then pemekaran could have occurred more extensively

throughout Indonesia's history instead of suddenly in the 1990s and 2000s. It seems a more political explanation is needed to understand the phenomenon of pemekaran.

The main argument of this paper is that pemekaran wilayah is an elite-led phenomenon where previously marginalized ethnic elites seek to increase their power and influence through access to political office afforded by the creation of new territorial units. It is justified and legitimized along developmental grounds, largely that it will increase economic and political efficiency by bringing the government closer to the people and by bringing development funds from Jakarta. Movements for pemekaran are enabled by ethnic differentiation and ethnic hierarchy that exists in a province or kabupaten, particularly in the outer islands. Ethnicity is further used as a tool for mobilization through discourse and through promises of ethnic patronage that results in among other phenomenon, putra daerah (regional affirmative action). Finally, pemekaran is successful particularly when there are strong patronage networks between the region and Jakarta, most often mediated by political party interests.

The implications of this argument are that the phenomenon of pemekaran needs to be seen as a profoundly political process rather than a strictly administrative one, as some claim. Though its justifications are for increased administration and increased development funds from Jakarta, there are clear beneficiaries at both the local and national level. Thus I also suggest that pemekaran is not simply a reaction of outer island regions against the central state but rather the result of intra-elite rivalry among the provinces and kabupaten. Sakai (Kingsbury and Aveling 2003: 189) makes a similar point about the experience of pemekaran in Bangka-Belitung.

Thus this paper attempts to insert a relational dimension into the study of local politics. The literature on state formation and state society relations often assumes a zero sum relationship between the central state and the local state or societal elites: a strong center implies a weak periphery and vice versa. In fact, the phenomenon of *pemekaran* suggests a more complex relationship where local politics is intricately tied to national level politics. This implies a positive – sum relationship where both sides make gains.

At the same time this paper also outlines the complex dynamic to the state's centralizing tendencies under the New Order. Conventional explanations have tended to see Java as the exemplary center and the Outer Islands as the periphery to be assimilated. My analysis of the New Order state suggests that there was unevenness in the outer islands where some ethnic groups were given more authority than others. Minahasans then were in some ways political brokers, subservient to the state, but dominant in their own region. For lack of a better term, I call this an indirect form of state centralization. These relationships during the New Order created ethnic hierarchies in the regions which then have led to the push for new territorial units. By extension, my argument is that these kinds of dynamics did not occur on Java.

More broadly then, this paper critiques the assumptions of state formation and state building as an internally uniform process of territorial centralization. Instead, it attempts to disaggregate the process of state building and examining local units beneath the national state to give a more sophisticated if complex account of center-periphery

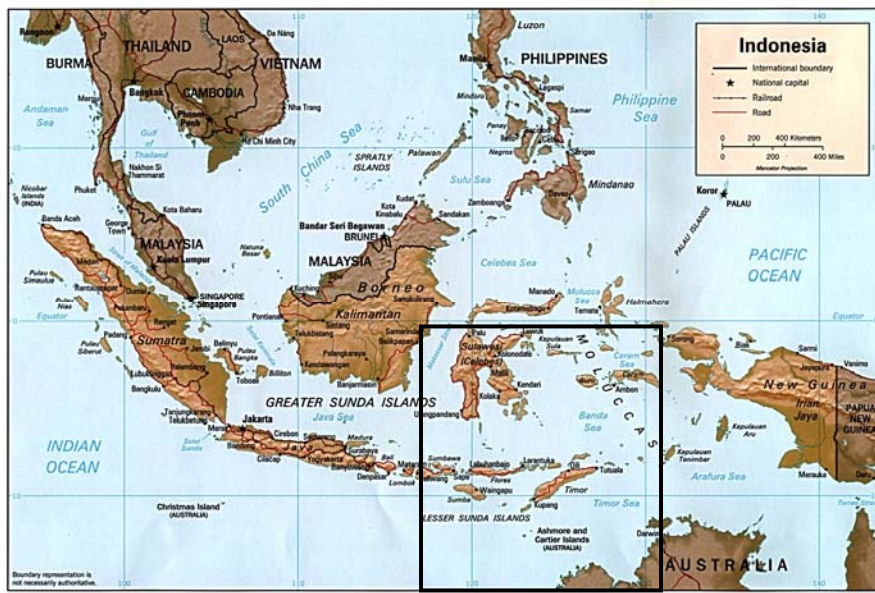
relations. It illustrates the variable ways in which states attempt to consolidate power and the implications of that variation for local power and autonomy.

### **Preliminary Observations from Northern Sulawesi**

As noted earlier, North Sulawesi is an ideal case to examine pemekaran both because of its high-incidence and its diversity. Though no single region can represent Indonesia's diversity as a whole, the political dynamics between different groups in North Sulawesi may offer insight to dynamics taking place elsewhere in the archipelago.

