

# Peace Building by Cultural Communities: Learning from Indonesian Cultures and Several Considerations

**Jimmy Marcos Immanuel**

Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS)  
Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta

**Abstract:** In human life, culture is really important. Culture serves many functions, often overwhelming many things in life. It shapes the way we live, think, speak, act, relate to each other, and so on. Even within the framework of violence and peace, every culture projects ambiguity in its functions. It can either be a source of violence or a source for peace building. Starting from this ambiguity, forms of violence and/or conflicts in many places (especially in Indonesia) can be reduced by culture through cultural communities, in a frame of peace building. Our efforts for peace building in this case need to include internal and external cultures, sources of power, and how to foster independence from the agent of culture from the ambiguity and other factors which cause violence. This article will explore the role of some of Indonesian local cultures in building peace. In addition, it will show that education, as a source of power, is the most important way to raise people's consciousness to live in peace.

**Keywords:** cultures, violence, peace-building, cultural community, education.

## A. Introduction: Cultures and Violence

Religious and cultural conflicts in many places in the world have ended in violence. These violent ends were caused by many factors, including religion (by the teachings and religious leaders) and

cultures that support or have the means to instigate violence. As a matter of fact, the two factors are the same, in that every religion also contains or relates to the cultural dimensions and/or is created by cultures.<sup>1</sup> In other words, when we talk about violence caused by religions (as the factor), then we also refer to certain cultures. Taking into account the view of Rene Girard that violence has been seen as a 'culture' and as a part of 'humans' culture' to sustain the life of their communities.<sup>2</sup> Human cultures are the most important thing here because they will continue to be produced by other factors or in other forms, such as art, politics, economics, militaries, etc., that also engage individual, structural and cultural level.<sup>3</sup>

Cultures engage or bind people, who at the same time produce culture and live within cultural bounds. Moreover, people within a culture will be doing esoteric things in that frame and/or that relates to their culture. C.A. van Peursen states that cultures are a sediment or deposit of human beings' activities and creations.<sup>4</sup> Cultures are seen as manifestations of human life both personal and communal, and they are also seen as something that has a superfluous nature and dynamic structure. Human beings are both the creators of their cultures and the people who practice those cultures. In other words, they are both the subjects and objects of their cultures. People are not just directed by their cultures but at the same time they can decide whether a practice should be accepted or rejected. This choice shows the autonomy of human beings in relation to their cultures as well as their ability to engage in their own unique manner of critical thinking. Humans also learn to develop "better" cultures not just for their own communities but also for the wider community, the universal community of human beings as whole.

Heather Dubois and R. Scott Appleby have argued that religion is ambiguous because on the one hand, religion can be a source for peace building, but on the other hand, religion can also be a source of violence. For instance, in Indonesia, there are many cultures that contain values related to social control and protection, but there are also practices within these cultures that contain or support violence such as war games (such as in Sumba, among other places), traditional

dances, sacrifices or rituals, ethnic stereotypes, among others. Additionally, Indonesian cultures are integral to Eastern cultures that emphasize communality (including ethnocentrism)<sup>5</sup> and material things as part of power.<sup>6</sup> These characteristics serve as stimuli of violence in Indonesia, but also can be tools for creating approaches to solve the problem of violence.<sup>7</sup>

Inferring from the phenomenon of ambiguity of the cultures, grounded within the narrative of Indonesian cultures, we can use ambiguity as a characteristic itself as a critical standpoint to pioneer and steer peace building efforts. This approach means that the bad (i.e. source of violence) and the good side (i.e. source of peace) of cultures can be used as a method or an opportunity to promote building peace. Nonetheless, critical to this is the requisite to evaluate the bad and good side of cultures, to identify all possible crevice or opportunity for peace building.

It should be noted that this article will neither discuss the debate on the meaning of the culture nor develop its theories, but rather this article probes into several examples of how a particular cultural community is motivated by its own system of culture to engage in violence or peace. Examples of culture as a source of violence will be explained initially followed by the function of culture in building peace. Furthermore, this paper examines how education plays an essential role in elevating people's consciousness—conditioning them to be both critics of their own culture and developers of cultural practices based on a spirit of peace.

