

CULTURAL VIOLENCE IN THE ERA OF REFORMATION AND THE POLICY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INDONESIA

Donatus Sermada

STFT Widya Sasana, Malang

Abstract:

Tema yang dipresentasikan penulis dalam simposium (2 – 7 Oktober 2005) di Madang, Papua New Guinea, berisikan tentang kekerasan budaya dalam era reformasi dan kebijakan Gereja Katolik di Indonesia. Kekerasan budaya menyentuh beberapa aspek budaya seperti agama, ideologi dan bahasa. Aspek budaya yang diartikan sebagai ruang simbolis hidup manusia digunakan sebagai alat untuk membenarkan dan melegitimasi kekerasan, baik kekerasan langsung maupun kekerasan struktural. Penulis mengawali uraian ini dengan perlukisan sekilas data-data empiris tentang kerusuhan sosial di Indonesia dalam era reformasi lalu meneliti kaitan kerusuhan itu dengan kekerasan budaya. Beberapa model kekerasan budaya seperti agama, ideologi dan bahasa tampak mencuat di dalam kerusuhan-kerusuhan sosial di Indonesia. Pada bagian terakhir, penulis mengedepankan kebijakan resmi Gereja Katolik di Indonesia ketika berhadapan dengan konflik dan kerusuhan sosial itu serta menggagas pikiran penulis sehubungan dengan kebijakan itu.

Keywords: *Violence, Cultural Violence, Social Riots, Policy of Catholic Church*

In response to the topic suggested by the committee of ASPAMIR III for Symposium held in Madang, Papua New Guinea, on October the 2nd - October the 7th, 2005, about the violence and the mission in Asia-Pacific, I would like to focus on the cultural violence in Indonesia during the era of reformation. The topic I elaborate will be limited to describing some models of cultural violence prevailing in Indonesia, but this elaboration should be accomplished by an analysis about the typology of the violence on the second part of this paper and about the anatomy of the violence depicted in some empirical data of social riots in Indonesia since 1998. On the last part, I will focus on the policy of the Catholic Church in her response on various social violences, including the cultural violence, in Indonesia.

1. The Empirical Data of Social Riots in Indonesia since 1998

The era of reformation was started with the downfall of Suharto's regime on May the 21st, 1998, and this era is still going on up to now under the different leaderships: Habibie, Abdurachman Wahid, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and the present President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The irony which is tormenting this era of reformation is that the liberation experienced by the people from the repressive acts of Suharto's regime towards the acquirement of the healthy democratization is being confronted with the bloody conflicts in Indonesian society until now. Indonesia remains unquiet and unpeaceful; the varieties of the conflicts, the social riots and the blood-sheds are spreading everywhere in the country.

We would like to mention generally some conflicts and social riots during this time in the national level. Since the bloody social riots on May 1998 resulting on the downfall of Suharto the president, the social riot in Ketapang was bursted out on 23 November 1998 and at the end of 1998 it was followed by the outburst of the social riot in Kupang, NTT. In 1999 the conflict between the Moslems and the Christians was flared up in Ambon, Maluku, and it was not settled down yet up to now. In the middle of 1999 the ethnical riots were exploded in Kalimantan: the ethnics Madura against Melayu and Dayak. On January 2000 there was social riot in Mataram, Lombok-island, and at the end of the year 2000, exactly on the eve of the christmasday (24 December 2000), the bombs were exploded in several churches of the big cities in Indonesia (the explosion of a bomb in the catholic church of Mojokerto-city around 30 km away from Malang-city killed one altar-boy and a moslem-churchguard of the Nadlatul Ulama's group). After the devastation of the WTC-buildings in New York and Washington done by the islamic terrorists on 11 September 2001 according to the finding of the american secret agency, Indonesia populated with the moslems as the majority got the serious attention of the american secret agency. Indonesia was, then, considered as the stronghold or the nest of the international terrorists, and this claim has been justified by the explosion of the bomb in Bali on 12 October 2002. Along the year of 2003 the social riots were bursted out in Poso, the Mid-Sulawesi, and it was not settled down well yet. On 5 August 2003 there was bomb-explosion in Hotel Maryot, Jakarta, and the last tragical accident I noted was the bomb-explosion in front of Australian Embassy in Jakarta on 9 September 2004, and the social violences are still going on here and there.

In the local level, a research done by Erlangga-University, Surabaya, has revealed some disputes and social conflicts which have occupied the eastern Jawa during the last five years (1998-2003).¹ From the tabulation

1 Mohammad Adib & Lutfi Agus Salim: *Ketegangan dan Konflik Sosial: Jawa Timur Pasca Bom*

depicted in their paper, there were three fields of conflicts and social riots which frequency was high enough in eastern Jawa. In the first place, the issues of witch-doctors and ninja (49 %) were prevailing every where in eastern Jawa, especially in Kecamatan Ronggojampi in Kabupaten Banyuwangi. It was followed by the incidents of burning down the worship-places like the churches (41.2 %) as taken places in Situbondo, Basuki, Panarukan. The third place was connected with the land-disputes (41.2 %) found in the region of Banongan and Situbondo.

