Religious Violence and Conciliation in Indonesia

Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas

Sumanto Al Qurtuby

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Maluku in eastern Indonesia is the home to Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics who had for the most part been living peaceably since the sixteenth century. In 1999, brutal conflicts broke out between local Christians and Muslims, and escalated into large-scale communal violence once the *Laskar Jihad*, a Java-based armed jihadist Islamic paramilitary group, sent several thousand fighters to Maluku. As a result of this escalated violence, the previously stable Maluku became the site of devastating interreligious wars.

This book focuses on the interreligious violence and conciliation in this region. It examines factors underlying the interreligious violence as well as those shaping post-conflict peace and citizenship in Maluku. The author shows that religion—both Islam and Christianity—was indeed central and played an ambiguous role in the conflict settings of Maluku, whether in preserving and aggravating the Christian–Muslim conflict, or supporting or improving peace and reconciliation.

Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and interviews as well as historical and comparative research on religious identities, this book is of interest to Indonesia specialists, as well as academics with an interest in anthropology, religious conflict, peace and conflict studies.

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Acknowledgments

This book is the fruit of countless interviews and conversations, extensive field-work, and a close reading of textual sources on the Moluccas violence and con-ciliation. When I started conducting fieldwork in January 2010 on the role of religion in conflict and peace in the Moluccas for my dissertation on which this book is based, some scholars, including Ambonese and Moluccans, wondered why I was studying and researching such a topic. For them, indeed for most social scientists, analysts, and commentators, the story of the Moluccas unrest is not about religion but political economy. It is precisely such overwhelming state-ments on the political economy of the violence that drove me to undertake research on the contribution of religion to the Christian-Muslim communal con-flict and peacebuilding in the Moluccas.

Some materials in this book have been published previously in International Journal of Asian Studies, Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations, International Journal on World Peace, and Southeast Asian Studies. I thank these journals for granting me permission to reuse and republish the materials in this book. I also cite my articles in those journals in the Bibliography.

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To his loving memory, this book is dedicated.

Abbreviations and glossary

ABS	*Ambonsche Burger school* (European school set up in Ambon in the 1850s and 1860s for children of Ambonese burgers).
adat	System of mores or customary law; custom; tradition.
AMGPM	*Angkatan Muda Gereja Protestan Maluku* (Youth Organization of the Moluccan Protestant Church).
Agas	Group of child Christian militias (derived from name of a small-type of mosquito).
Alhilal	Ambonese Arab-sponsored Islamic institutions of learning across the Moluccas. It has some 200 *madrasahs* (Islamic schools) and one university (*Universitas Alhilal* in Ambon city).
Alifuru	Generic term for hill tribes in Maluku, especially from Seram Island, traditionally having derogatory connotations of someone bad-mannered, uncultured, and uncivilized; the term is also used locally to indicate that part of the population that has adhered to the indigenous cultures, resisting the influences of both Islam and Christianity.
anak negeri	Lit. "son of *negeri*" (village); refers to a sort of indigenous people; used by Ambonese/Malukans as identity marker of their native status, to differentiate themselves from migrants.
anak dagang	Lit. "son of trade"; term used by Ambonese for migrants or outsiders, particularly from Sulawesi, who came to Ambon to do business.
aroha	Derived from *roh* (spirit), refers to spirits of ancestors and spirit of Prophet Muhammad. In Hatuhaha, Haruku Island, *aroha* is also called *manian* or *perayaan gaharu*, a celebration involving burning of aloes-wood incense.
Bahasa tanah	Indigenous language(s) of the Ambonese island.
baileo/baileu	Ambonese traditional village meeting hall; village council house; center of community and *adat* religion.
baku bae	Traditional mechanism of conflict resolution and reconciliation in Ambon and Central Maluku; restoration after quarrel.

Baku Bae   *Gerakan Baku Bae* (Baku Bae Movement).

batu pamali   Ambonese term for a sacred offering stone.

BBM   Abbreviation for "Buton, Bugis, Makassar" (three of the major ethnic groups from South and Southeast Sulawesi known for their inter-island trading and settlement outside their homeland. The term is common not only in Ambon/Maluku but also in other parts of eastern Indonesia, including Papua).

BIMM   *Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku* (Council for Moluccan Muslims).

BPS   *Badan Pusat Statistik* (Central Bureau of Statistics).

Brimob   *Brigadir Mobil* (Mobile Brigade).

Bupati   Head of regency (*kabupaten*).

Burger   Group of Ambonese or Eurasians known as free citizens (*orang bebas* or *merdeka*). In return for services rendered to Dutch East Indies Company (VOC), these groups—and their descendents—were declared to be free citizens, namely, free from compulsory services for VOC and obligations of the spice monopoly. The Burger settlement in Ambon city is now called Mardika, derived from the Dutch *Mardijkers* (lit. "free people").

cakalele   Maluku's traditional war dance involving a sword and shield.

Camat   Head of *kecamatan* (sub-regency).

Coker   Stands for *cowok keren* (handsome youths); refers to a group of Christian gangs led by Berty Loupatty (based in Kudamati of Ambon city).

CSO   Civil society association.

DPR   *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (Indonesian Legislative Assembly).

DPRD   *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* (Indonesian parliament at provincial and regional level).

fam or *mata rumah*   Collection of number of clan groups (ranging from 15 to 25), organized on the patrilineal-patrilocal principle.

FKM   *Front Kedaulatan Maluku* (Moluccan Sovereignty Front).

GKPB   *Gereja Kristus Perjanjian Baru* (New Covenant Church of Christ).

GPM   *Gereja Protestan Maluku* (Moluccan Protestant Church).

IAIN   *Institute Agama Islam Negeri* (State Institute of Islamic Studies).

ICMI   *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals).

Indische Kerk   State Church of the Indies.

inlander   Dutch term for native.

jemaat   Smallest unit of Protestant congregation.

kabong	Ambonese term for garden.
kabupaten	Administrative district or regency.
kampung burger	Burger village.
kapata	Traditional greeting formulas and shorthand histories consisting of, generally, old songs in which episodes of the past are told; Ambonese traditional sung verse.
kapitang	Ambonese term for *adat* war leader (i.e., "captain").
kepala soa	Head of *soa* (i.e., collection of kin-groups).
kecamatan	Administrative sub-regency.
kewang	Ambonese term for head of land/sea affairs.
klasis	Unit of Protestant congregation at district/regional level.
KNIL	*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger* (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army).
KOMPAK	*Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis* (Crisis Management Committee).
kompeni	Indonesian/Malay term for Dutch colonials.
Kopassus	*Komando Pasukan Khusus* (Special Forces Command).
Kudaputih	Faction of Christian fighters in Ambon led by Agus Wattimena.
langgar	Prayer house.
Laskar Jihad	Java-based Islamic paramilitary group (founded in early 2000) led by Ja'far Umar Thalib responsible for the Maluku wars (the group is now inactive).
Linggis	Group of Muslim child fighters during the Maluku conflict.
madrasah	Islamic school.
midras	Ambonese term for *madrasah* (Islamic institution of learning).
marinyo	Ambonese term for a *soa* messenger (an *adat* official who broadcasts information and announcements from *raja* to people in *negeri*/village).
mata rumah	Exogamous patrilineal clan (household, patrilineage).
MUI	*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulamas Council).
negeri	Ambonese term for village or, more precisely, "*adat* village" (in Indonesian/Malay the term equals *negara*, "state").
negeri lama	Ambonese term for "old village," i.e., the original settlements.
NGO	Nongovernmental organization.
NU	*Nahdlatul Ulama* (Indonesian Islamic movement).
Nunusaku	Name of the legendary mountain in Seram (largest island in Maluku) and source of the three rivers (Eti, Tala, and Sapalewa). It is traditionally regarded as the beginning and the end, namely the source and the destiny of life.
Nusa Ina	Ambonese term for "mother land" or Island of Seram.
oom	Term of address for older man in Ambon; it originally meant "older Ambonese soldier."

