



Proceedings

# LSCAC 2016

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## The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference

*"Language, Society, and Culture in Asian Contexts" (LSCAC 2016)*

on Cultivating and Casting Asian Diversities : Empowering the Asians  
May 24-25, 2016 at Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

### Organized by:

- Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia
- Mahasarakham University, Thailand
- University of Hyderabad, India
- College of Education, Hue University, Vietnam





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# PROCEEDINGS

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**THE 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
LANGUAGE, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE IN ASIAN  
CONTEXTS (LSCAC 2016)  
on “Cultivating and Casting Asian Diversities:  
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**Malang, May 24 – 25, 2016**

**Hotel Atria, Malang, East Java, Indonesia**



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## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PELA CONCEPT AS THE CONTRIBUTION TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN MOLUCCAN CONTEXT

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to discuss reconstruction of the "pela" concept as a cultural approach to contribute to multicultural education in the Moluccan context. The paper is basically to answer the questions of 1) How is the "pela" concept created by Moluccan ancestor and how does it contribute to multicultural society in Moluccas in the past?; 2) What is the concept of multicultural society in Moluccas that consist of many ethnics, tribe and religion nowadays?; and 3) Does it bring impacts for multicultural education in Moluccas? This study was conducted by using qualitative method through in-depth interview, participative observation of Moluccan society and related literature review. The investigation found that "Pela" as a cultural symbol in Moluccas does not accommodate multicultural societies in the present days consisting of various ethnics and tribes like Chinese, Arabic, Buginese, Butoness, Javanese, etc. because "Pela" relation only accommodates indigenous people in Moluccas, so that the concept of brotherhood as the cultural basis of "Pela" does not represent multicultural society, but it still preserves the cultural segregation. The contribution of this study is that the "Pela" concept has to be reconstructed to accommodate all ethnics and tribes in Moluccas to contribute to multicultural education.

**Keywords:** *Culture, pela, Reconstruction, multicultural education*

### INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian society is a multicultural society which consists of various ethnics, tribes, religion, language and others. The religion and ethnicity are two aspects in multicultural frame that should be noted beside political and economic interests from different society. The diversity united in the society provides a room to mutual reception as a collective consciousness.

In the reality, multicultural society of nation cannot avoid conflict, violence, discrimination, domination and hegemonic of one culture to others because often the dominant culture is used as benchmark or representation to others. For example, America as a democratic state is also dealing with domination of the *whites* against the *blacks* in the past, and Indonesia that deals with conflicts associated with religion and ethnic representation in determination process of "Pancasila" as the national principle. Those facts emphasize that multicultural phenomena are important things that need to be considered by all the society because of the very enormous potential of conflict, if it is not regulated properly.

The Moluccan context is multicultural society consisting of various religion, ethnic, languages and other. The fact, the Moluccan multicultural context in the past until today could not avoid conflict of internal village, between villages, tribes, or island becomes unavoidable custom. However, the Moluccan ancestor





strived to create a form of traditional conflict management called “pela”, which literally referred to as brothers. Traditionally “pela” that has binding two or more villages in the agreement and oath to obey the agreement. In other words, *pela* has transformed the conflict between villages, ethnicity, religion, tribe into brothers connective called as *pela*.

In Mollucan society view, “pela” is a cultural production serving as Common Good to preserve multicultural conditions. Moslems and Christian communities live side by side in *pela* bonding harmoniously to be a social fact as a result of the *pela* agreement. One social impact of such bonding in the school context is that students are taught to do *bahkti* together. Moslem students do mutual cooperation in Church and Christians in the mosque. However, 1999’s conflict change the condition. The “pela” power cannot solve the conflict which caused the crisis of humanity in the Mollucan society.

During the conflict, Moslem and Christian Mollucan society fought against each other although they are brothers in *pela*. Therefore, based on the aforementioned facts, this paper aims to discuss the reconstruction concept of *pela* which keeps the multicultural context society and also contributes to multicultural education. This research topic does not only consider reality of the Mollucan multicultural society in the past when the ancestors created an attempt to solve the conflict through *pela* agreement, but also to look at reality of the Mollucan society at present that consist of various ethnicities and tribes such as Chinese, Arabic, Bugis, Buton, Java and others.