The study of the conflicts and of the social riots either in local level or in national as well as in international level does not only focus on the description of the data, location, and the time the events were emerging. It should also involve an effort to depict generally an anatomy of the social conflicts and social riots which are referring to the identification of three important things, namely the roots of the problems; the factor of accelerator and the trigger.² These three elements are connecting each other; they form a model of analysis we can use to search for every case of social conflicts and riots. The roots of the problems are considered as the main problems which are not solved continuously. Those problems are sharpened by the actual factors accelerating the outburst of the social riots (the factor of accelerator), and on the certain point and on the certain moment when the situation and condition are triggered off by the small and meaningless facts involving the conflicting groups (trigger), the social riots are unavoidably bursted out. Some Indonesian Sociologists have applied the said model of analysis to some cases of the social riots in Kupang, NTT, on 30 November 1998, in Sambas, West-Kalimantan on 17 January 1999, and in Mataram, Lombok, NTB on 17-19 January 2000.

The social riot in Mataram, Lombok, NTB, for example, was started with the performance of Tabliq Akbar (religious rally) done by the Islamic political elites in order to gain the moral and financial support for Muslims' victims because of social violence in Ambon, Maluku. The provocative speech of one Islamic religious leader has excited the spirit of the people around to fight against the Christians. And in a moment those people did the violence; they burnt down the Christian churches and houses, destroyed the public buildings and drove the Christians away. The social riot took two days (17 January-19 January 2000) with the result: 5 people died; 7 were heavily injured and 152 had light injury.

By using the model of analysis mentioned above, some main unsolved problems, the factors of accelerators and the triggers for the social riot in

Bali. In: *Bangsa Yang Berdarah. Jawa Timur dan Potensi Konflik 2004*. Khoirul Rosyadi dkk (ed.). Surabaya: LP3- Jatim Universitas Airlangga, 2003, 374-375.

2 Riza Sihbudi & Moch. Nurhasim (ed.): *Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia. Studi Kasus Kupang, Mataram dan Sambas*. Jakarta: Grasindo, 2001, 1-36.

Mataram have been pointed out.³ Some main unsolved problems are as follows: the unending conflicts between christians and moslems in Ambon, Maluku; the gap of social-economic life between the newcomers and the islamic native inhabitants; the fanaticism of practicing the religious life as well as the agressivity of the certain religion's followers to spread out their religion. The unending conflicts between christians and moslems in Ambon have caused the anger and the disappointment of the moslems in Mataram towards the central government which has undertaken the job very slowly and unsuccesfully to solve the problems, and in the meantime plenty of moslems have been killed in Maluku. The big gap of the social-economic life between the newcomers and the native islamic people still remains unsolved; most of the newcomers are the chinese who are involved in business and have properious life because of their business, whereas most of the native people still remain poor and underdeveloped. The other main problem was the fanaticism of practicing the religious life and the agressivity of the certain religion's followers to spread out their religion. Lombok-island, where Mataram the capital of the province NTB (The province of Nusa Tenggara Barat) lies, is known as "island of thousand mosques" (pulau seribu mesjid). The native people are very strong in their islamic belief, but their islamic atmosphere has been disturbed when the native people witnessed that plenty of christian churches have been built in many strategical places in the midst of the islamic environment.

Those main unsolved problems were, then, sharpened by some factors which have accelerated the outburst of the social violences in Mataram. One of the accelerating factors we have found was the reports of mass-media about the tragedy in Ambon, Maluku. The reports of mass-media were one-sided and provocative, but they played the influential role in forming the opinion of the people so that the situation of hate and of anger was getting higher and more unbearable tension than before. For example, one day before the outburst of social riot on 17 January 2000, there was an head line in the local newspaper (Lombok Post) which has offered a main report about "the slaughter of six thousand moslems in Maluku" (pembantaian terhadap enam ribu muslim di Maluku). It was no wonder that such a report could increase the social tension conducting to the outburst of social riot.

The factors that have accelerated the happening of the social riot in Mataram have been related to the some small and meaningless facts the unavoding outburst of the social riot was triggered off. In Mataram-case, one of the triggers was the presence of a lecturer with nickname "Is" during Tabliq Akbar. He delivered a speech that made the situation turbulent

3 *Ibid*, 101-148.

and noisy, because his speech has really incited the native people to raise against the christians. The other trigger was the threat-letter to the christians. In fact, there was no answer-letter from the church found in the newspaper in responding on the said threat-letter to the christians. In moslems' point of view, no answer-letter meant that the christians did not agree with the performance of the Tabliq Akbar.

