Holding on a thin rope: Muslim Papuan communities as the agent of peace in Papua conflict

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Abstract

Political dynamics of minority group inside a minority community in a separatist movement setting is still understudied. Many studies are portraying minority community struggle vis a vis majority community in hostility situation. Yet, a community is never homogeneous; there are always minor groups with different aspirations or dissimilar backgrounds. My study acknowledges the Muslim Papuan minority’s political struggle under the Papua separatist conflict. The Muslim Papuan shares same identity with the majority community in Indonesia and it is different with the majority of Papuan fellows that are Christians. Muslim Papuan also experienced marginalization in the society. However, their political choice is to side with the majority Papuan. The main argument is that the Muslim Papuan community’s political preference is the result of identity struggle in their own motherland. Moreover, the paper seeks to assess the possibility of the minority groups as the agent of peace. It is found that the prospect will only occur in the loosened security tension and a situation is most likely not to occur soon in Papua conflict.

Keywords: Minority groups; identity; political struggle; agent of peace.

1. Introduction

The idea of separatism has always been tainting the conflict resolution settlement in a conflict between the central government and its territories. In Southeast Asia, separatist movement (peacefully or violently) has become a routine chore of many governments in addition to the daily business of development. Those rebellious communities share same characteristics; they see themselves as minority in the country, on the ground of different history, religious background, and race from the rest of their

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fellow countrymen. Moreover, they also feel have been treated unequal in the development of the country. For those reasons, the idea of independence takes place as a rational choice to confirm their existence.

However, even though the identity of the minority communities of those countries seems to be solid, there are still some exceptions. There are some minority groups within the troubled minority community in those countries who share the same identity with the majority in the country. There are groups facing the problem of contested identity in a conflict setting between the bigger community and the state. Moreover, to be able to survive, those groups should carefully examine their resources and identity in a conflict situation.

Nevertheless, a study to assess the minority group political struggle vis a vis the bigger community’s aspiration of self determination has rarely been studied. Some scholars have contributed notable works on the topics of separatism and majority community in the conflicted areas, but, not on the topic of minority groups’ political struggle in the conflicted places and their capacity in influencing the political situation. In the context of Papua secessionist movement, scholars such as scholars from the Indonesian Research Institute [1-4]; Drooglever [5], and King [6-7] have contributed significant researches. Those magnificent researches, though, mention very little about the minority groups and the current political development.

A study by Pamungkas [8] contributed on a significant input in the understanding of Muslim Papuan political behavior in the context of Special Autonomy status of Papua. The study focused on the dynamics around the forming of Papuan Muslim Assembly (MMP; Majelis Muslim Papua). It concluded that the regrouping of Papua Islam (Muslim Papuan) in MMP was a result of a contested identity in the society; as opponent to majority discourse of the single identity of Papuan. Moreover, in connection with the context of Special Autonomy Status in Papua, Pamungkas (p. 96) concluded; “by being acknowledged as the equal society member they are also having the rights over the land’s resources”. Since the Special Autonomy status of Papua is percut as the opportunity to the control of resources, the Muslim Papuan’s struggle is unluckily then perceived as such. An important study it was; however, it does not contain the Muslim Papuan political effort in the obvious political environment of Papua; secessionist conflict. By presenting the background in the political context of Special Autonomy Status of Papua, Pamungkas’ study has not presented complete pictures of the Muslim Papuan political struggle and their potency in the Papuan political dynamics.

This study tries to provide an analysis of minority group’s political struggle in a conflict setting. The study focuses on the minority group political struggle of the Muslim Papuan minority group in the context of Papuan conflict. Some individual of the Muslim Papuan minority has been taking a meaningful role in the Papuan politics especially in the demand of self determination; they are also the key players of the independence movements. What are the reasons behind such unlikely behavior? Bearing in mind that they share the same identity with the majority population in the country, it would be more logical if they take the majority side; sticking to the country, Indonesia. Nonetheless, when the Muslim Papuan political choice is leaning to their brother of blood, despite the fact that they are also suffering marginalization from them, the manner is considered distinctive.