#### Pela in the Past Mollucan Multicultural Society

An academic discussion about *pela* mostly involves an understanding of nature or worldview of Mollucan society. Discussion about *pela* means discussion on culture. Discussion on culture refers to Geertz view that explain culture in relation to symbol. (Geertz: 1973). Geertz said that:

The Moral and aesthetic aspect of a given culture, the evaluated elements, have commonly been summed up in the term “ethos” while cognitive, existential aspects have been designed by the term “world view” “Ethos is the tone, character, and quality of Reviews their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood. It is the underlying attitude toward Themselves and their world that life Reflects. World view is their picture of the way things in sheer actually are, Reviews their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains most comprehensively Reviews their ideas of order.

As what Geertz describes, ethos and worldview are both very important in relation to culture, because culture is created through ethos and world view of society. Just like “pela”, the Moluccan ancestors created the *pela* concept to promote the peace pioneered by ethos spirit and world view to change the situation and chaos into harmony. Conflict and *pela* agreement signaled that conflict is dangerous. Therefore, the *pela* concept is created as a management concept and a solution of conflict to create harmony for the Mollucan society .

The *pela* concept indicated a kind of brotherhood. Ruhulesin (2005) said that “*pela* is a form of public ethics, social system of common good and common values in wider context of the Mollucan society. He said that *pela* agreement is ethical code that binds the villages. He assumes that *pela* agreement can be a model to build relationships between groups, religions and others. He gave an example of *pela* relationship between passo country, as Christian village, and red stone as Muslims





village to describe cultural situation in Mollucan. In *pela* terminology, villages of different religions live harmoniously, hence top Ruhulesin “*pela*” was understood as a bridge to connect Mollucan society which consist of people of different religions (Ruhulesin, 2005).

Bartels said that *pela*'s function is not only to maintain the Muslims and Christians relationship in economic aspect but also serves as ritual center that integrates Muslim and Christian as basic identity of Mollucan society. Bartels, (31). Ruhulesin (2005) emphasizes *pela* function as signal to explain the Mollucan society awareness on harmony, equalitas problem and human dignity. In short he said that *pela* has function to prevent conflicts and potential of humanitarian crisis occurred individually and communally cause of domination and hegemonic.

### Multicultural Society in Mollucan Today

The multicultural context in Indonesia has always shown the contestation of religious identity. For two decades, religion and ethnic has become two major issues in several places in Indonesia (Mas'ood, 2000; Bertrand, 2004; Mujiburahman, 2009). Conflicts between people of different ethnicity and religion occurred in some places (Liddle, 1996; Azra, 2002).

The Mollucan society today consists of different tribes, ethnicities, religions and languages that come from various places. Therefore, the Mollucan society is not single identity but multiidentity. There are native and newcomers in Maluku. Native of Maluku in Ambon city is Amboiness, Seramnes” Saparua, Burunes, while Buton, Bugis, Makasar, Chinese and Arabic is considered as the newcomers. The Mollucan multicultural condition cause interfaith and inter-ethnic marriage, so their descendants inherit double identity. Newcomers have contributed a lot in trade sector, and some have political rights to the land and property. Politically, newcomers have their rights in the Moluccan. However, they face cultural rights issues, since involving them is considered as something taboo as it is mentioned in *pela* agreement and its rituals.

The phenomenon occurs in all region of Mollucan including in Batumerah and Passo villages, the newcomer societies as mentioned above, politically they have power over the land due to the sale and purchase transactions with the native inhabitant. However, due to the strong of native and newcomers stigma then in the cultural event, their role is only as spectators. Based on the interviews with one of the Mollucan conflict researchers in 2014, Mollucan society really like historical cultural product. So, it is difficult to create a culture that can accommodate all society levels.<sup>1</sup> This is the main obstacle for the Mollucan society to reestablish the bond of brotherhood as in the *pela* value.

The conflict occurred in 1999 involved all Mollucan society, both native and newcomer. As a form of effort to solve the conflict, many parties always resonated *pela* approach as an alternative of conflict resolution. The problem is it is difficult to place the newcomers in the framework of conflict resolution based on the *pela* culture, thus it is difficult to accommodate all groups in society.

<sup>1</sup> The results of interviews with an conflict activis, who is initial A. R, Mei, 2014





## Reconstruction of the "Pela" Concept to Maintain Multicultural Society and Contribution to Multicultural Education in the Mollucan Context.