2. The Social Riots and The Cultural Violence

We define first a social riot. Social riot is a manifestation of the collective violence; we can say that the social riot is a social violence. The social situation becomes turbulent; the law and order do not function any more, and the people become wild and the social gathering ends up in uproar and violence.

The social riots are directed to some basic human needs.⁴ It means that the social riots bring the impact on the damage or the lost of some basic human needs. The first basic human need is the survival of life. The social riots have the direct impact on human life. People become victims of social riots, either they died or are handicapped physically and mentally. The people lost their material things. The second basic human need is the prosperity of life. The social riots hinder the development of the economic life that helps people to gain the prosperous life. During the time of social riots in Ambon, the whole shopping-places and markets were closed down, and this condition made people difficult to buy food, vegetables, clothes etc., for their basic needs. The third basic human need is the need for the self-identity. The social riots give impact on the destruction of the self-identity. Most of the social riots in Indonesia have connected with the self-identity expressed in a typical word SARA (suku, agama, ras dan golongan= tribe, religion, race and group). The social riots in Maluku have shown up strongly the conflicts between the moslems and the christians. The conflicts in Sambas referred to the ethnic problems among Madura, Melayu and Dayak. The self-identity of the certain followers of the religion or the self-identity of the certain ethnic group has been destroyed and stained by the social riots.

Social riots and cultural violence can be explained in line with the typology of the violence we should identify. Johan Galtung, a german sociolog, has grouppped the social violence in three big types.⁵ The first type is the direct violence; the second is the structural violence and the

4 Johan Galtung: *Kekerasan Budaya*. In: *Teori-teori Kekerasan*. Drs. Thomas Santoso, M.Si (ed.). Jakarta: Penerbit Ghalia Indonesia, 2002, 184.

5 *Ibid*, 183-199.

third is the cultural violence. The social riots belong to all types. It means that in every social riot we are facing the direct, structural and cultural violence. These three types of violence are not separated from each other.

The direct violence is the accident of violence experienced directly on the spot by the people. When a group became wild and tried to attack the other groups by using weapons or other sharp materials, this attacking group did the direct violence. We are reminded of the social riot in Mataram. While the Tabliq Akbar was being performed, a group of people who did not attend the Tabliq Akbar came into a catholic church with force near Makodim and burnt down the church.⁶ Meanwhile, the military was powerless to drive them away. The direct violence appeared in attacking and destructing the basic needs of human being, like burning down the church, beating and killing the people, and plundering. Every social riot is really an essential part of the direct violence.

The structural violence is the violence prevailing in a certain structure, and this violence is not directly experienced, but it is the result of an oppressing structure. The structure of the society or the structure of an institution causes the great damage indirectly to the life of the people. We give an example about HPK (Hak Pengusahaan Hutan= The right to manage the forest) in West-Kalimantan.⁷ The contractors got the license given by the government to manage the forests there. They opened the big plantations on the soil of the local farmers. The labourers of the plantations were recruited from outside and not from the local native people who were the traditional farmers. Such an action did not help the local native people to develop their economic life, whereas the outsiders who were the labourers of the plantations appeared prosperous and worthy in their economic life due to the support of the plantations-management. So, the process of the impoverishment among the native local farmers went on slowly and systematically. Besides the lost of their soil for the big plantations, the local native traditional farmers were not promoted to participate themselves in the plantations-management on their native soil. It was no wonder that farmers' standard of life was getting lower and lower. Such a situation would be the time-bomb that would explode every time in form of social riots, when it was triggered up by the inconvenient and embarrassing attitude of the outsiders against the native local people. The ethnical tension that has exploded into social riots between Dayak and Madura was more or less facilitated by the said factor.

The structural violence happened in the condition of the unbalanced social interaction between the social upper classes called "topdogs"

6 Riza Sihbudi & Moch. Nurhasim (ed.): *Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia...Op.cit.*, 113-122.

7 *Ibid*, 174-179.

(businessmen, political leaders, the influential social group) and the lower social classes called “underdogs” (the masses, proletariat, the oppressed social groups etc.).⁸ The structural violence appeared so clear in form of exploitation, penetration, marginalization, segmentation and fragmentation. Exploitation is a form of structural violence when the human power is being squeezed out without a proper reward. The big businesses have sucked many human powers under the cheap salary for the sake of the big profits earned by the businessmen. Penetration is a form of structural violence in which the political elites in upper classes set up and penetrate their ideals and ideology into the hearts of the other social groups. Tabliq Akbar in Mataram was really a penetration of the islamic political elites to get the financial support for the islamic victims during the social riots in Maluku, and in the same time to strengthen the sentiments of anti-christian expressed by the islamic people in Mataram, Lombok. Marginalization is a form of structural violence in which the social underdogs are being treated so badly and unjustly by the topdogs that the underdogs remain constant outside of the unproper circumstances and get more and more marginalized towards no prosperous life. Segmentation is also a form of structural violence that operates through the treatment of the topdogs by planting the partial knowledge to the social underdogs so that the social underdogs do not know much about the realities of their own life. The underdogs are divided into segments of the social small groups that can be conquered easily. And the fragmentation is also a form of structural violence in which the underdogs are grouped into fractions that are set against one another in order to weaken the power of the underdogs.