This study based on an extensive field research in 4 principal cities of Papua during August-September 2012. The main argument of the study is in line with Pamungkas [8] study that Muslim Papuan political behavior is a result of the long battle of identity acknowledgement. However, my study finds that some political preferences are not solitary as the struggle of existence, but also based on

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* To mention some of them; the government of Indonesia has long been trying hardly to ease violence in Papua region (West Papua Province and Papua Province), Thailand has never been rested from the security problem in its Southern region (Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat), and the Philippine has always been busy with Bangsa Moro (at Mindanao/Sulu) rebellion for years.

* There is Papuan Muslim community inside the Papuan, Buddhist Pattani community in Southern Thailand, and Mindanao Christian community in Sulu.
ideological value hold by some individuals in the group. Second, the study tries to assess the possibility of the minority group as the agent of peace.

2. Papuan Conflict at a Glance

Papua, or West Papua as it is called by Papuan nationalists, has never been rested from political turmoil since it rejoined with Indonesia in 1969. Papua (as a “region”) is located in the eastern region of Indonesia, consists of 2 provinces namely West Papua province and Papua province. It is directly adjacent to Papua New Guinea since they share the same island. The region incorporated to Indonesia long after Indonesian independence from the Netherland in 1945. The process involved long disputes in the international arena since the Netherland as the former colonialist ruler of Indonesia did not want to free the region as part of Indonesia. Only after the process held by the United Nations of so called “The Act of Free Choice”, with the result of the majority of the Papuan leaders willing to join Indonesia, the region internationally been recognized as Indonesian territory. However, the practice was not free from allegation of defect regarding to the voting process. The government of Indonesia had been accused of using threats and intimidation to the 1026 Papuan leaders as the vote representatives.

During the dispute between Indonesia and the Netherland over Papua, there was a development of the political situation in the region on the idea of Papua as a free country apart from Indonesia. Papua declared its preparation of independence with the full support from the Dutch. The ground of the idea was the differences between Papuan and the majority of Indonesian. The Papuans saw themselves as Melanesian race and Christians, and they pronounced Indonesians are Malay race and Muslims. Nevertheless, even though Papua incorporation to Indonesia has been legally acknowledged by the international community, the assertion of an independent Papua has always been shaking the region ever since. Armed clashes erupted from time to time.

The restlessness grew bigger since Indonesia entered a new phase of democracy in 1998. The Papuan nationalists’ seized the opportunity by declaring a more assertive demand of self determination based on the some historical evidences including of the fraud voting process in 1969. The unconsolidated-newly democratic Indonesian government responded by defined the acts as separatism and undertook harsh treatments toward the opposite party.

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*d In this paper Papua is treated as a region because although Papua has been divided into 2 provinces in 2003, in political context discussions the two provinces are always perceived as one; Papua.
*d Indonesia has been entering a new phase of democracy of so called reformation era in 1998. It was marked by the resignation of Soeharto from presidency. The political situation suddenly changes dramatically afterwards since Soeharto was known as the authoritarian-militaristic ruler. The post-Soeharto Indonesia was a more open and democratic ones marked by the exercising of freedom of expressions and freedom of speech.*
3. Who is Papuan?

There is a popular song in 2011 titled “Aku Papua” with the lyric: ‘hitam kulit, keriting rambut, aku Papua’; literally translated as “my skin is black, my hair is curly, and I am Papuan”. This is a very popular song in Papua. The song seems accurate; it is underlying what has been notified by the world; Papuan is different from Indonesia. They are Melanesian-Negroid with black skin and wholly hair; moreover, they are Christians [9; 13; 14]. Nevertheless, even though the stereotype has been widely accepted it is not quite precise with the reality. Not all Papuan are Melanesian-Negroid blessed with black skin and wholly hair, and additionally, not all Papuan are Christians.

The Papua Island is a home of more than 250 ethnic groups that each poses different cultures and languages, some with slightly different physical appearances. What is more, Papuan in the 21st century is also a home of mixed-race communities and individuals. Those mixed-race individuals have physical characteristic that sometimes not black nor kinky hair. Those individuals, who many of them are happen to be a Muslim, identified themselves as no less than other Papuans. Discourse over the definition of ‘Papua asli’ or truly Papuan is also lively in Papuan political stages. According to the Special Autonomy Law of Papua, the power to granting legitimacy of an individual as Papuan is in the hand of the Papuan People Assembly (MRP; Majelis Rakyat Papua). So far, the definition of a Papuan according to the body excluded the mixed-race communities [15]. Therefore, the mixed-race Muslim Papuan who never knows any homelands other than Papua is trapped in the racist categories. They are never enough to be Papuan.

