The Phenomenon of Social and Religious Conflicts in Tanjungbalai, Medan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: North Sumatra is categorized as zero conflict area, but the emergence of riot burning at Chinese ethnic houses on 29-30 July 2016 and then in Tanjung Balai, indicates that this area is quite vulnerable to religion social conflicts. If the unrest in this town cannot be localized and immediately addressed, the impact probably could have been beyond the events of the previous riots, such as the riots in Ambon, Poso, Sampit, and others. This conflicts, besides sourced from the conflict values, it involves the differences of what the group believes, from minor differences in preferences or opinions to the big differences in ideology or way of life. These conflicts arise over the value of the way or goal achieved. These conflicts are also embedded with economic conflicts and power conflicts as each group wants to optimize influence and control in relation to other groups.

Keywords: *phenomenon; social; religion; conflict; economic*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the study of religious relations related to violence is often seen ambiguously. On the one hand many people consider religion contains violent conflict. On the other hand, religion is positioned free of violence. Violence is categorized as a form of distortion and desecration of religion values. These two perspectives can lead to a contradictory approach of religion studies between skeptical and apological approaches. In addition, religious discourse and violence are often trapped in the rhetorical circle of religious normativity in a philosophical perspective. Whereas philosophically, religion interrelation with violence is not significant, because the absolutism of all religions is clear. Religion is aimed at establishing peace and non-violence. However, if religiosity is seen historically and sociologically praxis, religion and violent relationships become relative and the inevitability to seek the truth. North Sumatra is categorized as zero conflict area, but the emergence of riot burning at Chinese ethnic houses on 29-30 July 2016 and then in Tanjung Balai, indicates that this area is quite vulnerable to religion social conflicts. If the unrest in this town cannot be localized and immediately addressed, the impact probably could have been beyond the events of the previous riots, such as the riots in Ambon, Poso, Sampit, and others. This assumption arises because the people in this area are well-known dynamic and consist of various ethnic groups, with distinctiveness of regional language background, traditions, customs, arts, culture and religion, as well as organizations, community organizations, professions, functional youth, women, and religious organizations. Therefore, it is not surprising that the occurrence of conflict or unrest in Tanjung Balai took a wide attention, not only in the local, regional, even national and international context. This can be seen from the news coverage from social media, newspapers, television and other electronic media. Various local and national media reported chronological events of the riots and how the the officials responded to them, for example, it can be seen in this brief news below:

This incident began when a citizen of Chinese descent named Meliana (41) complained about the sound of the prayer azan maghrib from Al Maksum mosque loudspeakers right in front of his house on Jalan Karya. After the Isha prayer or around 20.00, a number of pilgrims came to Meliana's house. According to Rina Sari Ginting in this meeting the atmosphere had heated up. Heard there was a commotion, the residents around Meliana's house came. They immediately secured some pilgrims to the local urban village office. "Meliana and her husband were taken to South Tanjung Balai Police," Rina said. Arriving at South Tanjung Balai Polsek conducted a meeting involving Chairman of Majelis Ulama Indonesia Tanjung Balai, Chairman of FPI Tanjung Balai, Head of Sub district and a number of public figures. "I suspect when the meeting took place, the crowd suddenly gathered and orated. Police officers also asked them to disperse. But at around 22:30 the mass increases. Allegedly they got information from facebook uploaded one of the citizens."