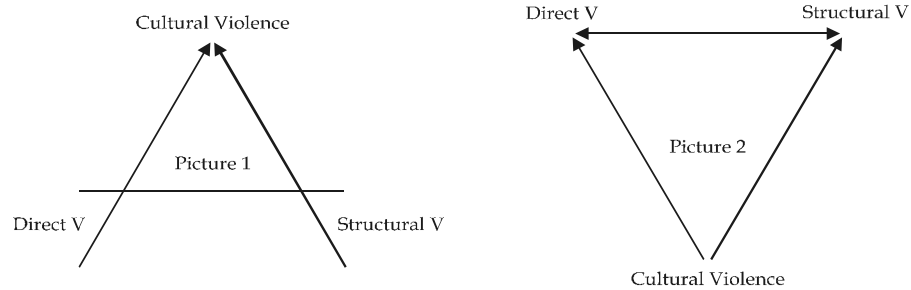
The third type is **the cultural violence**. The cultural violence touches the cultural aspects that are defined as symbolic spaces of the human existence, like religion, ideology and language.⁹ The symbolic spaces can be utilized to justify or to legitimate either the direct violence or the structural violence. We can give an example of cultural violence as appeared during the social riots in Maluku. The symbolic space that was utilized there was the religion. When the social riots were escalated in Maluku between the christians and the moslems, these two groups were very often using the symbolic space of their religion to give spirit of their struggle, even to legitimate their action for war. The islamic fighters called themselves “laskar jihad” (the legion of jihad), whereas the christian fighters “serdadu Kristus” (Christ’s soldiers). The cultural violence makes either the direct violence or the structural violence clearer, more transparant and more understandable. The use of cultural aspects

8 Johan Galtung: *Kekerasan Budaya...Op.cit.*, 184-187.

9 *Ibid*, 190-196.

can sharpen the situation of the conflicts inducing to the explosion of the social riots.

In accordance with our topic, we should answer the question of how to explain the relationship between the social riots and the cultural violence. We have mentioned before that a social riot is the social violence either direct violence or indirect violence in form of structural violence. The relationship between the social riot and the cultural violence can be pictured in a diagram of the simetric triangles.¹⁰ The first simetric triangle takes form of a cone standing with the topside up.

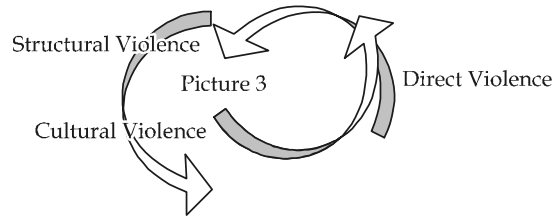


The cultural violence lies on the top of the triangle. Two other angles are applied to direct and structural violence, and two sides that form the top of a triangle show up a process of creating the cultural violence. In this diagram it is clear that the cause of the social violence is not coming from the cultural fields, but from the direct violence as an event or from the structural violence as a process of the social tension moving up and down which has backed up an event towards the creation of a cultural violence. The direct violence which prevailed in the other fields of life with its background of oppression and exploitation found its legitimization and justification on the cultural field. The social riots in Sambas did not start from the cultural problems among Madura, Melayu and Dayak, but from the beating and killing done by the ethnic Madura against Melayu and Dayak.

The second form of simetric triangle is the triangle with the topside down. The cone is formed in an upside down triangle. The cultural violence is in the down side. It means that the direct and structural violence is really backed up by certain cultural aspects that have motivated the outburst of violence. The social riot in Mataram is a clear example. Tabliq Akbar that was the religious performance and rally changed into sudden social riot with the issue of SARA.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 187-190.

But the form of relationship that can picture out the mutual relationship among cultural, direct and structural violence is the diagram of a circle with three arch-lines which do not touch each other (picture 3).



It pictures out that the direct violence can be rooted in structural and cultural violence or it can picture out that the direct violence can lead us into identification of structural and cultural violence. It can be also said that a violence has started with a structural violence. One social group has been in the position of having a great power guaranteed by the social structure. Because of this position, this social group can do arbitrarily against the other social groups. The people of this dominating group find their justification of the actions in their cultural values, and the dominated social groups can find the justifications of their struggle against the dominating group also in their cultural values, and this kind of struggle and conflicts can trigger out the escalation of social violences.

3. Some Models of Cultural Violence in Indonesia

The cultural aspects which are considered as symbolic spaces to justify the social violence either the direct social violence or the structural violence are religion, ideology and language.

These aspects of culture do not stand in a separated way, but relate to one another in producing the influence to the event of violence. We try to describe them separately and to find out their appearance in some cases of violence prevailing in Indonesia.