In accordance with the belief system hold by Papuan, statistically, the majority of Papuan population is Protestants. Catholic is in the second place, and Islam is the third. Considering that Papua is a migrant destination for Indonesian, one might argue that the Muslims in the area are the migrant Muslims from other parts of Indonesia. Yet, evidences show that many indigenous communities are also Muslims. The estimation percentage of indigenous Muslim Papuan is around 3-8% of the population. Not many, but, they do exist. Due to its minority position, Muslim Papuan have been undergone a marginalization in the society. As Thaha Al-Hamid, a Muslim Papuan leader states that Muslim Papuan has been excluded from the development efforts and treated as the fourth class in the society; after the Christian Papuan, the Christian migrant, and Muslim migrant. As the result, Muslim Papuan are experiencing double marginalization; as a Papuan in national milieu and as a minority group among Papuan. Therefore, the utmost struggle of Muslim Papuan is to be acknowledged as the son of the soil despite their differ religion.

4. Islam in Papua: Past and Present

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The song sung by a native Papuan; a national-wide popular singer Edo Kondologit. It is created by an Indonesian popular musician Franky Sahilatua.

Recorded interviews: JI, August 18, 2012; NK, August 6, 2012; AI, August 7, 2012; August VM, August 20, 2012; TW, August 21, 2012; AG, August 26, 2012; BG, August 29, 2012.

This is an assembly especially supported by the Indonesian government to advocating Papuan people, culture and identity. This assembly is a mandatory according to the Special Autonomy Law that has been implemented in Papua since 2003. The Special Autonomy Law is a special law granted by the central government to reduce the tension of Papuan conflict. Yet, much criticism is arising regarding the implementation of the law.

There is no formal statistic record on the number of Muslim Papuan. The number is estimation of some individuals during interviews.

The categorization is very political and unstructured due to the confusing concept in defining who is the ‘truly Papuan.’ Thaha Al-Hamid himself is never been accused as a non Papuan, even though his ancestor was Arabian Yemen. The category of 4 layer of society in Papua is confusing. Many Muslim Papuan who are mixed-race can be put in the third or fourth rank. Nevertheless, the paper is highlighting the feeling of marginalization of the Muslim truly Papuan down in the rural villages.

Historically, Islam had entered the island long before two German Christian missionaries Ottow and Giessler set their feet and marked their presence in Mansinam on February 5, 1855. Papua, or at least some parts of the bird-head region, was a long under the influence of Tidore Sultanate [16]. While some lesser islands such as Misol, Wageo, Waigama, dan Salawati had been under the influence of Bacan Sultanate of Maluku since 1520 [17]. Tidore and Bacan sultanates were Islamic kingdoms. The influence of the kingdoms proof by many areas in bird-head regions in Papua were also ruled by Muslim leader such as Raja Ampat and Fak-Fak. Goodman [18] (p. 206) discussed that; “around the year of 1780 the Raja Ampat Papuan referred a Tidore prince by the name Prince Nuku as “The King of the Islands”. Later, Prince Nuku declared himself as “Sri Maha Tuan Sultan Amir Mohamad Syafudin Syech, the Sultan of the Papuan District”. Moreover, in a family account written by Abdullah Arfan from Sorong in 1946 there was a story of the ancestor who was first Papuan indigenous who became Muslim; Kalewan. Kalewan married Siti Hawa Farouk, a muballighah (Islamic preacher) from Cirebon, and changed his name to Bayajiid. The event took place in the 16th century [19]. The first known indigenous Muslim Papuan group have emerged ever since.

