Political Religion: Marginalization of Local Religion in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT :

This article describes the chronology of recognition of formal religion and marginalization of local religion in Indonesia. Formally, the Indonesian government recognizes the formal religion based on the policy or the constitution in Indonesia. That is Presidental Decree number 1 the year 1965 and Constitution Number 5 the year 1969. According to the constitution, the formal religions are Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. But Confucianism was marginalized on the new order of Indonesia based on the decree of the Ministry of Home Affairs year 1974. Because of this marginalization of Confucianism, the followers of it must fill the religion column with a stripe sign or choose five of formal religion. out from the five formal religion is considered as local religion or indigenous. But, in Indonesia, there is much local religion that has been existed centuries ago before Indonesia's independence. Even though based on The Ministry of culture and Tourism in 2003, there were 245 local religions in Indonesia. Because local religions were not recognized, it was thought that Indonesia had no religion before the first century. So, this article explains about 1) the chronology of recognition of formal religions and local/indigenous religion in Indonesia and 2) the effect of political religion on formal and local/indigenous religion. I argue that because of a narrow understanding of religion, so the policy or the constitution about religion in Indonesia becomes accordingly narrow and impact on marginalization to civil society that believes in local religion/indigenous religion, because of this policy indigenous community in Indonesia do not have their rights such as recognition of the name of their indigenous religion in ID card and administration service. This article is descriptive-qualitative in approach, and library research is used as the technique of collecting data.

Keywords: Political Religion in Indonesia, Formal Religion, Local religion, marginalization, Understanding of Religion

Introduction

Indonesia context has the famous concept of religion called a revelation-based-religion and non-revelation-based-religion. This context and concept were formulated by several scholars of religion in Indonesia. But there is a strong possibility that this religious typology was introduced in Indonesia through the work of Ahmad Abdullah al-Masdoosi, a Pakistani Muslim scholar, entitled Living Religion of the World (1962). This concept was popularized by Endang Saifudin Anshari (1979). In his writing, Endang defines that revelation-based-religion or prophetic religion is religions revealed by Allah to the Prophet and His Messengers, while non-revelation-based-religions or cultural religions or, again, natural religions are those created by humans.

Besides Endang, Agus Hakim wrote a specific chapter about revelation-based-religion and non-revelation-based-religion. He stated that if revelation-based-religion is religion come from God, but if non-revelation religion or natural religion was born from the imagination of religion by a human who wants to worship to something which considered the Almighty. Non-revelation religion is called as nature religion or *thabi'i* because its followers' worship to a thing or worshiping gods and idols through nature.

Furthermore, another scholar of Indonesia that has the same concept of the typology of religion is Zakiyah Daradjat. She makes a typology of religion into two parts. The first is non-revealed religion and the second is revealed religion. Non-revelatory religion was born among four racial groups: Mongolian, Aryan, Miscellaneous, and Paganism. from the Mongolian racial group were born three religions: Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism. From the Aryan racial group were born four religions: Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. from the Miscellaneous racial group was born Buddhism. While the revealed religion was born from the Semitic nation. The three revealed religions according to Zakiyah Daradjat are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

According to Kuntjaraningrat in his *Kebudayaan, Mentalitas dan Pembangunan* (1974), the term 'religion' is used to address the six formal religions in Indonesia: Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Meanwhile, all belief systems that are not or not yet officially recognized are called religions.[1]

These three scholars of Indonesia cited as an overview of how the scholar of religion was take a position to define the formal religion in Indonesia and the local/indigenous religion in Indonesia. From the overview above, Agus Hakim and Kuntjaningrat mention the local/indigenous religion in Indonesia as a natural religion, but the other did not mention the local religion as part of the existence of religion in Indonesia.[2]

There, is however, one scholar disagreeing with the above religious typology: Kautsar Azhari Noer. He stated that the two typologies are the normative classifications first made by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the great medieval Christian philosopher and theologian. Aquinas wants to emphasize that Christianity is a true religion based on revelation (from heaven), whereas non-Christian religions are false and fake because of the natural creation (earth) of humans. This classification was then followed by some of

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[1] Kontjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan, Mentalitas, dan Pembangunan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1996).