## **B. Cultures: Source of Violence**

Almost all human activities are founded on the dynamism of cultures and are commonly termed to as cultural activities or, in general view, traditions. Many traditions demonstrate and perform violence in various forms. Some of them endanger many people directly or indirectly (by forming negative views, latent conflicts, their characters, etc., that in one way or another cause violence at any given time). As an inevitable result of this, the adherents eventually perceive those actions as something normal and, most of times, as something

good. In thus, we see that culture legitimizes violence both consciously and unconsciously. The following explanation will present some examples of those actions.

### ***Cakalele, Fitri Dance and Sparkling Holy Water in Moluccas***

Farsijana R. A. Rissakota's dissertation presents explanations on the background of a number of traditions in Moluccas.<sup>8</sup> She describes that the *cakalele* dance was inherited by the Moluccan people's ancestors. The dance tells the story of their ancestors who bravely opposed the colonial intrusion of the West (Portugal and Netherland) and Japan. This dance is still being performed by the Moluccan people. Interestingly, it incorporates swords and wooden shields in the performance. Each wooden shield is decorated with a mother of pearl shells which form the shape of eyes that symbolize their "ancestors' eyes" – to show and remember their ancestors' bravery in killing their enemies. Since this dance involves ancestors' spirits, there are also rules and taboos surrounding the whole performance of the dance. In addition, bad or evil spirits also are evident in this dance. This can be seen in particular strands of their customs such as when a dancer executes the role of being the one who is possessed and the watchers around him scream the word *tokanali* (rejoicing like the devil). Actually, the dance not only expresses the courage of the Mollucan people who opposed Western hegemony and Japanese colonialism, but more importantly, it further exhibits their memories of oppression in the form of stories and dances which are open, and at times fragile, to interpretation. It emphasizes power against the enemies or outsiders of the community.<sup>9</sup> From this view, we see that the dance was shaped by politics and colonialism during a complicated era of many opposing and interplaying interests and problems. The dance indirectly provides an image of oppression and memorializes, or say, solidifies the violent actions at their ancestors' time. The usage of sword and other "negative", meaning bordering to violent, customs may also play a role in shaping characters, values and concept of peace-building and therefore may influence threatening stereotypes to Westerners or outsiders. Furthermore, this

Mollucan dance has been interpreted differently by two communities: Christians and Muslims. For Christians, they do not believe in the ancestor spirits in *cakalele*, but plainly accept them as the realities of Satan and evil spirits or demons. For Moslems, they ardently believe in ancestor spirits, and sometimes they (that in Ngidiho) complain that Christians are not true Galelans because Christians do not believe in ancestor spirits. Hence, we see a crucial variance in interpretation. This difference highlights the disparity between the Christians and Muslims in Mollucas – therefore, serves a vital and potent force to stimulate violence and/or conflicts.

Aside from the *cakalele* dance, another dance called *fitri* as well as the ritual of sprinkling holy water is usually used to oppose the enemies of the community. *Fitri* (means holy or pure, from Arabic word) dance is done by the Moslem community in Moluccas (Tobelo and Galela) when they want to express their antipathy towards the Christian community and other communities. It is regarded to be a magical dance performed by three young girls, usually 8-9 years old, wearing transparent white robes that reveal every part of their bodies. They are chosen because they are virgins and have not yet menstruated, and also are believed to be essential in increasing supernatural power. For them, in the local traditions, the young girls are believed to have the power of revelation which is shared with members of society.<sup>10</sup> With the same purpose like the Moslems, Christians also do the ritual of sprinkling holy water. Before going to any war, the troops commonly gather in a church and they will be sprinkled with holy water which symbolizes the belief that the troops will be protected by God and that they will have strength in fighting. Furthermore, this practice stimulates their emotions before they go to war against another community that uses *Fitri* dance.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in the dance itself, in their hands they hold sharp swords that were smeared by blood of pig, to show their deep hatred, because Moslems believe that pigs are *haram* (forbidden).

Despite the fact that those practices are for certain conditions such as wars or battles, they are further used in other conditions that will stimulate and 'burn' their spirit to be violent and fierce against

their enemies. This can be called as the ‘chosen trauma’ and that is why so many people were killed in only a few incidents. Indeed, if both of these traditions were to be used in Moluccas today – that will remind them about the accidents or violence that has happened in Moluccas in the past, and thus, will also stimulate them to hide their revenge (latent) that can emerge or explode someday. Besides, using young girls that are virtually naked in their ritual is a part of violence, one of a sexual nature. These types of violence are dangerous now if members do not have a good understanding of these traditions, both historically and contextually.

