

Cultural Conflict between Malay and Dayak in Hinterland of West Kalimantan

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Introduction

Conflict is a phenomenon that can occur anywhere and anytime, either vertically or horizontally. Appearance of a conflict is often caused by the differences of interest about economy, politic, religion, identity, and other problems. Ruslan (from Mulkan, et al., 2001) saw the conflict as a historical inevitability whose presence is neither flawless, nor hope. Coser (1964) said that as a friendship, conflict can not only be seen as something that should be eliminated. When mutual understanding occurs in an interaction, a friendship emerges. On the other hand, if there is a disparity of interest, the interaction will lead to the conflict.

This paper examines the social rift between the Malay and Dayak groups. The different culture and ethnic identity appear to trigger tension between the both. There are two questions emerge from this phenomenon. First, what is underlying cause of the cultural conflict between the Malay and Dayak. Second, why the conflict is never escalate to physical.

Many studies discussed the conflict led to various definitions of the conflict itself. Mulyadi (2006) said that the essence of the conflict is the occurrence of resistance both among individuals and groups as a result of different interests. Mulyadi also said that because conflict contains elements of resistance, conflict is synonymous to violence. Different with Mulyadi according to Stewart & Logan (1993:341), conflicts are not always expressed verbally and physically violent, but also non-verbal conflict which the opposition has been expressed. I prefer to agree on what Stewart & Logan said to analyze conflict between Malay and Dayak ethnic group.

The term 'cultural conflict' in this paper I borrowed from Turner (1995, 87) who define cultural conflict as "differences in cultural values and beliefs that place people at odds with one another". Here, I will start from the second point of the definition proposed by Turner -that is beliefs- as first assumption of caused of conflict. I use religion standard as the categories of cultural values, since cultural values are something recognized as a standard of good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant, and other classifications within a society or community. In this paper, the term 'cultural' refer to some part of culture that different between Malay and Dayak and I use it as chapters, that are religion, different type of foods, *gawai* (harvest party), and marginal and dominant contestation.

Religion and Ethnic Identity

Dayak is the native of Borneo (Lontaan, 1975; Alqadrie, 1990; Purana, 2007). However, Dayak's not the only ethnic group that settles in Kalimantan. West Kalimantan ethnic composition written by Florus shows that 41% Dayak, 39.57% Malays, 11.33% Chinese and 8.10% other ethnics (Setiadi,

2006:180). As the two major ethnic groups in West Kalimantan, Malays control the coastal areas (river), while Dayak control the countryside.

As two of the ethnic majority in West Kalimantan, Malay and Dayak have a different culture. In addition to the different location of residence, the most striking is difference of religion. The Malays are Moslem, while the Dayak is non-Moslem (Catholic, Christian, and also animism).

The identity of both Malay and Dayak is not fully acquired by birth. Dayak people who decided to convert their religion to Islam will be changed to Malay automatically (Al-qadrie, 1990; Chua, 2007; Singarimbun, 1991). For Dayak, converting religion to Islam is called *turun Islam* (down Islam). While the Muslims who embrace other religions, although very rarely case, is called *naik darat* (rising ground). The religion conversion term shows that Dayak perceives higher than Malay by not embracing Islam.

Associated with ethnicity, what happened in Borneo are inconsistent with the notion of the primordial theorists who see ethnic identity as something that is determined by birth (ascribed) (Abdillah, 2002:75). But the ethnical identity actually in line with the thinking of constructivist theorists, such as Barth (1969) who views ethnic identity as a result of complex social processes, in which symbolic boundaries are constantly building and built by history and experience of the past. Furthermore, Serajul Islam also said that the constructivist view rejects the notion that ethnic identity and culture as a natural phenomenon or a given, but as a product of human behaviour and choice (Islam 2005:4)

In West Kalimantan, such as the division occurs between ethnic Malays who live in coastal and Dayak in hinterland (Purana, 2007). This is what caught my attention when I arrived in Kuala Rosan, the only village in the district Meliau that all citizens are local residents (not immigrants) who embrace Islam. Kuala Rosan site located in the interior, with the population are minority, inevitably the Malay Kuala Rosan was under the domination of Dayak group.