[2] Media Zainul Bahri, *Wajah Studi Agama-Agama* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 199.

religious scholars in Indonesia, especially Muslim scholars. According to him again, this normative classification has no scientific value because it is arbitrary, subjective, and one-sided by the religious side acting as an appraiser and judge as if representing God.[3]

In the history of Indonesia was wrote that chronologically the oldest religions in archipelago are only Hinduism and Buddhism. Those two religions were embraced by the community, especially on the island of Java. The proof of this history is the relics of the past those are Borobudur and Prambanan temples. These two temples were discovered centuries ago, and these two temples are the most authentic evidence of the existence of the two religions in the archipelago centuries ago. Hinduism is believed came to Indonesia at 1st century AD and after that Buddhism was came to Indonesia. This evidence also proves the concept of animism and dynamism culture that expanded and spread in Java or out of Java Island.

Besides Hinduism and Buddhism, other religions have spread to Indonesia. It was Islam. Spreading of Islam to Indonesia through trade routes for about 7th century AD after the Prophet of Muhammad passed away. On the history wrote that in Archipelago at 7th of century AD there were Islamic Kingdom, namely Perlak Kingdom in Aceh. Actually, there are many theories About spreading Islam to Indonesia, now the writer does not want to explain more about it. But this chronology is important to write to understand the chronology why our government just recognizes six religions as the formal religion of Indonesia.

After arriving and spreading Islam in Indonesia massively and fastly. Islam is not the last religion that arrived and spread to Indonesia. Then, Christianity came through Europe people. In this century Indonesia experienced colonization era. In the colonization of Europe era for about 16th century not only Christian but also Catholic was spreading in Indonesia. The center of spreading those two religions was out of Java Island and in the 18th century, the last two religions spread into Java Island.[4] And for the last, there was a Confucianism came to Indonesia through traders and immigrants from China to Indonesia.

Before the arrival of religions from outside, in history books in schools, only mentioned beliefs such as animism and dynamism. History textbooks circulating in schools do not clearly mention the original religions of Indonesia. Even though there are many original religions of Indonesia before formal religion came. If we just read the chronology of formal religion, it would seem that before Hinduism or Buddhism came to Indonesia, the people were not belief in religion. In fact, Indonesia has our own original religion beside formal religion. For example, Indonesia has Kaharingan before Christian and Islam came to Borneo. This religion is adhered to by the Dayak people. Sunda Wiwitan and Buhun had been existed in the Sundanese area in West Java. In Banten province Badui tribe had been exist and develop before Islam came. This tribe was called as Urang Kanekes. In other area such as in the area, which is used Java language, there are several indigenous/local religions such as Kejawen, Purwoduksino, and Budi Luhur. In colonization era, after Islam came, there was Samin religion. Those local religions are mentioned as the example of original religion before formal religion came. [5]

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[3] Ibid., 202

[4] Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historitas?* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 5.

[5] Agama-agama yang Dipinggirkan, https://tirto.id/agama-agama-yang-dipinggirkan-bnP3

According to the data from the National Census of Indonesia five religions were embraced by Indonesian, those religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christian, and Protestantism, and in the early 20th century Confucianism was recognized as the formal religion of Indonesia because they have much of followers, So, until today we just know the six formal religions of Indonesia.[6]

From this introduction, the writer would like to analyze what was happened in Indonesia. First, the writer would say that based on the restricted understanding definition of religion in Indonesia it gives effect to the political, social, policy of Indonesia government. For example, what the government understands as religions are limited to what we usually understand as world religion or revelation religion such as Christian, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism (to mention several religions). So, the natural religion or indigenous religions are not part of religion in Indonesia.