The emotional mass immediately moved to Meliana's house. They will burn the Meliana's house but it was successfully prevented by the citizens. Unexpectedly, the mass moved to Juanda temple which is located 500 meters from Meliana's house. They burned the temples in the area. Not only worship places, the mass also burned a number of vehicles. The police were overwhelmed by it.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Definition of Conflict
The term 'conflict' by experts in various literatures, contains many insights. In *Kamus Lengkap Pemikiran Sosial Modern*, for example, it is defined as a feud over the value or claims of rare status, power, and resources, in which the purpose of the conflicting party not only gets what it wants but also neutralizes, injures or eliminates its rival. Conflict can occur between individuals or between groups. Intergroup conflict and group conflict are the eternal features of social life; conflict is an essential component of social interaction in every society. According to Sigmund Freud, conflict is a clash between two or more forces, containing aggressiveness and expression. Furthermore, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn argue that conflict occurs when disagreements arise in social situations characterized by emotional friction between individuals or groups. However, conflict does not always mean "negative factors" that undermine collective life. Conflict often plays a role in group maintenance and development and strengthens interpersonal relationships.Conflict theory emerges amid the weakening of structuralist functionalism theory. This theory is accused of not able to take into account the problems of the conflict and the social change. First, because of their philosophical tendencies toward statusquo to become conservative and second, the nature of thought dominated by biological and equitabrium assumptions. Therefore, the theory of structural functionalism confronts the theory of conflict that is considered more capable of seeing and analyzing a fundamental social conflict and change.As Dahrendorf describes, structural functionalism provides a picture of society as consensual, integrative, and static, whereas society has always been two-faced: consensus and conflict. Therefore, he emphasized that the Utopian approach of the structural functionalists should be terminated, and see the conflict as a reality. Not infrequently the conflicts that occur in certain parts produce conflict in other parts of society. In general there are at least three sources of social conflict:
1. Seizing the resources, production tools and economic opportunities
2. Expansion of social-cultural group boundaries
3. Conflict of political interests, ideology and religion.

The first conflict source is a type of conflict that many occur. The battles in this field are usually won by individuals or groups who have strength and excellence in both Human Resources and the technology used. The second source of conflict arises in a pluralistic life, especially in urban areas. The differences in tradition, language, law and social identity can unite in the political interest that can trigger conflict, jealousy, and various social prejudices. The third source of conflicts is the clash of political, ideological and religious interests, a clash between established structures against developed cultures, values, ideologies and religions.

These three sources of conflict are encountered in every society (large and small). However, in complex (heterogeneous) and heterogeneous societies the frequency of impact will be more if compared to simple or homogeneous society. All three sources of conflict can unite simultaneously and create a violent impact in society, making it difficult to trace or differentiate. Thus the potential for conflict should be anticipated as early as possible. For that reason we need an accurate introduction to the society that is faced, especially the town people are plural and complex.Meanwhile Ronald J. Fisher argues that the occurrence of conflict between groups lies in three elements: discrepancies, behavior and feelings. Destructive conflicts are thought to be social situations where perceived mismatch in goals or between two parties (or more), attempts by one side to control each other, and the feelings of hostility towards each other. When parties are a group, people act and react to other group members in terms of their social identification with their group, which is an important part of their social identity.This definition emphasizes that incompatibility alone is not a conflict. However, when there is an attempt to control others to deal with discrepancies, and when those interactions produce, and are driven by hostility, conflict arises. This definition is in line with the approach to studying conflicts known as realistic group conflict theory, which emphasizes that objective conflict of interest causes conflict. In contrast, social identity theory suggests that the simple categorization of people into groups (in a least competitive social context) is sufficient to make differences between groups and a number of biases that support people in groups and discriminate against outside groups. In real life these two things usually run together, and it is not easy to know which one is the main influence, although the bias here is more clear in pointing out the real difference of interest.

2.2 Socio-Cultural Structure
James P. Spradley and David McCurdy in his book *Anthropology: Cultural Perspectives*, people in social life always understand and interpret the environment in which they are located and put every element in

the environment that know it into certain categories in the culture. As a result there will be many patterns of category relationships that embody the structures prevailing in different situations and arenas. The behavior embodied in the context of family structure differs from the behavior that is ubiquitous in the context of the office, and this occurs because of the special set of rules governing behavior in every social structure whose roots are in culture.The existence of the role device and social status possessed by each individual in the society causes the individual concerned to be in a variety of social structures. In discussions about social conflicts which are based on religious differences, the writer considers that the diversity of social structures plays an important role in sharpening and reducing the social incidence, so that the social order can be maintained. The principle of descendants embraced by the people of Tanjung Balai is the principle of descent that considers the relationship of kinship through the male line (patrinial).

