

Islamic Development and Changing Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia:
Seen from the Ways Religious Clashes in Maluku are Interpreted¹

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I. Introduction

Religious harmony between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia has seldom been questioned. Not only the government but most religious organizations and leaders have maintained that Muslims and Christians coexist peacefully, respecting each other's religion. Studies about Muslim-Christian relations have also proposed that religious difference was not felt strongly in the non-religious domains and mutual respect between Muslims and Christians free of conflict characterized their social interactions (Akkeren, 1970:136; Mohammad, 1979/1980:177; Soemarjo, 1959:99).

Recent situations, especially since the 1990s, give an impression that Muslim-Christian relations have changed and religious tolerance has been in wane. Several Islamic magazines are not hesitant to criticize Christians for using dirty tactics to lure Muslims into Christianity. In religious meetings, Islamic leaders express their concerns over Christianization and Christian intervention in Muslims' lives. A shift in Muslim-Christian relations may also be found in an increase in Muslims' attacks on Christians and churches. It is reported that the number of churches being stoned, burned or destroyed between 1995 and 1998 reached 275 while that between 1965 and 1994 was 239 (Tahalele, 1998).

Recent turmoil in Maluku province also shows that the inter-religious relations are not like what these were once thought to be.² Clashes between Muslims and Christians, which began in early 1999 and continued more than a year, have resulted in thousands of human casualties and massive destruction of houses and buildings. Amid the continuing outbreak of conflicts, an incident occurred in the island of Halmahera in December 1999. Although no official report was available, initial media reports gave an impression that Muslims, who constitute a

¹ I am thankful to Uly Sari, Bambang, Yun-mi and Dr Shin Yun-Hwan for their valuable comments.

² In 1999, the Province of Maluku was divided into two provinces, the Maluku Province and the North Maluku Province. In this paper, the term, Maluku, refers to the area under the former Maluku Province.

minority in terms of population, received substantial damage. This minority position makes it easy for Muslims outside Maluku to assume that those in Halmahera were one-sided victims in the clash.³ After the incident, criticism toward Christians spread widely in public discourses, negative images of Christians were strengthened, and Muslims' movement for counterattacking Christians was materialized.

The purpose of this paper is to examine two major frameworks proposed by political and religious leaders to interpret recent Muslim-Christian clashes. One de-emphasizes religious aspects and explains the clashes in non-religious terms, while the other stresses religious elements and condemns Christians for their maltreatment of fellow Indonesians. These two views will be labeled 'conspiracy theory' and 'religious war theory' and will be analyzed in the second and third sections. To place the 'religious war theory' into socio-religious perspective, I will examine, in the latter part of this paper, Islamic development for the last few decades which is characterized by an increase in Muslims trying to Islamize their everyday life. I will maintain that the recent Islamic development has helped to create an environment where a hypothesis that Christians endeavor to destroy Muslim community can be easily received. This negative attitude towards Christians plays a crucial role in allowing the religious war theory to be surged in public discourses and accepted by the masses without being seriously questioned.

As my analysis focuses on how recent clashes are interpreted in public discourses, the data used in this paper are limited to articles and comments of political and religious leaders reported in newspapers and magazines such as Kompas, Republika, Suara Pembaruan, Jawa Pos, Gatra and Suara Hidayatullah. For the same reason, the Halmahera incident itself is not dealt with in this paper.

II. Newspaper Reports on Halmahera Incident

A weekly magazine, Gatra's reports on the Muslim-Christian clash in Halmahera in late December 1999 were brief and indirect. Its January 8th edition does not give any remark of the incident. Its January 15th edition, carrying a special coverage on Maluku, reports only the number of victims, citing the sub-district head. Its January 22nd edition presents a detailed account of the *Jihad* (Holy War) movement, but does not explain the Halmahera incident which triggered it. An article in the February 5th edition, 'Halmahera Tiga Babak' (Halmahera, Three Stages) deals extensively with situations in Halmahera in 1999, but the clash in December was described only in brief:

³ The ratio of Muslims and Christians to the population of Maluku were respectively 59 percent and 40.5 percent in 1995. The ratio of Muslims were much higher in the district of Halmahera Tengah to which Halmahera belongs. In 1995, the ratio of Muslims reached 80.6 percent while that of Christians, 19.4 percent. The statistical data on the sub-district of Galela are not available, but there was a report that, of the total population of 50,000, only 5,000 were Muslims and the rest were Christians (Republika, 4/Jan). These figures have been repetitively used, as if being based on official statistics, by Islamic organizations and religious leaders.

