

## TRADITIONAL CONFLICT AND ITS INTERVENTIONS

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### Abstract

*The Ngali-Renda conflict is habituated. It has taken for years. It has grown in its severity. It is not the case that the people of Ngali and Renda and the government do nothing in dealing with the conflict. However, the conflict is still there and waiting its trigger to appear. This research is significant in that it analyzes the traditional factors and interventions of the conflict. Applying qualitative research and historical, socio-cultural and phenomenological approaches showed that the Ngali-Renda conflict transformed from ndempa (empty-handed fighting) to lewa (armed fighting). Ndempa implied the spirit of honesty, openness and patriotism. It occurred every year in rest period of cultivation and took one or two month. Although ndempa was kapoda ade (serious and violent), it was kadihi ade (no intention to do harm) and for play and pleasure. On the contrary, lewa was more violent and caused casualties because the fighters used big knives, arrows and firearms.*

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Konflik Ngali-Renda merupakan konflik yang sudah biasa terjadi. Konflik ini merupakan konflik kekerasan. Masyarakat Ngali-renda maupun pemerintah telah berupaya untuk mengatasi konflik tersebut, namun belum menampakkan hasil. Penelitian ini memiliki arti penting untuk melihat faktor-faktor tradisional dan penanganan konflik yang telah dilakukan. Tampak dalam penelitian ini bahwa konflik Ngali-Renda merupakan transformasi konflik dari *ndempa* (perkelahian tanpa senjata) menjadi *lewa* (perkelahian dengan senjata). *Ndempa* memiliki makna semangat kejujuran, keterbukaan, dan patriotisme. Tradisi ini merupakan tradisi tahunan, yang dilakukan setelah musim tanam dan berlangsung selama satu hingga dua bulan. Walaupun *ndempa* disebut *kapoda ade* (sungguh-sungguh dan keras) namun *kadihe ade* (tidak berniat untuk menyakiti), dan hanya untuk tujuan permainan dan kesenangan. Sementara *lewa* lebih keras dan menyebabkan korban luka karena pelaku menggunakan pedang, panah, serta senjata api.

**Keywords:** Ngali-Renda, *ndempa*, *Lewa*, conflict, violence

## A. Preface

Social conflicts, where groups of people were drawn, frequently happen in Indonesia, not only in some regions, which are famous as the trouble spots but also in peaceful spots such as Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, and some parts of Java. Conflicts have emerged into various types, different level of escalation, and number of impacts. The types of conflict can be categorized into vested-interests group conflict, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, or the combination conflict of those three types as the most complicated conflict. Those conflicts could turn into surface, manifest, or latent conflict and engender light negative impacts as well as more serious one, which could destroy the stability of economic, social, and cultural life of those who involve. The miserable violence occurred as the impact of conflict, from 1997-2000 in West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and Maluku killing approximately, about 10.000 people as reported by Human Right Activists.

Ironically, most conflicts happen among neighborhoods. For example, the conflict occurred between people of Karang Tapen and Karang Jasi whose positions are across the road. People of Petemon and Karang Genteng that are on the both sides of the 4 km wide-river also had a conflict. The most recent was the conflict between Ngali and Renda that only separated by a small hill *Wadu Nocu* and rice field *So Bente* with only 2 km distance.

The conflict between people of Ngali and Renda is a mass conflict, which has happened since before 1945 (the year of Indonesian independence). It has actually, become an 'annual ritual', except the fight since 2000, where the scene of conflict showed empty-handed fight and no battle casualties. The last 2 years conflict, however, appeared more violent because some people were seriously injured and even killed as they used firearms and conventional weapon.

Local newspapers released that the escalation of Ngali-Renda conflict in the last two months of 2009 was uncontrolled and the effort of dealing with the conflict had no result. The alliance team with 1000 personnel which consisted of military service and police officer from Bima and Dompu (*Polda NTB, Polres Dompu, Polresta Bima, Polres Bima, Brimob, and TNI*) failed to cope with the conflict. The difficulties of handling Ngali-Renda conflict were jeopardized by battle strategy applied by both of Ngali and Renda people such as closing the street access to and from their countryside, using sharp weapon

and firearm, and it even worsened by their desire to take revenge on behalf of those who were killed.

The representatives from legislative house (DPRD Bima), elite figure, religious figure, youth delegation, and executive element performed, at least, 7 times meeting without any significant result and contribution to end the conflict. Even when security approach was finally gone through, it only managed to stop the conflict on the surface. Sweeping weapon to citizen houses on 22 November 2009 could only discontinue the fight between them for a moment. Surprisingly, the security team found 39 gunfires: 22 from Ngali people and 17 from Renda people. Besides, not less than 287 security guards also could confiscate various sharp weapons (big knife, lance, and arrow). That fact showed that people could easily own illegal guns that led them to practice miserable violence. Ironically, as showed by that fact, a security approach, though it was required in critical situation, did not successfully solve the problem. The security approach, undeniably, must be integrated and followed simultaneously with any different efforts to build positive peace instead of simply creating negative peace.