Kuala Rosan hamlet is nearby to the Lubuk Piling hamlet. The both only separated by Buayan River. Those places have been linked by a wooden bridge. If viewed from the upstream direction, the Kuala Rosan people use the right side, while the Lubuk Piling people using the left side of the river for their daily activities. If it is seen from the living place which is close each other, it can be said that they are neighbours. However, the both have different religion, language, behavior patterns, and also ethnic identity. Kuala Rosan is occupied by Malays who apply Islamic life, while Lubuk Piling is occupy by Dayak who apply non-Islamic life.

The Malays Kuala Rosan is actually the Dayak people who converted to Islam and settled in Kuala Rosan. When I asked them about ethnic origin of their parents, they answered that most of their parents are Dayak. Nowadays, Malay in Kuala Rosan is the second and the third generation born as a Muslim. It is means that their parents had decided to convert to Islam. However, there are four head household who are mualaf (a calling of Malay to Dayak people who converted to Islam) in Kuala Rosan. There is a view that they convert to Islam because they want to marry Malay women. Those mualafs still have sibling who live in Lubuk Piling as Dayak ethnically.

When converted to Islam, their Dayak ethnic will change automatically to Malay. The change of these ethnic groups not only at the level of the state of self-identity, but also affects the patterns of behaviour and ways of life. This is because their view of ethnic identity refers more to a pattern of behaviour especially that is set by the religion. A similar situation is also presented by Tooker (inside Chua, 2007), as follows

Most of my informants define an ethnic not by an unchanging genealogical essence ('being') or an 'interiorized identity' but through specific performative attributes, including speech, eating habits, clothing and behaviour" (Tooker 1992:800),

As Tooker stated above, when they have become Malay, they leave their original daily language of Dayak and speak in Malay. The turnover of their daily language is also occurred in a Malay family who live in Lubuk Piling. There is one family who decided to stay in Lubuk Piling and do not move to Kuala Rosan. Even though they (Malays) live in the Dayak neighbourhood, they speak Malay in their daily life. Malays always speak in Malay, when Dayak speak in Dayak even they are talking together.

The Malays Kuala Rosan considered their selves more modern than Dayak by speaking Malay because it is similar with Bahasa. Since Bahasa is television language as their one daily intertainment where television program always show about Java, especially Jakarta. Everyone in Kuala Rosan want to be like people in television. They bought motorcycle similar in television, even they use name of character of drama serial in television as name of their cildren. Therefore, by using Bahasa they feel better and feel nearer with Jakarta than Dayak.

Kuala Rosan people who understand Dayak are only mualaf, while all the Dayak can speak Malay. Tsing who did research about Meratus Dayak found that, that the *bahasa laki-laki* (male language) which refers to the language of religion and mysticism is not respectable. While the outsider language such as Banjar and Bahasa is considered as the respectable one because those languages have authority (Tsing, 1998:284). What the Tsing said is similar with language position in Kuala Rosan.

In observing this language phenomenon, I agree with Faruk that denies the conception of language as a neutral communicator and expression (Faruk, 2001:16). In accordance to Faruk, the relation of language and culture is reciprocal that affect each other. It is even identical part of a certain culture. Furthermore, Faruk also said that the Malay language is deeply influenced by Arabic. Thus, the use of Malay emphasizes their Malay ethnic and Muslim identity. In addition, by using the language of Malay, Kuala Rosan people feel that they are more valuable compared to Dayak who still use the native language.

The differentiator is food

A clear differentiator between the Dayak and Malay besides the language is a pattern of food consumption. Pork as an important part of the indigenous Dayak, it is forbidden for Muslim Malays. Islamic doctrine strictly limits any animal that may be allowed to consume or not. As the Qur'an (Holy Koran of Muslim) strictly states that it is forbidden of eating pork and other animal with some criterias, and even halal animal slaughtered without mentioning Allah's name. This makes the flesh of animals being an expensive and rarely items for Malays Kuala Rosan. Malays cannot get animal protein every day, except eggs and salted fish that can be stored for a long time.