orang kaya	Lit. "wealthy man"; Ambonese title for headman in the hierarchy established under Dutch; does not really imply "rich person" as in standard Indonesian/Malay, but is simply a title granted by Dutch at village level, like *raja* or *patih* (at present, such a title no longer exists in Ambon).
Panglima	Commander, military or paramilitary.
Pancasila	Indonesian national ideology consisting of five basic principles (*panca*, "five," *sila*, "foundation"), namely the belief in one God, humanity that is just and civilized, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the wisdom of representative deliberation, and social justice for all Indonesians.
Parkindo	*Partai Kristen Indonesia* (Indonesian Protestant Party).
Pasukan Jihad	Ambonese/Moluccan (including North Moluccan) Islamic militia groups during the Maluku wars.
pastor	Priest (for Catholics).
patasiwa/*patalima*	Lit. "division of nine" (*patasiwa*), "division of five" (*patalima*); alliance system on Seram Island dividing island into two parts corresponding roughly to west and east Seram, respectively; found in various forms throughout central and southeast Maluku.
PDIP	*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle).
pela	Traditional inter-village (sometimes inter-clan) relationship. A common term in Ambon, *pela* refers to traditional ceremonial bonds of friendship and mutual obligation established between two or more villages often encompassing both Christian and Muslim villages in a single alliance. It is conceived of as an enduring and inviolable brotherhood, an alliance that has to be renewed regularly through important ceremonies and solemn oaths.
pela-gandong	Relations beyond the village level based on genealogical ties.
pemuda	Youth.
pemekaran	Lit. "blossoming"; subdivision of administrative region, such as province or district into two or more smaller ones.
pendeta	Reverend or priest (for Protestant).
Perda	*Peraturan Daerah* (Regional Regulation), issued by regional governments.
pesantren	Islamic boarding school.
PKI	*Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party).
PNI	*Partai Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party).
Poltek	*Politeknik* (college in Ambon).
putra daerah	Lit. "son of the region" (i.e., native people).

raja	Ambonese term for "village head" (Indonesian term for "king"); traditional village leader in Ambon and Central Maluku; highest ranked indigenous headman under the Dutch system.
reformasi	(Political-economic) reformation.
RMS	*Republik Maluku Selatan* (Republic of South Moluccas, Ambon-based secessionist movement in 1950).
Salam-Sarane	Ambonese traditional terms for Islam and Christianity.
saniri	Traditional village council in Ambon area.
SARA	*Suku, agama, ras, antar-golongan* (tribal, religious, racial, and intergroup relations).
Satgas	*Satuan Tugas* (Security Taskforce).
Sinode	Synod.
soa	Kin-group consisting of a number of *mata rumah*; a sub-division of village consisting of collection of families led by *kepala soa* (head of soa).
STOVIL	*School tot Opleiding van Inlandsleeranen* (religious school for the natives established by Dutch).
tenggara	Lit. "Southeast." In Maluku, term means "people from southeast Maluku" or "southerners."
TNI	*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Armed Forces).
tete-nene moyang	Ambonese term for ancestors (of Ambonese people).
Tete Manis	Lit. "Sweet Grandfather"; the everyday term for referring to God parallels the *Tete Lanite* used in indigenous religions in Maluku.
tuagama	Ambonese term for a church caretaker.
UKIM	*Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku* (Ambon-based Christian university, linked to Moluccan Protestant Church).
uli	Traditional village federation found on Ambon-Lease Islands (e.g., Uli Hatuhaha in Haruku Island of Central Maluku).
Unpatti	*Universitas Pattimura* (Ambon's main public university).
Upu Lanite	Lit. "Lord of Heaven," the deity who descended from the sky to mate with the goddess *Tapele* ("Earth") creating all life prior to withdrawing into the sky again.
Volksraad	Peoples' Council during Dutch colonial rule.
VOC	*Vereenigde Oost-Indeische Compagnie* (Dutch East Indies Company).
walikota	Mayor.
wijkmeester	Head of kampung burger or *burgerkampoeng*.
Yon Gab	*Batalion Gabungan* (Joint Battalion).

Introduction

Indonesia's new chapter of modern-day history began in May 1998. In this month, this archipelagic country witnessed a dramatic and historic event: the downfall of the Suharto-led New Order dictatorial regime that had been in power for over 32 years. The long-ruling Suharto (1966–1998) was toppled by an alliance of secular Muslims and non-Muslims, middle-class societies, democracy activists, students, and some political elites, following the economic crises that hit the world's largest Muslim country (about 88 percent of a roughly 240-million population embracing Islam) beginning in late 1997 (see, for example, Hefner 2000; Mujani 2003). In the beginning, the process of post-Suharto transition went peacefully. Unlike other undemocratic countries that commonly turned to deadly violence after a revolution has taken place, Indonesia's political transformation, at least at first, remained relatively peaceful. The country thus had been widely featured as a Muslim nation that was successful in handling the political shift from an authoritarian military regime to a democratic civilian government.

This nice picture of peaceful and nonviolent "transition toward democracy," however, was soon shattered by widespread outbursts of deadly sectarian conflicts and vicious ethno-religious communal violence in the months following Suharto's overthrow. These events raised suspicions that Suharto and his followers were behind the violence. The intergroup violent conflicts occurred not only in Java's main towns and places but also in "outer Indonesia," including the districts of Sambas, Sampit, Poso, Bima, Ambon, Halmahera, Ternate, and Tobelo, among others. The violence resulted in the displacement of some 1.5 million refugees, the deliberate destruction of urban and suburban areas, thousands of casualties, and a plague of criminality and public lynching (see, for example, Aragon 2001; Aspinal 2008; Hedman 2008; Hefner 2005a; Nordholt and van Klinken 2007; Pannell 2003; van Klinken 2007).

Religiously inspired anti-pluralist actions, vigilante attacks, Islamist terrorism, and the rise of uncivilized civilian groupings or paramilitary groups, whether ethnically, regionally, or religiously based, have also dominated the scene of Indonesian politics and cultures since the reformation "opened the door" for this nation. Martin van Bruinessen (2013) characterizes these new trends of the post-New Order's era the "conservative turn," typified by the

growth of radical Islamic organizations and hardline Muslims that have caused inter- and intra-religious clashes, and numerous incidents of religious intolerance and intimidation in the name of Islam. The cases have included, but are not limited to, attacks against churches, a synagogue, Sufi groups, followers of Ahmadiyyah, local sects, and minority Shiite Muslims. The extremist Muslim groups not only targeted non-Muslims and religious minorities but also certain groups of Muslims having ideas and practicing sorts of Islam different from those of Islamic radicals. A number of research and advocacy centers, such as the Setara Institute for Peace and Democracy (Jakarta) and the Institute for Social and Religious Studies (Semarang), have well documented cases of religious intolerance and religious freedom violations in contemporary Indonesia.

Of all the violent conflicts to erupt in Indonesia after 1998, the religious violence in Ambon, one of the country's largest urban centers, according to Gerry van Klinken (2007: 88), was the most appalling in terms of the scale of the death and destruction (ICG 2000a, 2000b). It was also among the most complex in term of actors involved in the conflict, phases of violence, and motives behind the tragedy (Bohm 2002, 2005). Apart from the 1975 and 1999 savage military onslaughts in East Timor (now Timor-Leste), the violence in the Moluccas, particularly in the Ambon city of Maluku as well as North Maluku from 1999 to 2005, was the most shocking violence seen in Indonesian history since the anticommunist pogroms of 1965/1966 (cf. Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Coppel 2006; Kingsbury 2005).