Very briefly, the island of Sulawesi, known also as Celebes lies east of Kalimantan and west of the Maluku and South of the Philippines. The earliest westerners to reach the northern area were the Portuguese and Spanish, first via Makassar in the south and later through the ports in Manado on the northern tips of the island. Spanish and Portuguese rule was relatively limited as the area fell under the influence of the Ternate Sultanate in the neighboring Maluku.

In the late early 1600s, the Dutch gained influence in the region and succeeded in toppling the Ternate Sultanate. They proceeded to sign a pact with Minahasan rulers to throw out the Spanish and Portuguese in the area. The Dutch and the Minahasans signed a treaty which consolidated Dutch rule for the next three centuries. North Sulawesi technically fell under the authority of the governor general of the Maluku, but the Manado (Minahasa) Residency with its close history with the Dutch was the only one ruled directly by the Dutch. Rarely did the Dutch interfere in the affairs of the other residencies, Gorontalo, Kawandang, Sangir, Talaud, and Bolaang Mongondow (Schouten 1998).





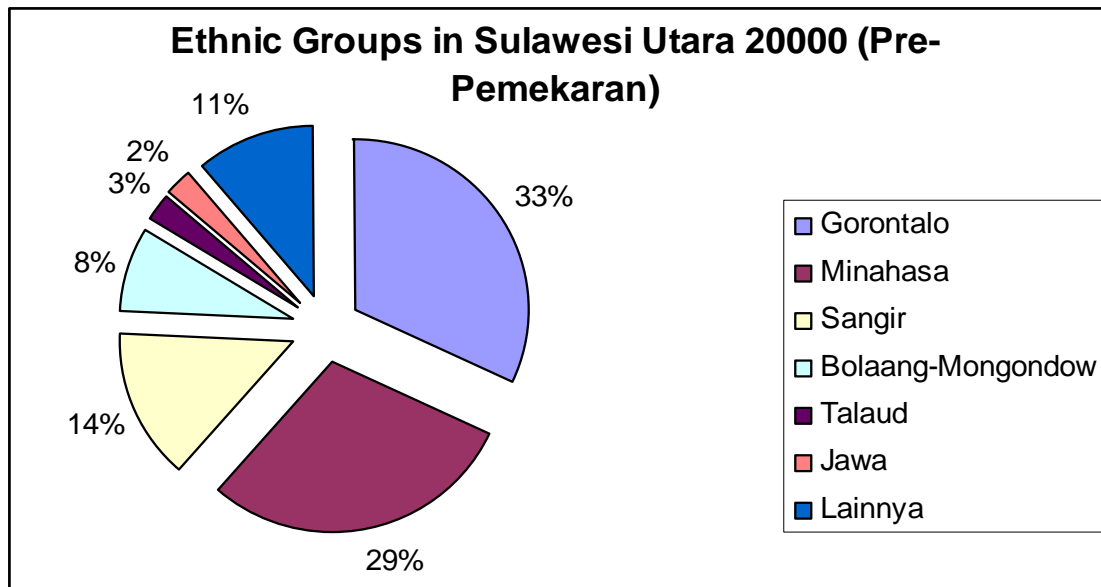
***Ethnic Groups in Northern Sulawesi***

Today the population of Sulawesi Utara hovers near three million people and can be roughly divided into six major ethnic groups, the Minahasa, Gorontalo, Bolaang-Mongondow, Sangir, and Talaud. It is important to note that these identities are malleable and often consist of sub-ethnic identities as well. For example, there are multiple languages in Minahasa that correlate to some eight different sub-ethnic groups. Minahasa, which means ‘united’ seems to be an oppositional identity of different groups that formed during its political rivalry with Bolaang-Mongondow to its south during colonial times. Colonial occupation also had direct influence on strengthening ethnic categories.

**Ethnic Groups in Sulawesi Utara in 2000**

Gorontalo	33%	897235
Minahasa	29%	824700
Sangir	14%	396810
Bolaang-Mongondow	8%	224749
Talaud	3%	79838
Jawa	2%	64619
Lainnya	11%	314735
Total	100%	2802686

