

INTRA-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN POST-SECTARIAN VIOLENCE: Assessing Sampang Sunni-Shiite Relation in Indonesia

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Abstract: *While there were various studies about Sampang Shiites which explore violence, exclusion, and conflict, the study analyzing intra-religious dialogue initiative and assessing the impact of it in enhancing Sunni-Shiite resolution in post-sectarian violence in Sampang, East Java, remains understudied. For this, I use Reina Neufeldt's framework (2011) on "the theory of change" in interfaith dialogue and employs qualitative inquiry by conducting observation, interview, and documentation. This study argues that the inability of returning Sampang Shiite to their home is in line with insufficiencies of intra-religious dialog initiatives in dealing with Sunni-Shiite antagonism theologically, facilitating reconciliation politically, and intensifying civic engagement culturally to restore social and intersect relation. However, there is a hope of peace from intersecting grassroots reconciliation between the former perpetrators and victims by "The People Peace Charter" that significantly decreased Sunni-Shiite antagonism and segregation.*

Keyword: interfaith dialog, Sunni-Shiite resolution, governments, peace charter, Sampang.

المخلص: على الرغم من وجود العديد من الدراسات حول سامبانج الشيعية التي تستكشف العنف والاستبعاد والنزاع ، فإن الدراسات التي تحلل مبادرات الحوار بين الأعراق وتقييم تأثيرها على تحسين حل السني و الشيعي بعد العنف الطائفي في سامبانج ، جاوة شرق ، لم تدرس. لهذا، استخدم أطر رينا نيوفلد (١١٠٢) عن «نظرية التغيير» في الحوار بين

الأديان وباستخدام نهج نوعي للمراقبة، والمقابلات، والوثائق. وترى هذه الدراسة أن العقبات سامبانغ الشيعة يعود إلى قريتهم وفقا لمبادرة الحوار قيود بين الاديان في تعامل العداء بين السني والشيوعي لاهوتيا، وتسهيل المصالحة السياسية وبناء السلام وتكثيف لاستعادة الربط بين طائفة الاجتماعي. ومع ذلك، هناك توقعات المصالحة الشعبية بين الجنة والضحايا السابقين ب «ميثاق السلام للشعوب» التي تعيد التفرقة والعداء بين السنة والشيعة.

Abstrak: *Meskipun ada berbagai studi tentang Syiah Sampang yang mengeksplorasi kekerasan, eksklusif, dan konflik, studi yang menganalisis inisiatif dialog antar-sekte dan menilai dampaknya dalam meningkatkan resolusi Sunni-Syiah pasca kekerasan sektarian di Sampang, Jawa Timur, masih belum dikaji. Untuk ini, saya menggunakan kerangka kerja Reina Neufeldt (2011) tentang “teori perubahan” dalam dialog antaragama dan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Studi ini berargumen bahwa kendala mengembalikan Syiah Sampang ke kampung halaman mereka sejalan dengan keterbatasan inisiatif dialog intrareligious dalam menangani antagonisme Sunni-Syiah secara teologis, memfasilitasi rekonsiliasi secara politis, dan mengintensifkan bina-damai secara kultural untuk mengembalikan pertalian antar-sekte. Namun, ada harapan dari rekonsiliasi akar-rumput antara para mantan pelaku dan korban dengan “Piagam Perdamaian Rakyat” yang secara signifikan mengurangi segregasi dan antagonisme Sunni-Syiah.*

INTRODUCTION

It has been about six years since the displacement of the Shiite community in Puspa Agro flat (refugee-like camp), Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, but their right as internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return to their homes in Sampang, East Java, remains unfulfilled. Around 335 inhabitants are still excluded from their own home and live in the flat since forced to follow relocation in 2013 after communal sectarian violence causing one person killed by sickle, 10 injured critically, dozens of people injured, and 48 houses burnt by

the masses.¹ While there were various studies about Sampang Shiites which explore violence, conflict resolution, and social resilience,² the study analyzing intra-religious dialogue initiative and assessing the impact of it in enhancing Sunni-Shiite relation in the post-sectarian violence remains understudied.

Researchers on the Sampang case have been inclined to argue that the theological dynamics of Sunnis and Shiites are not the main factors of the conflict and are only used by certain religious and political entrepreneurs. Afdillah revealed that behind the Sunni-Shiite conflict, there was a complexity of conflicting factors, such as the internal feuds of two religious leaders who are brothers (Rois Al-Hukama and Tajul Muluk), social conflict between Tajul Muluk and the local religious leaders (*kiai*), changed Islamic traditions, and economic conflicts in preaching.³ Ahnaf and Afdillah also asserted that the anti-Shiite narratives were made into political commodities for political election by entrepreneurs of conflict that caused the escalation of the conflict.⁴ Pamungkas also appreciated the attempt to escape from theological approach that is too sensitive in Sampang, to cultural approach by using local wisdom and cultural authorities for the possibility of reconciliation.⁵

However, overlooking the theological dimension and the alarming anti-Shiite discourse in the regional and national level without the

¹ Semendawai, et.al., 'Laporan Tim Temuan Rekomendasi (TTR) tentang Penyerangan terhadap Penganut Syiah di Sampang' (The Cooperation of Komnas HAM, Komnas Perempuan, KPA and LPSK, 2013), 5.