One day after the Christian holiday [Christmas], a bigger disturbance broke out in three sub-districts of North Halmahera. The Christian majority attacked Muslim villages in Jailolo, Galela and Tobelo. Assaults of those wearing red head bands resulted in hundreds of – according to a different version, thousands of – human casualties. From 28th December till 4th January, according to the head of sub-district Galela, 2,084 Muslims were dead. The law keeping forces, however, had a different version. From 26th December until the 7th of January, 907 were dead from both sides.

As the Halmahera incident was one of the hottest public issues in the early 2000, restricted coverage, lack of detailed information and a seemingly indifferent attitude are hard to understand. If the abrupt occurrence of the clash prevented Gatra from collecting direct and detailed information, it could have reported the incident by interviewing witnesses and local residents, as is frequently used in other articles. However, this method was not taken and readers could not hear the voices of ordinary persons in Halmahera.

Most newspapers and magazines show similar ways of reporting the incident. They cover speeches and opinions of government officials, police chiefs, military commanders, and a few Islamic organizations, but independent activities to collect first-hand data and to interview ordinary persons have not been carried out. This passive attitude is also seen in the ways these media define the incident. Most of them use such terms as '*konflik antarkelompok*' (conflict between groups), *kerusuhan bernaluansa SARA* (riots having a nuance of SARA), *bentrokan antarwarga* (clash between groups), and *pertikaian antarkelompok* (fight between groups) to refer to the incident, but seldom clarify who the two groups are. As every Indonesian may know the two groups, the indirect expression may not confuse them. For those who are not well informed of the recent development, however, it is quite difficult to figure out who the two groups are after reading the newspaper articles.

Limited use of information, lack of first-hand data, and circumlocutory mode of handling the story may be due to the explosive nature of the incident. Under the situation where the government is unwilling to provide clear statements on the actual state of affairs, detailed reports based on independent research and interviews may be accused of siding with one of the two parties or can be used by either of them to legitimize their own view of the incident. In both cases, the newspaper will be criticized for violating objectivity and neutrality.

Not all newspapers and magazines, however, are afraid of possible criticisms. Some of them carry extensive coverage of the incident, showing their willingness to be regarded as being biased. The daily newspaper Republika, for example, gives vivid descriptions, provides detailed accounts of eyewitnesses and presents critical assessment and editorials. An article in the January 4th edition entitled 'Three villages were assaulted, women were raped in Halmahera and 800 Muslims were slaughtered in one night', describes the incident by quoting the vice-president of the Maluku branch of the Indonesian Muslim Council.

“Almost two thousand Muslims in Tobelo were slaughtered and four masjid were burned down. The sub-district office of the department of religion and almost every building related to Islam were also burned down. Muslim women were raped on the street,” he said. ... “what is clear is that on the 26th of December 1999, they (Christians) assaulted Muslim areas in the town of Tobelo after the fasting period ended.” ... [on 28th, December] when a Christian mob riding on trucks passed through Muslim villages, they swiftly descended. They poured gasoline over houses and burned them down. “At this moment, of the villagers who escaped from the house, adult men were butchered.” ... (Christian) masses encircled the masjid where villagers were evacuated. “Then, they poured gasoline over the masjid and burned the villagers alive,” he said.

As is shown in this quotation, articles in Republika give readers vivid descriptions and straightforward explanations of the incident. In later editions, Republika stresses that most Muslim victims were children, aged persons and women, Christians committed extremely blasphemous behavior⁴, Christians’ attacks were carefully planned, actions of law-keeping forces were extremely slow and passive, and media reports were favorable to Christians.

