

State Neglect, Church Decline, and Ascendent Adat: The Power Contestation in Adonara, Eastern Flores

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Abstract

Tulisan ini mendiskusikan tentang kontestasi kuasa diantara tiga kekuatan mayor yang berperan penting dalam pengorganisasian masyarakat dan proses perubahan sosial di Adonara, yakni adat, gereja, dan Negara. Jika kekuatan Negara dan gereja sebagai representasi kekuatan pembangunan dan modernisasi mengalami penurunan peran dalam keseluruhan pembangunan masyarakat. Sebaliknya, adat sebagai representasi kekuatan lokal justru menunjukkan hegemoninya di hampir seluruh aspek kehidupan masyarakat. Bangkitnya adat sebagai kekuatan hegemonik tersebut tidak dapat dilepaskan dari desain kebijakan desentralisasi dan otonomi daerah yang memberikan ruang kebebasan bagi ekspresi lokal untuk menegaskan identitasnya. Alhasil, ketika negara gagal menjadi agen perubahan sosial dan gereja menemui titik kebuntuan dalam mencangkakan nilai-nilai katolikisme, adat merayakan diri sebagai representasi institusi lokal yang terkuat di Adonara.

Key words:

State neglect; church decline; Adonara; ascendent Adat.

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Introduction

“...Actually the adat occupy in the first place, and religion under the adat. When conflict emerged, religion could not against the adat, in that time too we against the religion. For us, specially in Adonara, adat is the highest place...” (Adonarese, 2008)

For Adonara society, there are three strong forces that influence their everyday life: adat² (local institution), the church (Catholic), and the state. However, the rule of adat has dominated social system of Adonara for long time. But, since the Catholic Church came to Eastern Flores in the mid of 16 century, the contestation between the adat and the church has begun, specially in deepening values of humanity between both institutions. The interaction between the church and local community shape a new identity for Adonara people. Although the church succeeded to convert most of the Adonarese as Catholic, they have their way to internalize Catholic values. It means that both adat and Catholic value influences the Adonara identity. However, they believes that adat has occupy the highest place in social order³.

Since modernization is brought social change in Adonara, the state has take over significantly the roles of the church. The presence of the state, consequently, creates tension between the role of the state and the church, particularly the contestation to provide public services for the Adonarese. Currently, the contestations among the state, the church and

2 There are many definitions of adat. Adat can defines adat as indigenou ordering (Galenter 1981); as a set of local sociolegal procedure (Hooker 1997, Tanner 1970); as a “species of social imagination” (Clifford Geertz, 1981: 214) where reflects “odd tenacity” *vs* legal procedural; as local custom which regulates the interaction of the members of society which reflect ideal pattern of behaviour to fullfil social expectations; and as rules and practices of social life, a culturally appropriate sense of propriety, tradition and custom (Bowmen, 1988). In this paper, I defines adat is simply the cultural practices inherited from the ancestors which in certain ways distinguish a community from their neighbors or persons father afield (Kipp and Rodgers 1987:3 in Barnes 2005: 361)

3 Interview with Simon Hayon, District’s Head of East Flores, April, 8th, 2008. This situation contrast to Manggarai society in Western Flores where adat became powerful again after the fall of New Order Regime (Erb 2006, Erb 2007 in Davidson and Henley 2007), in Adonara adat has never getting weak or died.

the adat have been occurring. If many of previous studies on Adonara tend to describe the Adonarese adat, history, and conflict, this paper attempts to explore the power contestation among the strong institutions that exists in Adonara. In order to reveals the contestation among these forces, this paper aims to explain three things. First, it investigates the interaction between the Adonarese with adat, the state, and the church in everyday life of Adonara people. Second, this paper attempts to perform the site of contestation among these forces. It then produces some consequences for Adonara society to reconstruct or re-imagine their identities and their *adat*. The concluding section then suggests to draw out the layers in Adonara society which adat still became the core layer in Adonara.

Everyday life of the Adonarese: Interaction with the adat, the church and the state

According to folklore, the Adonarese believes that they are descended origin from mountain Ile Boleng (*Ile Jadi*). But, there are many versions about the story of their ancestor. The disagreement among clans in Adonara reveals indigenous (*authochthonous*) to claiming *Ile Jadi* status for oneself and simply forgetting previous stories of outside origin (Barnes 2007: 25). In short, there are three major clans in Adonara: *suku Ile Jadi*, *suku Seran Goran*, and *suku Sina Jawa*. Then, the original clans have mixed and marriage with the inhabitants of Adonara whose ancestors came from other islands. These inhabitants not mean that they are not Adonarese, because they also possess cultural alligiances not very different from those of the other people of Adonara.