² Some well-known studies discussing these issues, i.e.: Rizal Panggabean and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, *Policing Religious Conflict in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi, 2015). Muhammad Afdillah, *Dari Masjid ke Panggung Politik: Melacak Akar-akar Kekerasan Agama Antara Komunitas Sunni dan Syiah di Sampang, Jawa Timur* (Yogyakarta: CRCS UGM, 2016). Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf et al., 'Politik Lokal dan Konflik Keagamaan: Pilkada dan Struktur Kesempatan Politik dalam Konflik Keagamaan di Sampang, Bekasi, dan Kupang', in *Pilkada dan Kekerasan Anti-Syiah di Sampang* (Yogyakarta: CRCS UGM, 2015). Cahyo Pamungkas, *Mereka Yang Terusir: Studi tentang Ketahanan Sosial Pengungsi Ahmadiyah dan Syiah di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2017).

³ Afdillah, *Dari Masjid ke Panggung Politik: Melacak Akar-akar Kekerasan Agama Antara Komunitas Sunni dan Syiah di Sampang, Jawa Timur*.

⁴ Ahnaf et al., 'Politik Lokal dan Konflik Keagamaan: Pilkada dan Struktur Kesempatan Politik dalam Konflik Keagamaan di Sampang, Bekasi, dan Kupang'.

⁵ Cahyo Pamungkas, 'Mencari Bentuk Rekonsiliasi Intra-Agama: Analisis terhadap Pengungsi Syiah Sampang dan Ahmadiyah Mataram', *Episteme* 13 (2018).

infrastructure of interfaith dialogue is also problematic. Many elites and intolerant groups, who reject the repatriation of Sampang Shiites to their villages, utilized theological arguments and blasphemy law legitimacy. The regional and national governments have less will to enforce religious freedom and bridge mutual recognition because of the strong religious authority in Sampang that used the anti-Shiite theological narratives. Even though many communities live relatively safely, side by side with the Shiites elsewhere, such as in Jepara, Balikpapan, and Kendari, but if the authorities do not mediate well Sunni-Shiite antagonism, it will have the potential to bring exclusion and discrimination, such as what happened continuously in Sampang.⁶ Moreover, the narratives about Shiite as heretical sect continue to be campaigned by anti-Shiite organizations such as the National Anti-Shiite Alliance (Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah, ANAS) at the national level and al-Bayyinah at the regional level of East Java.

This study argues that the inability of repatriating Sampang Shiites to their home is in line with insufficiencies of intra-religious dialog initiatives in dealing with Sunni-Shiite antagonism theologically, facilitating reconciliation politically, and intensifying civic engagement culturally. Rather than emphasizing particular dimension, as the complex landscape of the sectarian conflict, this study uses Reina Neufeldt's framework of "the theory of change" in interfaith dialogue addressing three basic orientations regarding how change occurs through dialogue emerge: theological, political, and peacebuilding. As she points out, "Interfaith dialogue efforts emerging from these respective areas of scholarship demonstrate divergent views of the intersection of politics, religion, and conflict and generate very different formats as well as expectations of outcomes."⁷ Because of its wide scope of the assessment (theological, political, and peacebuilding), this study places interfaith dialogue in wide meaning to open the door of peaceful interfaith interaction as wide

⁶ For knowing related stories of discrimination experienced and self-written Tajul Muluk and its community with the flow of theological-based exclusion in the period before and when the attack, see Center for Marginalized Communities Studies, Akhol Firdaus, *Quod Revelatum: Pledoi Ust. Tajul Muluk Demi Mengungkap Kebohongan Fakta* (Surabaya: Kontrass, 2013).

⁷ Reina Neufeldt, 'Interfaith Dialogue: Assessing Theories of Change', *Peace & Change* 36, no. 3 (July 2011).

as possible;⁸ not only dialogue in head (the understanding), but also dialogue in hand (the act), dialogue in heart (the spiritual dimension), and dialogue in holy (the integrating harmonious human).⁹

GODLY NATIONALISM IN INTRA-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE ROOM