Socio-cultural development is oriented towards the formation of intelligent, healthy, skilled and personable character of the society. The development of the quality of human resources through education and health will produce the people who master science and technology, healthy, full of spirit and high work ethics. While religious mental coaching will produce a society who is capable of maintaining its identity as a religious and cultured and civilized society in the midst of globalization. The expectations of the socio-cultural development described above cannot be fully achieved by Tanjungbalai. It must be acknowledged that socio-cultural development, whether education, health, religious mental coaching, youth group coaching, social organization has not run optimally.In culture, it is perceived the influence of foreign culture that is not in accordance with national and regional culture. The influence is feared to reduce the cultural resilience and the moral degradation, among others, shown by the increasingly rampant cases of pornography and porn action among the community. In the empowerment of women, the status or role of women in society is still subordinate and not as equal partners with men. These inequalities are seen in many development sectors including education, health, family planning, the environment, economy, law and politics as well as employment. Meanwhile, the ratio of male and female population is more male.In the youth and sport, the problems faced include low education, the presence of symptoms of moral and moral degradation, lack of respect for each other, the existence of anarchic actions, the spread of drug problems and juvenile delinquency and the decreasing sense of patriotism and sense of solidarity, the weakness of coaching and sports management system, low appreciation of athlete achievement, lack of spirit of society to reach maximum achievement, both at regional and national level and weakening system of foster father especially for sports branch of achievement.

2.3 Religion Conflict

Indonesian nation is a plural and multicultural nation with its inhabitants consists of various ethnic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversities scattered across territories separated by thousands of islands. Such a condition has a strong tendency towards each other's religions identity that has the potential to generate conflict. Therefore Parsudi Suprlan revealed that Indonesia's future is still vulnerable to conflict. The potential for social disintegration results from individual and group competition in various forms of "social sources" that use ethnicity to strengthen power.In Indonesia, since Suharto resigned from his power, escalating violence and religion conflict increased sharply in the rise of political reforms in 1998. The escalation of the conflict escalated rapidly as combatants engaged in religious sentiments for rapid and widespread support. Similarly, the stereotypes of one group emerged against other groups of different religions usually triggered inter-religious conflicts, followed by mutual attacks, killing each other, burning houses of worship and sacred places of value to each religious believer. A number of religious and social unrest that occurred some of them are large-scale and long-lasting. Religion social unrest and conflict are expressed in different patterns and forms of action. In addition, various issues and factors cause religious social conflicts accompany it, and this happens in various regions in Indonesia.The following illustrates the patterns of religion conflicts, as well as issues that lead to acts of violence, intolerance and even conflicts that drag the name of religion in it: Conflict is a natural phenomenon that cannot be avoided in the life of human beings, and it is proved that in the span of the history of human life is always colored by conflict. Indonesia is also inseparable from the conflict with various dimensions. The conflicts that occurred were not only manifested during the current reform era, but long before the reformation of Indonesian society which had been confronted by various conflicts, especially religion conflict. At least, the phenomenon of the conflict can be referred to the results of a research report prepared by Ihsan Ali Fauzi that revealed the patterns of religion conflict in Indonesia between the period January 1990 and August 2008. In that time we know and analyze in depth the various religion conflicts which occurred under the authoritarian regime of the New Order (1990-1998), the transitional regime toward early democracy (1998-2004), and the new democratic regime (2004-2008).