The Molucan multicultural context and social reality which is always in conflict since 1999-2004 need more attention. It is important to note that *pela* as social force that binds Mollucan society in the past and as conflict management created by the ancestors to resolve conflict needs to be reviewed. Based on the interviews, it is found that most of the Mollucan society consider *pela* as one possible solution that can solve the conflict. Takaria said that:

Pela is still relevant to talk about even still proper to use as basis when discussing the post-conflict Mollucan problem. The problem is how the government and society understand the *pela* itself and the society situation. Not seek to create a new thing anymore as the multicultural village. *Pela* do not seen as an individual problem, but a community problem, so that each society of various ethnic and religion entities to be part of the *pela* community even feel have it.<sup>2</sup>

The statements above emphasizes that "*pela* is still is considered as one possible form of conflict management that involves many parties. If we see *pela* as alternative for the conflict resolution in Mollucan, it is necessary to consider the Mollucan multicultural context which consists of various ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures. We need to find the way to put the society which has been regarded as "the Other" or Lyon becomes part of *pela* community integrated with other inhabitant who said as a "native"

The reconstruction process of *pela* requires the precise mechanism that can invite the whole society to participate in it. Habermas's theory of active communicative action can be used as a way to encounter the problem, which is by doing new consensus related to the *pela* agreement.

*"In communicative action speaker and hearer assume Reviews their simmetricall are interchangeable. By entering into inter-personal relations as in the performative attitude, they commit theme selves to recognizing each other as responsible subject siymmetrically capable or orienting Reviews their action to validity claims"(Habermas, 1996: 67).*

Habermas' opinion shows that the communication aspects in consensus can become a media to familiarize people with their identity and others. But the recognition process of this identity often does not take place, because consensus is often operating in the subject-object schema resulting the binary opposition between the strong and the weak. In this context, the identity will never melt but remain solid.

The indigenous inhabitant and newcomer scheme is a binary opposition form that is often being considered for involving the name of "the others" in the *pela* society. Therefore a communicative action is needed to bring everyone participates to take part in the process of action or dialogue in the new decision making or new consensus. The space that in Habermas language called public sphere in an arena for discourse that gave birth a consensus. Bourdieou use the term arena as place to bring together the whole of social element to fight for the symbolic capital that is cultural can be used as common property. Hence the new consensus is the core of reconstruction process in which within it discuss the *pela* society identity that must be criticized.

<sup>2</sup> The results of interview with Mollucan people who is initial M T, Maret, 2016.





Therefore, the social space or public sphere of the Mollucan society, including Batumerah and Passo as an example of the *pela* relationship between two villages had to undergo reconstruction process associated with process of involving the community or society, which is considered "the others" not part of the *pela* community for involving as part of the community. Understanding and gave meaning the *pela* as management form and conflicts resolution created by the Moluccas ancestor for future generations believed and understood as a culture becomes basis of the reconstruction process. Therefore, the educative *pela* value did not impact on the society segregation practices, but the educational value of *pela* always accommodate every element of society from time to time.

The post-conflict Mollucan societies with characteristics of multicultural society become challenge and obstacle in efforts to achieve democratic society, because in various interests often make the Maluku society as a *civil society* are fragmented and in mutual competition each other. Varshney (2003) offers an alternative step through a "*civic engagement*" or civic relations to promote the peace. The approach of *civic engagement* mentioned by Varshney as cited by Ahnaf (2013: 189-191) associated with: the importance of communication media, social institutions for problem solution both formal and informal, the importance of integrated social space. The need for integrative social environment that can allow interaction across groups in society or what is known in the social sciences and political discourse as a theory of social capital,

*Pela* is the social institution of Mollucan tradisional society as well as social space that became the symbolic capital to promote the peace as reflection form of the multicultural society. Therefore *Pela* reconstruction effort is an attempt to build the Mollucan social space integrating all society elements from various different of ethnic background, religion, ethnicity, language and the other in form of civic enggameent that is *pela* society. The *pela* community integrates all society elements become an integrative of social environment. According to Putnam argument about the social capital, it can be explain by social environment that integrateive has bonding and bridging the ethnic social relationship of expanding (Putnam 2001). Borowing to Putnam argument, *pela* that can be seen as the social capital formed to bind and bridge the relationship between ethnics and social groups. In the Mollucan context now days, the relation between ethnics and social groups created through the reconstruction process of *Pela* for the post-conflict of the Mollucan society become a new alternative at maintaining the conditions of society multicultural associated with effort on creating sense of peace. It is initiated by putting all elements of society in equivalent position.