In the theological level, this study reflects an intra-religious dialogue program representing the development of Sunni-Shiite relation and the complexity of the conflict. The complexity especially relates to the national discourse of defamation of religion and local narration of ‘cultural and religious injury’ felt of Madurese religious authorities. The dialogue program was held by the Center of Social and Democracy Studies (Pusat Studi Sosial dan Demokrasi), youth-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Sampang regency, on 24 October 2016. The dialog was crucial after around one-year absence of such dialogue involving various local parties after the transition of power of Ministry of Religious Affair that leads the reconciliation process. I attended this dialogue by following my friend, an activist of Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) Indonesia who cooperated with the Center of Social and Democracy Studies in holding the dialogue. Various prominent stakeholders in Sampang attended in the dialogue, such as from regional Ministry of Religious Affair, National Unity and Politics Board of regional government, Division of Preaching and Legal Aid of Nahdlatul Ulama, Preaching Council of Muhammadiyah, Military District, Police, Regional Research Council, regional Social Ministry, Nahdhatun Nisa’ Center (one of woman wing of Nahdlatul Ulama), scholars from local universities, NGOs, Medias, and university-based youth organizations. Yet, the main actors of the conflict, namely Shiites and Sunni leaders, were not invented because of the highly sensitive situation. The direct engagement of Sunni-Shiite will be discussed in the next section.

⁸ J.B. Banawiratma, ‘Apa Itu Dialog?’, in *Dialog Antarumat Beragama*, ed. J.B. Banawiratma and Zainal Abidin Bagir (Yogyakarta: Mizan and CRCS, 2009), 7. Banawiratma mentioned eight moments of interreligious dialog, i.e. dialogue of live, social analysis and contextual ethical reflection, interfaith dialogue with faith sharing in experience level, interfaith dialogue with theology, dialogue of action, and intrareligious dialogue. Banawiratma, 8.

⁹ Leonard Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding* (New York: Palgrave, 2014), 67–68.

The name of the interreligious dialogue program was “The Relax Conversation of Peace” (*Cangkruan Perdamaian*), with the topic “Recognizing Diversity, Knitting Peace” (*Mengenal Perbedaan, Merajut Perdamaian*). The topic was designed to be general in the term “Diversity” and “Peace” to anticipate suspicion from stakeholders, yet the content of the dialogue was predominantly about Sunni-Shiite gap, because the ‘religious’ conflict in Sampang was only it. The moderator also strategically did not lead participants to involve in the issue of Sampang Shiite and showed neutral stance. Interestingly, the moderator guided the dialogue with the fun atmosphere by expressing various jokes and when some participants raised the sensitive issues relating to Shiite refugees and challenged the religious and political authorities, he could situate the dialogue climate in a friendly way.

Regarding interfaith dialogue process, Reina Neufeldt divided three levels of theological dimension in her theory of change, namely (1) understanding (sensitive awareness of other’s own perspective of his or her religion); (2) mutual respect (the development of relationship toward religious others); and (3) active theology (requires mutual enrichment in friendship atmosphere in pursuing “Ultimate Reality”).¹⁰ The dialogue in Sampang might stimulate the first level of change: understanding. Yet, it still represented the attitude of limited hospitality toward Shiites. It could be diagnosed from some contents in the dialogue showing argument legitimating disrespect and even exclusion toward Sampang Shiites. In the early section of the dialogue, Syarifuddin, a representative of the Division of Preaching of Nahdlatul Ulama of Sampang explained that the meaning of Islam is closely related to peace. He believed that the socio-cultural and religious difference is *fitrah* (the given) and *rahmah* (a compassion) from God. According to him, the level one’s faith is also measured from the horizontal relationship by ‘prioritizing safety and peace to others’, especially in Indonesia which has the basic principle of the nation “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity) which *syuhada’* (the martyrs’) and *ulama’* (Islamic scholars) joined the struggle for independence and preserved the principle.

Syarifuddin had a peaceful and tolerant theological perspective and civic nationalism. However, there was an exception: “the limitation of peace and tolerance”. It could not be reconciled and

¹⁰ Neufeldt, ‘Interfaith Dialogue: Assessing Theories of Change’.

tolerant if it was deviant and there was defamation of the ideology of nationality and the Islamic faith. When it happened, he stated that state should be assertive. This according to him must be solved by a legal process based on the Law of Defamation of Religion. The judge, the prosecutor, the police, the security, and the government had the obligation to intervene. If it is deemed unfinished or there is a slowdown, then according to him, the mass demonstration deserves to be launched, but not anarchy. He emphasized that the legal approach must be forced. Yet, if this approach cannot be done, the communication among stakeholders is needed.