### ***Pasola and War Dance in Sumba***

Similar to the pattern in Moluccas, in Sumba two example cultural practice would be the *pasola* and the war dance. *Pasola* is played as part of their annual traditions held during the month of February or March. It is a traditional war game between two different groups—that are construed to worship *Marapu* (their ancestors’ spirits) in order to have good harvest next year. “*Pasola* is derived from the word *Sola* or *Hola* meaning a kind of a long wooden stick used as a spear to fling each other by two opponent groups of horsemen.”<sup>12</sup> The people deem that without blood *Pasola* means nothing to them. In explaining occurrences of death in the *Pasola* arena, the locals believe that they merely broke a law of tradition during the fasting month, hence causing their unfortunate fate.<sup>13</sup>

Besides this war game, they also perform a war dance that uses swords and shields and thus displaying, or perhaps encouraging violence. This dance shows the dancers’ skills in using swords and shields, as well as showcasing the power of their regal tradition. Even though both *pasola* and the war dance are relegated to special activities, these also influence daily life in which most cultural members have swords and spears in their house that can be used any time when the seeds of conflict occur. For example, in an accident in 2005 many Sumbanese people were killed (by swords and spears) because of misunderstandings. Similar incidents of tribal wars, in fact, still happen today in West Sumba. Both traditions also may build

the character of the Sumbanese, if we start from the concept that cultures relate to human character. Nonetheless, as in Moluccan traditions, these practices should be understood well by their members based on their histories and particular contexts – so they could have a different reflection and a more accurate comprehension rather than just assume that the *pasola* and values of war dance are the most ideal forms of their culture.

### ***Caci in Manggarai***

Caci is both a ritual and a performance done by people in Manggarai, West Flores. Two men fight each other using whips (*cambuk*) made from strong dried buffalo skin. The aim of the ritual/performance is to win the game. If one can hit his enemy until the enemy becomes injured, almost black and blue, and to a certain degree covered in blood, this entails that he is strong, heroic and great. If he wins, he will yell loudly, as if proclaiming his victory. Furthermore, in order to win the game, it is not a secret among the society that he uses magic to support him – a magic that presumably given to him by the ‘*dukun*’ (shaman).

In conclusion, a few important ideas must be noted. There are four reflections that can be deduced from those traditions or cultures. **First**, directly from their performances, the spirit of violence can be seen clearly. The symbols drawn, the action done, the intention motivated, the language used, etc., are very close to the form of violence. It affects their daily life when people respond to the problems in their society which ended in bloody conflicts. **Second**, the way people use and interpret their traditions is also related to the violence. **Third**, when no explanations are given to make sense of the positive aspects of that tradition, the violent forms of their culture becomes clearer. **Fourth**, for the younger generations, those actions can be learned, or in their minds conditioned, as the violent way of life.

### **C. Cultures: Resource for Peace**

Longing for peace is one of the most critical things that characterize the existence of human beings. Everyone, either personally or together

with other people, persistently and perpetually creates a way to achieve peace. When people live together in the same place and are tied by the same background shaped by and moulded through certain historical periods, they define their ways of sustaining peace for all of them. This attempt to define can be manifested in many ways, such as their rituals, customs, or just any other ordinary action in their everyday social life.

Nevertheless, apart from the bad side of Mollucan, Sumbanese and Manggaraian cultures, there are also particular traditions which can be sources of peace, or we can view as the 'balancing activities'. For instance, in Mollucas there are the traditions of *pela gandong*, *makan patita*, *sasi*, *masohi*, *maano*, *badati*, *tona ma langi*, etc.; in Sumba there are traditions to find *nyale*, eating together (involve many people from groups or *kabihu*), eating *sirih pinang*, etc; whereas, in Manggarai there are '*penti*,' '*bantang cama reje lele*,' etc. These are usually called in Indonesia as the "local wisdom" that can be useful to promote or say, maintain peace. The wisdom usually serves to enhance social relationships, heal social problems and support good attitudes in their society.<sup>14</sup> In the following section, this article will explain two examples of cultural traditions in Moluccas, Sumba, and Manggarai.