Second, the government of Indonesia just recognize the six religions as formal religion in Indonesia. As the implication of that recognition of religion so indigenous religion is recognized as part of the culture of Indonesia, not count as the formal religions. Therefore, because of this problem indigenous religions do not get the same recognition and service as part of civil society, or even they do not get their rights and being marginalize by the government. For example, in recent years there was a problem with the column of religion in the ID card of Indonesia. The civil society allows them to write their religion on the ID card just for those who follow formal religion in Indonesia. for those who follows indigenous religion/local religion, they have to write the column of religion by the stripe sign.[7]

Another example of marginalization of people who belief indigenous/local religion recently occur to Besipae indigenous community in Nusa Tenggara Timur. Besipae indigenous community has a conflict which had been occurring since 1987. That conflict is about land use of customary forest. The Besipae indigenous community belief that the customary forest is a sacred area that is forbidden to be exploited. They also belief customary forest is like a human, the leave in the customary forest as like a hair, limb in the customary forest is like bone of human. Then, according to their local wisdom, if they keep and protect the customary forest, they keep their mother. They have belief that customary forest as like a thing that would protect and keep them.[8]

If formal religion has a sacred place to worship to their God, the indigenous communities regarded the forest as the sacred place. They would be angry as the people of formal religion is angry when their mosque, church, temple, and their other sacred place is attacked or demanded.

This paper would like to see how the role of politics in Indonesia was affected to the formal and local/indigenous religion. The, this paper also would like to see how the indigenous/local religion get the discrimination.

Literature Review

The writer starts from the question when was the term of religion Religion used? Who was the people, or the scholar introduced the term of religion? The history records

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[6] Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historitas, 5.*

[7] Agama-agama yang Dipinggirkan, https://tirto.id/agama-agama-yang-dipinggirkan-bnP3.

[8] Dominikus a reptesentative of WALHI Nusa Tenggara Timur,10 December, 2020.

that the term religion did not appear and be used immediately. It is known that the term religion came into use in the sixteenth century, this information is taken and known from Richard Eden and Pedro Cieza de Leon. In A Treatyse of the New India (1553). Eden wrote how the condition of the natives on the Canary Islands, they were naked, without shame, and without religious knowledge or knowledge of God. While. In the same year, Cieza in Cronica del Peru (1553) also wrote how the indigenous peoples of the northern Andes were not practicing religion at all, as we understand it, also no houses of worship can be found there. After the explanation of two scolars above, here was the term religion started to use. It seems that the term religion has also replaced the designation for rites that have been practiced since before the sixteenth century. It is possible that what Eden and Cieza call religion has a different understanding from the natives on Canary Island or in North Andena.

However, the term religion that was coined by Eden and Ceiza began to get the attention of experts, so that the meaning of religion became diverse. This happened because the experts try to present the meaning of religion following by their experiences.

After Eden and Ceiza throw the meaning of religion to the public, here I would like to introduce the first scholar who defined religion. According to Acosta in The Natural and Moral History of the Indies (1590) "religion" is the belief system that results in ceremonial behavior. This definition tries to present a structured and systematic meaning of religion which he called as a belief system. On that definition, there are things or rules for how one should believe in religion as a systematic belief.

While Duruy stated that pre-literature societies were regarded the system belief were trees, mountains, rivers, and other natural formations process an animating power or spirit.[9] This concept is known as Animism. Animism comes from Latin, *anima* which means soul or spirit. According to this understanding, primitive society considers nature is filled with countless spirits, not only humans or animals that have spirits, but primitive societies believe that non-living things also have spirits, such as bones, stones, or trees.

We often see or hear stories about how the religion of primitive societies does their worship, such as those who believe in trees to be worshiped or keep offerings like foods or flowers on large stones. Besides it, we also hear other practices like bring something which throws to the sea or keep *kris* and sometimes wash the *kris* at a certain time. Those practices are religious practices that surrender and believe in the great or bigger energy than human energy on the object which trusted contained a spirit.

Although Animism is called and believed as primitive culture, nowadays we still find those practices above in Indonesia. Some people always bring something in their pocket, or some people put something in their house. The belief the thing could save them from bad destiny or evil. Even more unique, some people who do this animism practice nowadays also believe in monotheism religion.

Furthermore, Tylor define religion as a trust to something spiritual. This definition according to Tylor could be receive and has a wide scope. Although we found other similarities on every religion, but the only one characteristic which has by every religion, big or local religion, ancient or modern religion, is trust and belief to spirits who think, behave, and feel like humans. The essence of every religion, as well as mythology, is animism. Animism is the oldest belief which could found in every history of human.[10]

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[9] Nevill Drury, *Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985).
[10] Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 45.