Religion

The empirical study about religion has revealed that every religion contained the seeds of violence.¹¹ The contents of the doctrines formulated in dogma have from itself the exclusive character. It means that there have been the limiting elements that cause consequently the other ideas and system of belief to be not included. The people who put the doctrines into

11 Achmad Jainuri & Zainuddin Maliki & Syamsul Arifin dkk.: *Terorisme & Fundamentalisme Agama. Sebuah Tafsir Sosial*. Malang: Bayumedia Publishing, 2003, 27-82.

practice form from themselves a social religious group that distinguished itself from the other social religious groups because of the different system of belief. The monotheistic religions like christianity, islam and jewish religion show up a such exclusive character. There is no god except Allah. Allahu Akbar! The doctrines of the religion lead indirectly their followers to do the violence, when they are facing and confronting themselves with the other followers. Amrozi who was the doer of exploding bomb in Bali was sent by the court in Bali into death, and right after the judgement of the court, he cried out with pride: "Allahu Akbar!"

The social riots in Sambas have started with the conflicts and fighting between ethnic Madura and Melayu, but later on these conflicts and fighting went on larger between Madura and Dayak. After a Dayak was killed by the ethnic Madura, the conflicts changed into war between Madura and Dayak. The sentiment basing on the religion spread out. The ethnic Madura identified themselves with Islam, whereas Dayak with christianity and the followers of the native religion. The ethnic Madura considered Dayak as "kafir and easily being cheated", whereas the Dayak considered Madura as "being uncivilized and having no respect on local customs and culture". The religion which ties up closely with its followers becomes then the essential element of the social group's self-identity, and during the time of violence this element is taken out to be instrument of strengthening the self-identity of the religious followers against the other groups.

The social riot in Kupang was escalated also because of the use of the certain religious symbols to legitimate the act of violence.¹² The performance of the mourning-program to commemorate the victims and the sufferings of the christian people during the social violence in Maluku and Ketapang changed suddenly into act of violence by burning down several mosques in Kupang-city. The main highways in the city were blocked up by the christian citizens with coffins, cross in big measurement, and with the picture of Jesus' face wearing the thorny crown on the head. The religion expressed in its symbols is utilized by the people to affirm their self-identity and to give the spirit of doing violence. The same way appeared also in social riot escalating in Mataram. Tabliq Akbar that was performed in form of a religious rally to solicit the financial help for the moslems' victims because of social riots in Maluku before, changed suddenly into the act of violence by burning down several christian churches in Mataram-city and in the surrounding area.

In Indonesia the religion is understood yet as the determinant of the tribal identity. The Dayaks who were converted to Islam were no longer called Dayak, but Melayu. Melayu is identical with Islam; Flores is identi-

12 Riza Sihbudi & Moch. Nurhasim (ed.): *Kerusuhan Sosial di Indonesia...Op.cit.*, 45-56.

cal with Catholic, Bali with Hindu. The native people identify themselves with the religion they have followed. The social violence is easily bursted out, when the certain religion is either abused or used by all means to maintain the self-identity of its followers. The strategy to regulate how to omit such an understanding can only be managed by an effort to produce a wise regulation about the relationship between religion and politics. On the one hand, the religion is used as an instrument to reach the political purpose like some political parties based on Islam in Indonesia, and on the other hand, the politics can be used as an instrument to reach the religious purpose like some political groups which try to uphold the islamic syariat in Indonesia. The social violence in Indonesia is still tied closely with the religion as the determinant of self-identity of the certain social group.

Ideology

Ideology belongs also to one cultural aspect, because it is the product of the human creativity. It is a system of thought that becomes a principle providing the direction and the aim for the life of a society or a nation. Ideology is a must for persevering the continuation of a society or a nation. Indonesia stands on an ideology, namely Pancasila.

The social violence either the direct or indirect violence can be triggered out by an ideology. During the time of apartheid in South-Africa, an ideology that had been developed at that time had claimed that the white race was the clever race chosen by God, whereas the black race was the lazy race cursed by God. The acts of persecuting, beating, forcing and sending into slavery were justified and legitimated by a such ideology. So, an ideology can become an instrument of justifying the act of violence or of legitimating the act of violence. We still remember the tragic event 1965 in Indonesia. The killings of more than two million people blackmailed as comunists were legitimated by an ideology considering the communist-party as the evil and atheistic party as the enemy of America. There were only two ideologies ruling over the world at that time, namely democratic-capitalistic America and social-communistic Sovjet-Union.

During the era of reformation in Indonesia there were two very dangerous ideologies, and the facts have proved that the two ideologies have produced many acts of violence. These two ideologies are the ethnocentric ideology supported by its military wing "premanisme", and the religious ideology.