The faces of adat in daily life of the Adonarese reveals in their beliefs called adat religion, and their rituals which centered in three aspects of Adonarese culture i.e. marriage, murder, and farming (Lutz 1986: 89-90). To add, marriage is seen as the most central of the three cultural aspects. First, *adat* religion. Before the arrival of Catholicism (and Islam) in East Flores, people had have their own religion called *adat* religion. This religion believes in *Rerawulan-Tanaekan* which refers to the relationship between God and man, heaven and earth. *Rerawulan* refer to the Almighty God who controls man and whole the world, whereas *Tanaekan* refer to human who are the servants of *Rerawulans* in their activities. Therefore, man must give gifts (*sesajian*, *pao-bae*, *huke*) in order to obtain mercy (*kuat-*

kemuha) from *Rerawulan*. This religion also believe in other spirits both bad and good such as *koda-kewonot*, *nitun-harin*, *menakan*, *menebin*.

The reciprocal relationship between *Rerawulan-Tanaekan*, is sealed by an everlasting sign *nuba-nara*. *Nuba-nara* is a stone which symbolized the unity between *Rerawulan-Tanaekan*, heaven and earth. These *nuba-nara* symbolize both the ancestors of a clan and the founding ancestors 'places'. This stone are physical markers of ancestry, and they can, if be, be moved from a certain place to another place. The site of these *nuba-nara* are the ritual centers of village, and they are the locations of important ancestral rituals (Lutz 1986: 71-72).

Second, *belis* system in Adonara marriage. Adonara is a famous region with their *adat* mechanism called *belis* (tusk) or *kawin beli*. In Adonara tradition, the bridegroom must buy the bride. The price depends on the social status of the family's bride⁴. After married, this *belis* belong to the clan from the bridegroom until a male from bridegroom clan plans to get married. The *belis* from bridegroom clan can be used to pay *belis*. Currently, tusks are difficult to find in Adonara again. The circle of tusk is rare, tusks but nowadays it can be replaced by pets such as pig, goat, chicken, *kain tenun*, or money.

Third, murder ritual. 'Murderer Island' is very close and famous for Adonara. Most of murders happened on this island either because of family revenge or village revenge made Adonara known as *murder island* (Vatter, 1932). This stigmatization consequently appears from historical background of feuds between Paji and Demon in Eastern Flores which had killed many people. This ritual still exist in Adonara because *adat* has been introduced since newborn baby. The priority is to instill a warrior spirit (*mean bereketen*) in sons and passed down within the descent group as part of their heritage, so that they will be brave and adroit in using weapons of war. Symbolically, forming this disposition is marked with the presentation of a field knife (*kenube*), spear (*gala*), shield (*dopi*), bow

4 For noble class, *belis* could be reached until 7-10 tusks with 1 metre length and the diametre is 12 cm. For middle class of nobility, the *belis* is just 5 tusks, and lower class of nobility the *belis* is just 3 tusks. And, for ordinary people the *belis* is just 1 tusk, and for slave class it needs 1 tusk with little size.

and arrow (*wuhu amet*) to each newborn male⁵. All weapons are stored near the child's sleeping place, beginning with a ceremony intended to assure that the boy will later become someone who is courageous in defending truth and justice (Barnes 2002: 489).

While the interaction of the Adonarese with the Catholic Church has begun when dominican missionaries were active in this island until the 16 and 17 centuries. Then, the mission was continued by Jesuit missionaries for several decades under the Dutch colonial government. However, in the beginning of 20th century, the Dutch changed their policy known as 'ethical policy'. This policy was more focussed on social development for local community in order to repay the goodness of Indonesian people. Hence, the Jesuit were slowly being withdrawn from Indonesia, including Eastern Flores, and replaced by Society of the Divine Word misionaries (SVD – *Societas Verbi Divini*) which has more concern in the building and organization of schools and other facilities as well as 'ethical policy' wanted.

Hence, the church began to cooperate with the government (Dutch Government), specially in educational development. In 1913, a consensus was achieved between the colonial government and the church that educational programs for all Flores would be entrusted to the church, and would be supervision, cooperation and subsidization by the government (Ala 1989: 74). This policy was very beneficial for the church in order to spread Catholicism. Therefore, in the beginning of 20 century the church significantly began to interaction with local community through charity approach. The Church in East Flores, as well as in Adonara, had more concern in providing public services, specially in education and health sector.

On the other hand, the shifting of the Universal Church (Vatican) also influences the policies and characters of Catholic Church in local level. This council aims to arrange the Catholic Church relationship between church and community to make Catholic Church to be more open in their relation with lay people and social change in world. It meant that the church had to work more at adapting itself locally to merge with the customs of village life, a process termed 'inculturation' (Erb, 2007: 259).

5 Whereas female are not taught to have the *mean bereketen* spirit. Newborn female are presented *bena noon senure* (thread and spindle) and *kela lamak* (gourd bowls, plates; kitchen utensils).

By the forces above, since and during the Catholicism has arrived in Adonara, the Church at least have three arenas of services, i.e. educational service, health service, and base community service. Hence, I concludes that the interaction between the church and the people in Adonara based on two functions of the church for the people. *First*, morality protection. In this case, the church proposes to implant Catholicism values as norms that can be used as behavior guiding of the Adonarese in their social life. To instill the Catholicism values in order to protect the Adonarese morality, the church have two ways. (1) Encourage the Adonarese to participate in religious rituals such as Eucharist every Sunday. (2) Provide services for the base community such as assisting the Adonarese to solve their problems. The based-community which held by the church gives place to the local community to share their problem together to find the solutions. These base of communities in some cases also play socio-economic role eventhough limited.