The Tidore Kingdom domination over West Papua was reinforced by a treaty signed by Sultans of Tidore, Bacan, Ternate, and the Dutch (presented by VOC; Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; United East India Company, at that time), in December 1660 [20]. Albeit at that time the Dutch was merely using the Tidore Kingdom’s domination over Papua as a buffer to protect its precious Spice Island Moluccas, it continually renewed the contract until the last contract in 1814. To maintain the relation, the Dutch (VOC) shared its trading profit with the three alliances for more than two centuries [21]. Furthermore, the Tidore Kingdom’s rule over Papua was also used as the starting point of the Dutch’s legitimacy in sharing the island with Great Britain and Germany in 1885 and in the second treaty in 1895 [12]. In short, the Tidore Sultanate’s rule over Papua was considered legit and acknowledged internationally.

Unfortunately, even though Islam has entered the main island long time ago, it did not support the spreading of the religion in the interior island. Islam grew only in the coastal parts of the island especially in the bird-head areas; Sorong, Raja Ampat, Teluk Bintuni, Onin Peninsula, Teluk Wondama, Kaimana, and Fak-Fak. Only after the Dutch started sending migrants in 1902 and exiled Indonesian leaders in 1910 to Merauke, at the eastern end of West Papua, the indigenous Papuan of Islam believers broaden in other areas. Muhammadiyah, the second biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia, had some members exiled by the Dutch. They helped the development of Islam in their exile. Later on, to help its members in education issue, Muhammadiyah formally sent its teacher in 1933. Some indigenous Muslim communities were also arisen.

Islam in Papua, especially in the interior highlands, developed after Indonesian government administered the region since 1962. Migrants from other places of Indonesia as well as security forces deployed in the region assisted the spreading of Islam. In Jayawijaya highlands some tribes converted to Islam after their encounter with teachers and migrants. Jamaludin Iribaram, an indigenous Papuan from Fak-Fak who was served as a teacher in Wamena, Islamized the indigenous people of Walesi village in 1977. Musa Aso, a chieftain of a sub-ethnic group of Danii tribe from Megapura village, declared he became a Muslim since 1968 when he was 15 years old. Aso and his friends became Muslim after having interaction with Indonesian migrants deployed in the area by President Soekarno. Until today, some villages in Jayawijaya remain as indigenous Muslim communities as a minority group in the area. Indigenous Muslim communities scarcely can also be found in other parts of Papua such as Asmat, Yapen, Waropen, Biak, Jayapura, and Manokwari.

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k Kasibi Suwiryadi, a former chairman of Muhammadiyah of Papua Province branch. Recorded interview September 12, 2012
l Jamaludin Iribaram, recorded interview August 18, 2012
m Musa Aso, recorded interview September 5, 2012
n Darisman, the first migrant in Wamena. Recorded interview. September 6, 2012
The development of Islam in Papua is very much connected with the coming of Indonesian migrants. Since Indonesia gained its legitimacy in Papua, the flow of migrants is unstoppable. In order to spread the over-population in some areas of Indonesia, mostly in Java Island, the government conducted a government-sponsored migration as so called ‘transmigrasi’. Papua was also one of the target locations. Government-sponsored migration and voluntarily migrant significantly increase the Muslim population in Papua. But, it does not necessarily help the development of indigenous Muslim Papuan. While Christian Papuan got structural help from the religion body and organizations, the Muslim Papuan remained supporter is cultivated. Pamungkas [8] has explained that the Muslim Papuan exposed by contested identities; as Papuan and as Muslim. The consequence of the identity dilemma is isolation from both majority groups.

The stigma of Muslim is equivalent with government supporters is preserved by the ignorance of Islamic organizations toward the human rights abuses committed by the state apparatus to indigenous people. In interviewing local leaders of some national-wide Islamic organizations admitted the similar confession that their organizations have never been involved in publically criticizing the government’s miss conduct toward indigenous Papuan. The rationale of such action is because their organization arena is “dakwah” (religious preaching), education and social matters, rather than politics. Those leaders see the human rights abuses are very much connected to the high politics such as sovereignty of the country and secessionist movement. Therefore, they are staying away from the issue. Yet, some of the interviewees claimed to be delivered their concern of such matters personally to the chiefs of security forces. Nonetheless, the political stance of Islamic organizations in Papua is highlighting the image of Muslim as migrant and government supporters. The situation gives additional burden to Muslim Papuan, who bears the common identities with Muslim migrant, in front of their Papuan brothers.