III. DISCUSSION

The people of Tanjung Balai have a variety of ethnic, racial or pedigree origins, regional languages, customs, religions and other material cultures. This is a pluralistic factor of society horizontally. Meanwhile the plurality of society vertically is the level of income (economy), education, settlement, occupation and social or political position. "Horizontal plurality factors are factors that a person receives as an inherited (ascribed-factors), while vertical plurality factors are more likely to be derived from the results of their own efforts (achievement-factors)".The ethnic and racial or ethnic origin of Tanjung Balai community consists of many tribes or races, ranging from Batak, Java, Malay, Minang, Aceh, Mandailing, India, Tionghoa (Chinese), and others. Although previously Tanjung Balai as the center of the Malay sultanate Asahan, the Malay tribe is not more than 15.41% and Batak is the most ethnic in this town reaches 42.56%. The ethnic diversity here gives color to the culture of the customs and languages used.Chinese ethnicity often uses Chinese or Mandarin as the language of their community. Meanwhile the other tribes although each has its own regional language, but rarely and limited uses in daily interactions. Unlike the Chinese ethnicity who often uses Chinese or Mandarin Chinese language in the association, including in trade, this often causes prejudice for other ethnicities. Mandarin used is perceived as a secret language in the trade. This has been seen as commonplace for Chinese users and for non Chinese ethnic who do not understand Mandarin.The Tanjung Balai dialect Malay can be understood by all ethnic who live in this town, because in general the Malay language is not much different from Indonesian language. Even if there is a difference only in the use of certain terms and language used. Why the ethnic Chinese still use Mandarin even though they are born and hereditary settled in Tanjung Balai is a problem of its own and to this day generally they are more fluent in using ethnic language rather than speak in accordance with the Tanjung Balai dialect.Besides from the language aspect, as well as the cultural customs of the people, the Malay people do not understand the culture of the ethnic Chinese community. In contrast, the Chinese community also does not understand well the culture of Malay and other ethnic communities. This is due to the lack of social interaction in the arts and culture. A young Buddhist of Chinese figure who is not willing to be identified, once said that Chinese ethnic actually wants to participate in various activities in the arts and culture in the event of the anniversary of the national day, whether implemented by the government or implemented by the community, either the youth, community organizations, or other social groups are ready to contribute or greater participate if they are needed. But we as ethnic Chinese are not much involved in such activities, let alone displaying the Chinese ethnic cultural arts. This does not mean that we do not incur expenses for commemorating national holidays such as the 17th of August or the anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia celebrated each year. We seem to be only a permanent donor to the government as well as by other institutions or groups, without being invited to jointly fill art and cultural events including Chinese ethnic.Besides the potential conflict of language and cultural aspects mentioned above, the religions aspect of the people of Tanjung Balai Town is also diverse, consisting of several religions and religious groups. Besides Islam as a religion most widely embraced by the community, there are also adherents od Christian, Catholic, Buddhist and Hindu. Confucianists cannot be identified in this town, because Confucianism for ethnic Chinese, some regard as ancestral culture, but some others regard as a legitimate (new) religion in Indonesia. The differences of religion, also has its own potential conflict mainly related to the worship house established by each religion community, let alone not always through the processes and procedures that have been arranged in this country.

Other potential conflicts from the vertical aspects, the writer only sees three aspects, namely education, economic level and settlement. From the aspect of education, since children the Chinese ethnic and other ethnic Malay learn or go to school in different places. Malay ethnic and other non-Chinese ethnic are spread out in various schools or universities in this town, from public and private schools, from religious schools and public schools. While Chinese ethnics generally study at certain private colleges or schools, it is rare among Chinese children study in public schools. There are two dominant college students from ethnic Chinese, namely Perguruan Hang Tuah and Perguruan Sisingamangaraja. Education levels range from kindergarten to high school (SMA)/vocational school (SMK). In terms of name, this college is not related to Chinese or Buddhist, since the name of Perguruan Hang Tuah is taken from a figure in the famous Malay Hikayat with the name Hikayat HangTuah. While Sisingamaraja, closely related to the national hero from Batak land, Sisingamangaraja XII.For Chinese ethnic sending their children in this college is only because the quality of these two colleges is considered better. Then, why few Malays ethnics go to school in these two universities, because besides being expensive and difficult to reach most of the Muslim community of ethnic Malay and other ethnics, according to them other schools are also not inferior. Therefore, very few Muslim communities send their children to school in this college. The phenomenon of differences in education between Malays and Chinese ethnics indicates that Malay Muslim society with Chinese ethnic in this region is difficult to blend due to the ethnic and religious differences cannot be denied, let alone it is coupled with the superior and inferior feelings of one group from other groups. Without any serious efforts in education assimilation to Muslim communities with Chinese Buddhists ethnics, various prejudices, streotypes and suspicions and the like will always appear in plural societies town like Tanjung Balai.