An Islamic monthly magazine, Suara Hidayatullah, takes a similar position. It does not hide its anger at the alleged partiality of the media reports and at the Christians’ alleged unethical and cruel behavior, and does not hesitate to urge a unified counteraction against Christians.

The contrasting attitudes of the media in handling the Halmahera incident represent two views to interpret the Muslim-Christian clashes in Maluku and in other parts of Indonesia for the last few years. One stresses religious elements of the clashes and condemns Christians for their maltreatment of Muslims, while the other de-emphasizes religious aspects and explains the clashes in non-religious terms. These two views will be examined further in the next section.

III. Views to Look at Muslim-Christian Clashes

Riots and clashes between Muslims and Christians, which increased rapidly after the economic crisis, have been going on under the Wahid government. Various views have been put forward to explain these, but may be classified into a few. The first stresses what are usually considered as factors of causing social instability: economic hardship, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, lack of political freedom, human right violation, corruption and so on have deepened the feelings of deprivation and frustration and have prompted the masses to resort to violent forms of action. Less frequently discussed but still important to understand collective behavior at the micro-level is the lack of civilian leaders to mediate conflicts. As leaders of moral authority have not grown under the oppressive

⁴ For example, Republika cites a report of an Islamic organization contending that a Christian mob dig a grave of a Muslim leader open and inserted pork into the mouth of the corpse (Republika 1/15).

regime and the civil society has not had adequate experiences to resolve conflicts autonomously, people are easily led to express dissatisfaction at their own will, once the authoritarian rule is abolished.

Most political and religious leaders recognize the importance of socio-political and economic factors. Examination of their opinions, however, gives an impression that they resort more to an explanation that recent conflicts are instigated by certain groups. In this framework, the focus lies in intrigues and provocations, while the socio-political and economic factors are used to explain why the masses are so susceptible to these maneuverings.

This framework, which will be called ‘conspiracy theory’ in this paper, was popular under the New Order and was employed to explain riots during the last phase of Suharto’s rule. What makes the conspiracy theory in post-Suharto era distinctive is that not only politicians, the military and opposition groups but the government use it. As the conspiracy theory is widely used, those who have been pointed out as puppeteers are also diverse.

Suharto and the military were frequently cited as instigators of riots by the opposition. As social chaos could remind the masses of the importance of law and order, according to this argument, the riots could give Suharto a chance to solidify his rule. Even after his resignation, Suharto and his cronies have been designated as puppeteers (see Aditjondro[2000]).

After the Wahid government, ‘politicians in Jakarta’ come to the fore as the masterminds of the clashes and riots. Jakarta politicians who are said to aim at damaging the Wahid government, however, have not yet been clearly identified. Amien Rais, pointing out Jakarta politicians as the puppeteers, put forward his view in this way:

Indeed, there are indications that people in Jakarta have destroyed the peaceful situation in Maluku. They have made a scenario for the continuing crisis in Ambon. Yes, it is said that big names are involved [in the intrigues] and their identities are already been detected [by the government]. Their roles have also been known clearly (Republika 17/1).⁵

Just after the vice-president, Megawati Sukarnoputri visited Ambon in January 2000, the conspiracy theory involving Jakarta politicians was highlighted once again. The beginning of the affair was that just one day before her visit, a fresh clash took place in Ambon breaking a few weeks’ peace.

Questioning why the peaceful situation changed abruptly, Akbar Tanjung, the head of the DPR, argues that someone aiming at damaging her reputation manipulated the clash. A DPR member, Sutradara Ginting puts forward a more systematic theory. According to him, there were politicians who insisted her visiting to Ambon, but at the same time criticized her lack of understandings on situations in Maluku and doubted her capability to resolve the conflicts. Accordingly, he continues, the puppeteers attempted to damage her reputation and

⁵ Amine Rais adds that the government will soon announce the list, but this has not taken place.

credibility by instigating the clash (*Suara Pembaruan* 24/1).

The third group of puppeteers is found at the local level, whose identities are designated more concretely. One is a remnant of the separatist movement in the 1950s who reside in Indonesia and in foreign countries (*Gatra* 5/2; *Jawa Pos* 14/1). The others are local political factions fighting for the governor's position in North Maluku. Of three Sultans in Maluku, Mudaffar Syah of Ternate was frequently named as an intriguer, but this allegation was strongly denied by him (*Gatra*, 5/2).