The ambivalent attitude of the local NU representative, recognizing the diversity of religions in Indonesia yet limiting tolerance toward Sampang Shiites as the heretics, was parallel to what Jeremy Menchick called communal tolerance. On one side, it included several different groups such as the recognition of the six official religions in Indonesia, but on the other sides, it excluded other religious minorities assumed as the heretics.¹¹ The exclusion of the alleged heterodox groups, like Sampang Shiite, had been based on godly nationalism as “an imagined community bound by a common, orthodox theism and mobilized through the state in cooperation with the religious organization in society.”¹² In the rhetoric of the NU representative, it could be read the memory of the Godly struggle against colonialism by religious leaders and their followers that influenced the achievement of independence and the formation of the Indonesian state. Menchick recognized the character of communal-majoritarian tolerance in Indonesia, like in Sampang. Therefore, a liberal approach that emphasizes the individual liberty does not work in Indonesia, partly because of the institutionalization of godly nationalism. Menchick revealed that tolerance in Indonesia has limits based on religious virtues of belief in God and is in line with the tendency toward national unity. This made the struggle of bridging interfaith dialog and engagement had a big challenge in the context of post-colonial state like Indonesia where communal values and religious morality had a pivotal role in influencing public life, especially in the grass root level.

¹¹ Jeremy Menchick, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism* (Caambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹² Menchick, 92.

In the similar tone, Rudi, the head of National Unity and Politics Board in Sampang, legitimated the argument of the limited tolerance. He revealed that the minority would have no problem as long as they were able to keep the values. The life philosophy of the Madurese, “*Bhuppa’-Bhabbhu-Ghuru-Rato*” required excessive submission and obedience to *kiai* beyond the obedience to the government. According to Rudi, *kiai* is an informal leader. The moral values implanted by the *kiai* according to him must be kept and cared for. If the “local wisdom” is violated, the conflict arises (*tengkar*). Fahrul, the head of the Legal Aid Institute of Nahdlatul Ulama in Sampang supported the view by believing there was a conflict of norms between the universalism of human rights and cultural relativism in the Sampang case. He related the conflict to *forum externum* in international law, namely the issue of manifestation of religious expression and model of preaching method that could be limited by the state because it was considered to endanger public order. Assuming that the activists overestimated the universality of human rights, his perspective encouraged the need to look for a middle ground, so as not to blame Nahdlatul Ulama and the religious leaders, which according to this perspective were not wrong because of having value. Human rights activists who come to Sampang were considered to lack of ‘local approaches’. Sampang people were believed to have values that must be obeyed, a kind of “Madura values”, like Asian values in the human right debate.

In the Sampang case, beside the culturalist view, there was a rigid sectarian insight against Shiite Muslims who become minorities who are often considered opposition to national ideology, not part of Indonesian Islamic identity, the foreigner, and heretics. This perspective was guarded by intolerant *kiais*, political elites, and anti-Shiite organizations with various interests. They insisted that there were only two options, relocation or declaration of repentance by converting Shiite to Sunni since Sampang Shiite was considered to have different beliefs and defame Islam. Accusing Sampang Shiites doing apostasy, Ali Kharar Sinhaji, a *kiai* elite who led the rejection of Sampang Shiites, explained that his side had prepared a pledge of 10 statements of Sampang Shiites repentance, when he was visited by the Minister of Religion, Lukman Hakim Syaefudin on August 5, 2014:

1. Declaring Islamic creed.

2. Stating that the true religion is Islam delivered by Prophet Muhammad and spread by the Companions, including *Khulafa' al-Rashidin* and passed by the generation of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* ulama.
3. Stating that the holy book of the Qur'an which is in the hands of Muslims and is also read as a guide since the days of the Companions until the Day of Judgment is genuine and never experienced any change or replacement.
4. Believing the Companions of the Prophets are God's chosen and blessed people.
5. Believing the legitimate Islamic leaders after the Prophet is *khalifatu rasulillah* Abu Bakr, then Umar bin al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib.
6. Siti Aisyah, Siti Hafahoh and all the wives of the Prophets are the chosen women of God and sanctified by God from the great sins.
7. That the flow that is professed and taught by Tajul Muluk and his relatives are heresy and misleading.
8. That the East Java MUI fatwa on Shiite apostasy is true and we fully support it.
9. That our book of Shiite references such as *al-Kafi* by al-Kulaini and others is false and misleading.
10. Consciously I returned to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* schools and acknowledged the nine pledges I had mentioned above, witnessed by Allah and the Messenger of Allah, Islamic scholars, public figures, and government officials present at this pledge (emphasis from the author).¹³

That misrecognition and disrespect of Sampang Shias' identity are problematic because Ahlul Bait Indonesia (ABI), one of the largest recognized Shia organizations in Indonesia, stated that Shias of Sampang share common beliefs with them. ABI and the Universal Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHU) have actively advocated the fulfillment of basic rights and repatriation of Shia refugees. Unfortunately, as explained in the next section, the main norms were not present in the state-sponsored resolution and reconciliation in the Sampang case, namely the achievement of mutual respect and recognition requiring intersubjective and reciprocal acknowledgment

¹³ 'Catatan Perjalanan Menag, Sebuah Upaya Rekonsiliasi Kasus Syiah Sampang', *Direktoral Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, Bimasislam.Kemenag.go.id*, 2014.

of each dignity and identity which is the fundamental property of what it means to be a human.¹⁴