Second, social protection. In this case, the church is designed to protect human beings in three ways. (1) Educational Services such as building private schols and providing teachers; (2) Health Services such as providing health care facilities and health care personnels; (3) Securitization function such as managing conflicts (conventional securitization), providing water, electricity supply, home, transportation and so on. These roles are closed to the roles of the state.

Before New Order Regime, state capacity in Adonara to deliver public services was very limited. Consequently, almost all of state functions have been compensated by the church. Since the New Order Regime, the state became powerful and had capacity to provide public service. In some cases, the resurracton of state power in New Order Regime has aroused tension between the roles of the state and the church in providing public service, particularly in educational sector and health care facilities.

Notwithstanding, during the New Order Regime, the development in Adonara has been neglected by the state in comparison with other regions in western Indonesia. In reallity, eastern Indonesia, including East Nusa Tenggara Province are labelled as the poorest, most isolated, and least developed provinces of Indonesia because of the impact of physical isolation, inadequate infrastucture, and limited natural resources on development.

James Scott's (*Seeking Like a State*) contends that: "the premodern state was, in many crucial respects, partially blind; it knew precious little about its subjects, their wealth, their landholdings and yields, their location, their very identity (Scoott 1998: 2 in Corbridge 2005). In contrast, the danger of the high modernist state is that it sees too much. But, in Adonara, the problem is not that the state sees too much, which is Scoot's concern, but that it sees too little. In the familiar phrases of development studies, Adonara suffers from 'state failure' or lack of 'good governance'.

The question next is how the works of the state in Adonara. In particularly, "when, why, and who" of the state – poor people interaction or state – poor exchanges (Corbridge, S., Williams G., Srivasta, dan Veron, 2005: 21). For Adonarese, the state appears in two faces. *First*, benevolent faces as viewed in two ways i.e. entitlements and economic flows and flows of information and people (Corbridge, S., Williams G., Srivasta, dan Veron, 2005: 22). Benevolent faces of the state emerged on state employess such as teachers, health care personnels, and so on. Entitlements and economic flows revealed on how the state provides public services and administrative services for the people. In public services face, people met the state when they directly using public service facilities i.e. health care facilities, education services, infrastructure facilities such as roads, bridges, etc., and securitization functions of the state such as providing foods, water, electricity supply, home, transportation facilities, etc.

For Adonarese, the poorer person sees the state most directly when he or she takes a child to school (perhaps), goes to hospital or use health care facilities which held by the state, uses public transportations, uses road, receives electricity or clean water. They often met the state in an administrative services such as when they registers a birth or death, receives a registration certificate, pick up a pension or some other entitlement, etc. In fact, not all of these exchanges either public services or administrative services will take place on a daily basis. But, not all Adonarese receives those public services from the state. Indeed, most of Adonarese do not enjoy public service facilities from the state. The number of health facilities for instance, is not sufficient in number.

The Adonarese also seldom meet the state because of the physical isolated problems and inadequate infrastructures such as limited roads, limited ports, limited electricity supply, and limited water both

irrigation and consumption. Consequently, the minimum access makes the Adonarese often difficult to sell their cash crops from the mountain to beach, and also from the beach to another regions. The electricity supply still insufficient because not all of villages in Adonara have received electricity supply. The access for water is also limited because the government has no adequate facilitation in distributing water resources.

In short briefly, the Adonarese can not enjoy their social security as citizenship. The poor are excluded from citizenship. They are object of social exclusion. This situation reflects that most of the Adonarese did not acquire their rights as social citizenship⁶ which emphasized the citizen's rights of economic and social security (Steenbergen 1994:2).

Second, the state present on violent faces such as police and military. It because human security becomes dominant problem in Adonara, for instances, conflict among villages, murder, etc. Before the arrival of colonialism until today, murder because of family revenge or village revenge often occurred in Adonara. Consequently, most of Adonarese were jailed, eventhough, according to *adat* law those people were not guilty. These situation stereotyped Adonara as *murder island*. Here, the Adonarese often met the state, in the face of police officer and court officer.

From the explaining above, I argues that most of the Adonarese are very seldom to meet the state in benevolent faces. I agree with Partha Chatterjee when he said, "...that is right to insist that poorer people in 'most of the world' are very often compelled to meet the state as members of social groups 'that transgress the strict lines of legality in struggling to live and work' (Chatterjee in Corbridge, S., Williams G., Srivasta, dan Veron, 2005: 1). This situation suitable with the Adonarese.