*Source: BPS 2000*



*Source: BPS 2000*

**Territorial Characteristics of Sulut**

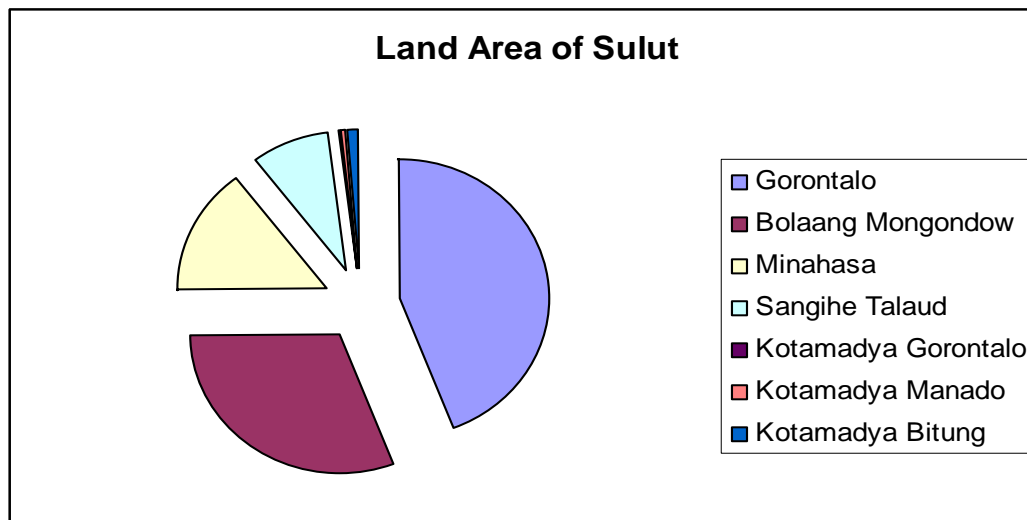
Territorially, these ethnic groups occupied four kabupatens -Minahasa, Gorontalo, Sangir-Talaud, and Bolaang-Mongondow- and three cities –Gorontalo, Manado, and Bitung. These kabupatens corresponded roughly with the ethnic groups outlined above. Gorontalo had the largest land area and lay in the southern part of the province. Bolaang-Mongondow lay to its north east. Minahasa was on the northern tip of Sulawesi. And Sangihe and Talaud, jointly one kabupaten, were islands just south of the Philippines.



### Kabupaten and Kotamadya by Size 2000 (Pre-Pemekaran)

Kabupaten/Regency	Km2	%
Gorontalo	12150.65	44.2
Bolaang Mongondow	8358.04	30.41
Minahasa	4188.94	15.24
Sangihe Talaud	2263.95	8.24
<b>Kotamadya/Municipality</b>		
Gorontalo	64.8	0.24
Manado	157.25	0.57
Bitung	304	1.11
Jumlah / Total	27487.63	100.01

Source: BPS 2000

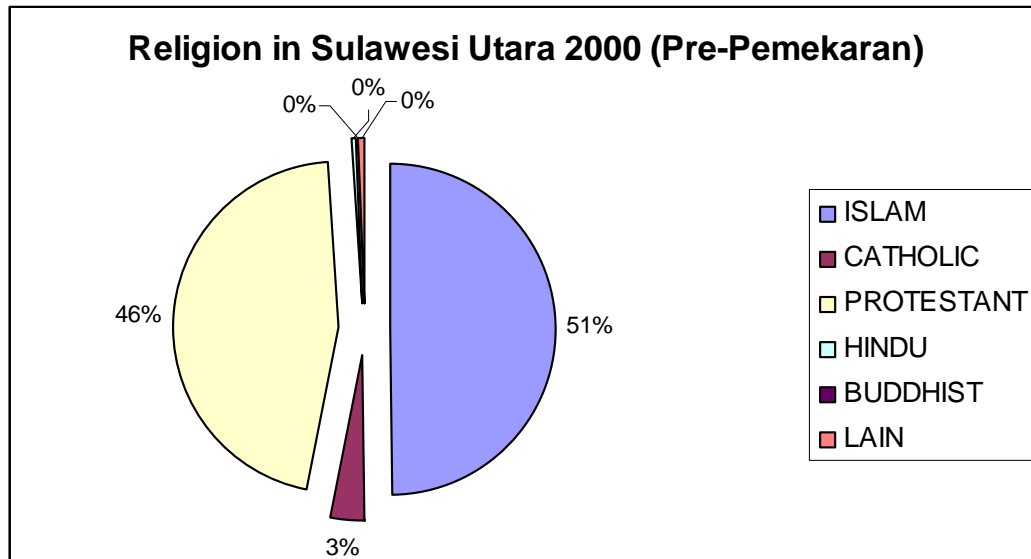


Source: BPS 2000

Religion in Sulawesi Utara is distinct from other areas of Indonesia for its high numbers of Christians. In 2000, about fifty percent of the population was Christian, mainly in the northern part among the Minahasa, Sangihe, and Talauds. Portuguese Jesuits had been around the area since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century but they were not strong presence. In the 1820s the arrival of two Dutch missionaries from the Calvinist organization, the Netherlands Missionary Society (Henley 1996: 6) marked the beginning of a mass campaign to convert the region to Christianity. By the 1860s, this work was nearly complete and vast majority of Minahasans were Christianized.

Meanwhile, the southern areas of the region, particularly Gorontalo and Bolaang Mongondow remained staunchly Muslim. Islam climbed to Gorontalo and Bolaang Mongondow from the south in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of the Kingdom of Gowa (later renamed Ujung Pandang and then Makassar). In 1604, the ruler of Gowa converted to Islam and imposed the religion on neighboring areas under his influence.

These two historical processes left North Sulawesi with a religiously split population: Christianity thrived in the north among the Minahasans and the Sangirs and Talauds, while Islam was strong in southern area of Bolaang-Mongondow and Gorontalo.