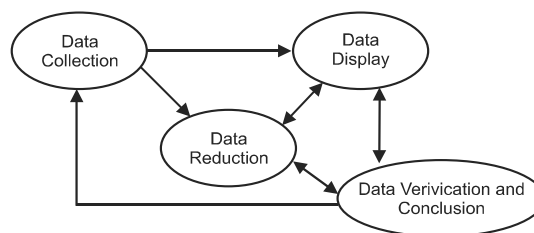
The struggle to increase the quality of peacefulness to change negative peace into positive peace is a daunting task. In fact, the conflict between Ngali Renda has happened for ages. Therefore, it needs some ways to recognize and understand the historical background of the conflict to meet the proper treatment toward the conflict. Besides, the values and norms that are supportive or contra-supportive to conflict must be highlighted in order to strive for an attainment of peace in Ngali-Renda. Finally yet importantly, the fact that the failure intervention from various parties in handling the conflict of Ngali-Renda demonstrated there must be things that need critical evaluation so that the same failure could be avoided next. The historical background of the conflict, the values and norms of Ngali-Renda people, and the failure intervention of concerned outsiders were three-projected target of this research. Based on the mentioned background, this research defined its questions as follows:

1. How is the historical picture of Ngali-Renda conflict?
2. What are social factors (in terms of social structure and interaction) and cultural factors (in terms of cognitive, normative, and symbolic aspects of culture) that “involved” in the Ngali-Renda conflict?
3. How are interventions to stop conflict between Ngali and Renda?

This research is qualitative to get qualitative data through observation, interviews, and documents. The data are presented in the form of comprehensive, analytical and systematic description.

In this research, we applied historical, socio-cultural and phenomenological approaches. The historical approach was applied because the data was historical reconstruction related to Ngali-Renda conflict. The socio-cultural approach was applied to examine socio-cultural contexts of Ngali-Renda communities in terms of their social structures and interaction and cultures including cognitive, normative and symbolic aspects. The phenomenological approach was applied to reconstruct the real perceptions of conflict subjects.

There are three analysis methods in a qualitative research: constant comparative method according to Barney Glasser and Anselm L. Strauss, semantic method according to James A. Spradley, and interactive method according to Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman.<sup>1</sup> We applied interactive method conducted in simultaneous and cyclical ways in the research process. This method includes data collection, reduction, display, and verification, tentative conclusion, data confirmation, and conclusion. The data analysis scheme is as follows:<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Lexy J. Moeleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006), p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> This analysis scheme is adopted from Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*, (Baverly Hills-New Delhi-London: Sage Publications, 1985), p. 23.

According to phenomenological approach, researchers give more emphasis on emic perspectives than ethic ones. Consequently, the framework developed in data analysis is inductive-abstractive.<sup>3</sup>

## B. Defining Conflict

*The Oxford English Dictionary* provides definitions that fit the popular conception: 1. An encounter with arms; a fight; especially a prolonged struggle; 2. Dashing together of physical bodies. The word is derived from the Latin meaning "to strike".<sup>4</sup>

In the *Oxford Thesaurus*, the synonyms include 'fight', 'battle', 'combat', 'engagement', 'struggle', 'war', 'fray', 'fracas', 'affray', 'brawl', 'dispute', 'argument', 'controversy', 'wrangle', 'contention', 'disagreement', 'altercation', 'feud', 'quarrel', 'row', 'squabble', 'clash', 'antagonism', and 'discord'. Conflict is most often identified with fighting, whether physically or verbally, with implications of winning or losing.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to recognize a distinction between problems, disputes, and conflicts although most of the literature on conflict resolution uses 'conflict' as a generic term to cover the whole area, and uses 'conflict resolution' to include problem solving and dispute settlement. It should be recognized that not all situations that are popularly identified as conflicts are of the same nature or dimensions.<sup>6</sup>

A problem can be resolved by management –by agreement on how something can or should be done. For example, a work group may have a problem in deciding how to undertake a particular task; the group seeks to resolve this by collaboratively managing its time and resources. A dispute arises when two or more people or groups perceive that their interests, needs, or goals are incompatible and they seek to maximize fulfillment of their own interests and needs, or achievement of their own goals (often at the

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<sup>3</sup> The description of inductive-abstractive logic in qualitative researches refers to Sanapiah Faisal, "Pengumpulan dan Analisis Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," in Burhan Bungin (ed.), *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif: Pemahaman Filosofis dan Metodologis ke Arah Penguasaan Model Aplikasi* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2003), pp. 64-79.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Tillet, *Resolving Conflict: A Practical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

expense of the others). This may be done through bargaining or negotiating, and the outcome is often reached through compromise: to obtain that which is most important, one party may yield to the other on that which is less important. Dispute are usually *settled*. A conflict arises when two or more people or groups perceive that their values or needs are incompatible – whether or not they propose, at present or in the future, to take any action on the basis of those values or needs.<sup>7</sup>

Values are incompatible if each contradicts or opposes the other. One need would be seen as incompatible with another if meeting that need is thought to prevent, obstruct, interfere with, or in some way make meeting the other need less likely or effective. Conflict becomes manifest when one or more of the parties involved seeks to resolve the incompatibility by, for example, discussing, fighting, compelling the other to change, going to the law, or seeking resolution.<sup>8</sup>