According to the explaining about the interaction among *adat*, the church and the state in daily life of Adonara society above, I suggest that

6 There are three types of citizenship. First, in the eighteenth century emerged civil citizenship, which established the rights necessary for individual freedom, such as rights to property, personal liberty and justice. Second, political citizenship, was build primarily in the nineteenth century and encompassed the right to participate in the exercise of political power. Third, social citizenship, was constructed in the twentieth century. This type emphasized the citizen's rights of economic and social security and gained its expression in the modern welfare state as it developed in Western Europe. See Bart van Steenbergen, *The Condition of Citizenship*, SAGE Publication, London, 1994, p. 2.

in daily life of the Adonarese they often have more interaction with the *adat* than to the state and the church. Most of the Adonarese more engaged with their *adat*. It is because the Adonarese are fear if they do not practice *adat* rituals compares to not to practice religious rituals. Adat have been embedded in the way of life and the way of thinking of the Adonarese. Even when modernization are introduced in Adonara by the church and the state, *adat* stil exits and never died. In some cases, the interactions among the state, the church, and the *adat* influence contestation among these forces as shown below.

Explaining Site of Contestation among State, Church, and Adat

The contestation among the state, the church, and *adat* have occurred after “world religion” (Catholicism and Islam) came in Adonara. The site of contestation among these actors divided into three arenas; phycisal, social and cultural and policy sites.

1. Physical Site

The contestation in this site was revealed on the evolution of *lewo* (village) function in Adonara society. In Adonara context, *lewo* has sacred function. Traditionally, *lewo* in Adonara are defined not as territories, but as ritual units, and they are marked not by their limits but by their focal point. However, because of a transformation from subsisten society to be productive society which has some implications to the social and ritual roles of *lewo*, the basis of *lewo* also moved. In New Order Regime, *lewo* have been administratively replaced by village (*desa*), and as a result, the ritual discourses of the *lewo* have been replaced by the community discourses of the *desa*. Thus, as units of community identity, though, *desa* does not always correspond to indigenious ritual units again (Lutz, 1986: 71-72).

After decentralization policy and local autonomy which possible with *UU No. 22/1999* about *Local Government* and then revised by *UU No.32/2004*, brought paradigm alternation in managing local government in Indonesia. This regulation gives chance for local government to arrange their own government, opening space for participation and to express local plurality in a local level. Consequently, local government has authority to restructure their local government in order to implement

the local autonomy. It arouses idea of '*pemekaran*' to form new autonomy region (*daerah otonom baru*) either in province or regency level. A simple process for shaping new region which is based on *pemekaran* regulation creates new trend in study of local politics in Indonesia called *booming pemekaran* (Pratikno in Mubarak, 2006).

Recently, the idea of *pemekaran* Adonara as *kabupaten* (local government), separated from East Flores government, also emerges in Adonara because of the lack of the local government capacity in delivering public services for local community. To fulfill the administrative condition that ruled by Government Regulation No. 78/2007 (*Peraturan Pemerintah No. 78/2007 tentang Tata Cara Pembentukan, Penghapusan, dan Penggabungan Daerah*) to form Adonara *kabupaten*, Adonara must had at least 5 sub-districts (*kecamatan*). During New Order Regime, Adonara just have 2 sub-districts i.e. East Adonara and West Adonara. By PP No. 129/1999, Adonara begins to devide their region and produces more villages to form new sub-district. As result, currently, Adonara has had 6 sub-districts, and now in process to reach 8 sub-districts.

Accordingly, Adonara have to divide their village (*pemekaran desa*-subdivision of village) to reach 8 sub-districts. In some cases, *pemekaran desa* causes conflict among villages in Adonara, particularly related with a fusion between government administrative structure and adat border. It is because *lewo* - which representing adat village - must be divided into some villages - according to government structure. Since the New Order Regime created uniformity structure of government units for all regions in Indonesia, it made local structure in local community have been neglected or have been tranformed to suit with government necessity. Then, in Adonara, *lewo* parallels the village. Consequently, when the idea of *pemekaran desa* was implemented, one *lewo* was divided into one or more villages eventhough each *lewo* had only one *nubanara*. Therefore, these villages try to claim *nubanara*. When *lewo* was divided into one or more villages, it could be emerges claim to the *nubanara* because village does not become a *lewo* automatically. In short, they were still one *lewo* eventhough their village could be different because of *pemekaran desa*.

As result, *pemekaran desa* have caused some conflicts in village society because of the competing of adat symbols such as *nubanara* or *rumah adat* (adat house or culture house) among those villages in one

lewo. Only *lewo* has *nubanara*, and only *lewo* border was made by the ancestor. So, *lewo* border can not be changed. For example, the case of claiming *nubanara* between Way Burak village and Narasaosina village in Eastern Adonara because of the *pemekaran desa*. This conflict emerged of a misunderstanding among Adonarese who regarded *lewo* as village. Hence, the people thinks that *pemekaran desa* is equal to *pemekaran lewo*. Indeed, *pemekaran desa* only divides border administratively but not the symbols of *lewo*. These misperception among the Adonarese creates conflict in grabbing the symbols of adat in *lewo*.

The conflict among village in one *lewo* which driven by *pemekaran desa* above reveals the contestation that is encouraged by the state force and the adat force. In one hand, the Adonarese needs to divide their villages and their subdistricts in to realize Adonara as *kabupaten*. On the other hand, *pemekaran* can separate the unity of adat symbol but the Adonarese is not ready yet to face these problem. Then, the idea of *pemekaran* can be seens as factor that can rise new conflict in Adonara, particularly related to border which is the most conflicting in Adonara island.