The vicious violence between Christians and Muslims from various ethnic groups on Ambon Island and the Moluccas in general began on January 19, 1999. The initially small quarrels turned into deadly large-scale communal violence once Java-based armed jihadist Islamic paramilitary groups, especially the *Laskar Jihad* ("holy war" militias), with the support of some elite members of military and police, sent several thousand fighters to Ambon, the provincial capital of Maluku, in mid-2000 (ICG 2001; Noorhaidi 2005). As a result of this escalating violence, the previously relatively peaceful Maluku became the site of devastating interreligious conflicts. Indeed, notwithstanding Maluku's history of separatist resistance to Jakarta and Indonesian nation-state since the proclamation of the *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS, Republic of South Moluccas) in 1950 (Bouman 1960), Maluku had a reputation during the New Order for enjoying relatively harmonious relations between Protestant, Muslim, and Catholic communities (Aragon 2000; Duncan 1998; Mujiburrahman 2006). Most experts and scholars of Indonesian society thus were baffled when a minor traffic incident in January 1999, between two young men of different religion and ethnicity from the regions of Batumerah and Mardika (both in Ambon city), triggered a string of bloody incidents between Christians and Muslims, spilling over from Ambon city to the corners of the Moluccan island.

The post-Suharto communal riots differ from previous forms that had broken out across the country in their nature, forms, patterns, and causes. Unlike the deadly violent conflicts in Aceh, Timor-Leste, and Papua, for instance, which are deeply rooted in the prolonged issues of regionalism, socio-political injustice,

economic discrimination, state-sponsored exploitation, and Jakarta-controlled development, the cycle of mass violence that emerged in post-New Order Indonesia is a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained simply under the rubric of "ethnic conflict," "religious violence," or "Islamist terrorism." In addition, the post-Suharto social chaos has considerable temporal specificity, shifting from one sort of violence to another in terms of its modalities (Erb 2005; Miller 2009). In addition, unlike the violence in Aceh or Papua which is far away from ethno-religious issues, the violence that took place in the final years and post-New Order era was marked by an ethno-religious nature (Bertrand 2004; Sidel 2006; Wilson 2008). The turmoil which erupted in various areas of the Moluccas also shares features in common with regard to the religious character of their collective conflict.

In his study of ethno-nationalist conflicts and collective violence in South Asia, Stanley Tambiah (1991, 1996) has observed that if scattered incidents of local brawls are to become full-blown communal wars, the tensions and resentments of everyday life must be removed from their place of origin and generalized into encompassing narratives of ethnic victimization and enmity. Tambiah refers to this process as "focalization" and "transvaluation." Tambiah (1996: 81) states: "Focalization progressively denudes local incidents and disputes of their contextual particulars, and transvaluation distorts, abstracts, and aggregates those incidents into larger collective issues of national or ethnic interest." It is precisely this process that gave the violent conflict in the Moluccas such an incendiary quality after 1999. What had begun as local grievances and a patchwork of alliances was gradually abstracted and focalized into a narrative of a religious clash by, in Robert Hefner's (2005a: 283) phrase, "the active presence of agents who have the discursive resources and social authority to disseminate a meta-narrative of communal peril and riposte."

What is the book about?

Focusing on Christian–Muslim violence and conciliation in Maluku or the Moluccas,[1] particularly in Ambon city and generally in Maluku province, this book is an attempt to explain and "make sense" of these events. This book is an ethnographic account of social change before, throughout, and after the collective violence. The book's underlying argument is that it is insufficient to study only conflict and violence; integration and pacification are also significant social phenomena that require documentation, analysis, interpretation, and explanation (Nardin 1996; Nordstrom and Martin 1992; Redekop 2002; Schmidt and Schröder 2001; Sponsel and Gregor 1994; Whittaker 1999; Wolf and Yang 1996).

There are at least three vital issues or topics discussed and analyzed in this book, all of which are surprisingly missing from most previous and existing literature on the Moluccas conflict (e.g., Adam 2009; Aditjondro 2001; Spyer 2002; Suaedy 2000; Tanamal 2000; Turner 2006; van Klinken 2001). The first issue is the historical legacies of colonial (especially Dutch and Japanese) and

post-colonial rule (Old Order and New Order) and society, including the role of European Christian missionaries (Portuguese Catholics and Dutch Reformed Protestants), Ambonese/Moluccan Christian leaders and ministers, and reformist Muslim groups (associated with either *Masyumi* or *Muhammadiyah*) that reached the island before Indonesia gained its independence in 1945—all could provide a fertile ground for the Moluccas violence to thrive. Not only colonial and post-colonial governments, but the presence of both Reformed Christianity and reformist Islam in the region could contribute to the process of militanization and radicalization of local Christian and Muslim societies (cf. McKenna 1998; van der Veer 1994). The history of Christian-Muslim relations in the Moluccas, it should be noted, was highly dynamic and unpredictable, marked by a constant ebb and flow. The encounter was marked by suspicions, tensions, oppositions, and violent conflicts, as well as by cooperation and dialogue across these religious communities.

The second crucial issue analyzed in this book deals with local dynamics and efforts of reconciliation processes and post-violence peacebuilding reconstruction (see Asefa 2003; Cortright 2008). It discusses issues of post-violence situations, including how local government and societies—both Christian and Muslim—struggle to resolve conflict, prevent renewed violence, and achieve a just peace and civil coexistence. The discussions about contemporary post-Peace Accord Moluccas aim at (1) understanding current situations in the region, including the most recent communal tensions in Ambon city and its surrounding areas, (2) knowing whether the peace treaty between the two religious groups set forth in 2002 run well or not, and (3) comprehending whether or not religious issues and identities still play a vital role in the social life of today's Moluccan Christians and Muslims.[2]

The third essential theme, which comprises the bulk of the book's arguments and analyses, concerns the role of religion in the conflict settings and social fields of the Moluccas. In brief, the primary focus of this book discusses the ambivalent role of religion as a source of violence and a resource for conciliation before, during, and after the mass violence (see Abu-Nimer 2003; Appleby 2000; Gopin 2000; Kimball 2003; McTernan 2003; Schirch 2004; Smock 2002; Tebay 2006). The word "religion," as used in this book, not only refers to religious doctrines, teachings, imagery, and symbols, but also religious agents (actors, adherents, groups, communities, networks, and organizations) who produce and reproduce religious practices, knowledge, and cultures (Asad 1983, 1993; Geertz 1976; Hefner 1989). This is to say, the term "religion" is not simply about beliefs, texts, doctrines, teachings, discourses, values, norms, or even ideology. It is also about social capital, that is social networks created by religious actors, namely, in Scott Appleby's (2000: 9) phrase, "people who have been formed by a religious community and who are acting with the intent to uphold, extend, or defend its values and precepts." This book thus can be viewed as an academic endeavor to reassess religious elements that can be used, on one hand, as a source for initiating and exacerbating conflict and violence, and on the other hand, as a resource for fostering integration, reconciliation, and social cohesion.

The book, furthermore, tries to understand factors underlying the interreligious communal violence and those hindering the post-violence resolution and peacemaking. It therefore explores not only the question of why and how the deadly Christian-Muslim fighting occurred in a region which had formerly been seen as a stable area and a less violent society, but also how these differing and competing religious groups portray the violent past, engage the current uneasy peace, and provide models of, and for, future coexistence. Giving these issues as the central focus of analysis, it means that this book tries to go beyond the "standard question" posed by most scholars of Indonesia or the Moluccas, that is: "Why did Maluku's Christians and Muslims abruptly become involved in such lethal communal violence which was previously absent in the modern history of Maluku?"