POLITICAL-STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES AND GRASS ROOT INTRARELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

This section discusses the political and peacebuilding dimensions in bridging the divided brothers of Sampang Sunnis and Shiites. Both interrelated dimensions show the dynamics of intrareligious initiative and socio-political context of the conflict. In fact, progressive initiative had been more conducted by grass root agency than the state actors intervention that actually perpetuated the conflict without any providence of equal state-sponsored intrareligious dialogue. The state actors tended to be more accommodative to the aspiration of religious leaders that had anti-Shia bias and contributed to manufacturing polarization. Ideally, in producing coexistence, the legitimacy of resolution, and alternative reconciliation, a political approach is highly crucial with the cooperation of religious authorities to change the opinion of their constituency toward broad-based change relationally and structurally.¹⁵ This is especially imperative for transforming the religious adherents and political elites' attitude toward religious others. While the relational and structural change that should be mediated by the state have been being missed in Sampang case, there has been a hope built by grass root agency. This peacebuilding approach of interfaith dialogue significantly eliminated the stereotype and dehumanization of Sampang Shiites, stimulated the participation of people building peace, and provide safe space and a balance of power for civic engagement.¹⁶

At the grassroots level, the progress of reconciliation was demonstrated by the realization of "The People's Peace Charter" (*Piagam Perdamaian Rakyat*) between the former perpetrators and victims on September 23, 2013, at around 16.00 WIB, located at Puspa Agro Sidoarjo. About 50 villagers of Blu'uren and Karang Gayam, Sampang, visited, apologized, and asked to reconcile with the

¹⁴ Ernesto Verdeja, 'The Element of Political Reconciliation', in *Theorizing Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Agonism, Restitution, and Repair*, ed. Alexander Keller Hirsch (New York: Routledge, 2012), 331–332.

¹⁵ Neufeldt, 'Interfaith Dialogue: Assessing Theories of Change', 354–356.

¹⁶ Neufeldt, 358–59.

Shiite community in the refugee-like camp. In the declaration, both sides stated that they were tired of the conflict. They were committed to build peace and respect their respective beliefs while upholding the culture, traditions, and local wisdom. The reconciled parties determined to bury a grudge and wanted to return to live in harmony as brothers, relatives, and neighbors.¹⁷

The People's Peace Charter

(From the villagers of Blu'uren Village, Karang Penang District and the villagers of Karang Gayam Village, Omben District)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

God will help believer as he helps his brother (Hadits).

We are the undersigned of the citizens of the villagers of Blu'uren Village, Karang Penang District and the villagers of Karang Gayam District Omben stated the following:

1. We as ordinary people who are conscious and very concerned after visiting, knowing, and seeing firsthand the situation of our brothers who are in Puspa Agro refugee camp, Jemundo, Sidoarjo.
2. We will throw away hostilities. Among us, there are still fraternal bonds of fellow Muslims. In addition, there is a familial bond that is very close to the refugee residents in Puspa Agro Jemundo, Sidoarjo flats.
3. We as citizens of society already feel bored with hostility and we are ready to reconcile and live side by side mutual respect-respectful of loving in accordance with what our noble lord of the Prophet Muhammad Saw.
4. We sincerely hope to be mutually false and not to blame, blaspheme, harass, and together to preach and uphold the truth.
5. We are aware that violence is not the way to solve problems. Therefore, if in the future there is a problem, we are ready to settle by way of familial deliberation.¹⁸

Initially, at the first meeting, Sampang residents who would participate in the grass root reconciliation still put suspicions on Shiite refugees. They had hesitated in the rest of trip from Sampang to Sidoarjo regency. They were afraid and had the prejudice that the

¹⁷ Nur Tamam, 'Mengapa Islah Sampang (Tidak) Perlu Didukung?', *Press Release, Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Universalia*, 2013.

¹⁸ 'Piagam Perdamaian Rakyat' (Ahlul Bait Indonesia, Jakarta 2013).

displaced Shiite refugees would take revenge and attack them when they arrived in refugee-like camp. This hesitation made them stop for about two hours. Shiite refugees waited and wondered. They were tricky. One car of three cars first run to the refugee camp and the rest, groups of two cars, waited around the refugee-like camp in a defensive way, if anything happened. When they came, they realized that their prejudices were wrong.¹⁹

Participants were mindful of formulating the peacekeeping charter themselves. The more dilute the process of decay of the problem, each group introspected prejudices, such the stigma that the Shiite refugees will be revenge. From these meetings, there was a greater interaction of “mutual forgiveness”. They were looking for ways to repatriate the internally displaced people. Participants wanted to live in harmony and peace in a sustainable manner based on a strong bond according to the principle of *Tretan Dibik* (Madurese brotherhood), *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (unity of fellow Muslims), and family ties that in fact most of the conflicting parties came from the same relatives and origin. One of the participants was Zainul, a 30-year-old farmer. He was so sorry to attack the Sampang Shiite community in 2012 which actually took the victim of his own adoptive father, Hamamah, who was killed by the mass. He embraced his adoptive mother who was often called by her husband’s name: mother Hamamah. Some people who watched were also crying.

