Religious Conflict Transformation through Collective Memory and the Role of Local Music

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Abstract— **This study departs from the writer's interest in efforts for conflict transformation in Maluku where religious diversity has been used as an instrument to escalate the conflict between people in Maluku. In efforts for conflict transformation in Maluku, the local music functions as a way of reviving the collective memory of the Maluku people about their cultural identity as orang basudara, an identity that was formed within the cultural institution of the community, such as in the cultural ritual pela-gandong that has been practised since ancient times, as well as in the life practices of orang basudara in their daily social encounters. The collective memory of the cultural identity of the Maluku community as orang basudara encourages the transformation of situations and relationships of conflict into situations and relationships in their life as orang basudara, which means they should always protect one another, help one another, and make peace with one another to end any conflict. Therefore, the goal of this research is to present an academic explanation which shows that music has the potential to communicate the collective memory of the Maluku people in connection with their cultural identity so that it can contribute to the scenario of conflict transformation in the community.**

Keywords— *religious conflict, transformation, collective memory, local music*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Maluku conflict was occurred from January 19, 1999 to 2004. The Maluku conflict was a horizontal conflict between Christian and Muslim communities in Maluku. Many previous studies suggested that the Maluku conflict was a social conflict, caused by various factors, such as: Because of the contradiction politics of elites in post reformation.[1] The Maluku conflict was very easy to spread because of the potential for hidden conflict as a colonial heritage that segregated the Maluku community based on religion.[2]

Maluku conflict, originally a social conflict, eventually emerged as a religious conflict that used various religious symbols. The conflict was difficult to overcome because the difference in religious ideological was used as instrument to trigger and spread the conflict. Each of the believers confirmed the truth and blamed each other. In conflicts, religious symbols were sacrificed for example by burning churches or mosques by rioters, to incite the emotions of each religious people who involved in the conflict. Therefore the Maluku conflict was also referred to as religious conflict.[3]

The Maluku conflict has had negative impacts that have implications on various aspects of community life. Trijono explained that the Maluku conflict caused a devastating impact in the Maluku community. The impact of the conflict resulted in victims of direct violence, thousands of lives were floating, thousands of people injured and Maluku people must became refugees in their own land. In addition, there were also indirect impacts of conflict, such as damaged to buildings or physical damaged, damaged to social relations, economic crises and the sharpening of social segregation.[4]

When the Maluku conflict occurred and had negative impact then various efforts to transform the conflict were carried out, among others, by increasing the number of security forces of the TNI and POLRI in conflict areas, peace negotiations mediated by the central government as well as local government, religious leaders and community leaders, and other peace efforts initiated by various Social Institutions that developed in the conflict. In all of these conflict transformation approaches, the local music of Maluku also played an important role as one of the media for building peace in Maluku. In efforts for conflict transformation in Maluku, the local music functions as a way of reviving the collective memory of the Maluku people about their cultural identity as *orang basudara*, an identity that was formed within the cultural institution of the community, such as in the cultural ritual *pela-gandong* that has been practiced since ancient times, as well as in the life practices of *orang basudara* in their daily social encounters. The collective memory of the cultural identity of the Maluku community as *orang basudara* encourages the transformation of situations and relationships of conflict into situations and relationships in their life as *orang basudara*, which means they should always protect one another, help one another, and make peace with one another to end any conflict.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative method by doing fieldwork and library studies. By this method, gathering data from two different religious communities with their different experience both in conflict and in conflict transformation effort, and form local musicians to see what practices, ideas and tool kits such different societies had regarding the use of music to influence people's views of each other. Combining fieldwork and library studies was intended to have more material available for analyzing and understanding the processes that take place when music was used for conflict transformation purposes.