The fourth is an unidentified group but whose motivation is clearly known, namely to break down peace and stability of the society. Wahid has been a proponent of this view for the last few years. According to him, there exist dirty hands trying to shatter down people's life in Maluku. The reason strong actions have not been taken against them is because the government has laid a priority on national unity. However, he continues, the time for tolerance is running out and the government will soon disclose their identity and ask them legal responsibility (*Kompas*, 16/1). In depicting who the unknown group is, Adam Damiri, an army general says that this group is like a wind, so that the military and police can feel its existence deeply but have had difficulty in tracking it down (*Suara Pembaruan* 12/1).⁶

In order for the conspiracy theory to be reproduced, there should be evidence of the puppeteers and their manipulations. The evidences used by its proponents, however, are indirect and circumlocutory. For example, the clash before Megawati's visit is interpreted as a proof of the puppeteers. This interpretation is said to be acceptable in that, without being manipulated, peaceful situation would not change exactly on the time of her visit. As people in Ambon knew her visit was to resolve their conflicts, they did not have any reason to create or to be involved in social chaos. According to this explanation, chance alone cannot explain the outbreak of the clash. There must be something more than chance.⁷ Other evidences frequently quoted in the media are: that Ambon was a region exemplifying a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of Muslims and Christians in the past (SP 11/1; SP 24/1); that the crowd in the clashes were well organized and their preparation was systematic; and that dispatch of riot police and troops could not quell the clashes.

Indirect evidences and the way these are accepted urge outside observers to question the reliability of the conspiracy theory. Moreover, the fact that this theory could have been used without puppeteers being identified or arrested for the last few years⁸ is hard to be understood and makes us puzzled.

⁶ The four groups of puppeteers, especially politicians in Jakarta and the unknown group are not mutually exclusive. People may use one or more of them at the same time. The separate treatment in this paper is for the convenience of discussion.

⁷ This mode of explanation reminds us of that in traditional Javanese culture. Among the Javanese villagers, there was a tendency to pursue deeper explanations lying beyond the perceivable relation between cause and effect. For example, if one person's stall was full of customers whereas neighboring stalls were not, explanations should be sought in order to rationalize the uneven results of certain phenomena. This mode of explanation could transform contingency into inevitability for those who were not satisfied with the explanation, 'by accident', alone.

⁸ There have been several cases in which the identities of provocateurs are publicized. However, they are not the figures at the national level who are pointed out as provocateurs by political and

One of the clues to solve this puzzle may be advantage of the conspiracy theory. In so far as the theory has not been criticized severely by the public, it can be utilized by anyone who wants to interpret the clashes for his or her own benefit. For the government, which has not been able to recover law and order, it provides an excuse to escape from harsh criticisms. For those who want to interpret the clashes for certain political and religious purposes, it offers them instant rhetoric and rationales to attack their opponents. In this respect, it can be argued that the conspiracy theory has been accepted and maintained because the puppeteers cannot be identified, but can be blamed of.

Another advantage of the conspiracy theory is that it can prevent religious elements in the clashes from coming to the fore. Most political and religious leaders have contended that recent riots and clashes are not related to inter-religious hatred and conflicts, despite of their religious appearance. It is likely that, by attributing the causes to the instigation of puppeteers, they attempt to downgrade the importance of religious elements and to avoid escalation of inter-religious animosity in other parts of Indonesia.