### **Sulawesi Utara in the Era of Otonomi Daerah**

Today the administrative landscape of North Sulawesi has changed considerably. Gorontalo has broken away from the province altogether and formed its own province. Minahasa split into three different kabupaten, north, south, and induk. Talaud split from Sangihe to form its own kabupaten. And in Bolaang-Mongodow there are a number of movements underway to subdivide the kabupaten into several kabupaten. All of this is taking place within the context of an overarching political movement to create three different provinces out of present-day Northern Sulawesi: In an extreme scenario, a single province with four kabupaten four years ago could become four different provinces and some fifteen kabupaten. In the next section, I will review how these movements for pemekaran wilayah have taken place.

### ***Minahasa***

As noted above, Minahasa is a Christian dominated region in the northern part of North Sulawesi province. A critical trading post for the Dutch, Minahasa was seen historically as loyal to the Dutch colonialists. Minahasan soldiers fought on the Dutch side when pacifying rebellion in the Java War (1825-1830) for example, and there was even a movement for making the area the twelfth province (Twaalfe Provincie) of the Netherlands. Later in the post-independence period, Minahasa played an active part in PRRI-Permesta rebellion of the late 1950s where rebels demanded a more balanced relationship between Jakarta and the Outer Islands.

As in other areas, we can talk about two processes of pemekaran taking place in Minahasa, the movement for larger Minahasan autonomy and the movement to carve Minahasa into multiple regions. The movement for Minahasa to become its own province was quite strong about five years ago when there was much more instability and

violence in Indonesia. There were some from Minahasa who say that if Indonesia were to become an Islamic state and adopt Shar'ia law, Minahasa would secede from the Republic. A more common proposal was for Minahasa to become its own province, Minahasa Raya. This movement too lost steam as it became clear that Indonesia would continue to embrace a secular form of government.

Pemekaran has been more successful *within* Minahasa so that now there are three kabupatens, Minahasa Induk (the 'mother' kabupaten), Minahasa Selatan (South Minahasa), and Minahasa Utara (North Minahasa). The first internal split came from South Minahasa. Informants claimed that there had been aspirations for their own administrative areas since the 1970s. They also noted it was necessary both for reasons of administration (its too far to travel the long and winding roads to the north to fulfill various administrative tasks) and identity (southern Minahasa has distinct sub-ethnic groups).

But there is clearly an elite politics behind pemekaran in South Minahasa as well. The bupati of the "mother" kabupaten opposed the split because he was concerned that ceding the territories threatened his electoral survival. Ordinarily, the process must be approved by the local legislature, the provincial legislature, advanced to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and ultimately after technical analysis, must be proposed as a law by the president. However, because of the bupati's opposition, the entire bureaucratic process was bypassed and brought before the legislative body known as Komisi II, which is in charge of affairs related to regional autonomy generally, and pemekaran wilayah specifically. Komisi II went ahead and drafted and approved the law for South Minahasa to become its own territory without having to gain approval of the local level legislatures and executives.

In 2003, North Minahasa also split off and became its own kabupaten. The dynamics of this case are similar to the South. It is justified by administrative and sub-ethnic differences, but a close look at the new legislative members and executives suggest a political dimension as well. For example, some of the main supporters and campaigners for pemekaran in Minahasa actually ended up in the legislatures of the new kabupaten. In addition, there are two other movements, one for a Central Minahasa and one for a Southeastern Minahasa that are still pending. The movement for Central Minahasa apparently emerges because originally the area was meant to be included in the break away kabupaten of South Minahasa but remained part of Minahasa proper as a compromise with the bupati.

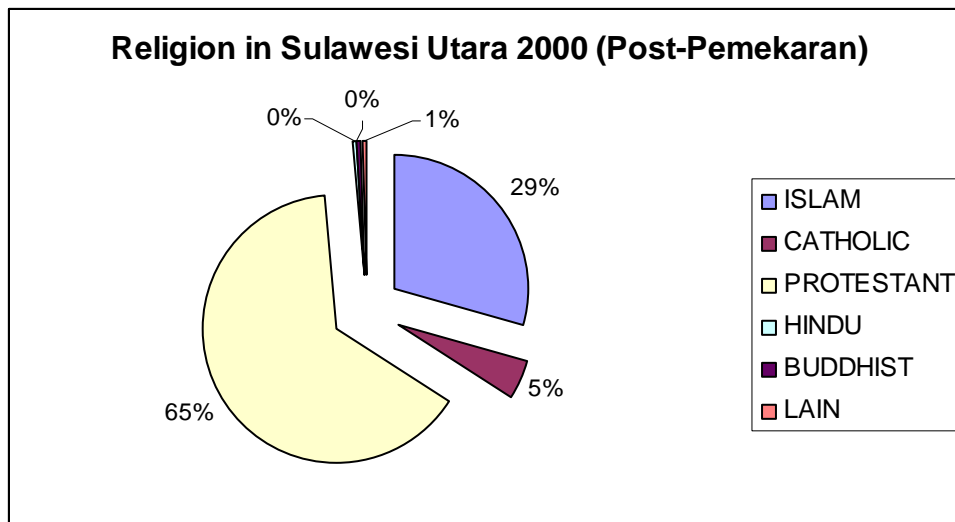
The case of Minahasa illustrates how pemekaran occurs at multiple levels. On the one hand, there is the tension between the Indonesian state and Minahasa's concern for its minority status. Independence or at least autonomy was seen as a way to preserve Minahasan identity in the face of uncertainty during Indonesia's transition. At the same time we see movements to split up Minahasa kabupaten. At first, this may seem like contradictory set of processes. But given that there are a minimum number of kabupaten required to create a province, provincial level and kabupaten level interests are fulfilled by these multiple processes. Kabupaten level pemekaran provides new positions for failed elites in Minahasa induk at both the executive and legislative levels. Thus we can