The attackers were disappointed because there was no assistance from the provocative parties of sectarian violence. Some of the attackers were injured and some were imprisoned. They were also aware that their attack was not related to Sunni-Shiite relations, but rather because of certain interests. The conflict they realized has distanced them from their own brothers, the outcast refugees. These groups were supported by Institute for the Unity of Muslim Communities (Lembaga Persatuan Umat Islam, LPU), Pamekasan, which has the initiative to assist reconciliation. In the post-sectarian violence, citizens in their hometown began to realize that they were victims of slander that caused the breakdown of relations between families and relatives due to conflict nuanced with Sunni-Shiite identity.²⁰

¹⁹ Hertaning Ichlas, Interview The chief of YLBHU, 15 November 2016.

²⁰ Tamam, ‘Mengapa Islah Sampang (Tidak) Perlu Didukung?’ Ichlas, Interview The chief of YLBHU.

After the grass root intersects dialogue and reconciliation initiative, the participants tried to convince the other residents in their hometown. There were also their neighbors who refused, although relatively more citizens agreed to the repatriation of displaced Shiites. Even Mat Safi, a Madurese civilian (*preman*), who was one of the principals who led the attack on Shiite Sampang in 2012, was so keen to encourage this reintegration process.²¹ These peace process agencies have found difficult to expect follow-up from the government. According to Nur Tamam, a chairman of LPUI and *kiai* of Al Hamidi Islamic Boarding School, Pamekasan, who participated to facilitate the intersect engagement. He said that if the government committed to support the initiative sincerely, many villagers were actually ready to attend the intersect reintegration and even to repatriate refugees.²²

Unfortunately, the positively-constructed and participatory intersect engagement were delegitimized by elite forces. During and after the reconciliation there was a disturbance to the group. The Setara Institute reported that the accessibility of the Sunni group to the refugee camp was limited by some who are trying to threaten and thwart this movement, even by claiming to have ordered from the Police Sector. In addition, the intolerant group intercepted the signatories of the charter so as not to infiltrate the refugees and the mobilizers of the engaged reconciliation were brought to the intolerant *kiai* to cancel the signatures in the peace charter.²³ Surya Dharma Ali, Minister of Religious Affairs at the time, questioned the reconciliation because it was considered not to involve the local government and Islamic scholars.²⁴ In fact, the former perpetrators realized that the requirement of repentance proposed by the religious-social elite was not negotiable and the government was reluctant to act in affirmation of recognition. They finally initiated the reconciliation in the frustrating deadlock.

The Shia refugees often questioned the promise of the government, since the period of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) who promised that he would lead directly the reconciliation and

²¹ Ichlas, Interview The chief of YLBHU.

²² Tamam, 'Mengapa Islah Sampang (Tidak) Perlu Didukung?'

²³ Halili and Bonar Tigor Naipospos, *Stagnasi Kebebasan Beragama: Laporan Kondisi Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia Tahun 2013* (Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2014), 153.

²⁴ Halili and Naipospos, 154.

would repatriate Sampang Shiites to their villages. The Religious Minister, Surya Dharma Ali, obtained the presidential mandate, tended to localize the Sampang conflict and provided a portion of the conflict resolution control to the regional clerics and government. The initiation emerged in placing the displaced Shiites to Hajj Dormitory, Pondok Gede, East Jakarta to “equate perceptions” with the clergy and training the insights of living in harmony before their homes were rebuilt.²⁵ According to Surya Dharma Ali, the *kiais* understood better the culture and the characteristics of the Sampang community and should be given more room for controlling reconciliation and dialog at the local level.²⁶ Although every citizen, according to him, has the right to stay anywhere and security right, if it is collides with reality in Sampang, the right is difficult to implement.²⁷ With the “perception equation”, Surya Dharma Ali hoped a dialogue process that leads to the same understanding. Nevertheless, he seemed just replacing the word “repentance” (*pertaubatan*) by more subtle words such as “enlightenment” and “perceptual equations”. He did not regard the Sampang conflict as a Sunni and Shiites conflict that exists in Islam, but was a problem of “blasphemy.” “It is a matter of blasphemy. Please do not clash Shiite-Sunni. Madurese Islamic scholars conduct studies. Then it is tied again with the agreement of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) of East Java,” he said.²⁸

INTEGRATING THEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING APPROACHES

The hope of the grassroots intersects engagement above unfortunately encountered a tough wall of non-compromise at the oppositional elite level. The figures who mobilize anti-Shiite movements set the prerequisite of “repentance” for reconciliation. Unfortunately, the next Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifudin actually surrendered the affairs to the local government. “This problem (of Shiite refugees) is more handled by the provincial and local governments,

²⁵ Ananda Badudu, ‘Wawancara Menteri Agama Soal Syiah di Sampang’, *Tempo*, 27 July 2013.