5. The Struggle to Existence

It was all started with the new phase of Indonesian national political change in 1998. The end of an authoritarian regime, marked by people resistance in most keys areas of Indonesia and ended with the fall of President Soeharto, has a significant impact in Papua. After a long time silenced from the non-armed struggle, the Papuan nationalists suddenly exposed to the freedom of speech and expressions provided by the new environment. The Papuan nationalist conscience of their political rights revived. Not only demanding greater political rights, they appealed to be separated from Indonesia. In the post-Suharto era of Indonesia, also known as the post-new order era; reformasi era, Papuan secessionist movement had taken many public political actions, domestically. Some of the most acknowledged were: first, the dialog between 100 Papuan respected leaders with President Habibie in Jakarta, February 26, 1999; Alua [22] noted that at the occasion the wish for separation was delivered. The second was the Papuan People Congress the second (Kongres Rakyat Papua Ke II) in May-June, 2000; attended by 21.000 people from all over the region, with 501 delegates. The Congress result was a resolution to demand a rectification of the History of Papua. This is also the most important step of Papuan movement since this congress gained wide support from the society both Melanesian and non-Melanesian [23]. There was another congress in October 2011 named Papuan People Congress the third (Kongres Rakyat Papua ke tiga). Unfortunately, the congress was not as success as the former congress in terms of the support from the society and its legitimacy. One of the reason is the severe segregation among current society due to the narrowing definition of a Papuan; the racist definition. Another reason is the factions of Papuan movement that compete to each other, rather than cooperate to each other, that have been growing since the second congress.
Muslim Solidarity (*Solidaritas Muslim Papua*). Borrowing from the statement of the chairman of MMP, Arobi A. Aituarauw, the event was to end the question of “who are we” that had been bothered Muslim Papuan. The institution was supposed to be a working body to consolidating and advocating the Muslim Papuan all over the region. Furthermore, Aituarauw stated that the existence of the Muslim people of Papua, in fact an integral part of indigenous Papuans. The organization, however, did not merely build by indigenous Muslim. Some of the most prominent actors were the non-Melanesian race. One of them is Latifah Anum Siregar, a long-standing human rights activist, who served as the secretary general.8 Bearing in mind that the organization was held before the Autonomy Status of Papua and Papuan People Assembly existed, which is containing the definition of truly Papuan, this phenomenon showing the social background at that time: racist segregation was not there.

In order to gain a greater legitimacy and acknowledgement, Solidaritas Muslim Papua held a ‘muktamar’ (congress) in April 2007. This time, representations of Muslim Papuan from seven indigenous territories attended the event.7 The event formed a new name for the institution with a more complex and specific goals. The new institution’s name is Papuan Muslim Council (*MMP; Majelis Muslim Papua*). The interesting development is in the more advanced form of the organization; there is a definition of the member of the organization which is quite different with the Aituarauw statement. The organization new statute stated that MMP is the institution of Muslim communities’ movement in Papua.

Whereas the definition of Muslim community is: “Muslim communities of Papua are indigenous Papuans and Muslim individuals or groups who are Muslims and live and settle in the land of Papua” [24] (p. 28).

In the interview, Sayid Fadhal Alhamid admitted that even the new name of the institution was formed to accommodate Muslims who have been living and settling in Papua, rather that exclusively to assist indigenous Muslim.6 It can be seen that being exposed by the rigid definition of truly Papuan as mandated in the Autonomy Status Law, the organization took a realistic change in order to accommodate its important supporters. The broadening definition is also providing space to the mixed-race Muslim communities to be involved in Papuan politics.

Up to the paper is written, MMP is the only organization of Muslim in Papua who consolidate indigenous Muslim and other Papuan Muslim across their differences of Islamic religious practices. Moreover, MMP is an exclusive organization of Papuan and does not relate to any other Islamic organizations in Indonesia. MMP’s branches are spreading all over the region and mostly are chaired by indigenous Muslim.7 In addition, in order to build a neat and structured network to serve the development of indigenous Muslim Papuan in all over Papuan, it uses the structure of Protestant church synods as the model of networking. The model provides MMP a tool to identify its needs; a proper religion leadership education for local religion leaders, the thing that it is still lack of indigenous Muslim Papuan communities.