Conflict does not only come about when values and needs are actually, objectively incompatible, or when conflict is manifested in action; it also exists when one of the parties *perceive* it to exist. Much conflict arises from assumptions about what might or will happen if or when one party does something. Much interpersonal hostility in relationships, for example, is a result of unspoken assumptions about the actions of the other or the meaning of the actions. Essentially the incompatibility can be summarized as: 'You interfere with my doing or being what I want to do or be'.<sup>9</sup>

### **C. Preview of Conflict in Lombok**

There have been numbers of mass conflict in NTB, and many researches on them have been conducted; among others, even, have been published in the form of book or articles in various academic journals. The most popular conflict which was studied is a mass riot happened in January 17<sup>th</sup> 2000 in Mataram –well known as “the riot 171” – One of the researches on that riot was published under the topic “*Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia: Studi Kasus Kupang, Mataram, dan Sambas*” (*Social Riots in Indonesia: a Case Study in*

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

*Kupang, Mataram, and Sambas*). The research focused on four problems: (1) sources of conflict, (2) escalators of conflict, (3) social, economic, politics, and cultural crisis in three conflict regions, and (4) solutions for the conflict. Especially for the riot 171 in Mataram NTB, the research traced some variables: sources, accelerators, and triggers of conflict. The research concluded that some driving factors of the riot are unfinished conflict in Ambon, hoisted development of church in Mataram, economics gaps, inter-religious relation, and settlement pattern based on religion.

Another research entitled “Konflik Horizontal dalam Masyarakat Etnis Sasak di Kabupaten Lombok Timur” (Horizontal Conflict within Sasak Ethnic Society in East Lombok) was conducted by Khotibul Islam, et.al. The research focused on two matters: (1) conflict potential, and (2) mechanism of solving conflict. Since 1996-2004, there were 18 horizontal conflict happened in East Lombok which was described by researcher using common category of vertical conflict and horizontal conflict. The researcher identified 13 causes of those conflict: (1) *merarik* (elopement) tradition, (2) water resource exploitation, (3) religious group differences, (4) desecrate, (5) young man, (6) compensatory of land, (7) land dispute, (8) exploitation of land without rights, (9) environment problems, (10) the extension of countryside, (11) leadership of religious social organization, and (13) the election of countryside head. Furthermore, researcher also showed that a number of efforts have been done to offer solution for the conflict including non-litigation procedure such as mediation. Unhappily, the researcher did not provide detail description about how the process of mediation was done.

The type of conflict studied in the two mentioned researches did not have acute characteristic and most probably, they could happen repeatedly with the same actors such as Ngali-Renda conflict. The unique characteristic of Ngali-Renda conflict gives challenges and distinguishes this research from those two previous researches. This research traced the historical root of the conflict and the findings are useful for recommendations anticipating upcoming conflict. Therefore, this research also had specification of methodologies, by applying social-cultural and historical approach at the same time.

#### **D. The Conflict Change from *Ndempa* into *Lewa***

In Ngali and Renda, there is a popular tradition called *ndempa*. Literally, *ndempa* means empty-handed fighting, individually or collectively. No body in

Ngali and Renda knows the beginning of *ndempa*. An informant loosely related *ndempa* to the time of Dutch imperialism in Bima. *Ndempa* is a pride expression of Ngali people who opposed the oppressive Dutch bravely. They perpetuate such feeling from generation to the other.<sup>10</sup> Along with the ending of colonialism era, they have manifested bravery in fighting against anybody.

One media to keep bravery spirits of fighting among Ngali people is wedding ceremony. A wedding is not only a ritual but also a cultural event in which a cultural process is conducted together with a wedding ritual. In the past, *ndempa* was a part of wedding ceremony because it was time to show bravery spirits to bride and groom's families. In a wedding ceremony, *ndempa* happened when a groom and his family brought a bride price to his bride's house at four in the afternoon. It was before performance of marriage contract in the evening. The groom's procession brought the bride price. The number of people involved in the procession depended on the groom's social status; the higher the status, the bigger the number. The procession consisted of cows, rice, cakes and cookies, a chanting group with tambourine, senior people, relatives, friends and so on in a series. Toward the bride's house, the bride's group blocked the groom's and prohibited them to go in. Then, both groups fought. In the next day, at four in the afternoon, after marriage contract performance, the groom was brought to a *ruka* (a house on stilts). The fighting between two groups happened again and ended by kicking (*ndempa*). The fighting ended automatically and people dispersed when the sun set.<sup>11</sup>

*Ndempa* happened among Ngali people. The people from the west of the village fought with those from the east, those from the north fought with those from the south. They called each other to fight. When the situation got hot, they fought. Some of them bleed, got small injuries, sprained or bruised.

In Bimanese' point of view; this tradition was very interesting because it showed that people hurt their bodies for nothing except prestige as a champion of *ndempa*. In the local language, it is called *ngau* (brave).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Yunus, personal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Hamzan, personal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Syarifuddin Jurdi, *Islam, Masyarakat Madani dan Demokrasi di Bima: Membangun Demokrasi Kultural yang Berbasis Religius*, (Yogyakarta: Center of Nation Building Studies, 2008), p. 260.