The term "communal violence" or "collective conflict" refers to those cases in which ordinary people, local masses, or civil populations steadily fight each other over a certain period of time (Adam 2009; cf. Brass 1997; Tambiah 1996). Addressing the query of "why Maluku fell into such massive conflict" is unquestionably significant since it can provide political, cultural, and sociological insight into the forces that underlay the mayhem. Such a question, however, is not enough to comprehend the dynamics, complexity, and varieties of collective violence. Accordingly, agreeing with Jeroen Adam (2009), other specific questions are needed to complement the initial query. Instead of simply asking "why conflict erupts," this book tries to elaborate, for instance, "what motivates ordinary people to continue fighting that could jeopardize their lives," or "why some people eagerly engage in the warfare while others refuse it or even support a peace project." Such questions are intended to address a change that might take place on the ground during wartime and its aftermath. Addressing these queries is also vital in part because the Maluku conflict was not a homogenous incident but rather a "heterogeneous riot" that erupted in a number of stages involving various actors, motives, and interests, in which religion and religious actors become one of the crucial components in this process.

In this regard, this book tries to examine the role of religious networks, organizations, discourses, and practices before, during, and after the collective conflict. It examines if and when these social and cultural resources contributed to the unrest, and how they may have helped or will have to create a public and pluralist culture capable of bridging ethno-religious divides. The book investigates whether religiously based organizations and networks in the Moluccas became one (among other) contributing structural or ideological influences on actors engaged in the violence. Finally, it tries to look at whether religious identity played a central role during the communal conflict or only provided symbolism and ideological conviction for their campaign to achieve more worldly goals such as political-economic interests. As shown in the following chapters, religious motives and aims became one of significant factors of those—radical militias and peace activists alike—involved in both violence and peace processes.

The Maluku violence thus provides a striking example of the rise of "resurgent religion" in contemporary world politics (Berger 1999). The Maluku case

also shows the phenomenon of the ambiguity of religion—or in Scott Appleby's (2000) term, the "ambivalence of the sacred"—in social life. While most scholars tend to neglect the important role of religion in the violence, I take this issue as a central focus of analysis, arguing that, while it was by no means an exclusive influence, religion did matter in the warfare and post-violence settings, whether in preserving and aggravating the discord or supporting and improving peace and reconciliation. In the context of the Moluccas conflict, it is almost impossible to undertake research and study the subject without examining the complex role of religion since it greatly contributed to the communal riots (see, for example, Adeney-Risakotta 2005; Duncan 2013).

It is true that for most Ambonese (or Moluccan in general) Christian and Muslim religious militants, especially those I interviewed and engaged with during my field research in the Moluccas from 2010 to 2011 (see Chapters 2–3), religion did matter during the violence. Michael Limba, an ex-Christian fighter of Rumahtiga in Ambon city, told me eagerly:

> The role of religion during the Maluku wars was not only important but very important. Christians and Muslims fought and killed each other due to their religion being humiliated by other religious communities. Because of religion Christians and Muslims in Ambon were involved in the wars for about five years since 1999.[3]

Many Ambonese Muslim jihadists and Christian fighters had indeed considered the violence as a sacred war and a means of purifying previous sins, misconduct, and bad things committed before the wars. Peter Manuputty, an ex-field commander of the Christian militia group, for instance, reveals: "For me, the Ambon war was a sacred war so that whoever killed [Muslims] will be rewarded a paradise by God."[4] Manuputty also believes that the war was a medium of self-purifying. The term "self-purification," for Manuputty, has something to do with, not only the "unworldly matters" (for instance, repenting from his sins) but also worldly things such as purification from negative behaviors to positive ones. More or less the same expression was also used by Ambonese/Moluccan ex-Muslim jihadists.

Christian and Muslim militant leaders and ordinary people in both groups, moreover, portrayed the wars as a sacred duty for the adherents of Christianity and Islam to defend religion (and God). The Muslim jihadists framed the wars as *Perang Sabil* (war in God's cause) and therefore their fighting was considered to be *jihad fi sabilillah* (war in Allah's cause) to protect the Islamic faith and Muslim *ummah* from Christian invasion and missionary activities (see Chapter 2). Using a similar frame, the Christian warriors regarded the Maluku war as a *Perang Salib* (Crusade) intended to guard (1) Christian faith from the Muslim *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) and forced conversion (*Islamisasi*) and (2) the Maluku territory which they saw as a "Christian land," referring to the land of Canaan in the Biblical tradition (see Chapter 3). Over the course of the violent conflict, religious symbols, texts, teachings, and discourses scattered throughout the archipelago.

Due to the vital role played by religion, Rev. Jacky Manuputty, a Moluccan peace activist and an elite member of the *Gereja Protestan Maluku* (GPM, Moluccan Protestant Church) Synod, stated:

> Although many political observers and social scientists regard the Maluku carnage as not a religious conflict, religion in fact became the powerful source of violence. Religious symbols were scattered all over the archipelago to characterize that the warfare was a religious one. Religious-based demarcation occurred in all levels of society, not only in the settlements but also in offices and other public areas, and all were divided along religious lines—the Christian and Muslim. This fact illustrates that religion undeniably played a significant role in the escalation and persistence of the communal conflict.[5]

Manuputty's comments signify the vitality of religion in contributing to the Moluccas chaos.

Although religious elements were present during the turmoil, this does not mean that throughout the stages of the violence, religion always played a central role and contributed significantly to the initiation and escalation of the mass violence. As I describe in the chapters that follow, the nature of the violence tends to shift from time to time and from place to place. This book, more specifically, concentrates on the early periods of the violence, especially from 1999 to 2002, where religious identities played a big role. During this period, religion aggravated the conflict, became a crucial factor in the violence, and served as a vital source of mobilization. In brief, the violence would not have taken the form it did without the role of religion—for both Islam and Christianity.

However, it should be noted, this also does not suggest that during this period, all Christian fighters and Muslim jihadists engaged in the battlefield across the archipelago were motivated purely by religious reasons. There were undoubtedly various motives, both secular and religious. Nonetheless, the contribution of religion in the conflict settings was stronger and more apparent during this period than after 2002. After the signing of the Peace Accord in 2002, religious identities were in general no longer a vital ingredient for local religious militants. Some ex-combatants of both religious communities told me that they stopped attacking other religious groups once the security forces and political leaders and elite members of society intervened intensively and started to manipulate local discord and interreligious rivalry for their own political and economic interests. While some members of militia groups—both radical Muslims and Christians—continued to attack their religious rivals for revenge and other "secular" motives, others ceased to fight once they realized that their sacred, passionate struggle, as they claimed, to defend Christianity or Islam, were being abused and "hijacked" by local and national elites for their own political-ideological-economic agenda.

Furthermore, even though local Moluccan Muslim jihadists and Christian warriors consider religion a "vital ingredient" of the violence, it is striking to find the fact that most religious scholars, policymakers, political commentators,

or social scientists of the Moluccas conflict mostly neglect or omit religious framing for the fighting, arguing that the underlying motives of actors involved in the mass violence are merely politics and economy. Religion, for them, is only used as a tool to attain material interests or political and economic aims. In other words, the creed is used to conceal the greed. In contrast, building on narratives of "grassroots actors" (both perpetrators and victims, both elites and masses who witnessed and were involved directly in the battleground), added to the findings from the questionnaire survey I distributed to 100 ex-members of Christian–Muslim militia groups, I argue that religion does matter in the Moluccas conflict, particularly in the early phases of the communal violence (roughly from 1999 to 2002/2003), and contributes to influencing Muslim militias and Christian fighters on the ground. Unlike claims made by most scholars of the Moluccas violence (i.e., religion is only a mask for political economy), I found that political and economic issues were actually just camouflage for the true religious goals of the violence, namely the defense of a particular God, religion, and religious community, the protection of a particular religious belief, the demolition of a Christian/Muslim area, and the conversion or the proliferation of a particular faith (see Chapters 2 and 3).