Those are the definition about religion according to the scholars. And the writer would continue to the definition of world religion. According to Esposito, the terms of world religion is the idea that all the world's religions have members in almost every country or society; and that technology affords access to all key religious sites, practice, and teachers (Esposito, 2014: 3).[11] From this definition of world religion, the writer can conclude that world religions are the religion which have many followers around the world. It means, those world's religions are existed in most of part of the world, not just in a local scope.

Ma'arif stated that In world religion paradigm, the cosmological system, which is based on western monotheistic ontology, orders a hierarchical dissimilarity among categories of being: divinity, humanity and nature. The world or the cosmos is occupied by the three categories of being, or in other words, the cosmos consists of three domains: the supernatural/divinity, culture/humanity and nature. The relationship of the three are essentially hierarchical. The supernatural/divine is essentially more powerful than the culture/human, and the culture is essentially more powerful than the nature. This may then be characterized as "hierarchical cosmology" that, although ethnocentrically based, has been applied universally.[12]

Furthermore, world religions are opposite from local/indigenous religion. According to Cox, indigenous or local religion is the primary characteristic of Indigenous Religion refers to its being bound to a location; participants in the religion are native to a place or they belong to it. The single and overriding belief shared amongst Indigenous Religions derives from a kinship-based worldview in which attention is directed towards ancestor spirits as the central figures in the religious life and practice. As such, Indigenous Religions are restricted cosmologically because their spirit world is organized around system of lineage. Ancestors are known by name; they belong to a place just ass their descendants do, and they relate to living community's ass spirit conveyors of ancestral traditions.[13] As Cox mentioned above, Indigenous Religion has local participants and they life in a certain location. As like Sunda Wiwitan (for mention one of an example of Indigenous Religion in Indonesia) who life in location of Sunda tribe in West Java.

According to Parsudi Suparlan in the book Religion in Sociological Analysis and Interpretation (1988), religion as a set of rules and regulations governing human relations with the supernatural world, especially with God, regulates human relations with other humans, and regulates human relationships with their environment.

In particular, religion is defined as a belief system adhered to and the actions that are manifested by a group or society in interpreting and responding to what is felt and believed to be supernatural and sacred. Following Parsudi Suparlan, if religion is a set of rules regulating human relations with the supernatural world, then not only the six religions recognized by the government are worthy of being called a religion. Beliefs are also worthy of being called religion.[14]

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[11] Esposito, John L, Darrel J. Fasching, Tood T Lewwis, *World Religion Today.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3.

[12] Samsul Ma'arif, *Indigenous Religion Paradigm: Re-interpreting Religious Practices of Indigenous People,* 2019, 110.

[13] James L. Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 69.

[14] Roland Robertson, *Agama dalam Analisa dan Interpretasi Sosiologis* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1988).

Conceptual Framework

Chidester (2018) discuses about the term of 'religion'.[15] In his discussion he states that religion is an enabling term, because it allows for critical and creative reflection on crucial problems of inclusion and exclusion that have both intellectual and social consequences.

Furthermore, the term "religions" raises a similar set of issues. How many are there in total? In theory, their number is indeterminate and infinite, but their classification bears traces of specific types of social projects. In an attempt to conceptualize, contain, and perhaps even manage this diversity, European and Euro-American scholars coined the term "world religions" in the nineteenth century. That is the legacy we have. What are we going to do about it?.[16] The classification of 'world religions' is highly problematic due to its arbitrary construction, exclusion of indigenous religions, and ease of manipulation by agents of various imperial projects, we must also recognize that the notion of 'world religions' has been enthusiastically embraced by advocates of inclusive citizenship in democratic societies and advocates of indigenous empowerment in postcolonial societies.[17]

Meanwhile, religion, according to Spencer, contains the belief in something eternal and beyond intellect, and Max Muller stated that religion is an attempt to understand what cannot be interpreted and articulate what cannot be described, a desire for something that is not limited. Further Religion, as according to M. Reville, is the defining force of human life, a bond that integrates the human mind with mysterious thinking that control both the world and oneself.