### **Pela Gandong and Makan Patita in Moluccas**

The term of *pela gandong* is not uncommon in the contemporary social context. This tradition is a social system that is well-known in the Moluccan society, which pertains to an agreement about the relationship between one *negeri* (village) and other *negeri*. Essentially, *pela gandong* is one component of three *pela* that are still accepted, believed and followed in Moluccas (*pela tanpa siri*, *pela gandong*, *pela karas*).<sup>15</sup> This *pela* commonly is done for the purpose of maintaining Moluccan relationships with their 'families' who live in different *negeri* or islands. This system ideally protects and maintains society. Furthermore, it is used by communities to prevent or solve their problems – to induce agreements between people or groups who are engaged in a problem (such as conflict, clash of interests between society and government, etc.) or have conflicting ideas and actions.



In thus, we see that the creation of peace and sodality, or say the desire to promote peace is also, at the same time, programmed in particular cultural customs and rituals. In addition to this, there is also another tradition that relates to the pattern of *pela gandong*, called as *makan patita*.

*Makan patita* involves a ritual of many people eating together. This practice can, in point of fact, serve as a decisive melting pot because it bring many people together – people who have many different backgrounds. They came from different *negeri* and perpetuate different elements in their own society, and they eat together and talk as well with their friends and families. The abovementioned traditions were used to reconcile and build peace in Moluccas when ethno-religious conflicts and riots occurred.

### ***Finding Nyale, Eating Together and Eating Sirih in Sumba***

In Sumba, the traditions of finding *nyale*, eating together with others in some occasions, and eating *sirih* are still persistent up until today and can be viewed and reconstructed to be balancing cultural practices. Finding *nyale* is a yearly tradition that involves many Sumbanese people from different backgrounds (religions, segments, social statuses, etc.). This tradition is also a ritual held to predict what will happen to their farms and harvest the following year, and will be followed by the war game called *pasola*. People perpetuate and continue this tradition together peacefully, nonetheless this may be also because Marapu (their ancestors' spirits that they admire and worship) requires the practice. In thus, this pattern can support the preventive effort to avoid or perhaps totally abolish violence, but it may be also that the *pasola*, as has been explained above, has to be reconsidered. Consequently, eating together and eating *sirih* is usually done by the Sumbanese in relation to their daily activities or on certain occasions. These traditions are used to welcome guests from other places to honor them during parties or to solve the problems in their society such as conflicts and riots as well. In a bloody conflict, in 2005, eating together was used to reconcile two groups that were attacking and gravely killing each other. After the communities or

groups and their main actors were gathered and asked to solve the conflict.

### ***Penti and Bantang Cama Reje Lele in Manggarai***

The Manggarain people also have their own way to keep peace as long as possible and to avoid violence. The tradition of '*pentti*', is a kind of ceremony of gathering people from several clans to perform and observe rituals and a party together in order to build peace in the community. Another kind of their tradition is '*bantang cama reje lele*' which literally means "sit together to solve the problem without any violent way'. In these rites, all the groups that had been in conflict are invited by the '*tu'a*' (the village leader) to speak and solve the problem and to end their conflict.

Based on these cultural cases from Moluccas, Sumba and Manggarai, we can see that cultures not only give sources of "problems", but also present a dose of "medicines." Traditions or cultural views in Moluccas, Sumba and Manggarai are only some of the many cultural traditions in Indonesia that can be treated as the potent medicines or sources for peace (such as *gotong royong*, *merti bumi*, *tepo seliro*, *dodo*, etc.). They are useful for us, especially for the cultural communities or societies, to sustain and maintain society. This, of course, needs a good foundation of understanding and knowledge about the cultures, particularly deconstructing the cultures for peace and other purposes to promote the common welfare.

## **D. Peace Building by Cultural Communities:**

### **Considerations**

Learning from the phenomena of ambiguity of the cultures and several cultural activities from some places in Indonesia, offers us awareness of the opportunity to initiate peace building in society through our cultures. The bad side or source of violence in cultures must be faced wisely and efficiently resolved. We do not wish to try to abolish them, but precisely they will be a good standpoint for peace building if we can reconstruct and appropriate their meaning and cover them in a frame of peace building. The members of the cultures

have to understand their cultures critically (that the cultures have histories and relate to certain contexts) rather than just understanding the cultures literally. The good side or source for peace really supports efforts for peace building. Cultural activities relating to peace building must be preserved or protected and, if traditions permit, improved by us. The members have to be aware about these cultures and related to the bad side that has been reconstructed and covered in frame of peace building. Both sides require the initiative of actors to commence efforts. Indeed, because the real actors (though there are “the backstage actors”) who are involved in the cultures and violence are the members themselves, and those who really know the source of their cultures that can be used for peace, so they are precisely the most effective actors to solve violence and build peace in their society and cultures. In other words, cultural communities have the primary role to push successful efforts for peace building (including peacemaking and peacekeeping).