One day, one of the citizens of Kuala Rosan had caught deer. When he reached home, the news that he got this deer so quickly spread to the corners of the village. Most of the people went to his house and intended to buy deer meat. After slaughter, meat of hunted deer was sold for Rp 40.000.00 per kg. The total weight of this female deer was 15 kg. Seeing this incident, one resident told me:

Dulu binatang buruan itu ndak perlu beli bah, semua orang disuruh datang untuk membantu menghabiskan dagingnya sebelum busuk. Tidak seperti sekarang, berburu dijadikan pekerjaan untuk mendapatkan uang. (For the long time ago, it used to be free

of having meat without paying any charge. Because it is need to spend the meat before foul. But now, we have to pay for meat when hunting became a job to get money).

I decode this expression as a regret of the difficulty to get *halal* animal in the forest, it was not like an old which getting a kosher animal in forest is so easy. That is the factor that forces the hunter to commercialize his quarry.

For the daily foods, Malay community uses the plants around them. For large events, they used to cut down palm trees, and cook the heart of the tree. In addition, the activity of a rubber notch in forest is also used to search forest products which can be eaten. Infrequently, some of them carry gum tree leaves to make it as food.

Conditions of the Malays who see it as something that animal protein is expensive and scarce in contrast with the Dayak people who do not embrace Islam. Therefore, they do not know of the prohibition to eat any kind of animal. Dayak people will eat every kind of animal they can catch, both of which came to the forest and around their homes. Such as, squirrels, snakes, lizards, monkeys, dogs, cats, and so on.

Dayak people's habit of eating all kinds of animals raises the discourse to the Malays who accused the Dayak as people who spend forest animals (because they are free to eat all kinds of animals). The Malays told me that the unique wild animals are now rare. They mentioned some names of animals, such as ingkar, bears, ruwai, orang utan, and so on as a result of Dayak's pattern consumption of animals.

Allegations that the Dayaks who make wild animals extinct have been denied by Dayak people. They said that Dayak also have difficulty of getting the hunted animal since the entry of oil palm companies around Kuala Rosan. However, although the wild animals are increasingly difficult to find, it do not stop people habit of hunting.

In Kuala Rosan, the powerful hunter is a Malay people. One of the most famous hunters was Malay, a man 50 years old. He could sell 2 sacks head of deer and elk in a period of 2 years. The hunter told me that while hunting, he never has come home empty-handed. If indeed he could not get the animals (*halal*) to eat, then he will shoot all kinds of animals (often in the form of a snake, *labi-labi*, ferrets, lizards, and monkeys) and sell it to the Dayak people. As justification, the hunter said that he would swap the animals with diesel to power electric engine, or other objects. He refused to accept gifts of money because it is same to eat the animals.

Malays accusation that the Dayak are the prey of wild animals is not entirely true. If it seen from the Malay problem of getting the animal protein is inversely proportional to the Dayak people who can easily get it. It shows that the accusation of Malay to Dayak is an expression of jealousy.

Gawai as a Culmination of Social Tensions

Annually Dayak communities who hold a traditional ceremony called the *gawai*. *Gawai* custom is held by each sub-tribe of Dayak, including the Dayak community in Lubuk Piling. In effect, the *gawai* is a form of thanksgiving to the Creator who has given them the crops (Al-qadrie, 1990:97).

As part of the rice harvest festival, the core of *gawai* custom is a ritual ceremony called *engkata*. With three traditional leaders pray in front of a vessel containing wine (*tuak*). This folktale tells the three of them related to rice cultivation, such as Demamang Arau, Demamang Boyok, Genesis of Demamang, and so on. After they has finished, one of them will feed the tools which has been used for a year back to work. They believe that the giving of *umpan* (gratification food) to the work tool

which is used for a year, will make the tool are not tired and angry with the owner. *Engkata* was conducted at the farm houses, and traditional leaders in charge of running the *engkata* going around from one house to another and get rewarded with rice and pork (in Dayak language called *balonk*).

Currently, the numbers of people who farm rice in Lubuk Piling not more than 10 families. It is because the system changes from subsistence economy to market economy. Instead of having to move farming, they prefer to plant their land with rubber, get cash, and buy rice. However, the reduced number of moving of cultivators does not necessarily reduce the Dayak community spirit to exhibit a *gawai* party.