Research Method

This paper uses several methods to collect data. First by use library research, second by brief interview, and the last is online research through a published electronic source. Library research is a process that is used to gather information to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project. It is commonly necessary to back up, revise, add additional material, or even change the topic completely.[18] Library research could use the book, journals/periodicals, or newspaper/magazine. Books are available today on any topic that wants to research. The use of books started before even the writer have selected the topic. After selection of topics books provide insight on how much work has already been done on the same topic and can prepare the literature review. Books are a secondary source but the most authentic ones in secondary sources. Then, journals/periodicals are becoming more important as far as data collection is concerned. The reason is that journals provide up-to-date information which at times books cannot and secondly, journals can give information on the very specific topic on researching rather talking about more general topics. Magazines/newspapers are also effective but not very reliable.

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[15] David Chidester, "World Religion in the World," *Journal for the Study of Religion*, (2018).
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] https://library.uaf.eduv

Newspapers, on the other hand, are more reliable and in some cases, the information can only be obtained from newspapers as in the case of some political studies.[19]

Interviewing Khan and Channell (1957) describe interviewing as a conversation with a purpose. Interviewing typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views but otherwise, respect how the participant frames and structures the response. The participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it.[20] Interviewing has a variety of forms including individual, face-to-face interviews, and face-to-face group interviewing. The asking and answering of questions can be mediated by the telephone or other electronic devices.[21]

The last method to collect the data is through an online source or published electronic sources. This is use internet as the advance, fast, and reachable. It has been seen that much information that is not available in printed form is available on the internet. In the past the credibility of the internet was questionable but today it is not. The reason is that in the past journals and books were seldom published on the internet but today almost every journal and book is available online. Some are free and for others, you have to pay the price. For other examples, the advantage of using online data is people can reach e-journals. E-journals are more commonly available than printed journals. Besides it, from the online resource, we could find the news that not available in printed news and also we could find the official website that available the online sources.[22]

Result And Discussion

Before the independence of Indonesia, the world *agama* was similar to *religio* of the first century.[23] But after independence of Indonesia *Agama* and religion have different understanding. Then, *agama* in Indonesia refered to practices of World religion such as Islam, Christian, Hindu, Buddhism, and Confucianism. So that, the six religions (*agama)* are called officially or formal religion of Indonesia. All of its are part of World religion. As the writer mentioned above that world religion is a common religion that recognize in most of whole the world, so that, it is called world religion because it is not local scope.

Both *religio* and religion *(agama)*, now not longer have similar understanding. *Religio* is refer to the ancient religion, rites, and cult while religion *(agama)* is refer to the modern religion that is world religion. Thus, *Agama* was reified as a concrete noun that has specific elements: doctrine of one God, a prophet, a holy book, institution, and internationally embraced[24] while local or indigenous religion does not categorized as modern religion because the indigenous or local religion does not have one God, a prophet, a holy book, and internationally embraced.

After the independence of Indonesia, as it is specified in the Indonesian constitution, *agama* was reified. Initially (since the post-colonial), *agama* was identical

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[19] Syed Muhammad Sajjad Kabir, *Method of Data Collection* (2016), 273.
[20] Data Collection Methods, https://marlenharrison-files
[21] Syed Muhammad Sajjad Kabir, *Method of Data Collection,* 221.
[22] Ibid., 274.
[23] Samsul Ma'arif, *Indigenous Religion Paradigm: Re-interpreting Religious Practices of Indigenous People.*
[24] Ibid.

to Islam. It was only Islam that was categorized as *agama,* and then Protestantism and Catholicism. Even though Hinduism and Buddhism were the "initial owner" of *agama,* given the fact that the word was Sanskrit of India, it took them several years to adjust to the reified *agama.* They were not recognized as *agama* until in 1959. Confucianism made its way to become *agama* in 1965, but two years later was banned, and then get recognized again in 2001.[25]

Since 2001, there are only six that qualify as *agama:* Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. No indigenous religion is recognized. It did not take long for the post-colonial state to decide that indignous religions may not be admitted as *agama*. In fact, soon after the state established the department of religion (January 1946, several months after the independence), the first state's policy was to disqualify indigenous religions: they were not religious,[26] and so may not be administered under the department of religion, or the citizenship rights of their followers may not be granted based on their indigenous religions. So, that was started the intervention of politic through government and policy to remove the list of indigenous/local religion in Indonesia.