In his recent study on North Maluku's collective violence, Christopher Duncan (2013) also points out the centrality of religious motives and aims for actors engaged in the battle. Building on Bruce Lincoln's (2006: 5–7) model of religion, which divides religion into four domains of varying significance: discourse, practice, community, and institution, Duncan provides explanations of how religion worked and functioned during the communal strife. By emphasizing narratives and perspectives of the "foot soldiers" (i.e., actors engaged in the violence—see Aspinal 2008), Duncan makes a compelling argument for how religion influences people's violent actions in the North Maluku violence. Based on his extensive research and ethnographic fieldwork in North Maluku, Duncan suggests that in any attempt to analyze interreligious violence, one needs to incorporate "narratives of divine interpretation and performative acts of violence that call on religious discourse" (Duncan 2013: 5), alongside an analysis of political economy of the conflict. As Duncan makes clear for the North Maluku conflict, interpretations and reinterpretations of religious narratives and discourses produced and reproduced by Ambon's and Maluku's local actors of violence—within Christianity and Islam—could influence, shape, reshape, and sustain the mayhem (Qurtuby 2014a).

There are a number of reasons of why religion sometimes, not always, does matter in violence. The first reason is that religion's confessional loyalty translates into a clearly defined and durable community, its model of faith counters rational calculation and enlightened self-interest, it cultivates a righteous sense of persecution and provokes passion against evil that fuels the excesses of group hatred. Although religions were indeed manufactured or invented within particular historical and political contexts of thousands of years ago, their creeds are represented as fundamental truths, providing security in times of uncertainty and countering the challenges of relativism and secularism of late modernity (see

Appleby 2000: 57–61). Second, religion possesses a stock of material metaphors and military imagery, and promises rewards for violent sacrifice. The concept of some transcendental authority—the "will of God"—which translates into the absolute authority of church officials, and religious myths of election (e.g., the idea of the "chosen people" or the "best religious community of believers") and persecution, provides a powerful alternative to the delusional formation of paranoia, which transforms victimhood into vengeful action. This is among the reasons why religiously motivated or inspired culprits and doers of violence—such as the jihadists of the Moluccas tumult—never regret their inhuman, violent acts. Third, religion potentially transfers secular differences between a particular "us" and "them" or the known and the unfamiliar to the cosmic plane and thus into a moral struggle between the amorphous forces of order and chaos, and good and evil, for which the ultimate sacrifice—murder or martyrdom—is possible. Fourth, religion provides a more powerful and effective force for mobilization than other forms of collective identity partly because, as Chris Wilson (2008) has argued, it is not only strongly linked to a sense of self, but also provides a far-reaching and uplifting ideology, powerful institutional structures and an enduring and clear-cut definition of an "other." Fifth, religion provides the concept of a "sacred territory" and a set of ready materials and symbolic targets, which if attacked provokes intense feelings. Accordingly during the Moluccas chaos, mosques were destroyed, religious centers desecrated, sacred texts and beliefs were ridiculed, prophets or religious figures were slandered, and other symbols of faith violated.

It is imperative to notice, however, that although this book emphasizes the role of religion, nevertheless I do not argue that religion in itself is the sole source of violence. Certainly religion does not cause communal violence. Just as "guns do not kill people," religion does not slaughter human beings. However, religion provides teachings, doctrines, rituals, symbols, metaphors, and discourses that can be easily used, misused, or manipulated by those (such as actors of violence, agents or "managers" of conflict, and interest groups) with material or immaterial interests. This is precisely what happened in Maluku where radical Christians and militant Muslims—both elites and lay people—utilized, translated, and transformed religious symbols, doctrines, and discourses into Moluccan social settings, not only to awaken a spirit of fighting or justify their violent acts, but also to protect and safeguard their lives. Although the contribution of religion was apparent over the course of the violence, it is also too simple to reduce the complexity of the conflict to just a matter of religion without investigating the political economy of being Christians and Muslims in the Maluku social field. This study thus tries to combine religious identities and local political practices in analyzing the Maluku turmoil. What I want to emphasize in this book is that while religion never acts autonomously as a cause of violence, ignoring its role completely would preclude a proper understanding of the Moluccas uproar.

Moreover, though the book focuses on the social and cultural supports for and against the establishment of a post-violence peace and the framework for

multireligious citizenship, it also examines the continuing challenge which exclusivist religious interpretations and practices pose for post-violence peace-building processes. This is also a vital point but it has ironically been ignored by scholars of the Moluccas conflict. Maluku's recent religious militancy and exclusivism are part of the legacy of the region's civil uprising that challenges the ongoing attempts to establish Christian–Muslim peace, reconciliation, and citizenship in the region. Many, if not most, former members of militia groups—ex-Christian fighters or Muslim jihadists—have become a hindrance for the region's peaceful conflict resolution processes.

Based on the depiction sketched above, the book hence provides an alternative framework for understanding religion, social groupings, and political practices and their contributions in violence and post-violence situations by: (1) focusing on the role of religious networks, civil associations, and normative discourses; (2) expanding the focus of conflict/peace studies to the broader level involving state-society agency; (3) moving beyond studies that have paid sole attention to violence while neglecting post-war peacemaking and reconciliation; and finally (4) combining little-examined historical archival material with knowledge from the field to contribute to the emerging literature on communal violence, conflict resolution, reconciliation, and civic peace.

Ambon and Maluku: geographical and social settings

There are several reasons of why I focus on Ambon and not Maluku or the Moluccas as a whole. Ambon is the name for both the provincial capital of Maluku and an island. The first reason is that, besides being the provincial capital of Maluku, Ambon is the hub of Maluku and the turmoil started from this city prior to escalating to the surrounding region. Once the capital of the Dutch East Indies,[6] Ambon is also the most populous region in Maluku, within which multireligious and ethnic groups have lived. As a "city of migrants," as Gerrit Knaap (1991: 105–28) has called it, Ambon had been inhabited by people from diverse ethnicities and religions since colonial times (Goss 1992; Leirissa 2000). As the home of multireligious and ethnic groups, Ambon has undeniably been an arena of competition, conflict, and power struggle between Christians and Muslims (or even between Muslims and Muslims as well as Christians and Christians from different denominations, regions, clans, and ethnic backgrounds), Ambonese and non-Ambonese, as well as settlers and migrants.

The second reason why I focus on Ambon—both Ambon Island and Ambon city—is that the region was most severely affected by the mass violence in Maluku province (van Klinken 2001, 2007). The third reason, equally important, is that this region is today highly segregated in terms of religion, region, and culture. Everyone coming to this area will immediately recognize the diversity of its inhabitants, but they have been divided along religious lines: *negeri salam* (Muslim village) and *negeri sarane* or *serani* (Christian village). Such divisions actually already existed in the Dutch colonial era (see, for example, Bartels 1977a; Chauvel 1990a), but the Ambon conflict made the separation worse

(Pattikayhatu 2008). In post-violence Ambon, local residents choose to live in an area inhabited by those having the same faith as them. Although living in the same village or town, they grouped together with their religious brethren in a separate bloc. As a region with a strong segregated plurality, it is understandable why Ambon's social actors have found it difficult to establish sustainable peace and post-violence integration (Pariela 2008; Soumokil 2011).