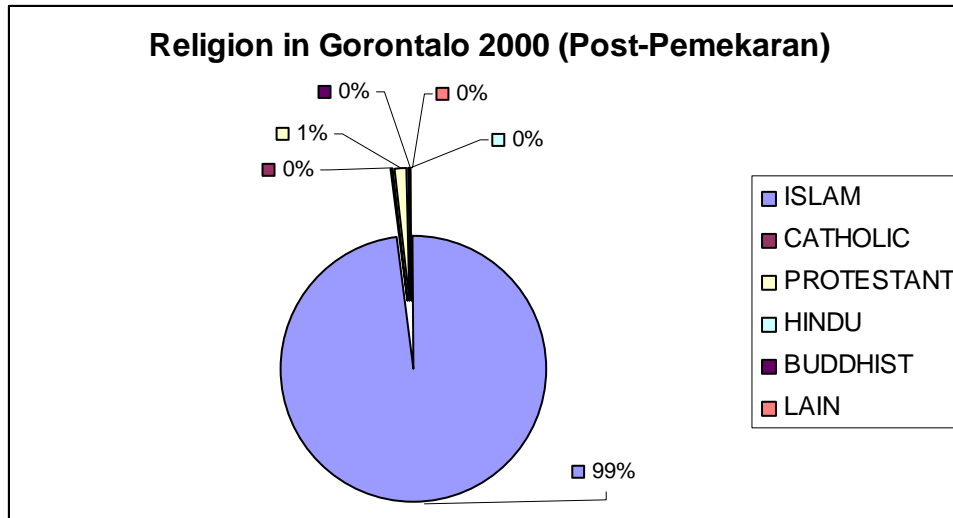
see that the movements for more Minahasan autonomy, and the movements within Minahasa are not contradictory movements as we might expect, but rather, working in concert with one another.

### ***Gorontalo***

The most prominent well-known case of pemekaran that took place in Northern Sulawesi was Gorontalo which is the only successful case achieving province-hood in the region. Gorontalo's split from the rest of the province was one of the earliest in post-Suharto Indonesia. The legislation at the DPR was passed in 2000 (Law Number 38) and the official declaration occurred on 16 February 2001.

The case Gorontalo suggests that a major justification for separating from Northern Sulawesi was a feeling of marginalization by a Minahasa dominated province. Politically, Gorontaloese resented the fact that although they had the largest population and the largest land area, Minahasans occupied the key positions in government. Economically, Gorontaloese informants vented that development funds often did not reach their area in the amounts that they were entitled to. One respondent described Gorontaloese as "anak tiri" or neglected children. And the difference in religion between Gorontalo and Minahasa proved a key factor as well.





The politics of Gorontalo's success in gaining its own province is intriguing. Several informants said that the early success was due to prominent national level politicians who pushed the process along. One of the main actors seems to have been former president Habibie. Although Habibie is often said to be from South Sulawesi, many informants told me that he had family roots in Gorontalo. I do not know exactly what kind of role he played or who he might have influenced. Apparently, the wife of General Wiranto is also from Gorontalo. Because her husband is a prominent General and because the military still had seats in the legislative at the time, this pressure also helped to expedite the process. ICMI also allegedly played an important role in pushing for pemekaran.

### ***Sangir and Talaud***

Sangir and Talaud are two sets of islands that were under the same administrative unit since the formation of the Indonesian Republic. However, ethnically and culturally, the Sangirese and Talauds claim to be quite different. The Sangir islands are bigger than their Talaud counterparts and they are more populous. Hence, the capital of the kabupaten was placed in Tahuna on the island of Sangihe. This upset the Talauds who complained of inconvenience, inefficiency, and most of all discrimination. The movement to split off Talaud from Sanghir into its own kabupaten was apparently in existence since the 1950s, but only became a reality after the end of the New Order and the implementation of decentralization.