2. Social-cultural site

The history of Demon and Paji in this island had contributed on outbreak of violence in Adonara. Under the New Order Regime, the government and community leaders have tried hard suppress the Demon and Paji identifications and hostilities, and they have been successful, but other, similar conflicts still occur from time to time. Data from the period 1990-1996 show that the tradition of murder adhered to in the past still prevail in Adonara. Of 24 cases involving land and women on Adonara, around 23 cases (96%) were followed by acts of murder and violence (Barnes 2002: 489). In fact, long before this period, there were already very many bloody incidents causing the loss of thousand of lives (Dore in Barnes 2002: 489).

It is evident that hars discipline of the Soeharto dictatorship never completely eliminated low level conflict (Barnes, 2005:15). In contrary, the collapse of New Order Regime, then, led to any increase in overt violence or hostility in Adonara. Many of the conflicts occured in Adonara over the past several years were closely related to adat, and the most violence

conflicts were land wars between villages⁷. For the Adonarese, murder is an important cultural symbol of Adonarese manhood. They liked the image of Adonarese people as *keras* (hard) and self-reliant, and for many, specially for men, this image was well expressed in the role and the symbol of the warrior (Lutz, 1986: 90-91).

Indeed, murder (*tubak belo*) for Adonarese not represent violence, harshness, but represents an implementation of God's blessing and thus represents a 'holy' activity (Barnes, 2002: 491). Murder for Adonarese is the way to find justice and truth that revealed by blessing from *Rerawulan* (God). It means that the decision to kill is not just based on emotional sense, but based on blessing from *Rerawulan* and ancestors. To gain blessing from *Rerawulan* is not easy because must follow a long process of murder ritual. This ritual is very secret and only certain people know it.

Notwithstanding, the Adonarese have murder ritual which part of this ritual shows how to create peace building among the villages. Murder ritual itself divided into three phases. (1) the pre-murder phase which compares the rite of *mula eken peri wato, gahin koda* (plant the bamboo, stack up the stones, request the speech), and the ritual of *bale nuren* (request the dream, i.e., return certainty about the outcome via a dream). (2) the phase of carrying out the murder which comprises the rites of *beliwane pana* (make war), *oron hurit* (victory shout), and *odo mei/getun* (cleaning off the blood/tearing with the hand). (3) the post-murder phase comprising the pre-peace phase and the peace. The rites performed his stage are *bito batan hoe bake* (open and pull out, offer betel) and *mela sareka/holi limat* (make good/shake our hands) (Barnes, 2002: 490).

The Adonarese itself have unique culture in managing various conflicts in their island. And, the contestation in social-cultural site reveals in managing conflict among Adonara village between *muder ritual* (customary practice) and legal institutions practice (state or church) to reconcile wars among village (*perang tanding*). In fact, there are two sources that forces conflict among the Adonarese: land and women⁸. For

7 The latest instance of conflict took place in 2000 between inhabitants of the villages of Lewokeda, Lewokelen, and Tobi following the forceful seizure of clan land (Barnes 2002: 489).

8 Focus Group Discussion with youth people of Adonarese, Adonara, April, 9th, 2008. RH. Barnes (2002) also shows that the data on cases concerning land and women were collected by the police of the Sectors of East and West Adonara and the Division of Public Order of the Regency of East Flores in 1996.

Adonarese, these conflicts have function for contests of courage (*mean bereketen*, bravery) and ending in attempts to kill each other. On Adonara context “killing” was drawn as “alternative dispute settlement” in order to counter legal official legal institutions which are used by the public (Raharjo in Barnes 2002:489).

Hence, the contestation in social-cultural site related to customary practice vis a vis state modernity. Eventhough Adonara is famous as murderer island, indeed, it has several forms of ritual which reveals peace building and returning the parties to unity such as *bito batan hoe bake* (the rite to return *koda* or blessing given by *Rerawulan* for the murder) and *mela sareka* rite or *hodi limat* through the *ega tuak* ceremony (mixing palm wine), *gelu neak* (exchanging coconut shell cups), *gelu wua warak* (exchanging betel baskets), and *bua hama hama* (eating together) between the two sides which had been divided by conflict (Barnes 2002: 493).

If the violent conflict among villages (*perang tanding*) occurred, the peace building process would be facilitated by the third party either the church or the local government. The church, actually, has certain institution to overcome the existing conflicts. The church also uses adat law to reconcile those conflicts, and only uses civil law as the last alternative⁹. However, these efforts often failure. Civil law more used to finish the existing conflicts in Adonara society.

Accordingly, many conflicts in Adonara very difficult to solve because the state and the church ignores in using customary practice (murder ritual) or less understand the adat law (murder ritual) to reconcile those conflicts. It might be the church and the state impose to use legal institutions practices to reconcile conflicts whereas the Adonarese still hold and practice their indigenious ordering (murder ritual). Therefore, it is very important to the church and the state to figure out the logic beyond the murder ritual, and not insist to use civil law or legal institutions to reconcile those conflicts. If not, the Adonarese will still neglect to the presence of Church through priests who help to reconcile those conflicts.