Premanisme comes from indonesian word "preman" that means civilian, no military group, but it has negative connotation with robbers, the armed group, snatchers, disturbers, rioters etc. Premanisme contains an ethnocentric ideology which followers glorify their clan, tribes or their social group by forming their own military (paramilitary) group in fighting against those who have conflicts with them. This own military group is

paid to do violence for reaching the political purpose. The Indonesian military that should keep peace and security was not trusted any more, because they were siding with the certain conflicting tribes and social groups and were not able to overcome the social riots. An example can be taken out from the social riots in Sambas, West-Kalimantan.¹³ The ethnic Madura is known as the tribe who is acting and working hard, stubborn, having steely heart in behavior. Wherever they go, they are bringing along guns, weapons, knives or the sharp materials. The feelings of their tribalism are so high that they have no respect to the local customs. They have disturbed very often the peaceful situation and violated the public order. When there were people who were riding on the motorcycles passing the village of ethnic Madura, some of the ethnic Madura blocked up the road with the big branch of wood, and when the driver of the motorcycle fell down, some ethnic Madura came and robbed the whole things and materials the driver had. Some of the ethnic Madura were preman people who have organized themselves as the paramilitary group in doing the violence during the time of social conflicts. In every social riot in Indonesia like social riots in Ambon, Poso, Mataram, Kupang etc., there have been preman groups that created also the social riots.

The second dangerous ideology prevailing in Indonesia is the religious ideology which is operated by certain religious groups under the banner of a certain religion. The violence and social riots are also triggered out by the religious ideology. The social riots in Ambon have been ridden by a religious ideology that has aggravated the situation of conflicts becoming clash between Moslems and Christians. The Laskar Jihad that defended Islam in Maluku considered its involvement as a holy war against the Kafir (the pagan groups), whereas the Christians utilized the spirit of the Christian martyrdom to defend the existence of their religion against its enemy.¹⁴ In the national level, the Islamic religious ideology is containing the ideals of establishing the Syariat-Law in Indonesia and of building up an Islamic state in Indonesia. In accordance with the radical Islamic movement in the world, the Islamic religious ideology is being manifested in several international Islamic organizations like Alqaidah and its network Jamaah Islamiyah and Mujahidin which were involved in several violences in Indonesia (bomb-explosions on the Christmas night, social riots in Poso, Ambon, bomb-explosion in Bali, etc.). One modern phenomenon that has shown up the consequence of the implementation of the religious ideology into practical life is suicide-bomb regarded as the way to die as a martyr (*mati syahid*) for the sake of Allah.

13 *Ibid*, 182-186.

14 *Tempo*, Edisi 13-19 Mei 2002: *Untuk Apa Dia Ditangkap?*, 24-33.

Language

Language is one of the cultural aspects utilized also for creating the violence. Language contains the constructive power, but also the destructive power. Language that contains the destructive power can easily excites the emotional reaction of the people which is conducive to violence. In Indonesia there are some expressions of language that have stereotyped and stigmatized conceptions. These two characters of the understanding sharpen also the condition and situation that induce to violence, even they justify the subjective prejudices that strengthen the reason to do violence.

The stereotyped conception means a conceptual insight about the characters of a social group based on the subjective prejudices, and this conceptual insight is really not true. We take an example about the social riots in Kupang. The root of its problems lied on the imbalanced economic life between the newcomers and the local native inhabitants. The newcomers were more advanced and more prosperous in economic life than the native local people. The poverty of the local native people has reached 60% and the stage of the unemployment was so high. The such imbalanced economic life between them has been coloured up by the stereotyped ideas or images that were prevailing among the people, that the local native people were lazy, had less spirit of working hard, had less capability of managing the time, were easy going, acted in short ways (*jalan pintas*) and had no tough attitude, whereas the newcomers were pictured out as those who were stingy, too ambitious and had less capability to mingle with the other people.¹⁵ The stereotyped images have seriously coloured up the social interaction that stood upright very often to the destructive expressions of the language. The ethnic Madura, for example, have stereotyped ideas about the ethnic Melayu and Dayak. They consider the ethnic Melayu as the people who are coward, give up quickly, feel discontented easily, and are easy to be cheated, and the ethnic Dayak are considered as the people who have no prestige, pagan, drunkard and gambler, are easy to be cheated, but they should be feared seriously by the ethnic Madura, because the Dayak can become wild very easily to kill.