In addition, a few scattered islands that like to the south of the main Sangihe islands, namely Siaou, Tagulandang, and Biaro are also in contention to become a separate kabupaten. Though somewhat different in language and cultures from the northern main island, it would be an exaggeration to say that the people of these islands are seeking a new territory in order to redress past discrimination. Instead it may be a way to capitalize on new opportunities for elites after seeing the success of Talaud's split.

In the meantime, there is also a movement to create a single province out of these island kabuatens. The proposed province would be called Nusa Utara and already proponents have formed a Congress Nusa Utara which met in March of 2005. This movement seems to be pushed largely by Sangirese and when I ask the Talauds I met whether they support

such an initiative, most were hesitant. My sense is that the memory of being attached to the Sangirese is too close for many Talauds. Meanwhile, the Sangirese feel they have been discriminated against by the Minahasa's and see the creation of Nusa Utara as one way to gain positions of power they have been until now deprived.

Thus the Sangir Talaud case thus illustrates yet another level of power relationships in North Sulawesi, while the Minahasans feel minority status in Indonesia, and Gorontaloese and Sangirs feel minority status in North Sulawesi, the grievance of the Talaud is that the Sangirese are politically dominant.

### ***Bolaang-Mongondow***

Finally, Bolaang-Mongondow is also a largely Muslim region lying between the area of Minahasa and Gorontalo. When Gorontalo broke away from Sulawesi Utara, there was discussion of Bolaang Mongodow joining the split based on the similarity of religion. Within Bolaang-Mongdow now, there are several movements to create new kabupaten. In particular there is a major move to create a Kota Kotamobagu and a kabupaten Bolmong Utara. But in recent months there have also been increased initiatives for a Bolmong Selatan and Bolmong Timur.

One legislator from Bolmong argued that the kabupaten level pemekaran was happening for reasons of administrative efficiency coupled with sub-ethnic identity. Another leader in the DPRD of Bolmong noted quite frankly that Bolmong was seeking to become its own province because of the development funds windfall from the central government. After the split from Gorontalo it sees itself in the minority with the largely dominant Christian population in Sulut. Furthermore, the relationship between Minahasa and Bolmong has faced challenges due to a border dispute between Minahasa Selatan and northern Bolmong, and also due to a conflict in an election to the DPD. Thus, as in other areas, another overarching reason that it is happening is promoters want to fulfill the requirements for the minimum number of kabupaten in order to become a province.

Despite some similarities to Gorontalo in terms of religion and other grievances with Minahasa, the case of Bolaang Mongondow may also represent a case of failure. Part of this may be that they have not fulfilled all the administrative criteria to become a new province. However, the lack of political heavyweights behind their cause may also be a significant factor.

### **Discussion**

Given the varying experiences of the sub-regions in Northern Sulawesi (including Gorontalo), what does this say about the hypotheses for pemekaran we put forth above? First, the example of Northern Sulawesi illustrates that complexity of multiple factors involved in pemekaran. No single one of the reasons listed in the hypothesis can account for all the pemekaran taking place. Furthermore, it is easy to see that the reasons are not mutually exclusive from each other, that is, they may occur in some combination. For example, ethnic identity may be closely linked to a desire for more development funds because they were previously deprived of those benefits. This seems to be the case for the movement in Gorontalo, for example.

I would argue that the evidence suggests pemekaran has become a way for political elites who have been traditionally marginalized from the bases of power to gain access to public offices. By suggesting the pemekaran is an elite-phenomenon, I was to proceed cautiously, and not immediately dismiss the importance of ethnicity and religious factors in explaining pemekaran.

One possible line of argument is that elites are by their nature, rent-seeking creatures. They seek to maximize revenue which is achieved through positions in the government where they can extract resources both legal (taxes) and illegal (corruption). It is also clear both in North Sulawesi and that positions in legislatures bring personal benefits and opportunities for patronage. Thus, elites who seek to maximize their revenue and political influence manipulate ethnic and religious sentiments for their own ends.

Although I think there is truth to this, I would make a softer instrumentalist argument about the elite-led nature of pemekaran that also incorporates a historical context. I suggest that the New Order's centralization strategy in North Sulawesi is one where the domination of Minahasans over other non-Minahasans in government affairs continued to flourish. The strategy of the central state was one of indirect rule. I borrow the term 'indirect rule' from Furnivall who compared Dutch and British colonial policies in Indonesia and Burman respectively (Furnivall 1956). I suggest that the New Order ruled Indonesia's regions by ceding positions of authority to Minahasans, who were the most educated and well off in the province, which fostered resentment of the other ethnic elites.