Beside *ndempa* among Ngali people themselves, *ndempa* happened between them and their neighbor villagers. There were *ndempa dende* and *ndempa dhiha*. *Ndempa dende* was a part of a wedding ceremony, whereas *ndempa ndiha* took place between Ngali and Renda people.<sup>13</sup>

Like *ndempa dende*, the beginning of *ndempa ndiha* is not known. A 73 years old informant said that *ndempa* appeared since his and even his grandfather's childhood.<sup>14</sup> As remembering his childhood, he said that every afternoon, children from Ngali and Renda gathered in rice fields located in borders of both villages. Empty-handed fighting began when the number of children gathering increased. Firstly, children came into the fighting arena. Secondly, teenagers did so. Finally, adults conducted the fight.<sup>15</sup> In other word, at the beginning, children did *mpaa ncao* (playful fighting) for two or three days. Then, the fighting involved the bigger number of people including teenagers and adults.<sup>16</sup> At that time, schools were only in Ngali where Renda children schooled. In the time of *ndempa*, children planned *ndempa* after going home from schooling without any commando from anybody. They began *ndempa* every afternoon from day to day before involving adults.<sup>17</sup>

The time of *ndempa ndiha* between Ngali and Renda people related to cultivation system. At that time, the cultivation system was simple depending on the rainfall. Therefore, farmers had spare time to do communal empty-handed fighting (*ndempa ndiha*). *Ndempa* took place at the rest period of farming that has changed from time to time. *Ndempa ndiha* happened from September to November at earlier time.

*Ndempa* was a play that implied spirits of honesty and openness. In the *ndempa*, a fighter had to challenge a comparable rival and avoid any fraud. The fight took place seriously; people kicked and hit each other that resulted in some bruises. However, when the call for sunset prayer was heard, they dispersed without any feeling of anger and revenge. Beside that, when a fighter began to use a tool such as a slab of soil, stone or wood, the fight ended directly.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Musthafa, , personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Yunus, personal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Yunus.

<sup>16</sup> Musthafa.

<sup>17</sup> Musthafa.

<sup>18</sup> Yunus, personal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

That description showed that there was no continuity from *ndempa ndiha* to *lewa* (violent and armed fights). The first *lewa* of Ngali and Renda was in 2000. Before that year, *ndempa* did not take place for a long time, from 1980 to 1993. According to a former headman of Ngali, he was successful in stopping *ndempa ndiha* along 13 years of his ruling period because he initiated to cultivate onion in *so bente* twice a year and corn in sequence. Consequently, Ngali and Renda people did not have spare and rest time to do *ndempa ndiha*. I intentionally ended such *ndempa*.<sup>19</sup>

However, fights between Ngali and Renda people took place some years after that time. The fights increased in their severity. They were not *ndempa*, but *lewa* (violent and armed fights) because the spirits of honesty and openness disappeared. Both fighting parties used tools and weapons from a slab of stone and soil, big knives and arrows, to firearms. There are several levels of fights: empty-handed fights, stone-armed fights, arrow-armed fights, and fire-armed fights (since 2000).<sup>20</sup>

The fact showed that the conflict change from *ndempa* into *lewa* did not happen consecutively. There was a time called the break time of *ndempa*. When it reappeared, it transformed into *lewa*. The people perpetuated its negative values and omitted the positive ones such as honesty, openness, and patriotism. The Ngali-Renda conflict also represented that any kind of violence, either religious or cultural based eventually creates new kinds of violence. Although there may be positive values of fighting culture, its violent side is more conspicuous. Furthermore, when different interests are involved in such violent culture, people are easily provoked to create new and more violent cultures. Senior figures of Ngali and Renda might not imagine that their grandchildren could not perpetuate the noble values of *ndempa*. Instead of that, they developed its violent face that resulted in a new tradition called *lewa*.

As a violent and armed fight, *lewa* showed anger, hostility, and vengeance, whereas *ndempa* represented a play containing bravery, honesty and openness. A former Ngali headman who is 73 years old described that

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<sup>19</sup> Musthafa, personal interview, Ngali, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Hakim, focused group discussion, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010; and the Ngali headman, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

neither *ndempa dende* nor *ndempa ndiha* were for hurting nor killing committed in recent *lewa*. *Ndempa* was conducted every year as an expression of friendship and even it was seen as a prove of *meциangi* (like and love) between *dou* Ngali and *dou* Renda (Ngali and Renda people) because they used to socialize and work together in rice fields. *Ndempa* was intended for *kadihi kai ade* (play and pleasure), not for *musu kai angi* (hostility and vengeance).