In Papuan political life, MMP members have taken serious deeds to translate the organization’s vision of Islam as a bless for the whole universe (*Islam sebagai rahmatan lil ‘alamin; berkah bagi seluruh alam*). MMP members try to be present in many fields. Karupukaro and Iribaram from MMP of Mimika

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8 Latifah Anum Siregar, a non-Melanesian born in Papua, is a respectable name in Papuan movement. She is a lawyer for many human right abuses victims. She won an award as the women peacemakers in 2007 by The Joan B Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego California.

7 There are seven indigenous territories made Papuan Customary Council (DAP) in Papua; those are: 1.Region Mamta / Tabi; covers Mamberamo to Tami. 2. Region Saereri; covers Biak Numfor, Seroi, Yamen, Waropen, Nabire coastal areas. 3. Region Domberai; covers Manokwari to Raja Ampat. 4. Region Bomberai; covers Fak-Fak, Kaimana, Timika. 5. Region Anim Ha: covers Merauke, Boven Digul Mappi, Asmat. 6. Region La Pago: covers Jayawijaya, Tolikara, Yahukimo and Pegunungan Bintang.7. Region Mee Pago: covers Puncak Jaya, Paniai and Nabire mountainous.


1 Recorded interviews to the chairmans of MMP in Mimika Regency, Jayawijaya Regency, and Merauke Regency. August-September, 2012.
branch shared the same idea; MMP has made the chance to involve in political life wider. In the context of Papuan politics, there are two arenas of contestation that exist. The first contestation is national-local politics or low politics; and the second is high politics related to the secessionist movements of the Papuan. MMP members took their parts in both arenas. While people like Iribaram and Karupukaro are preparing to run for the Regency Head of Timika in 2013, people like Sayid Fadhal remain in the self-determination camp.

The wish to separate from Indonesia is not a secret in Papua’s society. It is an everyday discussion in common people. Yet, sometimes the wish serves like a mantra to end the misery of being oppressed and discontentment. The involvements of some members of MMP in the movement were also known. To name a few; Thaha Alhamid was one of the 100 Papuan delegations who conducted a dialog with President Habibie in 1999. During the dialog the request to separate Papua from Indonesia was presented. He also held the position as the general secretary of Papuan People Congress (Kongres Rakyat Papua) in 2000 and member of Papuan Presidium Council (PDP; Presidium Dewan Papua). He was jailed along with other 4 leaders of the PDP due to their political actions. Another name who consistently speaks of the wish of the people is Sayid Fadhal Alhamid who served as the member of Papuan Customary Council (DAP; Dewan Adat Papua). While Anum Siregar with support from her NGO; ALDP (Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua; Democratic Alliance for Papua), has been providing pro bono legal assistance to many Papuan nationalists as well as combating human right abuses in Papua. Those individuals are the voice of Muslim in the arena of Papuan high politics.

6. Assessing the Role as the Agent of Peace

In order to contain the political turmoil in Papua, the government of Indonesia has taken many efforts such as granting the region with Special Autonomy status. The status comes with a huge budget allocation that never awarded to other provinces in Indonesia. The special status and budget is intended to infuse development. The idea is when prosperity comes the separation wish will disappears. Yet, severe corruption and miss managements are hampering development efforts. Despite its huge budget and natural resources Papua provinces are remain poorly developed and backward. The development scenario does not work well; it cannot tame dissatisfaction of the Papuan nationalists. Violent actions connected to secessionist movement are still erupted frequently. Then, the government policy to combat such actions is hard treatment by deploying more security forces. Human right abuses raises as the result. The circle of violence in Papua region is become more relentless and hardly to stop.

In a political antagonism leading to violence of Papua, the unlikely position of the Muslim Papuan can also be used as the agent of peace. Apart from the notion that political behavior exercised by Muslim Papuan leaders in the political arena is a defense mechanism, it also can be exploited to other directions. Identity commonalities of Muslim Papuan with the two parties; the Papuan nationalist and the majority Indonesian, and the high prestige of some elites in Papuan political society is an asset. It puts them in a perfect post as the agent of peace. However, other questions raise; how does the idea work? What is the possibility of Muslim Papuan as the agent of peace in Papua conflict?