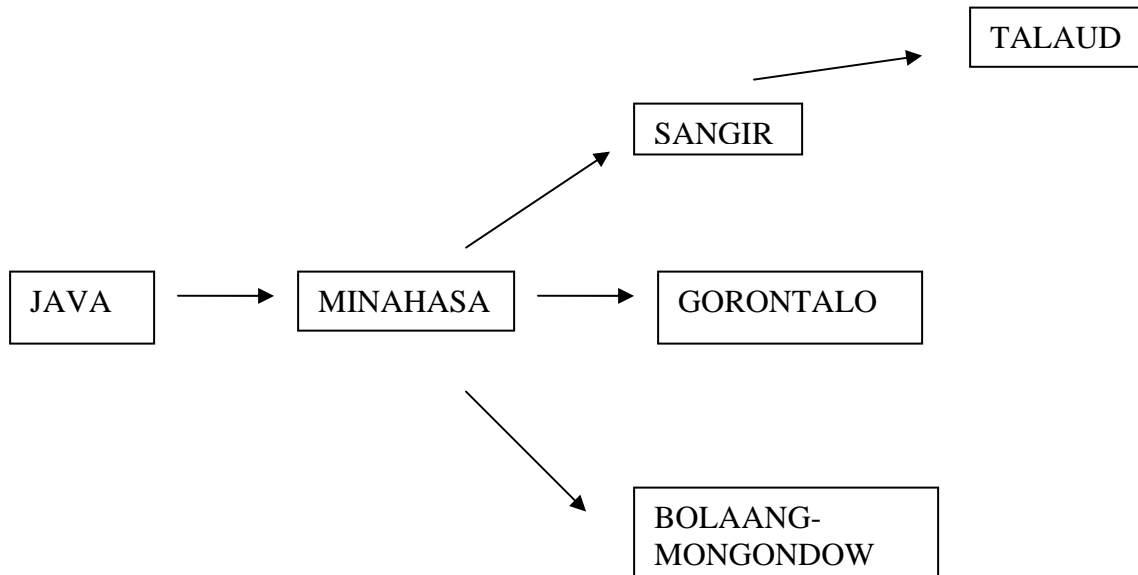
Note that almost every governor in Northern Sulawesi has been Minahasan. Minahasans also tended to dominate the bureaucracy disproportionately. To be sure, there were some power-sharing features. The vice governor or the head of the provincial legislature might have usually been from Bolaang Mongondow or Gorontalo or Sangir, but even in that context, the Minahasans were usually first among equals. Geographically, the capital city was closest to Minahasa and lay quite far from other kabupaten.

#### Governors of North Sulawesi 1961-2005

AA Baramuli SH	1961-1962	Sangir/Makassar
FJ Tumbelaka	1962-1965	Minahasa
Sunandar Prijosoedarmo	1966 (pejabat)	Java
Abdullah Amu	1966-1967 (pejabat)	?
HV Worang	1967-1978	Minahasa
Willy Lasut	1978-1979	Minahasa
Erman Harirustaman	1979-1980 (pejabat)	?
GH Mantik	1980-1985	Minahasa
CJ Rantung	1985-1995	Minahasa
EE Mangindaan	1995-2000	Minahasa
AJ Sondakh	2000-2005	Minahasa
H Sarundayang	2005-	Minahasa

Source: (Sulawesi Utara (Indonesia) and Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah 2004)

### Simplified Authority Structure of Governance under the New Order in North Sulawesi



### Governors of North Sulawesi 1961-2005

AA Baramuli SH	1961-1962	Sangir/Makassar
FJ Tumbelaka	1962-1965	Minahasa
Sunandar Prijosoedarmo	1966 (pejabat)	Java
Abdullah Amu	1966-1967 (pejabat)	?
HV Worang	1967-1978	Minahasa
Willy Lasut	1978-1979	Minahasa
Erman Harirustaman	1979-1980 (pejabat)	?
GH Mantik	1980-1985	Minahasa
CJ Rantung	1985-1995	Minahasa
EE Mangindaan	1995-2000	Minahasa
AJ Sondakh	2000-2005	Minahasa
H Sarundayang	2005-	Minahasa

Source: (Sulawesi Utara (Indonesia) and Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah 2004)

Thus a soft-instrumental argument suggests that ethnicity is not simply a tool but also a fundamental basis of inequality and marginalization. My argument is that a devolution of power and the increased autonomy of the regions has given these previously marginalized elites new opportunities to carve out positions of influence for themselves.

It is not a unique argument that elite interests are driven by the desire to rectify the elite domination of one ethnic group and to create opportunities for those marginalized elites to occupy their own executive and legislative positions. David Brown has made similar arguments about ethnic rebellion in Southeast Asia (1988), Van Klinken has made similar observations in Maluku and ethnic violence there (2001), and political sociologists such as Gould have also made such observations in terms of analyzing the



relationship between state centralization and political contention (1996). My suggestion is that similar forms of rationales are at play in the demand for new territories.

If elite marginalization is a driving cause of pemekaran, then it also explains its prevalence in the outer islands, and its occurrence at multiple levels of administration. Some territories may be reacting to the overly Javanese influence of New Order rule. But if rule was also “indirect”, then we can understand pemekaran as an attempt to break away from the regional hegemon (excuse the term) and actually get closer to Jakarta and fit into Indonesia.