²⁶ Badudu.

²⁷ Badudu.

²⁸ Badudu.

we are continuing to coordinate,” he said on March 18, 2017.²⁹ This disappointed the internally displaced people who patiently waited in six years since the initial attack because they have been convinced that the government will be able to solve the problem. Previously, in 2014, Lukman came to the Shiite Sampang refugee camp in Jemundo Sidoarjo after meeting with *kiais* and stakeholders in Sampang District. According to Tajul Muluk’s explanation, he had said that he was optimistic that internally displaced people could return home. Tajul quoted Lukman as saying: “I personally can say I am optimistic to solve this problem because there is a strong desire of refugees to go home. I am sad if refugees are pessimistic to get home.” Tajul explained that Lukman also promised to make roadmap completion case of Shiite Sampang. According to Tajul, until re-elected as Minister of Religious Affairs in the government cabinet of Jokowi-JK regime, there has been no serious effort to solve problems that he and his community face.³⁰ Meanwhile, at the national government level, the handling of the Sampang case tends to still end from meeting to meeting. There has been a meeting or coordination meeting hundreds of times, at the central government level related to the Sampang case, but no clear schemes related to the return of Shiite Muslim Sampang.

However, at the grassroots level, many local clerics were well-mannered and compassionate to Shiites albeit they were *kiais* that had a small influence in the socio-political sphere. According to Irfan, an activist of Kontras Surabaya, they stood as ‘little candles’ under the great *kiais* controlling large *pesantren* and the government.³¹ Local *kiai* groups tended to have the same hope for refugees to return to Sunni belief and believe that the Shiite is on the wrong path, but were with a different path of putting humanity forward. This meant that there was the strong capital for building coexistence between Sunnis and Shiite in Sampang. Those *kiais* have been silent, because when

²⁹ Achmad Faizal, ‘Tak Punya Solusi, Menag Pasrahkan Nasib Pengungsi Syiah ke Pemda’, *Kompas.com*, 18 March 2017.

³⁰ Tajul Muluk, ‘Lima Tahun Terusir dari Kampung Sendiri’, *Press Release, AMAN Indonesia*, April 2017.

³¹ ‘Notulensi Lokakarya Perlindungan Minoritas di Indonesia: Menemukan Solusi Kasus Syiah Sampang’ (The Notes of Seminar on Minority Protection in Indonesia: Finding Solution Shiite’s Case in Sampang, Universitas Airlangga Surabaya, 2016).

declaring support or receiving, they are afraid of being attacked unless they are supported by the government.³²

The effort of providing the infrastructure for intersects dialogue and reconciliation that emphasizes the respect of each identity of each party deserves to be the orientation of the struggle. It needs interfaith and inter interest dialogue that is large enough openly and equal. In the dialogue program mentioned early, Rudi, the head of National Unity and Politics Board in Sampang, suggested the similar direction of reconciliation. According to him, the reconciliation and repatriation of the refugees will be successful if the state actors can facilitate: (1) the two sides of major leaders of Sampang *kiai* and the Sampang Shiite to be reconciled; (2) a consistent cooperation among local, regional and national governments. Rudi pointed out that Sampang regency government cannot work alone.

Intra-religious dialogue initiative in Sampang can take into account the local cultural capital to bridge sectarian differences passionately. The engagement with cultural devices makes reconciliation among grass root level more possible, like *pela* (kinship tradition) as a cultural vehicle to form Mollucan theology of Muslim-Christian dialogue combined with oral history and tradition as the living text.³³ In Sampang, there is actually the cultural capital deeply rooted in Madurese cultures, like the well-known shared ethnic identity of Madura, one of the strong tribal solidarities in East Java, which committed highly to a powerful cultural catchword “*Tretan Dibik*” which means “all of us are brothers”. Beside of that sense of brotherhood, like the most rural area in Java, most of the people in Blu’uren and Karang Gayam in Sampang have family ties, including Shiites and Sunnis. Some month after relocation to refugee flat, Shiites received remittance from their family in Sampang that followed mob stream evicting them.³⁴ In addition, both sectarian groups also had common religious-cultural spaces, especially when they gathered together for Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic tradition of every Thursday in the afternoon, like *tahlilan*, *yasinan*, and *shalawatan* (weekly

³² ‘Notulensi Lokakarya Perlindungan Minoritas di Indonesia: Menemukan Solusi Kasus Syiah Sampang’.

³³ Izak Lattu, ‘Culture and Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Moluccas, Indonesia’, *Interreligious Insight: Journal of Dialogue and Engagement* 11 (2011).