If we look back to the cases of violence and conflicts in Moluccas, Sumba, Central Kalimantan, Java, Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, etc., the success in reconciliation and peace building lies in the part played by the cultural communities. Even though both the government and NGOs have critical functions as well, without the involvement of cultural communities, nothing can happen. The cultural communities are the ones who really perceive and understand the problems and what values or traditions within their cultures can be used to solve the problems. Of course, starting from this view in attempting peace building, we must also understand their cultures and views, and engage them in solving problems and building peace.

In thus, it is necessary to identify the main actors in cultural communities, such the heads of tribes. Because of the character of communality among Eastern cultures, these actors can influence and promote change in their community or society. This is a pattern that takes place in Indonesia. From several cases of riots and conflicts in Moluccas, Sumba, Sampit, Java, Eastern and Western Nusa Tenggara, etc., we can see that main actors of cultural communities were engaged in reconciliations and efforts for peace building. They

included cultural and/or religious actors who have responsibilities to teach culture or religious teachings. In addition, they are useful because of their authority, and we can call them the 'middle persons' that can be a bridge between elements of society such as ordinary members of a society and the government or NGOs. In other words, they can access every element in their society, government and non-government. After all, based on the cultural communities' role, including their main actors, we can see how important they, in addition to their cultures can be as tools for peace building – the most pertinent mediators for peace.

Referring to the pattern above, there emerge considerations or strategies that need to be considered for a plan toward peace building. First, to use 'internal culture', including the cultural community and its main actors, to solve problems and enhance peace building. This can happen further given that the problem or our object is attached to the same culture itself. Culture could be seen as the 'public reason'<sup>16</sup> that is usually accepted and considered by people and influences them in almost all aspects of their social life. Here, culture – whatever its functions may be – and its community or members can be empowered by us to be effective tools. Furthermore, if there is a problem which engages two or more cultures, each internal culture still also has an important role. However, the key is to see first what aspects of their cultures are inclusive and can be accepted by other cultures. In addition, perhaps there are universal values or cultural activities in each culture that exist and can be accepted across cultures. For instance (besides examples of resource for peace above), *gotong royong* and *merti bumi* in Javanese culture also exist in several cultures in Indonesia, at least, these can be accepted by outsiders of Javanese as something that is actually positive. In Kopeng, Magelang, Temanggung, and several places in Central Java, *gotong royong* and *merti bumi* are still practiced by societies that not only consist of Javanese culture but also include other cultures and/or religions belonging to outsiders (of Javanese culture) who live in these places. Second, there are 'external cultures' that can be applied to the society if the internal culture and its part still cannot contain, handle or solve

the problems and once they fail to build peace.<sup>17</sup> External cultures can be new or other cultures that will be accepted by society. They come from outsiders who contribute to building peace in conjunction with the society (such as government and non-government organizations). One cultural mode that employs soft power and usually can be accepted by us is 'knowledge', means that peace building knowledge is a new or rare culture for the people who usually live in cultures that permit them to do violence or that encourage violence.<sup>18</sup> Once we know the role of the cultural community and its actors, then we need to embrace them to build dialogue of knowledge which is in the frame of peace building. We need to explain the source of violence in their cultures. This does not mean that we intend to change, or altogether modify the systems of their cultures, rather we attempt to help them understand their culture historically and contextually instead of artificially and superficially,<sup>19</sup> and how their culture can be a source for peace. Indeed, if we talk about knowledge here, education is one way to efficiently transfer or reconstruct, and moreover deconstruct, the knowledge of a particular society. Education can target school age children, in which case the curricula of education in the local school will have to be reviewed, added, or formulated in light of knowledge of peace building. In addition, the cultural community and its main actors have to also be given information (as part of education) about the phenomena of their culture, especially about the resources for peace that must be kept and/or maintained by themselves. This is a way to foster independence and allows for members of the culture to manage by themselves the problems and expectations to build peace in their own society. The contributions of outsiders in peace-building process are not limited to problem-solving during the reconciliation process, but also extend to more forward-looking education.