#### Pela Reconstruction Impact for Multicultural Education

Multiculturalism is an idea that appears to illustrate that the society made up from various diverse cultures, but have the same social status. Farrely (2004: 43) said that:

*"Multiculturalisme is not about difference and identity, but about Reviews those that are embedded in and sustained by culture, that is a body of beliefs and practices in terms of the which a group of people to understand Themselves and the world and organize Reviews their individual and collective lives "*





Fallery's opinion confirms that in a multicultural society, the identity differences is not an issue or a matter that should be debated. But the multiculturalism concept appears give an understanding that people of different identities can live harmoniously with mutual understanding. In other words, the multiculturalism emerged as response to diversity in a society (Karengga, 1997, Heywood, 2002).

An effort to understand existence in the public sphere context of Mollucan society, *pela* still has an important role. *Pela* as the past conflict management as well as understood as culture product should serve as a share ground for the Mollucan society. However, it should be done reconstruction related to effort involving the entire of society entity to be a part as well as recognized as part of the *pela* agreement. Charles Taylor said that culture recognition is a value that is required to implement the multiculturalism concept, in which each individuals, groups treated with respect and equal. Taylor (1994: 30) said that the importance of cultural recognition due to the social fact in which our identities are negotiated through cultural contacts (dialogue) with other people. Therefore, cultural recognition is very important in order to reject the deterioration of relations between the existing culture, and give space for each culture to shows its existence still survive amidst the society or state life.

The cultural recognition and equality in the Mollucan public sphere through "*pela*" relationship contributes to multicultural education that emphasizes the equality aspect to all society entities. One solution offered by Taylor (1994) is education. Through education, everyone is taught to understand, appreciate and respect each individual, groups with different cultural backgrounds upon the right equality of each person as human that has dignity and human rights (Parekh, 2008: 9; Rockefeller, 1994: 88).

The multicultural education in the Mollucan context can be started from the discourse as well as the *pela* practice among the Mollucan society of different ethnic, religious, ethnic, linguistic and others, becomes a strength of synergy to build the post conflict in Mollucas. This can minimize statement "self and other" or the term of master and slave that strengthens the native and newcomers stigmas. Therefore *pela* reconstruction as an active form of communicative action can give a new consensus that accommodates all elements of the social community becomes persuasive force to build the Mollucas. Therefore the education sector became one arena of efforts to promote multicultural education based on local culture.

The settings of multicultural education curriculum become important to apply in schools through learning process. The students are taught in theory and practice to things of the *pela* cultural based on the empirical data like *pela* that has been reconstruction. The democratic, humanist values and tolerant will become a force to strengthen students in segregated schools as a result of the ideology and indoctrination based on religious education curriculum, referred to the dogmatic aspect. Therefore culture has an important role in building collective solidarity in the Mollucan society, include the education context in Mollucan starting from the reconstruction process of culture itself. By the reconstruction process leads to accommodating a process in the setting of multicultural education curriculum in school, so did not only speak at the philosophy theoretical level, but on the practical and empirical aspects.





## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the discussion and analysis of *pela* concept as a form of contribution to multicultural education in Mollucan context, we can conclude that:

1. *Pela* is form of conflict management created by the Mollucan ancestors in the past as form of conflict resolution between ethnicities, tribes, religions and regional. The *pela* process begins with oath that binds *pela* community in a brotherhood called as *pela* brother.
2. The brotherhood bond in relations with *pela* has particularist and exclusive character, therefore the brotherhood concept in *pela* need to be reconstructed in order to accommodate all elements of society. The Mollucan today consisted of diverse ethnicities, religions, cultures and languages in a brotherhood bond between the villages.
3. The *pela* reconstruction process contains multicultural spirit that highly appreciates the equality among the society. Therefore, the *pela* reconstruction concept is applicable form of multicultural education model in the Mollucan context which possibly gives some ideas for multicultural education curriculum in public schools.

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