³⁴ Bayu, Interview a guardian of refugee flat, 1 December 2015.

reciting some chapters of Qur'an, praising Prophet Muhammad, and praying together). Most of Madurese people were extreme, fanatical members of NU, as the biggest Islamic organization of Indonesia. NU becoming like 'religion' in Madura was a shared umbrella for Shiites and Sunnis to blur the difference. Yet, the emergence of anti-Shiite narrative in various preaching and publication sharpened the binary opposition and caused the segregation. "We as Madurese *Kiai* had highly strong 'Sunni-ness'. Our rituals were equally the same since a long time ago as usual until 2006. A new situation arose in 2007-2008 when *Risalah Mujahidin* and *Sidogiri Bulletin* (anti-Shiite, faith-based media) entered the village and caused the tension. In the past, we just know that Islam was NU. Just that. "NU was like religion", Iklil al-Milal, a Shiite refuges coordinator, said.³⁵

More professional management of intra-religious dialogue is needed. It can be with the participation of higher education institutions in disseminating interfaith understanding like sensitive issues of Sunni-Shiite relation and combining the theological conversation with intersecting civil dialogue and several contexts of conflict.³⁶ The various context of interreligious conflict should be determined in interfaith dialogue, like the polarization of Nigerian Christian and Muslim communities that are highly influenced by many issues beyond religious matter such as issues of the Northern versus the Southern, the settler versus the indigene, the dominant versus the marginalized, and the rich versus the poor.³⁷ The low level of education and the wide poverty of the Sampang people should be also determined in relation to intersecting mutual understanding, civic attitude, and tolerance. This can be underlined along with the clarification of the genealogy of the sectarian conflict, like psychological aspect in the internal friction of two brothers (Rois al-Hukama and Tajul Muluk), social-cultural dynamics with local *kiai* and traditions, and also economic aspect of preaching, and political opportunity structure in the regional level.³⁸

³⁵ Iklil al-Milal, Interview, 1 December 2015.

³⁶ Wan Sabri Wan Yosouf and Arfah Ab Majid, 'Interreligious Dialogue Models in Malaysia', *GJAT* 2, no. 1 (2012).

³⁷ Mukhtar Umar Bunsu, 'Challenges of Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria', in *Interfaith Dialogue: Global Perspective*, ed. Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

³⁸ Afdillah, *Dari Masjid Ke Panggung Politik: Melacak Akar-akar Kekerasan Agama Antara Komunitas Sunni dan Syiah di Sampang, Jawa Timur*.

In the People's Peace Charter, former perpetrators from Sampang realized that Shiites were slandered and they were provoked. Mixing the particularist approach of cultural and Islamic sensibilities and universalist approach of human right and pluralism is also crucial to considered contextually along the interfaith dialogue.³⁹ Furthermore, convincing the government to facilitate dialogue as a socio-political agenda becomes a difficulty that should be dealt with. The government's commitment to bridge sectarian difference needs to be encouraged. While continuing to enlarge and broaden grassroots agencies such as 2013 reconciliation, involving the elite and government is crucial to facilitate a vast reintegration and to anticipate the government to not delegitimize it again.

CONCLUSION

Sunni-Shiite antagonism has not been mediated openly through interfaith dialog among the main actors and elites in the Sampang case. The governments in local, regional, and national were reluctant to deal with intolerant *kiais* and several state apparatus commodifying the conflict. The Sampang case illustrated the imbalance of minority-minority forces that put Sampang Shiite as a loser that must surrender and even should be subjugated as shown in the previous state-sponsored reconciliation. The pivotal norms of interfaith dialogue are not present in the state-sponsored interfaith dialogue in the Sampang case, namely mutual respect and recognition. The multiplication of intersecting engagement is a very crucial as interfaith dialogue initiative. Grassroots reconciliation by the People Peace Charter significantly obscured the segregation and stigma of each conflicting party by forgiving one another and recognizing each dignity and identity. It is very crucial step for a new, wider and more extensive interfaith dialogue. Lattu reminded that the textual relationship and elite conversation alone which were predominantly used in interfaith dialog failed to reintegrate and re-engage divided religious enclaves, especially in the post-conflict situation.⁴⁰ Yet, without proper state-

³⁹ Akhmad Rizqon Khamami, 'Dialog Antar-Iman Sebagai Resolusi Konflik, Tawaran Mohammed Abu-Nimer', *IAIN Ponorogo, Al-Tahrir* 14, no. 2 (2014).

⁴⁰ Izak Lattu, 'Orality and Interreligious Relationships: The Role of Collective Memory in Christian-Muslim Engagement in Maluku, Indonesia' (Diss, The Graduate Theological Union, 2014).

sponsored interfaith dialogue promoting mutual respect and active theology without hardening religious boundaries, the image of Shiites as heretics and imbalance power relation in Sampang politically is very hard to be restored.

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