Knowledge is really important in resolving cultural issues because we direly cannot avoid the issue of power in the society and in the other levels of culture when we try to solve problems and build peace. In cases like that, knowledge is a source of power that is softer and yet more powerful than other sources. According to Alvin Toffler,

there are three main sources of power from which other sources of power arise.<sup>20</sup> These are violence, wealth, and knowledge. Violence usually is used for punishment, and has been described as a source that is very inflexible (versatile). Wealth can also be used as punishment and for appreciation; it can be changed into the other sources; and, it can be an instrument of power that is relatively more flexible. Nonetheless, knowledge is the most flexible and basic source, because it can help avoid challenges that perhaps require violence and wealth. Knowledge is usually used to influence or affect others to pursue personal interests that are perceived as desirable and/or are disposed ways. Knowledge produces power with the highest quality. Based on this view, knowledge, especially in the frame of peace building, is indubitably essential to the peace-building process. Education or knowledge as a source of power here is necessary to build people's imaginations about peace so that it can be a real power in itself that promotes peace among other sources of power.

Considerably, we have to be optimistic to build and obtain peace and we should start from the imagination of it. In a philosophical framework on imagination, according to Jaques Lacan, human beings usually imagine, fantasize, or desire something that they want to get.<sup>21</sup> Actually, the important thing is not the object of their desire, but the mere imagination or fantasy of it. For example, if someone hunts an animal, in the process she/he really enjoys it and imagines the animal to be subdued or killed. After she/he subdues or kills the animal, perhaps she/he feels a loss of that desire and happiness and perhaps even feels disappointed at some point, and subsequently tries to hunt other animals to regain the initial feeling. From this view, if education or knowledge that is shared or taught to build a social imagination about peace as something people must desire, they will both endeavor to achieve it, and always try to maintain it. It is possible that when peace is achieved, people will feel accustomed to the circumstances, but what I is crucial to be emphasized here is that their efforts to build or achieve the peace directly (based on their imagination about peace) contribute to the lives of many people and serve to reduce violence. This process also builds an independent society that can

solve problems and build and maintain peace in society by their own efforts without any external interventions.

After all, cultural communities need multiple approaches or strategies that are derived from their own efforts, without needing aid or guidance from outsiders. Principally, if they understand their abilities to achieve peace through their own efforts, they will find their own strategies that will be most effective based on their own needs. It is possible that their strategies will coincide with the thinkers or activists' ideas,<sup>22</sup> even though the communities are unaware of what has been written on this topic. In this way, the communities can focus on what they really need to do to solve problems in their own communities and to maintain a peaceful life. Perhaps, it sounds a bit pragmatic if we just say that the most important thing is the end result of their efforts rather than the strategies utilized to achieve those ends, but the result also represents and precisely reflects that their efforts and strategies whether those have been chosen and done well or not. Hence, education or knowledge imparted also needs to promote independence and address the types of things community members need to do for their lives as those lives are embedded in the ambiguity of their cultures and subject to other factors.

## **E. Conclusion**

We started from an understanding that culture relates to human thought—that undergoes internalization and an externalization process, such that cultures have always been growing and improving in human thought development. Of course, in that process there will be parts of cultures that persist, and also there will be those eliminated because they failed to fit with human thoughts including what they believe as dictated by faith and reason. Based from this understanding, we can reconstruct and deconstruct our cultures for peace purposes. Cultural communities have the most important role to achieve the purposes that is most effective, especially for maintaining peace.

Reconstruction and deconstruction processes must work to build an imagination for peace in the community, as an optimistic standpoint

for peace. An imagination for peace is important here to encourage cultural communities to keep attempting to achieve peace and therefore, once achieved, maintain it. Whatever the results of that effort, by that pattern there will be good impacts that are perceived and received by others around of them, especially for their lives. Undoubtedly, this requires a kind of knowledge and education. Peace-building process rely on knowledge and education as a source of power to effect change that also promotes independence in cultures so that they are able to both build and maintain peace in their own societies, using their own cultures and strategies.[]

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> As Clifford Geertz emphasized, religions are cultural system. Daniel Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 243-244.