The condition was getting worst at 1965 when the new order was started. On that year there were a policy to filled the religion column in ID card of Indonesian. And based on the decree of Ministrer of Home Affairs on 1947, the religion coumn in ID Card of Indonesia must be filled by choose one of official religion of Indonesia (at that time, Confucianism was not recognized yet as official religion). the choice were Islam, Christianity, Catholic, Hinduism, and Buddhism. For people who as the followers of indigenous/local religion were forced to choose one of formal religions.

For example, Kejawen people in Jipang, Cepu, Blora they were forced to choose among five formal religion. They were confused and dilemma. If they did not fill the religion column, so they would be called as communism or "PKI." Label of communism or PKI would make they life difficult, because they could not be national army of Indonesia or government employees of Indonesia. Forcefully they were choose Christianity to fill their religion column because they had clashed with Muslim community.

How if we look for the root of this history? When was the marginalization of local or indigenous religion started? Whether has it been a while after the Independence of Indonesia? Here is the explanation. Ma'arif stated that the political religion today is an effect of the contestation series politics that has been going on since the Dutch colonial period. On the colonization of Dutch in Indonesia, political contestation between groups society occurs because first government policy The Netherlands that differentiates and polarizes groups colonial society, and secondly social contestation on the community level itself.

In relation with the issue of ancient or local religion, there are two "events" in the Dutch colonial era that can traced as the root of the underlying tension political efforts by making religion as a tool (a tool of politics religion). The first is the conflict between Islam vs. culture, and second is the contestation between *"santri"* vs. *"abangan."* The contradiction continues until the approaching independence of Indonesia, including at a time when the state constitution was formulated. This section describes the process, down

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[25] Ibid., 106.
[26] Samsul Ma'arif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur dalam Politik Agama di Indonesia.* (Yogyakarta: CRCS, 2018).

to the process in which said "Religion" and "belief" are included in the constitution / UUD 1945. This section is a historical record that shows the initial process of religious politics.[27]

In the Dutch colonial era, there were different understanding between religion and culture in society. Because of that differentiation the Dutch government decreed the policy about the differentiation between Islam vs. culture at the end of 19th century. The different assumption between religion and culture came from Religious communities that have a modern religious orientation, orthodox, and puritans generally regard *adat* as cultural elements that pollute religion. while religious communities which has a traditional-contextual religious orientation tend to accept *adat* as a source of religious enrichment. As long as *adat* does opposite with the principles of religious teachings, for example, teachings about the only of God, culture/*adat* can be considered as an element that enriches diversity.[28]

The decree was proposed by Christian Snouck Hurgronje, the decree was suppress Islamic politics, the piety of Islam was released, and the culture/*adat* was strengthened, revitalized, and institutionalized. This policy was an effort of the Dutch government stem and overcome rebellions by militant Muslims on the one hand, and by making indigenous groups as alliances.

The policy of differentiation by the Dutch colonial government effectively polarized the colony. Before it, once again, Islam and *adat* were often at odds in public discourse, but also in practice and life socio-cultural, the socio-cultural seem to be united.

As a result of these policies, institutionalized culture/*adat* to be exclusively different from religious institutions, and religious group of Islam in the turn considered not only Dutch colonialists but also indigenous groups as enemies, because they were considered to be allied with the invaders. This is what called by model of "bamboo split politics": civil society are split and differentiated. The first group is pressed, and others are strengthen. This differentiation policy has an impact on polarization and social tensions between Islamic groups vs. indigenous groups at that time.