The municipality of Ambon covers about 40 percent of Ambon Island's territory. Ambon city refers to the commercial and administrative center of the municipality of Ambon and is situated on the southern side of Ambon Bay (*Teluk Ambon*). The remaining 60 percent of Ambon Island is part of the *kabupaten* (regency) of Central Maluku. Furthermore, Ambon city's population in 1990 was 275,888. After the mass conflict, with huge numbers fleeing or displaced to other areas, the population shrunk to 191,561. In the 2006 census, the city of Ambon contained 258,331 people, of whom 120,489 are Muslims (46.5 percent), 122,407 Protestants (47.2 percent), and 15,175 Catholics (4.6 percent) (BPS 2007, 2008). As of 2010, it had reached 330,355, all packed into a tiny land area. My focus on the region of Ambon is also due to the fact that Maluku is a vast archipelagic province and thus it is an unfeasible task to conduct a fieldwork across all the islands. However, during the 14 months of my research and fieldwork (2010–2011) providing the sources and data of this book, I travelled to nearby islands affected by the region's violence including Seram, Buru, Haruku, and Saparua. In the present work, I highlight some findings that result from my visits to these islands.

Located in eastern Indonesia, the Moluccas is a group of 1,208 islands which colonial trade since the beginning of the sixteenth century made famous as the "Spice Islands" for their rich supply of nutmeg and cloves (see, for example, Alwi 2010; Amal 2010a, 2010b; Andaya 1993a). It is thus no exaggeration to say that Maluku had once been the heart of the Dutch East Indies' spice trade (see Lapian 1982; Leirissa *et al*. 1982). The islands in Maluku province (the southern part of the Moluccas) cover about 850,000 square kilometers (about 87 percent of which is sea) to the east of Borneo and to the west of Papua, running north of Timor-Leste through to the border with the southern Philippines.

Until the Moluccan archipelago was divided into two provinces (Maluku and North Maluku) in September 1999 under the presidency of B.J. Habibie, it had been Indonesia's most extensive single province. Ambon city (located on the island of Ambon, also known as Amboina), the capital of the old undivided province of Maluku, remained the capital in the new Maluku province, with Ternate as the provincial capital of the more remote North Maluku. At the time of the division into two provinces, the archipelago's population of just over two million, about 830,000 of whom were in North Maluku, amounted to less than 1 percent of Indonesia's total population (see Hill and Sen 2005; Leirissa *et al*. 2004).

Maluku, moreover, is the home for Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics who had once been coexisting relatively peacefully. The population in Maluku province, estimated in the 2000 census as 1.15 million (see Table I.1), is split almost

Table I.1 Population of Maluku Province by religion, 2000

Province	Urban	%	Rural	%	Total	%
Muslim	124,918	43.1	439,117	51.1	564,035	49.1
Catholic	19,325	6.7	69,252	8.1	88,577	7.7
Protestant	145,055	50.0	343,576	40.0	488,631	42.5
Other	661	0.2	7,995	0.9	8,656	0.8
Total	289,959	100.0	859,940	100.0	1,149,899	100.0

Source: calculated from BPS 2001.

evenly between Muslims (49.1 percent) and Christians (50 percent), most of whom are Protestant.

Christians are slightly more concentrated in the urban areas, where they represent 56.7 percent of the population; Muslims form a slight majority in the rural areas. Catholics have been the dominant religious group in Southeast Maluku, especially the islands of Kei and Tanimbar. In the 2006 census, the province of Maluku consists of 1,322,908 people of whom there are 798,292 Muslims (60.3 percent), 425,490 Protestants (32.1 percent) and 94,198 Catholics (7.1 percent); the rest are small minority religions such as Buddhism (BPS 2007). Furthermore, the migrant population in the region, composing respectively 9.1 percent of the total populace, comes mostly from Southeast Sulawesi (Butonese and Kendarese), South Sulawesi (Buginese and Makasarese), and Java. The level of socio-economic imbalance between religious and migrant groups prior to the conflict is demonstrated in Table I.2, which shows the proportion of the population employed in high-ranking jobs (i.e., government officials, professionals, and technicians) in Maluku province in 1990. These intergroup horizontal inequalities are an important potential cause of conflict, but the relationship is not straightforward. High inequalities can persist for many years without sparking mass violence.

Methods applied in the study

This book was the outcome of 14 months of research and fieldwork carried out from February 1, 2010, to March 30, 2011, in Ambon and the surrounding

Table I.2 Proportion of population in Maluku employed in high-ranking jobs by religion and migrant status, 1990 (%)

Religion	Non-migrant	Migrant	Combined
Islam	2.5	7.4	3.1
Catholic	4.2	16.7	4.4
Protestant	7.4	12.7	7.6
All religions	4.4	8.8	4.8

Source: calculated from sample of Census 1990 (cited in Brown 2005: 26).

regions, particularly the islands of Buru, Seram, Haruku, and Saparua for ethnographic fieldwork, as well as in Jakarta and Salatiga (Central Java) for gathering relevant historical and archival literature. During my field research, I employed three main methodologies: (1) ethnographic fieldwork; (2) network and associational analysis; and (3) historical and comparative research on the social formation of religious identities and associations in the Maluku region. The book also draws on a questionnaire of 100 former members of militia groups, both Christians and Muslims.

The ethnographic fieldwork relied on two key research methods, namely participant observation and interviews. The communities in which I carried out ethnographic fieldwork were Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims. The multiple origins as well as ethnic and professional backgrounds of these religious groups who inhabited the region were taken into consideration. In this regard, I engaged and interacted with both natives of Ambon and migrants from various ethnicities, especially Butonese, Buginese, and Makassarese as the major migrant groups in Ambon. Among these ethnic groups, Ambonese have certainly been dominant since the Dutch made the town their center of power in the early seventeenth century. More specifically, I took part in the events and practices such as ritual festivals, religious ceremonies, public sermons, group gatherings, interfaith dialogue meetings, public performances, religious educations, and other forms of routine activities held by the region's religious, "civil" organizations affiliated with Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims.

The second method I applied during the ethnographic fieldwork was interviews. I employed various types of interviewing methods depending upon the informants, including informal interviewing, unstructured, and in-depth or semi-structured interviewing (see Bernard 2006: 210–12). The use of a variety of types of interviewing was needed since my informants varied ranging from ordinary townspeople and ex-militia members to high-level bureaucrats and elite members of a community. In general, I conducted this particular kind of interview with members of both Christian and Muslim communities of Ambon's major ethno-linguistic groups. Select informants included those who supported and rejected the Malino II peace accord (signed in 2002 between Moluccan Christians and Muslims) in particular and the ideas of post-violence Christian–Muslim reconciliation in general.

Those interviewed for this research also consisted of state-society representatives. Representation of state-society groups in undertaking the interviews was needed since the creation of a post-violence culture of citizenship requires the collaboration of the two. In short, the informants represented ordinary villagers, city dwellers, academicians, politicians, business communities, ex-militia members and leaders, military and police personnel, government officials, community and religious leaders, and members and activists of "civil" organizations. The field interviews with the representation of these wide-ranging communities aimed to obtain insight into the perspectives of those involved in the clashes and post-violence activities. All interviews were conducted in my native language, Bahasa Indonesia, and Ambonese Malay.