For the last few years, the conspiracy theory has been popular and influential enough to suppress the emergence of an alternative framework in public discourses. The Halmahera incident, however, has brought change to this situation. As the argument that Muslims are one-sided victims can easily be accepted by the masses, this incident has triggered an alternative view to come to the fore. The core element of this view is that recent clashes and riots are rooted in religious antagonism and animosity. This view, which will be termed ‘religious war theory’, also uses socio-political and economic factors in explaining the disturbances but considers these as condiment rather than the core.⁹

According to the religious war theory, the Halmahera incident is a part of a Christian strategy to expand their influence and, ultimately, to Christianize Indonesia (Republika, 1/7, Suara Hidayatullah, 2/2000). To this end, Christians in Halmahera, the theory goes, initiated attacks to terrorize and expel Muslims and, quoting Hamzah Haz, the head of the PPP, to make a genocide of Muslims. A local factor in Maluku is also said to have played a role in prompting Christians to wage a war against Muslims. It is said that Christians in Maluku having enjoyed a privileged position for the last decades have become envious of and frustrated by Muslims’ active involvement and success in the local government, military and commerce (Suara Hidayatullah, 2/2000). These emotions have strengthened their abhorrence to the presence of Muslims in Maluku. The motivation of Christians is, according to this theory, illustrated by a speech that is alleged to have been made by a Christian minister.

religious leaders. Concerning a case in which a person accused of as a provocateur refute the allegation, see Achmad Fachruddin (2000).

⁹ The religious war theory can be regarded as a kind of conspiracy theory, in that it does not give direct and concrete evidences to show that Christians have masterminded inter-religious clashes. As the identity of those who are designated as provocateurs is clearly put forward and religious elements are highlighted in interpreting the conflicts, the religious war theory is analyzed separately in this paper.

Muslims in Indonesia should be wiped out, in that they are filthy. Don't be afraid and keep going forward, in that there are assistants from the Netherlands, England and Australia. Let's make Tobelo the second Israel. Islamic leaders in Gorua ... should be caught alive (Republika, 15/1).

With these intentions in their mind, Christians are said to have prepared a careful and systematic attack, a fact that may be revealed by the way of mobilizing the masses and by weapons they used. According to Muslim witnesses, Christians from several villages are said to have gathered two or three days before the attack (Republika, 12/1). They are also said to have been equipped with weapons which cannot be easily obtained such as automatic firearms, ranjau darat, bom rakitan, and bom buatan pabrik (Republika 15/1; Suara Hidayatullah, 1/2000).

The religious war theory contends that the media, police, military and the government have been unfair to Muslims. Christian damages are said to have been reported widely, while Muslim damages, neglected (Republika, 13/1). The police and the military are said to have not taken a firm stance on Christian attacks (Republika, 25/1; Suara Hidayatullah, 2/2000). There are even cases, according to the Maluku branch of Majlis Ulama Indonesia, in which the district head ordered the military commander to assist Christian attacks, and the police chief endeavored to transfer Muslim officers to other regions and gave orders to shoot Muslims (Republika, 13/1). These are considered to show Christians' systematic preparation to wipe out Muslims from Maluku.

The core element of the religious war theory, namely that Christians attempt to destroy the Muslim community and to Christianize Indonesia, is not new, but has been put forward sporadically by a few Islamic groups (Boland, 1982; Liddle, 1996). What makes the situation after the Halmahera incident distinctive is that a few newspapers and magazines overtly support this view.¹⁰ Political freedom and freedom of speech after Suharto's resignation have helped to create a social environment in which people and the media express alternative views. The uniqueness of the Halmahera incident, namely that Muslims can be viewed as one-sided victims, also helps this theory to be accepted with only circumstantial evidence. In addition to these, we should take Islamic changes for the last decades into account. Without the social atmosphere that is conducive to this theory, it is difficult to understand fully its emergence in public discourses, its easy acceptance and wide circulation. In the next section, recent changes in Islamic community will be discussed in order to place the religious war theory into a socio-religious perspective.

IV. Changes in the Muslim community and the Religious War Theory

Since the 1970s, changes in the Muslim community have been clearly visible. Among Muslim intellectuals, a new religious stream that differs from the

¹⁰ Several books which propose the religious war theory have also been published. For example, see Rustam Kastor (2000).

well-established legalism, traditionalism and reformism has developed and has expanded its influence on the educated youth and relatively prosperous Muslims. Among the masses, increasing enthusiasm and aspiration to place Islam at the center of their life, which will be called hereafter 'Islamization of everyday life', have been widely reported.¹¹ Of those who lead changes in the intellectual circle are Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid.¹²