The stigmatized conception is connected with the word or the negative idiomatic expression stamped or labelled to a certain person or a certain social group. The islamic hard-lined group have stamped the non-Islam people, specially the christians as the Kafir (pagan) and the unclean (*najis*). During the celebration of Idulfitri and Christmas, it is imposible for the christians to shake hands and to give greetings to the said group. In the social riots in Sambas between Madura and Melayu, the ethnic Melayu came into amuck and burnt down the houses of Madura and killed many Maduras, right after the ethnic Madura had teased and mocked the ethnic

15 Riza Sihbudi & Moch. Nurhasim (ed.): *Kerusuhan Sosial...Op.cit.*, 85-89.

Melayu by saying: “Melayu Tengkyung, Melayu Kerupuk”, that means Melayu the coward!¹⁶ The other example is taken from Bali-event in 2000. The Balinese were coming into amuck, destroying the government’s offices, blocking up the roads and highways, when presidential election voted by the Indonesian parliament between Megawati Sukarnoputri and Kiai Abdurachman Wahid had been won by Abdurachman Wahid instead of Megawati Sukarnoputri who is Balinese in blood. The reason was that before the election the Islamic Kiai have voiced out that a woman as a leader was not in accordance with the Islamic doctrine. Megawati would have been stamped as an unfitting leader.

The certain words or the certain idiomatic expressions are not, of course, the reason of the social riots and violences. But the habits of using the certain negative words or idiomatic expressions with the stereotyped and stigmatized conceptions can have negative impact on creating the sentiment of hate in the social interaction. Those words are really considered as the time-bomb that is ready to be exploded.

4. The Policy of The Catholic Church in Indonesia

The policy of the Catholic Church in Indonesia means the official response of the Catholic Church on the various social riots and violences that have hit the nation during this era of reformation. The official response of the Catholic Church is reflected on the basis of some church-documents like pastoral letters and statement-letters issued by bishop’s conference of Indonesia in regards to some important events in Indonesia. The official response did not touch directly how to react on the cultural violence, but spoke about the guidelines that can give the inspiration of how to develop a culture contra violence, namely an alternative culture promoting culture of life, culture of peace and culture of justice as stated in “Nota Pastoral” (pastoral note) KWI 2004 (KWI: Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia= Bishops’ Conference of Indonesia).

On the first place, we pay attention to three documents, namely *Christmas-message delivered together by PGI and KWI 2002 (Pesan Natal Bersama PGI & KWI 2002)*; *Moral Message entering the holy month Ramadhan 1423 H and entering the Sunday of Advent and Christmas-day 2002*; a document issued by KWI regarding bomb-explosion in Bali. Those three documents showed up the attitude of the Catholic Church to the wounds the Indonesian people have suffered from because of violences, social riots and bomb-explosions, specially bomb-explosion in Bali on 12 October 2002. Together with the other Christian churches united in PGI, the Catholic Church expressed her feelings of pain and sufferings because of all violences, but in the light of

16 *Ibid.*, 152-158.

the christian hope of God as “*Emmanuel*” (God with us), the wounds will be healed and the solidarity of all has increased to recover such a bad situation.¹⁷ The catholic church put an effort to activate the solidarity among indonesian people for creating a culture of peace and of reconsiliation for the sake of the healing from the people’s wounds.

Right before the holy month Ramadhan 1423 H, the catholic church participated in a national movement responding on the national problems, especially on the event of bomb-explosion in Bali. The religious leaders from all religions recognized by the state to exist in Indonesia have proclaimed a message they called “*The Moral Mesage Together*” (*Pesan Moral Bersama*).¹⁸ This mesage contained, among other things, the curse on the event of bombing in Bali, the refusal of religious leaders to put a label of the act of terrorism on the certain religion or on a certain social group, and the urge to the government to act firmly against all forms of radicalism which have impact on the act of violence and endanger the humanity as well as the life of the nation. Besides that, for the catholic people regarding the event of bomb-explosion in Bali, the catholic church expressed the feelings of sadness and sorrow as stated on 13 october 2002.¹⁹ She urged the government to investigate the doers of bombing in Bali, and the most important thing of the statement was an appeal to the catholics not for being provoked by the spirit of disunity, but for looking for the way in order to find the way out of all crisis the nation has suffered from.

The policy of the catholic church as stated in those documents was reaffirmed in the pastoral letter of the easter 2003.²⁰ In the light of the christian faith in Christ’s resurection, the catholics were appealed to have no desperation, but to strive for finding the way to go out from the sufferings caused by the violence. The catholics were called by Him who is Life (John 14,6) and has been resurrected by God to strive for developing the culture of life in this country. The indonesian bishops invited their people to find the way to constitute a form of life in the society that belongs to all of us, and this form of life in the society should be realized by a new consensus to create again the feeling of togetherness as a nation. In the form of togetherness every body should feel secure, free, know how to be responsible and have an ability to develop his/her talents, including the talents of art, culture, spirituality and thought.

17 Spektrum: *Dokumentasi dan Informasi*. No.1 dan 2 Tahun XXXI, 2003. *Pesan Natal Bersama. Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia dan Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia*, 63-66.

18 Pesan Moral Bersama Dalam Memasuki Bulan Suci Ramadhan 1423 H Dan Menjelang Minggu-Minggu Adven Dan Hari Natal 2002. *Ibid.*, 67-69.

19 Pernyataan Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia Sehubungan Dengan Peledakan Bom Bali. *Ibid.*, 71-72.