I also utilized the informal interviewing technique with those having plenty of time and occasions to talk and discuss particular issues dealing with conflict and peace in the post-Malino II peace deal. The communities in which I carried out this sort of interviewing method were selected from the following groups: (1) Christian and Muslim villagers and townspeople from various ethnolinguistic backgrounds and professions that inhabited Ambon; (2) the participants of the Malino II peace accord; (3) civil society leaders who were involved in the peace processes such as members of *Tim 20 Wayame*; (4) moderate religious groups; (5) women's groups, such as members of Gerakan Perempuan Peduli or the Concerned Women's Movement; (6) Christian and Muslim conservatives who reject ideas of interreligious reconciliation; and (7) ex-militia members.[7]

In addition to the informal interviewing technique, I used an in-depth, semi-structured interviewing method, a technique of interviews based on the use of "interview guide" usually in the form of a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order (Bernard 2006: 212). I applied this sort of interviewing method to the following groups: (1) high-level bureaucrats and political elites;[8] (2) respected religious and community leaders; and (3) ex-commanders of Christian and Muslim paramilitary groups that rejected the Malino II peace deal and attempts of reconciliation. I then "triangulated" the data obtained from these multiple sources in order to obtain varied, different accounts of the same event and subject (violence, conflict, peace, and citizenship) from opposing sides and to attain more nuanced, comprehensive, and balanced data and understandings on the Maluku carnage and post-violence situations, particularly with regard to attempts of building peace and a culture of citizenship.

In addition to participant observation and interviews described above, I used network and associational analysis. In multiethnic societies, Ashutosh Varshney, who conducted research on ethnic conflict and civic life among India's Hindus and Muslims, has argued, "institutional frameworks tend to produce very different political strategies," some of which privilege ethnic cooperation and accommodation while others favor ethnic polarization. In this context, "institutional frameworks can, thus, be liked to communal conflict or peace" (Varshney 2002: 12). In this regard, accordingly, it is significant to analyze structures and frameworks of Moluccan/Ambonese religious institutions and networks whether they support or oppose conflict and segmentation or peace and collaboration. It is also important to analyze the "mechanisms" that link religious-based civic networks/institutions and interreligious conflict/peace. This method, moreover, was to examine the existence of what Paul Brass calls an "institutionalized riot system" (Brass 1997) and "institutionalized peace system" (Varshney 2002). In its implementation, I looked at rural and urban-based religious networks and institutions to examine the similarity and difference of the institutions with regard to their role in and attitudes toward violence, as well as the subsequent truce.

Since part of this research deals with the history, trajectory, and dynamics of Christian–Muslim relations prior, during, and after the mayhem, the book also

employed a method of historical and textual analysis. The historical and literature reviews were carried out by examining materials at, among others, the National Archive Museum, the National Library (located in Jakarta), the Rumphius Library (Ambon), and the *Universitas Pattimura*, the largest university in Maluku (located in Ambon). At these institutes and libraries, I investigated the various views of the socio-historical roots of the violence and the development of post-conflict Maluku. I completed this archival and historical research by exploring relevant documentation and media, especially newspapers, magazines, and the internet.[9]

At first I had difficulty getting access to the Christian and Muslim radical-conservatives, as well as to former members of the religious militias, especially those members who rejected the ideas of interreligious reconciliation. A special word of thanks goes to my excellent friend and "assistant," Rev. Elifas Maspaitella, whose connection to wide-ranging local informants made it possible to gain access to the Christian conservatives, ex-militias, and field commanders. As for the Muslim conservative groups and ex-militia members, including ex-members of the *Laskar Jihad*, I was finally able to approach some of them after regularly participating in their religious sermons and ritual practices, and having conversation with some elite members of the groups. I utilized my Muslim identity and knowledge of Arabic and Islam to approach and interact with them. Additionally, I was helped by my Muslim research assistant, who was an ex-member of the *Laskar Jihad*, in distributing a questionnaire survey for ex-Muslim militias. The Ambonese Muslim leader KH Abdul Wahab Polpoke also helped me gain access to some ex-(Muslim) field commanders. However, unfortunately, while some Muslim leaders of jihadist militia groups (such as Rustam Kastor, Umar Attamimi, Hanafi Marhum, among others) were happy to share their previous experiences during the civil unrest, others refused to be interviewed for reasons that I was unable to determine.

Finally, the ethnography of violence should not only be concerned with building scrupulous theories about violence and conflict but should also be engaged in critical reflection on the methodological problems of conducting research under violent conflict. This is vital to point out because an ethnographer of violence will face what Jaap Timmer (2002: 3) called "risks of seduction" in high-conflict settings, since the informants, both victims and perpetrators of violence, have a personal and political stake in making the ethnographer adopt their interpretations of the cause and dynamic of the conflict. I felt that both Muslims and Christians tended to make an argument and interpretation to justify their violent actions and blame the others as the initiators and perpetrators of the conflict. It was hard to find an informant who honestly admitted their faults in the past bloody conflict.

In addition to three methods described above, I administered a questionnaire to 100 former members of local militia groups (50 ex-Christian fighters and 50 ex-Muslim jihadists, including Ambonese members of the *Laskar Jihad*). The sites for the survey were Kudamati, Rumahtiga, Kariu, and Aboru, all of which are Christian strongholds, for Christian respondents. Whereas Rumahtiga and

Kariu (in Haruku) were completely damaged by the Muslim jihadists, Kudamati and Aboru were safe. Rumahtiga was destroyed by the *Laskar Jihad* campaigns, while Kariu was devastated by its Muslim neighbors, the Pelauw Muslims. Kudamati, located on the hills of Ambon city, was the base of the main groups of Christian fighters such as the *Coker*, *Kudaputih*, and *Front Kedaulatan Maluku* (FKM, Moluccan Sovereignty Front), while Aboru, on the tip of Haruku Island in Central Maluku, is renowned as the headquarter of the old RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan*, Republic of South Moluccas) separatist movement sympathizers. This area is difficult to reach since it is located behind a mount and thick forest. One needs to take a boat and *ojek*, a motorcycle used for public transportation, to arrive at this place. Accompanied by a local GPM pastor, I landed in this region and stayed there for a few days to undertake fieldwork, conduct interviews, and distribute the questionnaire. Over the course of the Maluku wars, both Aboru and Kudamati were among the Christian centers which most threatened the Muslims.

Locations for the Muslim respondents were mainly Batumerah (85 percent) in Ambon city and Negeri Lima (15 percent) in Jazirah Leihitu. Batumerah, whose population today reaches more than 45,000 people, is the oldest and the only Muslim *negeri* in Ambon (see Leirissa 1995, 2000; Leirissa *et al*. 2004). It is in this crowded area of Ambon city that the incident of January 19, 1999, took place. Established by the Dutch, Batumerah nowadays is inhabited by Muslims from multiethnic backgrounds, both settlers and migrants. During the sectarian conflicts, the *Laskar Jihad* used this settlement as its main base, particularly in the area of Kebun Cengkih, located on the highland of Batumerah. Since the *Laskar Jihad* was disbanded in October 2002, many of its followers chose to stay in this area. Some of them established their own sub-village in Gunung Malintang. Negeri Lima, furthermore, is located in the rural area on the upland of Leihitu Peninsula. It was in this area where Hitu, one of the oldest Islamic kingdoms in Central Maluku, was located. Over the course of the communal strife, Muslim jihadists from this peninsula, infuriated by the deliberate destruction of the Al-Fatah mosque, came down to Ambon city and attacked Christian centers.

Ethnically, the survey respondents are Ambonese and Moluccan. Their ages range between 20 and 50 years old and, as regards their educational backgrounds, most had graduated from elementary school (*sekolah dasar*). The profession of most respondents is *wiraswasta*, a term commonly referring to those who run a small private enterprise, with the average monthly income of the respondents below IDR1,000,000 (in Indonesian rupiah; about US$100) before and after the communal conflict. I will present the survey results mainly in Chapters 2 and 3. The questions in the questionnaire survey are categorized into three main parts as follows. The first questions deal with respondents' educational, religious, political, and social backgrounds. The second relate to respondents' motivations in the involvement of previous wars and their perceptions of the Maluku carnage. The third category is respondents' responses toward the future of Christian–Muslim relations in Maluku.