It is unlike the economic level of the people of Tanjung Balai, where the Chinese ethnic generally master the system of trade and economic sector. In the economic field, especially the traders are controlled by Chinese ethnic (China), in addition, fishing boats and boats are also generally owned by theChinese ethnic. So the economy in this town is controlled by Chinese ethnic. Socio-economically, the strong economic position of Chinese descent citizens has been faced with the abandonment of indigenous Indonesians. Historically, the economic position originated from the Dutch East Indies government policy which made the Chinese as an intermediate or middle class.Malayan Muslims and other ethnic groups are generally incapable and only a small percentage can compete with ethnic Chinese Buddhists. As a result, there was an anti and jealous attitude towards Chinese ethnic people. This is the potential for conflict that has always been a threat without any effort from the government and concerned figures of harmony and diversity to provide solutions. For example, how efforts and initiatives undertaken empower and protect local communities from economic downturns. In recent years, Chinese ethnic tend to prioritize workers from outside the region, compared with local workers. The Chinese in this matter cannot be entirely blamed, considering that the required labor or worker must have high skill and loyalty.The disparity of economic, poverty, loss of moral values, religion becomes an inseparable part of violence; even poverty is the most provocative component as the trigger of vulnerability and social conflict. Although the triggers of conflict often stem from religious, ethnic, racial beliefs as Usman Pelly's explanation, the ethnic unrest is rooted in socioeconomic inequality and is a cultural protest that provides a strong indication that the social order in a pluralistic life has been violated and destroyed.Labor or local worker tends to be less disciplined, lazy and also less loyal to the employer. If this is always a problem, it is necessary for the government efforts to bridge the common interests, such as training, guidance and policies that protect the community or local workers. Labor also has the right and is not justified exploited without boundaries of obligations and rights respectively. It means the employers are given understanding and sanctions if not treating laborers or workers in accordance with the rules. So far, although there may have been efforts by the government, it is still considered inadequate, so that the workers in the region do not get legal protection because the workers are employed not recorded and only informal.One of the potential conflicts in this area is the unplanned settlements. This can be seen from the conditions of residential and very limited public facilities such as narrow worship places, very limited public spaces. In relation to the house, on the one hand there is a particular religion community, but there is no facility for worship houses, or there is a particular religion house but the people who use it do not have much of it around. Al-Makshum Mosque on Jalan Karya, where the early protest against the sound of Toa mosque, the location is very narrow. If this explored further is due to lack of spatial plans or may be caused not yet the enforcement of laws or regulations in the midst of society.