Nurcholish objects to those who politicize Islam to establish an Islamic state and proposes a division of religion and politics as is implied in his famous slogan, 'Islam yes, Islamic party no'. He also criticizes those who reduce Islam to a system of religious laws. According to him, legalism, oppressing *ijtihad*, has prevented Muslim communities from adapting to the modern society. In lieu of the scripturalist trend, which considers everything related to human life is inscribed definitely in the scriptures and is not an object of human interpretation, he puts forwards an 'Islamic renewal' (*pembaruan*). Renewal of Islam can be obtained by '*liberalisasi*' (to encourage open and creative thought liberated from tradition and conservatism), by '*sekularisasi*' (to distinguish which are divine and which are worldly, and to desacralize what are treated as sacred, despite of being worldly), by '*rationalisasi*' (to think and behave rationally) and by '*modernisasi*' (to face modernity and to adapt to it). His opposition to the formalistic interpretation of the scriptures, his emphasis on the reinterpretation of religious teachings, and his call to free Islam from non-sacred domains manifest a clear departure from established traditions of Islamic thought.

Wahid's view is similar to that of Nurcholish. He argues for a division between politics and religion, and rational thought freed from formalism and tradition. The concept of '*pribumisasi Islam*', among others, may summarize his position. With '*pribumisasi*', he stresses the need to take local and historical factors into account in interpreting religious laws and formulating exegesis. This does not mean to propose a modification of religious teachings, but their contextualization in a society that has distinctive history and tradition. Seen from this perspective, attempts to purify religious life by applying the scriptures directly and strict adherence to the interpretation of the established legal schools do not understand and practice Islam properly. He also opposes an attitude to view Islam as an alternative system giving fixed guidance to every aspect of life.

Nurcholish and Wahid's view, which is sometimes called 'neo-modernism' (Barton, 1991) or 'substantialism' (Liddle, 1996), has brought wide influence to intellectuals, educated youth and relatively prosperous Muslims'.¹³ The expansion of neo-modernism, however, does not mean a decrease

¹¹ This does not mean that a new intellectual stream has influenced only on the relatively well-educated, while an effort to Islamize everyday life is visible only among the less educated mass. Rather, the well-educated and the less-educated are major loci of these two developments.

¹² Analysis on Wahid's and Nurcholish's thoughts is based on Barton (1991, 1999), Malik and Ibrahim (1998), Nurcholish (1987), Ramage (1995) and Wahid (1989).

¹³ Liddle contends that neo-modernism can appeal to many upwardly-mobile members of Muslim community, in that it enables them to be devout and at the same time does not incur the suspicion of the government that they are closet extreme rightists (Liddle, 1996:280). This view is also proposed by Adnan who concludes that Nurcholish's view gives an effective formula in promoting

in the influences of the scripturalist trend. During the same period of time, the scripturalism has been able to maintain and even strengthen its position with an increasing enthusiasm of the masses to Islamize everyday life.

The Islamization of everyday life means to behave in Islamic ways and to perceive things in an Islamic framework. Ideally, it does not divide life into the sacred and the profane, or the religious and the secular. In reality, however, its scope and focus are shaped by socio-political and cultural environments. The focus of Islamization in the 1980s was on personal religious activities such as fulfillment of the Five Pillars and participation in Friday congregation, sermon and so on. This emphasis on the personal life can be illustrated by a remarkable decline in political influences of Islamic organizations in the 1980s.

Neo-modernism and Islamization of everyday life share an emphasis on the importance of Islam in the non-political, personal life. In spite of this, however, the Islamization of everyday life has been much closer and conducive to the scripturalist trend, which neo-modernism opposes. This is because, among others, most ordinary persons have difficulty in understanding the ideas of neo-modernism which stresses contextual exegesis and which, in many cases, gives vague interpretations of religious teachings (Liddle, 1996).¹⁴ Consequently, the Islamization of everyday life has increased the number of Muslims who internalize a simple statement that they should live in accordance with Islamic teachings and who consider the dichotomy of the Islamic and the non-Islamic as absolute rather than relative and contextual.