### E. *Lewa* and Its Severity

Unlike *ndempa* that passed on from one generation to the other, *lewa* began in 2000. The trigger of Ngali-Renda *lewa* in 2000 was as follows:

“On Friday, 14 January 2000, we were taking a horse cart passing by Renda. Besides me, there were Muhammad Yasin and Ahmad. Suddenly, some persons from Renda blocked us in Wadu Nocu (a small hill in Ngali-Renda borders). In fact, they were many persons hiding in the east side of the street in Wadu Nocu. They throw at us with stones that got on Yasin’s and Ahmad’s nerves. Both would get off to fight them, but I prohibited them and asked the coachman to spur the horse quickly that we could arrive at Ngali. It was 400 meters left. Yasin and Ahmad actually were disappointed with my behavior, but because they considered me senior, they eventually obeyed. Arriving at Ngali, when Yasin was seeing a Renda’s horse cart passing from the south after carrying students of Ngali, he directly hit the horse with a sharp edge to express his anger. The Renda coachman was very terrified and spurred his horse quickly. In the next day, the people of Renda provoked by the previous incident seemed to plan revenge. When Guru Yusuf passed by Renda, they hit him and burnt his motorbike. After that, *lewa* began for about 10 days; Ngali and Renda people fought each other using firearms. Consequently, one person from Ngali and one person from Renda were killed; in local word *ompu ba ompu sa*.”<sup>21</sup>

Ahmad who was in the horse cart at that time explained further:

“Provoked by that accident, some Renda’s people under the command of Jalu and Saba gathered to attack Ngali people. At about 3.00 p.m. at the day, they moved to the rice field in So Bente and burnt Ngali people’s shelters in the rice field. The Ngali people chased them away and they went back to Renda. In the next day, Saturday the 15 January 2000, at 9 in the morning, Renda people went to the rice field and Ngali people were already there. They fought each other by arrows, catapults, and

<sup>21</sup> Musthafa, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

knives. The fight lasted until the next day. On Sunday, the police came to control the situation. However, it still happened for 10 days and stopped because the rain season came down."<sup>22</sup>

From that time, *lewa* occurred in 2008 and reached its peak in 2009 due to its severity. In 2009, many fighters used firearms. Some were manually assembled, and the others were manufactured. Five persons were killed either shot in the fight arena or hit by a stray bullet.

As usual, *lewa* happened from November to Desember 2009, in the rest period of cultivation. It took two months and ten days. Its trigger was juvenile delinquency. However, when we asked who started it, both parties of Ngali and Renda pointed toward each other. Renda people showed that Ngali juvenile delinquency was the trigger and vice versa.

Although there is a different answer about who started the conflict, both communities agreed that juvenile fights often become the trigger of Ngali-Renda communal fight. Because those communal fight were not settled, they got bigger and involved more people from two communities.

According to a Renda informant, the fight between Renda and Ngali teenagers triggered *lewa* in 2009. After Idul Fitri feast day, a Ngali teenager hit a Renda one riding a motorbike by a sharp edge. Renda people took revenge. Whenever and wherever people from both villages met, they hit each other. It eventually became open and communal fight for two months and ten days in rice fields in the border of Renda and Ngali.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, an informant from Ngali said that initially Renda students in Senior High School Belo told their communities on Ngali children delinquency. Therefore, whenever Ngali people passed by Renda, they were tortured although they did not know anything about the problem. Whenever Renda people passed by Ngali, they were also hit. The revenge took place. The Ngali people were afraid of passing by Renda that they built a block in Ngali and Renda Street.<sup>24</sup>

Another informant from Ngali explained that one of accidents preceded the *lewa* in 2009 is an overwhelming of a Renda person, a security officer.

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<sup>22</sup> Ahmad, telephone interview, October 16<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Rosmawati, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Aisyah, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Ngali and Renda people had different perspectives about the conflict in 2009. For Renda people, fighting was a part of their task as members of Renda. All Renda people were involved either directly in the fight arena or indirectly in term of money and donation for the logistics.

That financial support was not only allocated for the logistics, but also for the police officers who were in charge of keeping the conditions during the fight. An administrative staff of Renda explained: "The fight happened days and nights. The police officers were tired. Renda people butchered chickens and goats to provide meals for them who keep the security of Renda."<sup>25</sup>

Unlike Renda, Ngali people did not consider the fight as a task for all of the society members. Not all persons in Ngali were involved. A Ngali informant said, that only unemployed young men did the fight; they were called *preman kampung*.<sup>26</sup> He argued that if all Ngali people went into the fight arena, all Renda people would end because the number of Ngali people was bigger than the number of Renda's. The fighters collected money for buying firearms and bullets from their own group.<sup>27</sup>

Only unemployed young men got in the fight arena. There was no data of their number. However, there might be common persons engaged also in that field because of their solidarity to keep the village from any attack. Ngali *preman* were only provocateurs of the conflict, but when the fight began, they disappeared. The police caught common persons who fought to defend the village.<sup>28</sup> The common persons were involved in the fight because the exclamation to the fight was called in the Ngali mosque, "*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Great). Renda people got in our village. Let us get out! Get out the young men! Do not get out children and women!" Hearing this call, people went to Tolo Benteng (the battlefield) bringing weapons.<sup>29</sup>

According to a Ngali senior figure, the victims of *lewa* in 2009 were common persons who might not have any relation with the problem. The people of Ngali and Renda fought each other in an open battlefield, the rice

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<sup>25</sup> Rosmawati, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Literally, it means street young men and criminals.

<sup>27</sup> Aisyah, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Aisyah.