The people of Tanjung Balai can be categorized as open to all ethnics and religion communities as long as they are not disturbed and bothered. The people of Tanjung Balai are always open to receive anyone who comes to this town. This has been the community's character for a long time. Long before independence, at the time of Asahan sultanate centered in Tanjung Balai, this area was crowded with people from various regions.
Lately, there are accusations that at the time of Sultan Asahan in power, all immigrants must convert to Islam or become Malayans, that is not true. Even if the Batak tribe people came to this area then converted to Islam and identified themselves as Malayans, it was not because they were forced, but rather due to self awareness or other considerations, such as for immigrants who converted to Islam, they were given free land to work for settlements and land for agriculture and farming. Such Sultan's policies were certainly natural, and are in accordance with the context of the time because the land in the sultanate territory that has not become a private property belongs to the Sultan entirely.The potential conflicts among religion believers other than those mentioned above may be added to several other aspects, (1) the establishment of worship houses; (2) The religion expanding; (3) The foreign aid; (4) The different religion marriage; (5) The celebration related to religions; (6) The defamation of religion, that is an act that is harassing or tarnishing the doctrine and beliefs of a particular religion, whether committed by a person or group of people; (7) The activity of the splinter beliefs, that is the belief of a person or a group of people based on their belief in a particular religion, deviates from that religion. Some of the potential aspects of conflict among religion believers above are inseparable from the journey of interracial relations in Indonesia, especially between Islam and Christianity related to Criticism and Islamization issues. The phenomenon in Tanjung Balai does not describe it. There is no conflict between Islam and Christianity in religion expanding or *da'wah*/mission so far. Or there is no fear of which religious group increases the number of adherents from one religion to another. However, the above factors still need to be cautioned especially related to religion blasphemy.The potential of religious social conflicts at least comes down to four differences; 1. The differences of doctrine and attitude, 2.The differences of ethnics and race, 3. The differences in cultural level, and 4. The problems of majority and minority of religion people. In general, conflicts can arise from the existing models of social interaction, values, religious identity, and structural dominance. In relation to the identity and religion as a source of conflict, as Novri quoted, by using the communal conflict approach on the dimension of primordial conflict views conflict as a result of a shift in the interests of ethnic or religious based group identity. This theory sees that conflict occurs because of the various

cultures, ethnic, racial, geographical encounters.Actually, embedding religion as one of the potential variants of the violence trigger is not easy. This is because religion is regarded as a doctrine that is always associated with teachings laden with values of peace and salvation. Meanwhile in a violent act there are things that can cause damage, destruction and even death. The cool face of religion is very unlikely to be attached to the hot face of violence. But the fact often shows that religion can trigger violence. Religion followers make religions doctrine as the main drive, premium mobile and push factor violence that they do. On the other hand, the reality of tension among religion people is closely related to the factors that are outside the scope of religion. Because of religion is sensitive then everyone leans on behalf of religion. That is a very complicated problem faced by various religions.The issue of religion for the people of Indonesia is so sensitive, so that actual social and political conflicts outside of religion are often drawn to religious areas to gain more support from adherents. Actually, the conflict between religious people is caused by cultural factors, concerning social life, economy, and politics, for example: the conflicts of Ambon, Poso, Sampit, Ciketing, Yasmin, and others. These conflicts are not actually initiated by religion factors, but the economic, social, and legal issues in general. Only then, the perpetrators involve religion to get emotional support or justification from religious groups. In this case, religion is used as an integrative factor for certain religious communities, but it is a divisive factor (disintegrative) between different religious groups. This is, as depicted by Denny J.A, that the culture of Indonesian society is conflictive, reflected from the long history of communal conflict, such as Islam versus Christian conflict, indigenous versus non-indigenous, migrants versus indigenous people.Therefore, there are two things that need to be maintained in a pluralistic society such as Tanjung Balai, that is inequality and justice in the midst of the society diversity. If these two things can be safeguarded, the potential for conflict will not turn into an open conflict. Conversely, if in the midst of a pluralistic society the inequality and unfairness of potential conflicts will easily turn into open conflict.

IV. CONCLUSION

This conflicts, besides sourced from the conflict values, it involves the differences of what the group believes, from minor differences in preferences or opinions to the big differences in ideology or way of life. These conflicts arise over the value of the way or goal achieved. These conflicts are also embedded with economic conflicts and power conflicts as each group wants to optimize influence and control in relation to other groups. Basically this is a domination struggle.

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