This survey was truly helpful in understanding: (1) the social backgrounds of the ex-militias; (2) their motives for being involved in the war; (3) their recent views toward the earlier violence; (4) their current perceptions of the opposing religious groups; and (5) the prospects for future peace in Ambon. I used former members of local Christian fighters and Muslim jihadists as my assistants to distribute the survey and analyze it. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, I explained the purpose of the questionnaire to my assistants. In addition to the survey, interviews, and ethnography, I also had occasion to have conversations with former combatants who were willing to talk about their "dark past." Although survey responses on the Maluku conflict and peace vary, religious factors in motivating their involvement in the conflict are common in both groups. The two parties also considered the Maluku conflict as a holy war.

Narrative outline

This book is divided into eight main chapters. Chapter 1 outlines chronologies, phases, dynamics, and density of the Moluccas violence aiming at understanding multiple root causes, changing nature, plurality, and specificity of the havoc. As mentioned before, religious elements are strong in the early stages of the violence. The chapter also briefly discusses socio-historical factors and contemporary developments, including the "dark history" of Christian–Muslim relations and rivalry, which could provide a rationale for the tragedy to erupt. Moreover, the chapter briefly depicts the historical process of religious polarization, purification, and proselytization (both Christianization and Islamization) that led to the destruction of Maluku's ethnic unity and stability. It sketches the genesis of Christian–Muslim division that later radicalized interreligious relations and sharpened intergroup tensions. It illustrates the historical settings, social roots, and religious discourses that transformed Maluku's religious communities from common adherents of religion to zealous followers of Islam and Christianity whose identification with their faith could provide a *raison d'être* for the mass violence to flourish. This chapter, furthermore, highlights the discriminatory policies and politics of the colonizers and post-independence regimes that caused unequal relations and jealousy that might provide a ground for the communal violence to thrive.

Chapter 2 discusses Islam and its links to the mass violence by emphasizing the role of Muslim jihadists and militia groups (both Ambonese and non-Ambonese). The question of why and how they utilized Islamic discourses, teachings, symbols, and networks to support their *jihad* actions against Christian communities throughout the collective violence becomes a central focus of this chapter. Chapter 3, moreover, examines the relationship between Christianity and militancy. In particular it discusses Moluccan Christian participation in the violence by focusing on the contributions of Ambonese/Moluccan Christian militants and warriors. It underscores Christian discourses, teachings, symbols, and Biblical texts and narratives the Christian radicals used during the wars.

These two chapters underline the central role played by ritual and religion in initiating and radicalizing the Christian–Muslim violence. As well, both chapters depict the complex roles played by Maluku's religious actors, local Christian fighters, Ambonese Muslim jihadists, ordinary masses, and civilian groupings in initiating and intensifying the mass violence. Throughout the communal conflict, Maluku's local actors had indeed played as active agents and not passive victims. It is interesting to note, once again, that despite the fact that local actors, masses, and unions have greatly participated in the Maluku warfare, their role has been largely neglected in any analyses and studies on the violence (Adam 2010; van Klinken 2001, 2007).

The Maluku case thus illustrates the appearance of not only Muslim but also Christian politics. During the communal violence, Islam and Christianity, Muslims and Christians all tended, in some part, to perform violent and demonstrate antagonistic characters and behaviors. In the Maluku context, Islam and Christianity configure the politics of, in the words of Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996: ix), "a broad swathe of the world." As in Muslim politics, Christian politics also involves the competition and contest over both interpretation of symbols and control of the institutions, formal and informal, that produce, reproduce, and sustain them. To complement and strengthen analyses and arguments, the chapters will present vital findings of a survey questionnaire I distributed to 100 ex-Christian fighters and Muslim jihadists on the islands of Ambon-Lease aiming at highlighting how religion had contributed to the increase of the battle and how other-worldly motivations became one of the major contributing factors for actors involved in the violence.

Chapter 4 depicts Maluku's indigenous means of reconciliation and conflict resolution, and traditional practices of inter-village, sometimes Christian–Muslim, cooperation, as well as discusses challenges posed by local people and *adat* (customs) chiefs in the face of "foreign religious puritanical flows" from both reformed Islam and Christianity. This chapter aims to understand the region's native cultural ideas and practices of social institutions of brotherhood, of dispute resolution and interpersonal or intergroup reconciliation, as well as the ways that both *adat* and religious leaders and followers negotiate and resolve their tensions and differences.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 discuss peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation efforts before and after the signing of the Malino II peace pact. In Chapters 1, 2, and 3, I discussed the role of religion, both as normative discourses and social networks, in the Maluku sectarian conflict. Now, I turn to depict uneasy attempts at building peace, reconciliation, and citizenship culture, either in the time of the collective violence or after the signing of the Malino peace pact in 2002, played by the region's social actors. I analyze three social groups or actors of reconciliation processes in these chapters, namely: (1) moderate religious groups, both Christians and Muslims (Chapter 5); (2) religiously inspired civil society agencies[10] such as local NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), CSOs (civil society associations), women's groups, intra-village community leader unions, and voluntarily grassroots alliances (Chapter 6); and (3) government officials and state

institutions (Chapter 7). Chapter 7, more specifically, discusses various efforts of a number of political actors in the government, both central and provincial or regional governments (Maluku and Ambon), in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table. It is vital to underline here that, in the Moluccas social context, the division of secular and religious forces sometimes does not work in part because all components and factions—both state and society—utilized religious narratives and networks to support their peace actions and reconciliation processes.

By presenting these three social groupings, these chapters aim at outlining various peacebuilding initiatives taking place in Maluku ranging from religious peacemaking (attempts at creating sustainable peace promoted by religious leaders and associations), grassroots reconciliation (the peace processes initiated by the agents of civil society and community leaders), to state-sponsored negotiation (the government's efforts to find the middle ground between the conflicting parties). This is to say that the chapters are intended to describe, not only "reconciliation from below" but also "reconciliation from above." Moreover, the three chapters discuss the challenges pro-peace factions within Christianity and Islam faced from their co-religionists who supported a continuation of the violence. The aim of these three chapters is to show that the Maluku case is not only about conflict, fighting, malice, and bigotry, but also nonviolence, collaboration, reconciliation, and tolerance. Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas were not only involved in the warfare but also engaged in the peace process. Even during the wartime, there were a number of social groups and individuals that initiated interreligious gatherings, set off intergroup meetings, and tried to find peaceful solutions by using local *adat* and traditions (e.g., Brauchler, ed. 2009; Pariela 2008).

The last chapter (Chapter 8) assesses contemporary situations in post-accord Maluku, highlighting the region's segregated pluralism, religious militancy, and citizenship discourse. It also discusses the competing ideas between religion and regionalism and how this effects to the debate about citizenship and civic peace. The chapter aims at providing a picture of whether processes of post-Malino II peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and reconciliation have developed significantly or not. This last chapter is followed by the conclusion of this book.

Notes

1 In this book, the English term "Moluccas" is used interchangeably with the Indonesian "Maluku," and the word "Moluccan" is applied interchangeably with "Malukan" to refer to its inhabitants or as an adjective. The modern Moluccas or Moluccan archipelago comprises two provinces: Maluku and North Maluku.

2 The term "Muslim" in this book refers to mainly Ambonese or Moluccan Muslims coming from across the province's islands such as Ambon, Lease, Seram, Buru, and Banda, as well as some groups of Muslim migrants, particularly Butonese, Buginese, Makassarese, and Javanese. The word "Christian" refers mostly to Calvinist Protestants linked to the Moluccan Protestant Church (*Gereja Protestan Maluku*), the biggest Christian congregation in the Moluccas, except in the regions of Southeast Maluku, where Catholics hold the majority. In the latter region, particularly in Kei, Tual, and Tanimbar, violence occurred between Muslims and Catholics.

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