As the scope and focus of Islamization are bound to socio-political and cultural environments, changes in society and politics bring impacts on its process. In the 1990s, Muslims were concerned more and more with social problems that they saw were incongruent with Islamic teachings. This shift of focus was reflected in an increase in Muslims' collective actions: a magazine publishing a simple survey result in which Muhammad was ranked 9th on the list of the most respectable figures was attacked and closed down; the national lottery was abolished by mass demonstration; education law was amended by pressures from Islamic groups; and freedom to wear *jilbab* in government schools was secured. On the one hand, these cases illustrate Muslims' interests have gradually expanded to cover social problems. On the other hand, these show Muslims' power to influence the government has strengthened, in that these demands had been raised but could not be achieved before the 1990s.

As collective voices of Muslims are heard more and more clearly in public discourses, social atmosphere in which Islam is treated has also changed. Critical attitudes toward Islamic teachings, Muslims and Islamic countries cannot be expressed. Behavior and comments which may be interpreted to be incongruent to

socio-political mobility of young Muslims into the state (1990: 458).

¹⁴ In traditional Islam and legalism where charismatic authority of religious leaders is acknowledged, their interpretations of Islamic teachings are clear and straightforward. The encouragement of rational interpretation in reformism (modernism) makes the emergence of charismatic leaders difficult, but its emphasis on the immutability of the scriptures in the sacred and the secular domain makes it harder for its followers to acknowledge the possibility of multiple exegesis of religious teachings in terms of social and historical contexts.

Islam are no longer tolerated, irrespective of whether these are made by intention or by mistake.¹⁵ Religious freedom is interpreted more and more as something to be controlled and regulated (Kim, 1998b). Domain which were previously considered to be private are changing into those of collectivity, and collective action is regarded as a thinkable option to counteract behaviors which are thought to be deviated from dominant interpretations of Islam.

With the expansion of the scope of Islamization into the social domain, Muslims' attitudes toward Christians have also changed. A negative image of Christians has spread widely to the public in the 1990s through books and magazines¹⁶ and more significantly, by religious meetings and sermons. According to this image, Christians are viewed to make every effort to lure Muslims into Christianity, to weaken Muslim solidarity and ultimately to destroy the Muslim community.

Muslims contrast this negative image to their aspiration to achieve harmonious coexistence with Christians. Their tolerance toward Christians is said to be based on Islamic teachings as is revealed in al-Kaafiruun, which proposes harmonious and peaceful relations with non-Muslims and encourages a pluralistic attitude. This Islamic tolerance and harmony, however, is not an unconditional one, but can be maintained in so far as non-Muslims also respect Muslims and do not disparage Islam. When their tolerance and pluralistic attitude are not reciprocated by non-Muslims, Muslims must defend their faith and retreat from their fights against these offenders is not forgiven.

Dan perangilah di jalan Allah orang-orang yang memerangi kamu, (tetapi) janganlah kamu melampaui batas, karena sesungguhnya Allah tidak menyukai orang-orang yang melampaui batas (Al-Baqarah 190-191).

Hai orang-orang yang beriman, apabila kamu bertemu dengan orang-orang yang kafir yang sedang menyerangmu, maka janganlah kamu membela kangi mereka (mundur) (Al-Anfaal, 15).

The Islamic principles of tolerance and retaliation show that the question of who initiates provocative and offensive actions in inter-religious relations is crucial. Concerning this question, Muslims have an indisputable answer. For the last few decades, it is always Christians who have started provocative actions to threaten peaceful and harmonious relations.¹⁷ One of the most frequently used evidences for

¹⁵ As an example, Harmoko faced a mass protest and had to ask forgiveness when it was publicized that he recited a passage in al-Fatihah incorrectly. The Situbondo case also shows that interpretations of religious teachings which are thought to be deviated from the dominant ones are no more tolerated.

¹⁶ Christianization seems to have been one of the most frequently discussed issues in Islamic magazines. *Panji Masyarakat*, one of the most widely read magazines in the Islamic circle has presented special reports on Christianization and relations between Muslims and Christians at least once a year since 1991. The issue of Christianization has been more seriously dealt with in a monthly magazine called *Media Dakwah*. Apart from carrying more articles about Christianization than *Panji Masyarakat*, *Media Dakwah* has had a special column from 1990 onward devoted entirely to the expansion of the Christian community and the tactics of Christian missionaries.