Mugny and Perez [25] have drawn analysis around the minority groups’ influence in the processes and spread of social innovation as a counter act of discrimination, rejection, and denial they experienced. Corresponding to the study, as a minority group, Muslim Papuan has also shown their capability in influencing the political architecture of Papua. By being in the key positions in important political organization they will be able to influence organization’s policy to involve minority groups. Such a policy can be seen in the resolution of Papuan People Congress the second, “The Papuan second congress of 2000 calling to all Papuan to respect and protect civil rights to all citizen of Papua land, including minority communities” [23] (p. 104). Sayid Fadhal has also admitted in the interview by being the only

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Muslim in DAP he has been able to advocate the idea of Muslim Papuan as an inseparable part of the Papuan society. However, after having achieved the main goal of promoting Muslim Papuan voice in the society, the next goal of promoting peace has awaits.

Additionally, Mugny and Perez [25] (p. 29) have also pointed out that for minority groups “when given [an] opportunity, subjects will express identity commonalities that coincide with their own ideological position.” The Muslim Papuan had exercised their chance in the Papuan political turmoil. Some individuals represented the group have taken side with secessionist movement, human rights activism, society development, and local politics based on their identity commonalities and ideologies. Muslim Papuan posses more identity commonalities with various Papuan citizens in compare with non-Muslim Papuan. They share religion commonalities with majority of migrant, which are also having a good relation with the government, as well as commonalities with the fellow Papuan nationalist as they are in the same ideology. The commonalities of Muslim Papua with both opposed parties are the bridge to conduct a role as peace promoters. However, the role as the messenger of peace is hard to translate in a sharp segregation environment.

There are at least two obstacles of performing the role as the agent of peace for Muslim Papuan. The first obstacle is the narrow definition of ‘Papua Asli’. The racist definition has excluded mixed-race Papuan in the political life since pure-blood Papuan political elites quickly use it as a weapon to gain legitimacy in short range political goals. The definition also has put the political struggle of Papuan society in jeopardy, since the race category never fits with the merit system. Also, it does not attach with the reality of Papuan society. Rather served as the affirmative policy for the indigenous, the definition has undermined the Papuan struggle. The struggle cannot rely on individuals, therefore, the fair definition of what is ‘Papua Asli’ is needed to open the opportunity of (mostly mixed-raced) Muslim Papuan to be active as cadres in Papuan struggle. The second obstacle is the unsympathetic behavior of the security forces. Indonesia has gained international attention of human right abuses in Papua committed by security forces. A peaceful conflict resolution is a critical demand of Indonesian government as well as Papuan people. However, to achieve a peaceful conflict resolution two contrasting parties have to able to conduct a dialogue to deliver their expectations. Under the threat of violence, the environment of distrust and resentment will most likely build than the environment of understanding to be ready for a dialogue. For that reason, security approaches to response political movement of the people will damper the possibility of a peaceful conflict resolution.

7. Conclusion

Peace is a desire for Papuan people. However, peace is also a rare condition for Papua. To be able to end the conflict that has wrapped Papua for a very long time, every conflicted parties should be able to sit down and talk. To conduct a meaningful dialogue the warring parties should be equal served by equal facilitators. Therefore, untangling the root of inequality in Papuan society as well as in Indonesian-Papuan relations is one of the means. Papuan nationalist elites should be aware of the possibility of loosen their alliance by excluding community groups such as mixed-race community and Muslim Papuan. Throughout history, Muslim Papuan and mixed-race communities have always been an integral part of Papuan society. In fact, exploiting racist category of Papuan will only enhanced community segregations.

The study also finds that the opportunity of equal dialogue will only happen if the security situation is conducive. In a harsh antagonism environment the choice will be limited. The difference between communities will be more pungent and clear. The feeling of distrust will lead community to strengthen its inner groups. What is more, culturally, Papuan communities are characterized by small groups with a strong inner bound, rather than a big society with loose relations. That is why, diminishing the gap between communities by enhancing trust is crucial. Hence, to reach a peaceful ending of the conflict and to provide an opportunity for minority group to become the agent of peace, one party has to loosen the tension. In Papuan conflict between government and Papuan nationalists, the paper suggests that the government should take an initiative to relax its rope. By doing so, conflict transformation could be
expected. Nonetheless, the recent development of violence series in Papua makes the expectation far from the reality.

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