In short, the power of adat mechanism through murder ritual can not compensate both of the power of state and church. Since continuing interaction between the Adonarese and their adat is embedded in

9 Interview with Lazarus Koten, SVD, priest in parish of Waiwerang, April, 9th, 2008.

Adonarese since the newborn baby. And, the parents have obligation to introduce the adat. Hence, the Adonarese prefer to customary practices rather than modern practices through law. "Legal practice/legal law" for Adonarese is adat law, not civil law. Thus, Vatter description of Adonara as the island of immoderation. Immoderation in this case based on outsider's rationality, not insider's standart rationality (the Adonarese).

3. Policy Site

For long time, since the arrival of Catholic Church in Adonara, the church concerns only on providing public facilities such as educational services and health services. In this case, the church was compensated with the roles of the state. Since the independence of Indonesia, the state was lack capacity in serving citizens necessity. The neglectfulness of the state function was replaced by the church. As result, the 1950an until 1960an were periode in which the social development programs of the Church such as education and health care services grew rapidly¹⁰.

Since under the New Order Regime, the roles of the state became powerful in development activities, specially in educational sector. Since 1960/1970, state became much more important as centre of power in East Flores because of a remarkable increase in government finances. The subsidies from national government to local government had increased between the early 1970's and mid-1980's because of oil revenue from national budget (export and domestic sale of oil). Therefore, development activities and personnel capacities had also increased.

During this periode, the Church in East Flores had relatively limited amount of funds and personnel available compared to the state. This situation caused by two regulations from the Minister of Religious Affairs for the Church after 1978 i.e. *Surat Keputusan No. 70/1978 and Surat Keputusan No. 77/1978*. These regulations restricting the activities of foreign misionaries in Indonesia and foreign funds received by Indonesians, including the Church. These regulation were not very

¹⁰ At the end of 1949, there were 74 Catholic schools with 9.703 pupils in East Flores. By the end of 1959, there were 134 Catholic primary schools and eights Catholic secondary schools. By 1969, there were 201 Catholic primary schools, 19 junior high schools, three senior high schools and two kindergartens in East Flores. Almost all of these schools were subsidized by the government. However most of the teachers were church-paid, only some of them were state-appointed and state-paid (Bayo, 1989: 84).

beneficial for the church because most of local priests and local church funds came from foreign aids such as Germany, Netherland, and Ireland (Ala 1989:130). Consequently, the church experienced lack of funding for social development activities. Educational cost and health care cost which held by the church became more expensive than educational cost and health care cost which held by the state. In order to run their roles in educational services, health services, and religious services, the church began to cooperate with the state.

Thus, since the late 1970's, the church received subsidies from the government, accepted the appointed of state teacher in the Catholic schools and of state health care personnel to its health care facilities. Even, in certain cases, the church has accepted the conversion of some of its secondary schools into state schools in order to lighten its financial burden (Ala, 1989: 130-131). The cooperation between the church and the state caused the tension roles and contestation. On several occasions, the church protested certain government policies which were considered as a threat either to catholicism or to the position of the church in East Flores. Sometime, in fact, the church has been able to take "retaliatory measures" such as getting state schools made into Catholics ones (Wilber and Jameson in Ala 1989: 132).

Finally, the state began to play their roles in social development activities, specially in educational sector such as building a primary schools called *SD Inpres* program. Step by step these programs was moved the existing education institutions which held by the church. This shifting reveals the tension roles between the church and the state in educational sector and health sector. These tensions has continued after the fall of New Order Regime.

Some Consequences of Contestation for the Adonarese, the church, and the state

The contestation among the state, the church and the adat have some consequences for the Adonarese, the Church itself, and the state itself. For the Adonarese, these contestation caused two implications.

Firstly, the Adonarese begin to reconstruction their identity. Decentralization and autonomy have effect of encouraging local communities to reconstruct and re-imagine their identities and their adat.

To response this situation, some of local elites and local leaders in Adonara revealed the idea of *pemekaran* Adonara as *kabupaten*, separated from East Flores Regency. There are many factors driven the idea of *pemekaran* Adonara. But, issues of incapacity of the state was dominated to emerge this idea. *Pemekaran* was used by Adonarese to reconstruct their identity although the Adonarese were Lamohotese too.

Identity is defined as people's sources about meaning and experiances. Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation. Identities can also be originated from dominant institutions, they become identities only when and if social actors internalize them, and construct their meaning around this internalization. In short, from a sociological perspective, all identities are constructed¹¹. The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations. But, individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework (Castells, 1997: 6-8).