<sup>29</sup> Aisyah.

field. The fight did not need a skill of shooting because the rivals were clearly seen. They shot guns to any direction and intentionally made them missed. If all the fighters holding firearms directed their shootings at their rivals, there would be many bodies killed. They shot playfully. They actually did not have any bravery to kill a person because it is a very big sin. However, they could not avoid coming in the battlefield because it was social disgrace. "*Wati loa ja mu dalao wali, au ku nggahi di kampo ke* (We had to go in the battlefield, we could not do otherwise, the people would reprimand us)", he said.<sup>30</sup>

There were some commanders of fight in Renda, whereas there was no such person in Ngali. An informant said: "I swear by God that there was no fight commander in Ngali." The commanders exerted their strong influence upon the process of conflict; they decided when the fight began and ended.<sup>31</sup>

Many conflicts in Indonesia relate to some political and economic interests. In Ngali-Renda conflict, for example, people used firearms needed bullets. In Indonesia, only the government manufactured bullets. The people got bullets illegally from unknown sources and bought them quite expensively. Such conditions created opportunity for some persons to take advantages by trading bullets illegally. Therefore, they maintained the conflict to get economic benefits.<sup>32</sup>

The parties maintaining the Ngali-Renda conflict hampered its resolution, especially after 2009. The parties were in both sides, especially the fight commanders of Renda: they were Jalu and Saba. They played very big rule in initiating or stopping the conflict. They exerted influence upon the police that they could manage the police positioning according to their own needs during the conflict.

In the conflict, the need of the police officers' presence is necessary. As law upholders, they must respect justice and neutrality because their partiality makes the conflict worse and more difficult to solve. Moreover, when the police officers have certain hidden interests, their presence triggers new conflicts. In 2009, Ngali and Renda people perceived the police officers' presence differently. The Ngali people considered them partial to Renda. The Renda people also agreed that perception.

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<sup>30</sup> Rahim, focused group discussion, October 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>31</sup> The administration staff of Ngali, personal interview, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>32</sup> The headman of Ngali, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

An informant from Renda explained why the police officers tended to be partial to Renda. That was because Renda people treated them humanely. The fight took place days and nights that they had to keep the village's security all the time. It needed physical strength. The Renda people then butchered chickens and goats to serve them. Conversely, Ngali people did not serve anything for the police officers because they get salaries every month. Moreover, Renda people were obedient to the government rules and orders. There was no person from Renda was caught due to the conflict that killed five bodies.<sup>33</sup>

Such good services made the police officers liked to stay at Renda. Ngali people then were suspicious that the police were partial to Renda. Eventually, that condition brought about unfaithfulness in the police officers. It became worse when the police officers caught some of Ngali members after they opened the block of Ngali-Renda Street. It showed that the Ngali-Renda conflict does not stop yet. In a formal sense, there was no *lewa* resolving in 2009. There was no law enforcement upon the persons involved in the fight causing five bodies killed. In the future, conflicts may reappear.

## F. The Conflict Intervention Patterns

The Ngali-Renda communal conflict has appeared and disappeared for years. Its underlying factors remain waiting for the triggers leading to the open and violent conflict. It is not the case that the people and the government have never resolved it. Referring to Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall,<sup>34</sup> we categorize the Ngali Renda conflict intervention into four: conflict prevention, reconstruction, peace building, and reconciliation.

### 1. The Conflict Prevention

As inevitable or even ineradicable phenomena in people's life, conflicts have to be managed and resolved. In the case of habituated/ritualized<sup>35</sup> Ngali-Renda conflict, the people tried to handle conflict triggers as early as possible

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<sup>33</sup> Rosmawati, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 109.

<sup>35</sup> Tillet, *Resolving Conflict: A Practical Approach*, (Victoria: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 11.

to prevent open and communal fights. For example, they resolved the fight of two individuals, which always became the trigger, peacefully through dialogue and mediation. *Firstly*, they brought the two conflicting individuals to the village administration apparatus for mediation. *Secondly*, if both of them could not reach an agreement, they brought the case to the sub district level and involved the police officers of Belo sub district for the next mediation. Finally, it was often that the offender and the government officials brought the hurt victim to the hospital. The Ngali headman admitted that this intervention was effective in resolving the trigger. For example, they resolved three recent fights peacefully that prevented open and communal conflicts between the Ngali and Renda communities.<sup>36</sup>

The history proved that effective communication prevented the violent conflict. The Forum Komunikasi Belo Selatan Bersatu (the Communication Forum of United South Belo) established in 2003 functioned well. However, since 2006, the forum has been dysfunctional.<sup>37</sup> Recently, the headmen of Ngali and Renda have been busy in the city centre of Bima, they have had no time to build an effective communication that is very useful to resolve an individual fight and prevent a massive conflict.<sup>38</sup> An effective communication between two communities is very significant as an early action to handle provocative issues of the conflict. The head of Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (the discussion forum of villagers) of Renda pointed out that unconfirmed issues of fight often became the trigger of conflict. For example, there was an issue that a Ngali person jabbed a knife into a Renda person or vice versa. Both communities did not confirm its truth, the communal fight eventually occurred, whereas the issue was not proven.<sup>39</sup>

On the one hand, there was no law enforcement upon two fighting individuals. On the other hand, it showed that litigation is not the only effective way to solve the conflict. Alternative conflict resolutions such as dialog, negotiation and mediation are promising ways to prevent communal conflicts and keep peace.