Dayak people are not familiar with the prohibition to eat pork. Precisely pig is an animal that must be presented at the *gawai* as an annual feast of Dayak (Al-qadrie, 1999:97; Chua, 2007:268). When the *gawai* takes place, all residents will slaughter pigs as a food dish. After the pigs finished being slaughters, people will clean it in Lubuk Piling River. On the river, when the Dayak people cleaning pigs as part of the party, the Malays Kuala Rosan stays away from the river. None of them do their activities on the Buayan River which is also a river of Lubuk Piling people. Their reason is because they think that the river was infected by pigs which are considered as the unclean things, the animal that they should not be touched. Malay people choose to use Rosan River that is located farther from the Buayan.

Still about pork, the head of the school that is located in Lubuk Piling is Malay. She is a mualaf woman who used to convert from Dayak Engkodan to Islam. She made policy to dismiss the student off when *gawai* is exhibited. The only reason of her policy is because she can't stand in smelling the roasted pork cooked by Lubuk Piling people. I asked her a few days after the *gawai*, how when she was Dayak? The school principal said that she used to eat pork. But because now she is repent, then he felt dizzy and sick when she smells grilled pork.

At the side of pork, the main dish that always present in every *gawai* is *tuak*. The drink made from fermented rice that already contains alcohol and intoxicating. Such as pork, wine is also conditions that must always exist in every ceremony held Dayak people. Especially on the season of *gawai* which every home provides jars of *tuak*. For the Malays, this *tuak* is also considered something that should really be shunned because it is intoxicating.

Night is the top of *gawai* party agenda. Diesel engine power is turned on all night long. Some houses have a specific intent to hold the ceremony. The event was once also used as a performing the ceremony for the events that occurred between last year until this year *gawai*. The event could be adoption, marriage, birth of children, renovation of the grave, engagement, and so forth, which all of it is a part of the indigenous Dayak. In addition to custom events, when the *gawai* occurs, there are a lot of sudden stalls stand of semi-permanent tent. Stalls sell food and beverages, including beer and *arak*. The term *arak* is actually an alcoholic beverage that is packaged in a bottle. In local terms, they call it *lotup*. *Arak* is different with *tuak*. Besides shops, the season was also filled by stand of gambling called 'kolok-kolok'. This is a game that uses dices and board media pictorial and people lay their money above it.

A party is not only enjoyed by the Dayak people, but also the Malay. At night, the Malays also come in droves to enjoy the atmosphere of Lubuk Piling *gawai*. The Malays usually meet the stalls to drink branded aperitif, and playing 'kolok-kolok'. In the rule of Islam, drinking aperitif and gambling is just as illegitimate by eating pork. When I tried to ask this, one of them just say that unlike branded aperitif, *tuak* is owned and produced by the Dayak people.

Gawai is certainly a party that cost a lot. Dayak people will open the door house widely and welcome anyone who comes to their house, although it is a foreigner. To be known, the guests who come to the *gawai* also come from other villages. All guests will be welcomed, treated to food and drinks.

About *Gawai*, the Malays say that the Dayak people like to party and spent a year working only for one day. The Malays compared to Eid day that every house presents only small cakes. But the discourses that circulate in the Malay are not entirely true. Dayak people who have immemorial time to exhibit *gawai* was already preparing for it along the year. For example, they keep pigs from small to slaughter when the *gawai* comes and grow rice, if only they have to make a *tuak* clerk in significant amounts.

In addition to pigs of *gawai*, Islam rule said that dog is also excrement animal. In fact, there are a lot of dogs running around Lubuk Piling. Not infrequently dogs wandering in Kuala Rosan. That makes Malay do not interact freely with Dayak. They will not come to Lubuk Piling if no urgent business. Even then they prefer to sit on the porch only. This is done because they feel the house of Dayak people are often passed by dogs. In addition, the Malays often refuse food or beverage from Dayak people. The reason is because the Dayak people cook using cooking equipment that had been used for cooking pork and dogs.

The Marginal and Dominant Contestation

As the majority ethnic, Dayak was the dominant in Kuala Rosan. The influential figures commonly are Dayak people. Dayak people play almost all the governmental role in the village, even the head of the Kuala Rosan held by the Dayak people. In this observation, I assume that the conflicts occur between the Malays society of Kuala Rosan and Dayak n Lubuk piling is not fundamentally conflict with the purely religious basis. To a certain extent, the conflict occurs between the marginalized and the dominant group.