In Adonara context, the Adonarese uses material from geography and from history for reconstruct their identity through *pemekaran*. Geography reason is revealed because Adonara is a separated island from Flores mainland. Eventhough the state and the church endeovur to provide public services in this island, the social development still

11 Since the social construction of identity always takes place in a context marked by power relationships, Castells distinction between three forms and origins of identity building (types of identity-building), and each type of identity building process leads to a different outcome in constituting society. First, *legitimizing identity*; introduce by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination *vis a vis* social actors. Second, *resistance identity*; generated by those actors that are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society. Third, *project identity*; when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure. See Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Blackwell Publisher, Oxford, 1997, p.7-10.

limited. Hence, *pemekaran* issue has been used as political instrument to acquire new administrative region as *kabupaten*. Whereas from historical materials, the idea of *pemekaran* Adonara had been rooted in the 1963 when the local parliamentary called DPRDGR (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong*) was determined 3 region in East Flores i.e. Larantuka, Lembata, and Adonara would be formed as *kabupaten*. Since 1999, Lembata was separated from East Flores Regency and becomes own regency called *Kabupaten Lembata*. While Adonara region still be a part of East Flores Regency. Thus, by decentralization and local autonomy policy today, some of the Adonarese are imposes the central government to acquire Adonara island as *kabupaten*. On the contrary, the *pemekaran* idea appears that the Adonarese, actually, need the presence of the state. In other word, "bringing the state back into Adonara".

Secondly, the contestation among the state, the church, and the adat in some cases caused competing values among the Adonarese, particularly competing values between adat values and Catholicism values. This competing values is seen in religious differentiation between the church and the Adonarese to be "true" Catholic¹². According to Jose Casanova (1994), some aspects of the modern differentiation between private and public religions which already appear within the social scientific study of religion as the distinction between "individual" and "group" religiosity at the intercation level of analysis; as the distinction between "religious communities" and "commnity cult" at the organization level of analysis; and as the distiction between "religion" and "world" at the societal level of analysis (Casanova, 1994: 43-44).

According to interaction level of analysis, the presence of Catholicism inside Adonara society has not yet touching up to individual religious or has not became *personal religious* yet, since Catholicism is still regarded as *group religiosity*. Whereas, if we use organization level of analysis, Catholicism in Adonara still reflects *religious communities*, not *community cult*. In Adonara, Catholicism works in formalistic face such as religious practices (pray in Church, attend Eucharisty, and so on). For the Adonarese, becoming *true* Catholic is still in *religious community* level. The *religious community* walks succession and together with adat. The interaction between Catholicism and adat is reflected in *religious dimension*

12 The term "true" Catholic was adopted from Maribeth Erb (2005).

because either adat and Catholicism has religious aspect. The religious aspect of Catholic, on the contrary, supporting adat beliefs.

The Adonarese and Catholic Church have different definition about 'true' Catholic. For Adonarese, Catholic means following all formalistic religious ritual that held by the Church. So, be Catholic is considered as *group religiosity*, not *personal religius*. On other hand, be Catholic in Church's way of thinking is Catholicism as *personal religious*. Thus, Catholic values will be held by Adonarese in their everyday life. It means all conflict, revenge, murder in this island can decrease. However, because of adat more powerful in influencing the way of life of the Adonarese, the Catholicism values were declined and replaced by the *adat* values.

While for the church, the consequences tends to make the church to be aware with their policy to implant Catholicism values for the Adonarese. For long time the church has used charity approach and concern in social services for the Adonarese until now. Then, under New Order Regime Church also adopted "new-catholicism-suku" in deeping Catholicism in grassroots. This approach assumes that *suku* or clans are very important and have a great impact on the socio-political and economic life there. Therefor, by the early 1970's, the church's structures had hardly penetrated the clans. Aware that East Flores is a very *sukuistic* society and the importance of *suku* in East Flores, the church wanted to establish "new-catholic-suku" namely *gabungan/umat basis* (base communities). By this approach, the church hopes its influence will go more deeply to the grass-roots (Ala, 1989: 187).

Unfortunately, this approach did not worked well. The church policy in social development is kept dominated to support government roles in those development sector. Because of charity approach is very strong and dominants in Flores, many people describe the priest's tasks as *sakramen dan saksemen* (sacraments and sack of cement) (Prior in Erb, 2007: 260). Webb, who writes about Christian churches across the Sunda Island, also has some criticism of a few priests who had worked on Flores, fowards the church's foreign aid programmes, that the church taught the people to become 'beggars' (Webb in Erb, 2007: 260). Whereas Y.B Mangunwijaya, the outstanding priest, architect and novelist, complains that, "in general, the Catholic Church in Indonesia has focussed more of its effort on helping the poor via its

charity programs, but the structural dimension of poverty has not been touched much by the church."¹³

Accordingly, it can be assumed that for the Adonarese, becoming 'true' Catholic meant allowing all formalistic religion rituals in church such as going to the church for praying. It reveals that the effectiveness of Church effort to impart Catholic values in Adonarese is still limited. There are some reasons. *First*, Catholics in other villages seldom come out in solidarity with the victims of these violations. Also, the protests are often led by members of church hierarchy rather than by lay people, because many of the leaders of the laity are civil servants who have declared their *monoloyalitas* to the government.