20 Spektrum: *Dokumentasi dan Informasi KWI*. No.3 dan 4 Tahun XXXI, 2003. *Bangkit Bersama Kristus Untuk Membangun Budaya Hidup Bersama*. Surat Gembala Paskah 2003, 104-107.

An important document that has mirrored up the basic attitude of the catholic church to the national problems up to now is *Nota Pastoral KWI* issued during the yearly meeting of KWI from 1-11 November 2004.²¹ This document contained an elaboration about a national problem that should be tackled and overcome. This problem is the damage of public civilization because of three social diseases that have seduced the nation, namely corruption, violence and destruction of the environment. In order to heal those social diseases, an effort should be made to build up a new culture called “an alternative culture or competing culture (*budaya tandingan*)”. An alternative culture means “a pattern of view and of behavior that should compete against the pattern of view and of behavior that is common in the society”.²² By building up an alternative culture, it is expected that the roots of the social diseases can be successfully overcome, and the nation can reach a so-called “new civilized habitus” (*habitus baru yang beradab*). Habitus is defined as “a cluster of instinct, either individual or collective, which can form the way of feeling, the way of thinking, the way of viewing, the way of understanding, the way of approaching, the way of acting, the way of relating practiced by a person or a group”.²³ To reach up the new civilized habitus, there are three powers that should be regulated and built up effectively, namely keeping up the law that has option to defend the weak and the poor, using money accountably and transparently for the sake of public welfare, and empowering the culture of peace through dialogue, collaboration, consensus and mutual respect.

If we reflect on the policy of the catholic church expressed in some documents we have mentioned in relating to cultural violence, we can say that a such policy has no strong impact on the practical life. The cultural violence is not easy to be overcome. The alternative culture or the competing culture offered by the catholic church in her policy is a noble idea, even the content of this idea is universal, human and surpassing the border of tribes, races, groups and religions, but its influence and impact on the grass-root are not felt, either among the catholics or among the non-catholic people.

Where should we start to revive this idea and how can we put it into practice? We need a strategy according to the author’s view. One fact that can not be denied is that the power of catholic church in national level is

21 Spektrum: *Dokumentasi dan Informasi KWI*. No. 1 Tahun XXXIII, 2005. *Nota Pastoral KWI 2004. Keadaban Publik: Menuju Habitus Baru Bangsa*, 163-177.

22 Budaya Alternatif atau Budaya Tandingan adalah “suatu pola pandang dan perilaku yang menjadi tandingan terhadap pola pandang dan perilaku yang berlaku umum dalam masyarakat”. *Ibid.*, 172.

23 Habitus adalah “gugus insting, baik individual maupun kolektif, yang membentuk cara merasa, cara berpikir, cara melihat, cara memahami, cara mendekati, cara bertindak dan cara berelasi seseorang atau kelompok”. *Ibid.*, 177.

not felt so much, even pinched among the other powers. The burning of the churches, the religious sentiment and the politics done by the others to block the catholic works and activities, and the social diseases like corruption practiced also by some members in the catholic church, have mirrored up the catholic figure which is not so much taken into account. The noble idea about the alternative culture or the competing culture should be supported by *the involvement of the church in the practical politics*. The involvement of the catholic church in the practical politics means the involvement of all catholics, especially the bishops, clergy, priests, monks and nuns responding directly on the certain policy taken by the government or other social groups in whatever fields, e.g. in the field of education and formation, of social economy etc., if the certain policy brings damage to the public welfare, especially damage to the catholic interests. It is not only the task of the lay people.

In collaboration and dialogue with the majority, namely with the Moslems, the church attempts to *plant her influence on the intellectual islamic groups oriented to moderate and liberal attitude*. The influence of the church should focus on the planting of the universal humanistic values and concepts like the culture of peace, the culture of life, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, etc., to those groups. So, those groups can give their direct influences on their fellow-moslems, specially on the radical militant islamic groups so that there will be the possibility of the renewal of the ideology, the renewal of concepts, the renewal of the actions within the own islamic environment. The idea about the alternative culture or the competing culture the church has declared should be socialized and communicated to those moderate, liberal, intellectual islamic groups, if the church would like to succeed to overcome the social diseases the nation is suffering from.

5. Conclusion

We can not deny that the cultural violence prevailing in Indonesia has been the social reality. It is a fact. Some models of cultural violence have been pointed out, namely religion, ideology and language. These fields have been the symbolic space utilized for legitimating or justifying the social violence in Indonesia. The catholic church has given her idea and strategy of how to build up an alternative culture or competing culture that helps indonesian people going out from the social diseases the nation suffers from. The such idea and strategy offered by the catholic church is expected to be put into practice. It needs commitment and education.

*) **Donatus Sermada:**

Master di bidang Filsafat dari Universitas Bonn, Jerman, dan dosen Filsafat Ketuhanan dan Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana, Malang.

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