¹⁷ Several components of the religious war theory can be explained in this context. As is discussed,

this argument is an increase in the number of Christians.

Statistics show that the Christian population has grown steadily. The ratio of Christians to the total population, which was 6.7 percent in 1971, became 8.8 percent in 1980 and 9.6 percent in 1990 (census data). Muslims view this increase problematic, in that missionary activities have been officially banned by the government decrees in the 1970s. Accordingly, this rapid increase of Christians surpassing a ‘natural birth rate’ can be regarded as an evidence of unlawful missionary activities. As the growth in Christian population is made mainly by conversions of Muslims, this increase is considered as proof of offensive actions to destroy the Muslim community.

The spread of the negative view on Christians has affected the ways Muslims and Christians interact. A local-level study shows that a clear line demarcating the Muslim community from its Christian counterpart has been constructed, religious identity begins to be utilized as a factor to guide one's actions both in religious and non-religious domains, and the clear awareness of religious difference has created tensions and friction (Kim, 1998a). In several cases, these tensions have developed into open clashes. Muslim attacks on Christians and churches, which occurred 8.9 cases per annum between 1975 and 1984, increased to 10.4 cases per annum between 1985 and 1994, and jumped to 68.8 cases per annum between 1995 and 1998 (Tahalele, 1998).

In sum, the increase in Muslims who try to Islamize their everyday life has helped to create an environment where the negative view of Christians is easily accepted by the masses. As this image is implanted in the minds of Muslims, the hypothesis that Christians’ malicious endeavor to destroy Muslim community can be received without being seriously questioned. This attitude towards Christians has played a crucial role in allowing the religious war theory to surface in public discourses and to be received by the masses after the Halmahera incident.

V. Concluding Remarks

After the Halmahera incident, the religious war theory comes to the fore in public discourses and Islamic groups overtly express their dissatisfaction with Christians. This gives us a chance to appraise long-term effects of the Islamization of everyday life on Muslim-Christian relations in particular and Indonesian society in general.

While the Islamization movement initially aimed at private life, its scope has gradually expanded to larger domains of social life. The end of the Suharto regime and subsequent freedom of speech have accelerated this trend, allowing broader social issues to be discussed and assessed in Islamic terms. One of the social issues that draw Muslims’ concern is Muslim-Christian relation. Muslims criticize Christians’ alleged endeavors to destroy the Muslim community and the negative image of Christians has spread and received without being seriously questioned.

this theory stresses systematic preparations of Christian attacks. This emphasis is to show that Christians initiate the attacks.

This attitude towards Christians has helped the religious war theory to be surfaced in public discourses and to be accepted by the masses after the Halmahera incident. These developments imply that religious tolerance between followers of different religions can no longer be taken for granted and that religious harmony cannot be recovered automatically by political and economic stability but should be newly created.

For the last two decades, the scripturalist trend has strengthened its position with an increasing enthusiasm of the masses to Islamize everyday life. Muslims' collective actions in the 1990s and the surge of the 'religious war theory', however, cannot urge us to make a generalization on the social and religious influences of the scripturalism. The fact that the conspiracy theory is still the major framework of interpreting the Halmahera incidents shows that there is a strong intellectual and social stream, which is not exclusive in certain beliefs and which stresses contextual relevance rather than absoluteness of religious teachings. Of those who do not feel comfortable at the expansion of the scripturalist trend are nominal Muslims, Muslims with secular orientation, non-Muslims and neo-modernist intellectuals and their sympathizers. Although they have not voiced their opinion out in the society where Islamization is almost taken for granted, their influences cannot be disregarded. Another point which should be considered is that Muslims' commitment to the scripturalist ideas is acquired only recently. Due to the short history, their dispositions have not yet severed completely from traditional relativism and syncretic culture. in this respect, interplay between Muslims with the scripturalist trend and people with other orientation will be an important factor in determining socio-cultural and political changes in Indonesia.

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