<sup>2</sup> R. Schwager, *Rene Girard: Violence and the Sacred*, (San Fransisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 1-42.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Daniel Pals, *Seven Theories*, p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> C. A. van Peursen, *Strategi Kebudayaan*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1985), pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> We can compare with Amartya Sen's view that, many conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained trough the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity. Violence is promoted by the cultivation of a sense of inevitably about some allegedly unique—often belligerent—identity what we are supposed to have and which apparently makes extensive demands on us (sometimes of a most disagreeable kind). Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence*, (USA: W. W. Norton and Co., 2006), pp. xiii-xv, 1-17.

<sup>6</sup> These can be seen from many violence in Indonesia are stimulated by some people of group or community and continued as communal actions. Besides, the violence are also stimulated by material propaganda such as burning or defacement religious buildings, abuses of religious symbols, envies because of some people's properties, rumors of symbolic things (i.e. in North Moluccas and Halmahera in 1999 there was rumor about number nine regarding the date 9/9/99 – that was assumed as apocalypse day, it stimulates the violence there), powers, money politics, etc. It can be compared with philosophical frame work of human beings in their social construction, that people are perfectly uninteresting if they posses no personal powers which can make a difference. As its consequence, as Michel Foucault said, "Man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea." Michel Foucault in Margaret S. Archer, "Models of Men", *Transcendence: Critical Realism and God*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 66.



<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, in a research to see patterns of collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003), the researchers found that ethno communal violence is the highest number of violence forms in Indonesia, neither in the number of death persons nor incidents. Besides, one of their conclusions is that collective violence in Indonesia is highly locally concentrated because of groups that have clashed only in the certain places. We can see their results of that research in attachments of this article. Ashutosh, Rizal, Mohammad, *Pattern of Collective Violence in Indonesia 1990-2003*, (Jakarta: United Nations support facility for Indonesian recovery, 2004), pp. 5-37.

<sup>8</sup> Farsijana Addeney-Risakota, *Politics, Ritual and Identity in Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta, 2005), pp. 141-311.

<sup>9</sup> The story of *cakalele* tells how the ancestors would go for long sea journeys to hijack ships, but before that they had to have a big party. They drank and danced the local liquor to stimulate their energy and stir up the company of the ancestral spirits who died long ago. Addeney-Risakota, *Politics, Ritual*, p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> Addeney-Risakota, *Politics, Ritual*, p. 228.

<sup>11</sup> Addeney-Risakota, *Politics, Ritual*, pp. 239-231.

<sup>12</sup> "Pasola Sumba", [www.sumbaisland.com](http://www.sumbaisland.com), October 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>13</sup> "Pasola Sumba".

<sup>14</sup> Emmy Kuswandari, "Kearifan Lokal Bisa Atasi Konflik", Sinar Harapan 13 Desember 2006, <http://www.sinarharapan.co.id/berita/0612/13/nas01.html>, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>15</sup> "Pela", <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pela>, October 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>16</sup> The idea of public reason is to find the 'common language' (or an 'inclusive language') which can be used by society that consists of plurality or many languages or comprehensive doctrines, in order for answering and/or solving the problems that relate to many people of society. This idea actually emphasizes the political concept to manage and maintain the democratic society which requires people to use the language to argue what they believe and want in public sphere. There are consensuses that will occur and exist in the society. John Rawls, *Collected Papers*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 573-615.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1998), p. 239.

<sup>18</sup> The external culture in frame of peace building knowledge that then requires education– is very important because if this is intensively built by us– there will be significant changes. We can learn from circus of dog and cat– that the human being and his/her expectation (as the external culture) train the cat and dog to be friendly. Naturally, dog and cat are difficult to live together in harmony (as their internal culture). In fact, after has been trained, the dog has suckled to several cattles, and live with other cats in harmony. The event appears odd. If the animals can be like that, there is no reason human beings still hold the violence and cannot build the peace. See Saccadhammo, *Menimba Kearifan di Keseharian*, (Jakarta: Vihara Metta, 2006), p. 83.

<sup>19</sup> Peursen also states that cultures have been infiltrated wholly by consciousness at that time. C. A. van Peursen, *Strategi Kebudayaan*, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> See Alvin Toffler, *Power Shift: Knowledge, Wealth, and Violence at Edge of the 21st Century* (USA: Bantam Books, 1990), pp. 3-22.

<sup>21</sup> John Lechte, *50 Filsuf Kontemporer: Dari Strukturalisme sampai Posmodernitas*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2001), pp. 114-115.