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<sup>36</sup> The Ngali headman, personal interview, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Now, a Ngali who lives in the city of Bima chairs the forum.

<sup>38</sup> Hakim, focused group discussion, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Yadin, focused group discussion, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.



Another intervention is private communication. In Renda, some figures have tried to communicate frequently and privately with the criminals and unemployed youth who always initiate the communal conflict. They gave moral persuasions for them not to trigger the conflict. Recently, the former terrific thieves and fight commanders of Renda, have been busy of onion production. Because of farming and trading activities, the Renda people do not have time to establish a forum or institution for guiding and build the youth. Instead of that, they do moral persuasion.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike Renda, the Ngali young people established a communication forum in which the village administration apparatus called them to prevent the communal conflict and prohibited their involvement in *lewa*. The community leaders and figures also personally came to parents suggesting their children not involved in *lewa*. The religious leaders called such persuasion through the Islamic teachings in the mosque because *lewa* is against Islamic values.<sup>41</sup>

With regard to education aspects, families, schools and communities as educational institutions should play an important role in building efforts of conflict prevention for the long run. There is only one senior high school in Belo sub district, which is SMAN 1 Belo. Students of Ngali and Renda covered 70% of all SMAN 1 Belo's students. According to its headmaster, in fact students from Ngali and Renda often fought in the school due to trivial things. Then, they brought the fight into communal one between two communities. Actually, the school ceaselessly calls and implants values of discipline, tolerance and mutual respect to the students. However, it does not bear expected results. The headmaster suggested both communities do not respond students' fight excessively. Families should pay attention to their children not only in sorts of money and materials but also love, which is the most important thing. This may be difficult because the parents are very busy with their work and even they leave their families to farm and trade in other regions for several months.<sup>42</sup>

A teacher of an Islamic primary school in Ngali is also trying to instill anti-violence values into her students. She has drawn them from the *ndempa*

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<sup>40</sup> Yadin.

<sup>41</sup> The headman of Ngali, personal interview, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Salim, personal interview, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

tradition conducted as an everyday play to out-school activities like singing, playing, and story telling. She hoped they will be the anti-violence young generation in the next ten years.<sup>43</sup>

Although such efforts did not show up their results in the conflict prevention since the last *lewa* in 2009, at least the people have taken some actions. They should keep on struggling and developing the efforts that they internalize perceptions and feelings of anti-violence in their communities because a conflict actually roots in perceptions and feelings, not realities and facts.<sup>44</sup> In this case, referring to Tillet,<sup>45</sup> the people endeavor to bring about *internal resolution*, to resolve the conflict personally without the involvement of any other party or parties. Peace education conducted individually by a Ngali teacher in her school could be used to bring about internal resolution in relation to Ngali-Renda conflict that was not resolved in the past and that continues to cause future tension.

## 2. The Conflict Reconstruction

It includes security keeping, law enforcement and agreement.<sup>46</sup> Before 2000, although there might be some persons got small injuries, *ndempa* of Renda and Ngali villagers did not cause casualties and financial loss. After lasting for about a month, *ndempa* ended automatically and began in the next year. The injured persons treated their wound by their selves. After *ndempa*, the relationship of two communities in farming, trading, schooling, and personal contacts functioned well as it was before.<sup>47</sup> The reconstruction process ran naturally without any intentional effort or intervention from outsiders.

However, since 2000, armed communal fights caused casualties and financial loss. The communities greatly needed an intensive reconstruction. They treated hurt and killed bodies. In 2009, for example, a stray bullet hit an old woman of Renda. They spent almost 30 million rupiahs collected voluntarily to treat her in the hospital of Mataram, the capital of West Nusa

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<sup>43</sup> Aisyah, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Gregory Tillet, *Resolving Conflict: A Practical Approach*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> Ramsbotham, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, p. 199.

<sup>47</sup> The wife of Renda headman, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Tenggara province that takes 15 hours from Bima.<sup>48</sup> Yet, they do not address psychological trauma of the armed fight.

Regarding peacekeeping, the local government initiated and conducted mediation in the city.<sup>49</sup> Under Zainul administration (the Bima regent from 2000 to 2005), the armed fight did not happen for four years after the *lewa* in 2000. He invited senior figures of two communities to discuss conflict resolving and disseminate the discussion result. Conversely, Ferry Zulkarnain (the Bima regent of 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 periods) approached and discussed with the unemployed young people whose views were unclear and even crazy. One of the results was the symbolic ceremony of peace agreement by butchering a cow in the battlefield in 2008. However, it had not any impact. An armed fight appeared in the following year.<sup>50</sup>

In fact, the different social condition influences those different approaches. In the recent years, religious leaders and community figures of Ngali have not exerted influence upon the unemployed young generation who has been the main actors of the conflict.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, some famous criminals and fight commanders have controlled young men in Renda. The apparatus of village administration have had no power over the conflict. Moreover, there is no person considered a religious leader or community figure in Renda.<sup>52</sup>

Although the government sent 287 police officers to keep the security during the fight in 2009, it even made it worse in which the police shot five civil persons of Ngali arbitrarily. The police officers also have not enforced the law upon the persons who clearly commanded some armed fights, hurt or killed. Up to now, the former terrific criminals and fight commanders of Renda, have never been arrested. The shooters who killed some Renda people have never been sentenced.<sup>53</sup>

It pushes the Ngali people to say that the peaceful condition at this moment is pseudo and temporary. An armed conflict may reappear in the next

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<sup>48</sup> The wife of Renda headman.