Malay have never chosen to be a winner in local head village election. It is because the number of Malay is 360 persons, while Dayak is more than 2400 persons. Whereas, head village is a strategic position in hinterland of Kalimantan. It is because head village is always has a relation with palmoil company as a new economic pattern in hinterland, including Kuala Rosan. For an example, son of a former head village in Kuala Rosan who got scholarship from palmoil company Bintang Harapan Desa to study in one of university in Jakarta. Head village is also the first one who know all about information, especially about grant, from district and resident as higher level government. It shows how head village has lot of accesses to palmoil company facilities.

Related to the topic of this paper, here I want to analyze relationship between religion and conflict. Islam (2005) in his book tells about conflict between Muslim Moro and Catholics. He said that the conflict occurred was not entirely due to religious sentiments, but rather because the Moro Muslims feel American colonial government's treatment of the migrants who almost Catholic is not fair. A similar conflict occurred in Malifut, Wilson (2008) writes about the conflict between Muslim Makian of Kao residents and a Christian in Malifut, North Maluku, on August 1999-2000. According to Wilson, religion conflict has wider coverage than the ethnic and regional identities that can spread very quickly. At the end of his writings, Wilson said "analysis of the case Malifut sounds a note of caution about placing too much importance on economic factors as the primary cause of violent conflict" (Wilson. 2000:180). I think what the Islam and Wilson say has similar case with cultural conflict in Kuala Rosan. Malay does not practice Islam pilar as the biggest duty of Islam. They still drinking aperitif and playing gamble. Malay also sell *haram* animal to Dayak. It can be proofs that

religion rule differences are not too much embedded inside Malay's life. Where politic and economic is the main caused of cultural conflict, since Malay as minority and marginal between majority Dayak.

The cultural conflict between Malay and Dayak has always been a closed conflict or the level of conflict is only as social tension. It does not grow as an open or phisical conflict. For Kuala Rosan case, the preservation of this closed conflict, as they said, it because of the filiation between them. As Dayak says, "*ibarat pisang, kami masih satu tandan*" (like a bananas, we are from one bunch). I am not sure that this filliation is a main caused of this unopen conflict. It is shows by Malay who keep the distant away from Dayak, if they said Dayak is their family. I agree with Scott (2000) who said that minority will always keep the closed conflict. It is because the minority realized their capacity in case they doing the open conflict.

Conclusion

Malays in the hinterland of Kuala Rosan are some Dayaks who decided to convert Islam. When they changed their religion to Islam, they will see themselves as Malay. Dayak also change their language after embrace Islam. This condition makes Malays and Dayaks have very different culture. The striking observable difference between Malay and Dayak is type of food consumption.

Pork and *tuak* (Dayak's aperitif) as something very important in the existence of indigenous Dayak are precisely the two things banned for consume for Muslim, because it is considered to be sinful. Nevertheless, the Malays of Kuala Rosan are not a religious society in everyday life. Very few of Malays pray five times a day, they still love to gamble, and they also consume intoxicating liquor. Thus, it can be said that the Malays comply with Islamic law which forbids pork and *tuak* not merely because of fear of sinning. It is just as an attempt to limit their communication with Dayak people. The culmination of this difference and also the culmination of social tension between Malay and Dayak is during the *gawai* when the Dayak celebrate with pork and *tuak*.

Cultural conflict between the Malays in Kuala Rosan and Dayak in Lubuk Piling is not only triggered by religious difference. It shows by the worship pattern did by Malay in Kuala Rosan. They do not pray regularly, where praying regularly is the main duty for Moslem. However, Malays of the Kuala Rosan exactly respects the *halal-haram* rule more than praying. Malays of Kuala Rosan used the *halal-haram* rule as the reason to restrict social relations between themselves and the Dayak people. Malay of the Kuala Rosan who feels subordinate to the Dayaks tries to justify their situation by finding a lack in Dayak people's behaviour. They want to have important positions in the system of village government, by showing their superiority that Dayak do not have. It shows that cultural conflict between Malay and Dayak is not because different of religious teachings, but as contestation between minority as marginal and majority as dominant.

However, cultural conflict between is never evolve to be physical or open conflict. The level of conflict is only about vilifying each other, and keep distance far away. This situation makes Malay and Dayak always have social tension. Preservation of this social tension is because as marginal and minority, the Malay are aware of its effects if they do open or physical conflict to Dayak as dominant majority.

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