<sup>22</sup> As Diane Schilling has mentioned about ten strategies for solving violence and/or conflicts: abandoning, avoiding, dominating, getting help, humor, postponing, compromise, obliging, integrating, and problem solving. Diane Schilling in Simon Fisher, *Mengelola Konflik: ketrampilan dan Strategi untuk Bertindak*, (Jakarta: The British Council, 2001), pp. 296-297.

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ATTACHMENT

**Source:** Ashutosh, Rizal, Mohammad. *Pattern of Collective Violence in Indonesia 1990-2003*. Jakarta: United Nations support facility for Indonesian recovery, 2004.

Indonesia is one of country that has many conflicts and violence. Conflicts come from many factors that are at work in the Indonesian context. In these conflicts, violence is the primarily focus of attention. Violence in Indonesia can be called collective violence, because the violence involved many factors. Actually, in the Indonesian context, violence has happened only in several places in 14 provinces (North Maluku, Maluku, West Kalimantan, Jakarta, Central Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, West Java, East Java, Central Java, South Sulawesi, West Nusatenggara, Riau, East Nusatenggara, Banten). Therefore, our focus is on group violence. There are three conclusions concerning collective violence that we have made:

1. The most striking difference between the New Order and post Soeharto period appears to be that the New Order often used state perpetrated violence to bring order whereas clashes between social groups have been much more common since 1998.
2. Overall, collective violence in Indonesia is highly locally concentrated because of groups that have clashed only in the certain places.
3. Youth clashes constitute the single most important trigger of group violence.

The present violence is not simple. Four categories of collective violence are ethno communal (inter ethnic, inter religious, and intra religious); the state versus community; economic (conflicts over land, industrial relations, natural resources); others (dukun santet, lynchings or vigilante killings). Therefore, violence is embedded in Indonesian society and culture. Let we look at describing violence in the name collective violence.

◆ **Categories of violence based on collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)**

PEACE BUILDING BY CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

CATEGORY	DEATH	%	INCIDENT	%	INC. WITH DEATH	%
Ethno communal	9,612	89.3	599	16.6	409	39.4
State Community	105	1	423	11.7	55	5.3
Economic	78	0.7	444	12.3	34	3.3
Others	963	9.0	2,142	59.4	610	58.8
Indonesia (14 provinces)	10,785	100	3,608	100	1,108	100

Note: Based on the data, ethno communal violence accounts for only 17 per cent of all incident of violence, but its share of deaths is almost 90 per cent. That essentially means that ethno communal form of group violence is not very common in Indonesia, but when it does take place, it is much more deadly than other forms of violence. The incidence of economic and the state versus community clashes is not far behind that of ethno communal strife, but the magnitude of deaths associated with them is a great deal smaller.

♦ **Distribution of ethno communal violence 1990-2003**

	DEATH	%	INCIDENT	%
Ethno communal	9,612	100	599	100
Ethnic	4,122	43	140	23
- Anti-Chinese	1,259	13	32	5
- Madura vs Dayak	2,764	29	70	12
- Ethnic others	99	1	38	6
Religious (Muslims- Christians)	5,452	57	433	72
Sectarian	38	0	26	4
-Intra-Muslims	38	0	22	4
- Intra-Christians	—	0	3	1

Note: Inter religious violence has caused the largest destruction of lives, followed closely by inter ethnic conflict. The three biggest takers of lives in Indonesian are Muslims-Christians, Madura-Dayak, and anti Chinese violence respectively, suggesting that these three have been the greatest cleavages of Indonesian society.

◆ **Provincial distribution collective violence in Indonesia 1990-2003**

PROVINCE	DEATH	%	INCIDENT	%
North Maluku	2,794	25.0	72	1.7
Maluku	2,046	18.3	332	7.8
West Kalimantan	1,515	13.6	78	1.8
Jakarta	1,322	11.8	178	4.2
Central Kalimantan	1,284	11.5	62	1.5
Central Sulawesi	669	6.0	101	2.4
West Java	256	2.3	871	20.4
East Java	254	2.3	655	15.3
Central Java	165	1.5	506	11.9
South Sulawesi	118	1.1	223	5.2
West Nusatenggara	109	1.0	198	4.6
Riau	100	0.9	165	3.9
East Nusatenggara	89	0.8	55	1.3
Banten	37	0.3	112	2.6
Total 14 Provinces	10,758	96.4	3,608	84.5
Other 14 Provinces	402	3.6	662	15.5
Indonesia	11,160	100	4,270	100