Second, the faith of most Catholics in East Flores especially in the village areas is still not very deeply affected by Church teaching. For them, Catholicism is more folk religious practice rather than a personal commitment to God. *Third*, there is still a widespread belief among ordinary Catholics especially in the village areas that the work of the Church is the concern of the clergy. Consequently, many lay people are little more than spectators, seldom involved in its work and its concern. *Fourth*, the economic condition of the ordinary people means that most of their time and energy must be devoted towards maintaining a livelihood for themselves and their families.

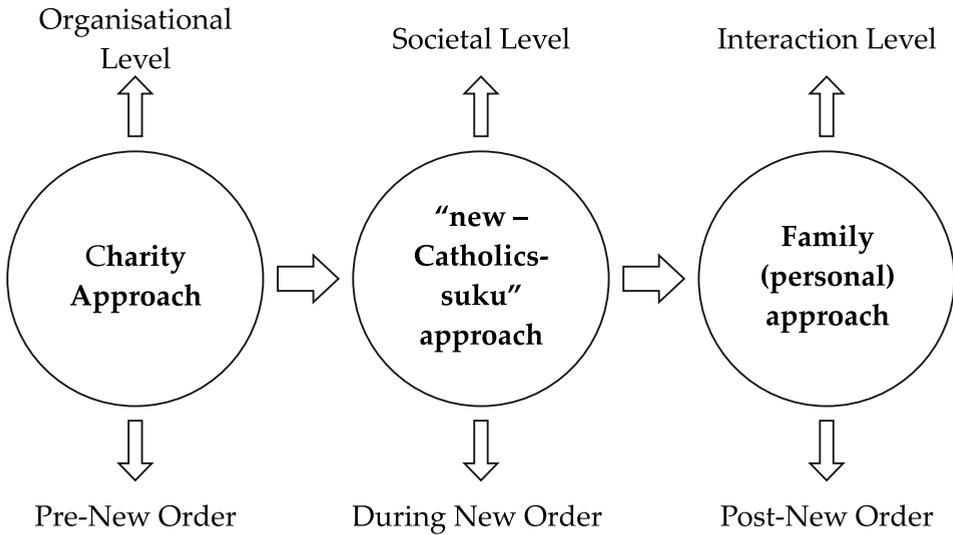
Therefore, after the fall of the New Order Regime, the Church changes their policy in interaction level and uses a family approach. Currently, the Church attempts to implant in the personal lives of the Adonarese through family to reconstruct Adonarese identity as "hard" person, cold-blooded, merciless people. The Church tries to build Adonarese identity as kindness persons, non-violent, compassionate, and so on.

After the New Order Regime, the Church changes their strategy to reconstruct the Adonarese character. The Church uses family or personal approach to implant Catholic values. This approach attempts to reduce violence and hostility among the Adonarese. The never-ending violence and murder is very ironic considering the presence of various (modern) social organizations and institutions such as the church (and the state) which directly or indirectly strive to stem this culture of violence (Barnes, 2002: 489). Therefore, faith

13 See YB. Mangunwijaya, SJ., "Gereja Antara Yesus dari Nasareth dan Caesar", in *Prisma*, 9 September 1982, p. 39.

building applied by church tends to treat individual as personal in changing group or community further. If individual has strong character as Catholics, the church hopes that the Adonarese will not engage to communal conflict.

The Shifting of the Catholic Church Approach



While for the state, contestation among the state, the church, and the *adat* have impacts in government activities. Even *adat* also influences the way of thinking of local government in East Flores. On the discourse level, after the fall of New Order Regime, currently, East Flores government have been practising "Development with Culture Paradigm" (*Pembangunan Berparadigma Budaya*).

While in practical level, *adat* still keeps playing in managing government. For Adonara society, *Bupati* (Head of District) equal with the King. So, when a *Bupati* will be inaugurated, the *Bupati* ought to practice *adat* ritual first before his inaugurated in local parliamentary. It reveals that *adat* is the highest position in Adonara daily life. In government activities, then, *adat* also occupy the honour place. When the government officer will go to the village, they have to visit the head of *adat* community (*tetua adat*) first before visiting the head of village.

Concluding Remarks

The interaction among the state, the church, and the adat in daily life of Adonara society reveals the contestation among these forces in local politics. From the contestation which occurred in physical, social culture, and policy site, the power of adat is still dominant while the power of the church and the state were declines. It appears that the ascendent adat has been existing in Adonara. Adat never died in Adonara eventhough some aspects of it were suppressed by the government or the church. Adonarese values and culture, indeed, had been renewed before decentralization and local autonomy policy adopted by Indonesia government. But, it is give greater place for local community to express their culture precisely.

In contrast, the church declines. The concern of the church on charity approach makes the church ignores to instill Catholicism values. The war among villages (*perang tanding*) which is still ocured until the present time is the evident that the church's role to protect 'morality' the Adonarese is fall. While the state is also neglected by the Adonarese because the development was slow and steady. But, by the decentralization and local autonomy policy the local government takes responsibility for linking up with society by managing everyday life's issues. It meant that the state wants to be close with the people in benevolent faces. Therefore, the idea of *pemekaran* emerges to guarantee Adonarese rights as citizens. *****

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