This social tension between Islamic group vs. indigenous groups effected when Indonesia reached the independent. Islam as the majority in the government regarded indigenous community as apart from religion, so the policy of religion just recognized the six formal/official religions. The indigenous communities were not registered under the ministry of religion, but they registered under the ministry of culture. This differentiation got strength with the concept that wrote by the scholar about the typology of religion. If the religion does not have God, prophet, holy books, and institution, so, it does not part of formal religion.

Nowadays, the effect of "bamboo split politics" in Indonesia is still felt by partly of civil society who follow indigenous community. One of the newer case is in Nusa Tenggara Timur. Over there, Besipae indigenous community get repression from the local government. The conflict between the Besipae indigenous community and local government has been occurred for 38 years.

On my opinion, the case has been occurring until today because local government there does not have same perspective and understanding about what is the indigenous

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[27] Ibid., 11.
[28] Ibid., 12.

community belief and about their local wisdom. Because of the narrow definition from *religio* to religion in Indonesia, the belief of nature is not part of categorization of religion in Indonesia. So, when Besipae indigenous community belief that their customary forest as the sacred place, while the local government just regard it as the ordinary forest and get much advantages from the forest, so the local government does not regard the costumary forest of Besipae indigenous community as the sacred place for indigenous community.

The term of customary forest on *Dawam Amnuban* Bahasa called as Nais Kio, it means as prohibited forest. Prohibited forest means no one could manage or touch the forest in order to keep the forest from exploitation or illegal logging. On the other hand, the designation of Pubabu forest as customary forest was because the culture and understanding of indigenous community there. Their understanding of keeping the forest as the sacred area because they assumed the forest is like their mother, if we damage the forest it is same with we hurt their mother.

Furthermore, the Besipae customary forest is located in upstream. If the upstream is exploited so it has an impact to the downstream. For example, if upstream is exploited and no longer leavy, in the downstream it would be dryness and the water springs no longer exist. The other purposes of designation Pubabu customary forest are people let Pubabu customary forest grow and keep leavy in order that the forest could be a home for wild animal and cattle. Beside it, people are prohibited to hunt animal in customary forest. Hunting animal just allow if wild animal get into village, but if the wild animal run away and get into the forest again, people are prohibited to hunt it.[29]

Above are the local wisdom of Besipae and part of belief of indigenous religion. The repression to the indigenous community would be continue day by day. Most of conflict of indigenous religion with the government of private parties about the land use. If people who follows world religions belief that their mosque, church, temple, synagogue, or other sacred place must be keep and be their place to worship to their God, neither do them as indigenous community, they belief the customary forest as their sacred place and they do their worship in the sacred place, that is customary forest. Beside the belief customary forest as sacred place, they also belief the forest could keep and protect them from the hunger, thirsty, and the forest would give them the much life. Because of this local wisdom and belief, the indigenous community depend on the forest because human need cattle and forest. The cattle look for the food in the forest, and human keep and protect the forest. If one of these elements are sparated, it would be impacted to the other element.

As the writer mention above about the conflict between Besipae indigenous Community and local government, so, Besipae indigenous community survive and make efforts to regain their rights as indigenous peoples, namely in the form of land and forests. They effort to regain their rights are: held the dialogue between Besipae Community and the Government of NTT, held mediation which facilitate by DPRD (Local Representative Council), propose local regulation/policy to manage customary forest, Organize the Besipae community and other indigenous community to make solidarity action to regain their rights.

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[29] Dominikus, interview.

Conclusion

Presumably we should redefine religion into larger context, or we back to the *religio* definition used in the 16th century. But because not every people understand and want to relearn about definition and context of religion for wider perspective, most of people understand the religion based on the mainstream definition. This is a duty for the scholar who has objective perspective of religion. Do not let the scholars of religion trapped in certain interest so they give subjective definition and spread it to the public. Another case that must scholar resolve is how to unite and erase the sentiment and history of bamboo split politics during colonial era in order that between formal religion and local religion could unite and together make Indonesia great again.

According to Kausar Azhari Noer, world religion became the cause of conflict and violence because of its narrow definition and the followers of world religion feel that their religion is the right and the best one than other religion. It is as if they compete to have the largest following in the world, whereas, belief in religion is one of the way to live the best life.

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