As we have seen, these dynamics may be paralleled at the kabupaten level for three reasons. First there may be sub-ethnic rivalries among elites that emerging in the context of decentralization. Second, the main unit of administration under the 1999 decentralization laws was the kabupaten. And lastly, the incentive to create new provinces may be fueling the incentive to create new kabupatens because each new province requires a minimum number of kabupaten. These factors and their confluence may drive provincial and kabupaten level elites to work together. Thus we can understand the simultaneity of province and kabupaten level pemekaran but also the way in which they are related.

Finally, I want to suggest that these intra-elite conflicts are also occurring in the context of a nationwide struggle between major political parties. In particular, I would argue that pemekaran is a major strategy of Golkar and PDIP to strengthen their political foothold in the local areas. Though the calculations are quite rough, the chart below shows how Golkar has been the biggest beneficiary of pemekaran at least in absolute terms. PDI-P has also been a major beneficiary.

Political Parties-Seats Gained in DPR-RI for New Provinces in 2004 Elections

Partai	Seats	Pulau Riau	Grontalo	Bangka Belitung	Banten	Banten II	Maluku Utara	Irjan Bar.	Total Gained
PNI	1								
PBSD	0								
PBB	11			1	1				2
MRDKA	0								
PPP	58		1		1	1			3
PDK	5						1	1	2
PIB	0								
PNBK	1								
DMKRT	57				1	1			2
PKPI	1								
PPDI	1								
PNUI	0								
PAN	52	1			1	1			3
PKPB	2								
PKB	52				1	1			2
PKS	45				1	2	1		4
PBR	13								

PDIP	109	1		1	2	2		1	7
PDS	12								
GLKAR	128	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	11
PNCSLA	0								
PSI	0								
PPD	0								
PLOPOR	2								
Jumlah	550	3	3	3	11	10	3	3	36

Source: KPU 2005

This is only based on provincial level data for the national legislature. It would also be useful to see how various parties fared in the DPRD Level I and Level II elections and the more recent local direct elections (PILKADA). The overall point however is that there is clearly a national stake in pemekaran that is mediated through a very centralized political party structure.

To what extent can one generalize from the experience of North Sulawesi to the rest of Indonesia? I suggest that full confirmation is requires more indepth case studies in other parts of the archipelago. For example, Sakai (Kingsbury and Aveling 2003: 189) has made a similar findings about the experience of pemekaran in Bangka-Belitung.

However, we can gain partial confirmation through some large-n statistical analysis undertaken by researchers at the World Bank. Fitriani, Kaiser, and Hofman (2005) have written a detailed study of pemekaran from a large-n statistical framework and present a nice set of hypotheses and then use a dataset that they created to attempt to confirm or reject their various points. Their independent variables include rent-seeking, administrative efficiency, ethnic revivalism, and fiscal spoils.

The results of the analysis are at times confusing. For example, they make a qualified conclusion about 'fiscal spoils' saying it was more important in 'pre-decentralization' (meaning pre-2001) pemekaran rather than 'post-decentralization' (post-2001) pemekaran (2005: 75). Bureaucratic rent-seeking indicators show opposite trends between pre and post-decentralization. The justification for the pre and post-pemekaran distinction seems largely data driven and it is difficult to assess the theoretical reasons why these differences are occurring.

However, they do find conclusive evidence that pemekaran is occurring along ethnic lines, and tends to result in ethnic clustering. This supports a hypothesis that ethnicity is a key rationale in explaining pemekaran. To be sure it does not confirm an elite led theory, but even to understand its ethnic patterns tells us that there is more to pemekaran than the a political administrative explanations put forth by economists and public officials.

## Conclusion

To summarize, I have suggested that pemekaran is an elite-led phenomenon based on the experiences of marginalization of some elites at the expense of others. The basis of this marginalization was ethnic and religious, in the case of North Sulawesi it was Minahasan

dominance over other groups. Thus decentralization and pemekaran more specifically offers a way to rectify that marginality. The bases of mobilization was therefore cultural, the justification administration, and the success dependent on patronage links with the center, often through political parties.

This paper has suggested that the legacy of the Suharto regime's policies of state centralization laid the foundations for the rise in pemekaran wilayah. Arguably, pemekaran represents one kind of mobilization that, among other things, leads to the territorial fragmentation of the archipelago. Whether this process is a threat to the state ideology of a unitary state (NKRI or Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia), or whether it represents a compact with elites where autonomy exchanged for membership in the Indonesian nation-state has yet to be seen.

This paper has also suggested that pemekaran is not simply a reaction of outer island regions against the central state but rather the result of intra-elite rivalry among the provinces and kabupaten in the periphery. The Java-Outer Island framework is vastly oversimplified. Thus, more broadly, it has also tried to offer a revisionist account of state centralization and state building theories by suggesting that the processes of territorial consolidation in states is a variable process rather than a uniform one. Strategies employing indirect rule and cooptation are useful when a region contains regional group hierarchies. Where such hierarchies are less evident, forms of direct rule are more effective.

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