<sup>49</sup> Musthafa, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Musthafa.

<sup>51</sup> Muhammad, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Hakim, focused group discussion, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Hamzan, personal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

years.<sup>54</sup> The Renda people are also pessimistic of real peace making. A Renda figure said, "The condition without peace agreement is better because the Ngali people usually stab us through the back during such time. Let *lewa* occur."<sup>55</sup>

In the case of conflicts causing casualties, it seems that alternative conflict resolution does not resolve anything. Litigation should be taken because causing people's death is against the law and religious order. Permissive actions toward the crime offenders create perceptions and feelings that such crime is permitted.

The former headman of Ngali firmly stated that if the police arrested and sentenced the commanders and main actors of the armed fight, the Ngali-Renda conflict would end. To drive the people away from *lewa*, he said that death caused by fights is *kafir* (unbeliever) in Islamic teaching forums. According to him, the headmen of Ngali and Renda hid the main actors of the armed fight. Similarly, the police officers let them free although they really knew them. It seemed that the headmen of two villages did not know what to do with the conflict, let it happen and often went to the city leaving their village's problem unresolved.<sup>56</sup>

Conflict mediation initiated by a third party functions if the mediator is neutral.<sup>57</sup> It is difficult to achieve because the Ngali people's trust in the police officers lost because they sided with Renda and shot some Ngali person until the death. Their trust in Ferry, the ruling regent, is also low because the majority of Renda people chose him whereas the majority of Ngali people chose Ferry's rival. Although it is difficult to prove, some of Ngali people said that Ferry does not favor Ngali.

### 3. Peace Building

In many cases, a third party forces peace building on conflicting parties. It is ineffective. Peace building should involve insiders of the conflict as its main actors.<sup>58</sup> In the Ngali-Renda conflict, although peace-building activities

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<sup>54</sup> Musthafa, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Yadin, focused group discussion, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Musthafa, personal interview, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Tillet, *Resolving Conflict: A Practical Approach*, p. 164.

<sup>58</sup> Andi Widjajanto, "Dinamika Keamanan Pasca Orde Baru", *Global*, Vol.1, No.7, (February 2001).

involved the people, those were third parties that initiated such as the provincial government, the local government, government organizations and non-government organization. In the conflict situation, initiatives of the insiders to make peace hardly emerge.

Several institutions like Universitas Gajah Mada, GTZ, the Local Police, and the National Bureau of Intelligence held several trainings on conflict resolution for the administration apparatus and community leaders of Ngali and Renda. With such trainings, they spread and internalize peace values and master techniques of conflict resolution. However, it may take very long time to achieve that goal. Conflicts still happened. One of weaknesses of the trainings is the recruitment of participants that only involved community leaders and neglected the main actors of the conflict. The programs with regard to conflicts for the criminals, fight commanders and unemployed young men are not conducted yet.

#### **4. The Conflict Reconciliation**

Reconciliation is to settle a broken relationship and to learn living without violence in diversities including underlying aspects of life. We are on the long way to reconcile the Ngali-Renda conflict rooted in culture, social situation, economy and politic. The Ngali-Renda conflict reconciliation has not been performed. There are *ndempa* lasting for years, strong stereotypes, self-identification of being brave in fights, unemployment, family education patterns, law enforcement, and lack of people's trust in the government officials. We have to solve all of them to achieve real peace. In other word, every underlying factor of the conflict should be addressed.

Although it seems very difficult, reconciliation is not impossible. The history showing that both communities had had very good relationship before violent conflicts is a great modal we revitalize to initiate peace. The fact pointing that violent conflict happened in the break time of cultivation also lead us to identify and analyze the problem properly. What come about in the rest period are unemployment, lack of productive activities and channels for playing. Communication and dialog about stereotypes should be communicated between Ngali and Renda people. Prioritization and disentanglement of the conflict complicatedness should be done.

## G. Conclusion

The Ngali-Renda conflict is habituated. It has taken for years. It has grown in its severity. The Ngali-Renda conflict transformed from *ndempa* (empty-handed fighting) to *lewa* (armed fighting). *Ndempa* implied the spirit of honesty, openness and patriotism. It occurred every year in rest period of cultivation and took one or two month. Although *ndempa* was *kapoda ade* (serious and violent), it was *kadihi ade* (no intention to do harm) and for play and pleasure. On the contrary, *lewa* was more violent and caused casualties because the fighters used big knives, arrows and firearms. It occurred in 2000, 2008, and 2009.

Some efforts of conflict resolution had been initiated, but it seemed need to review in order to find out the effective ways to resolve the violent conflict. Similarly, peace building activities such trainings on conflict resolution were initiated and conducted by the third party. The activities also only involved the community figures who were actually did not involve in the fight. The main actors of the fight such as unemployment young people and criminals have never been involved in peace building activities.[w]

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