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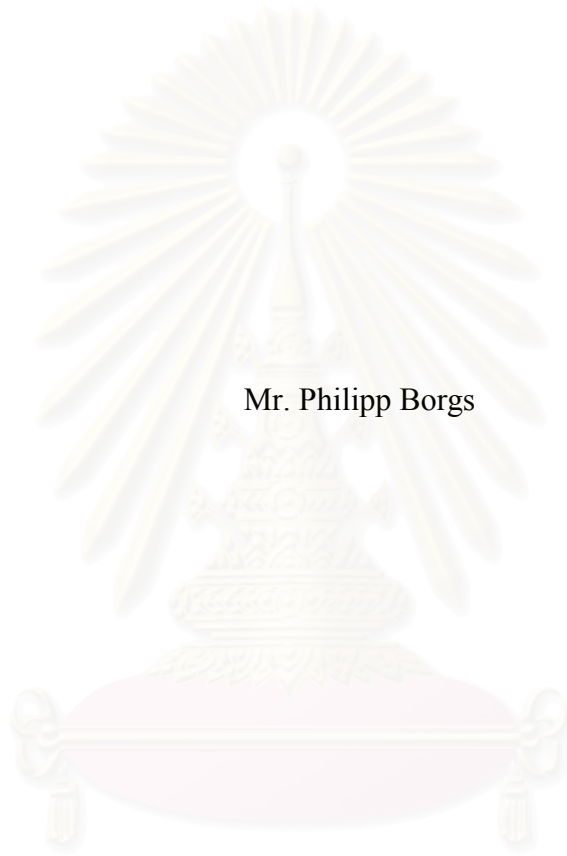
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MINAHASA AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA- THE PROBLEM
OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY



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ฟิลิปป์ โบร์คส์: มินาฮัสซาและสาธารณรัฐอินโดนีเซียกับปัญหาความหลากหลายทางชาติพันธุ์ (MINAHASA AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA: THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY) อ.ที่ปรึกษา: รศ.ดร. วิทยา สุจริตธนารักษ์, อ.ที่ปรึกษาร่วม: ดร. คอลิน แมคแอนดรูส์, 118 หน้า

มินาฮัสซาเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของจังหวัดซูลาเวซีเหนือในอินโดนีเซีย ความจริงที่ว่าดินแดนส่วนนี้เป็นที่ที่มีคนนับถือศาสนาคริสต์อย่างท่วมท้น ทำให้มีลักษณะที่แตกต่างไปจากส่วนอื่นๆ ในอินโดนีเซีย รากเหง้าของความแตกต่างนี้เกิดขึ้นมาตั้งแต่ยุคอาณานิคม เมื่อมินาฮัสซาดตกอยู่ใต้การปกครองแบบอาณานิคมของดัตช์ ทำให้มีระดับการศึกษาสูง มีความมั่นคง และความโน้มเอียงไปเข้าข้างดัตช์ แต่เมื่อเวลาผ่านไป มินาฮัสซาก็เปลี่ยนจากการได้รับการปกป้องจากดัตช์ไปเป็นนักชาตินิยมอินโดนีเซีย ปัจจุบันนี้ มินาฮัสซานับเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของอินโดนีเซีย แม้จะมีวัฒนธรรมที่แตกต่างออกไป ประเด็นที่ว่าเหตุใดจึงไม่ได้เกิดการปะทะกันอย่างรุนแรงดังที่ได้เกิดขึ้นในจังหวัดใกล้เคียงนั้น จึงได้รับการพิจารณาและประเมินในวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ วิทยานิพนธ์นี้ใคร่เสนอว่า คนในมินาฮัสซาและในซูลาเวซีเหนือมองเห็นว่าการกระจายความมั่งคั่งอยู่ในลักษณะที่เสมอภาคกันเพียงพอ และการเป็นตัวแทนทางการเมืองก็ยุติธรรมดี ในเรื่องศาสนาและวัฒนธรรมที่มักเป็นปัจจัยที่นำไปสู่ความรุนแรงที่ได้รับการกล่าวขานว่าเป็น "ความรุนแรงทางศาสนา" ในมินาฮัสซาและซูลาเวซีเหนือนั้นไม่มีปัญหาดังกล่าว จึงไม่เกิดการปะทะกันจนถึงทุกวันนี้ อย่างไรก็ตาม ยังมีขบวนการบางอย่างเกิดขึ้นที่อาจจะทำร้ายและพร้อมจะทำร้ายอำนาจส่วนกลาง หากเมื่อใดรัฐบาลกลางนำกฎหมายและข้อบังคับที่เป็นอิสลามออกมาใช้ เมื่อนั้นรัฐบาลกลางก็อาจถูกคุกคามจากซูลาเวซีเหนือ จนกระทั่งบัดนี้ การคุกคามในเชิงแบ่งแยกดินแดนในมินาฮัสซาเป็นเพียงกลไกการต่อรองอำนาจ หากใช้การคุกคามจะแบ่งแยกดินแดนไม่อนาคตของมินาฮัสซาในสาธารณรัฐอินโดนีเซียจึงมั่นคงตราบเท่าที่ไม่มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงสำคัญใดๆ เกิดขึ้น ข้อเสนอแนะในเรื่องอนาคตทางการเมืองของอินโดนีเซียอาจจะเป็นการเอาระบบสหพันธรัฐมาใช้เพราะเป็นระบบที่รองรับความเป็นเอกเทศทางวัฒนธรรมและชาติพันธุ์

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ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา

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Minahasa is a part of Indonesia's province North Sulawesi. The fact that this region is predominantly Christian distinguishes it from most parts of Indonesia. The roots of these differences date back to the colonial times, when Minahasa was subject to Dutch colonialism. This led to a high education, wealth and the orientation towards the Dutch. Over the time however, Minahasa changed from Dutch protégés towards Indonesian nationalists. Today, Minahasa appears to be an integral part of Indonesia despite cultural differences. The question why there have not been any violent clashes as the neighbouring provinces have experienced is examined and assessed. It is suggested that Minahasa's and North Sulawesi's population sees a somewhat equal distribution of wealth and has a rather fair political representation. Besides religion and culture, these two factors can contribute to violence which is often labelled "religious violence". Since Minahasa and North Sulawesi do not face these inequalities, there have not been violent clashes so far. However, certain movements are present in Minahasa that might be able and willing to challenge the central authorities. Only if the central government drifts towards Muslim-oriented laws and bills, then Jakarta will face threats from North Sulawesi. Until now, separatist threats in Minahasa are a bargaining power and not a real secessionist threat. The future of Minahasa within Indonesia seems secure provided no major changes in politics occur. A suggestion for Indonesia's future might be federalism as it would ensure cultural and ethnic autonomy.

Field of Studies: Southeast Asian Studies

Academic year: 2007

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GLOSSARY

Anjing Belanda	Dutch Dogs, derogatively used to describe Minahasans who fought for the Dutch
BPS	Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics
Bupati	District head
Cap Tikus	Literally "rat brand", a local liqueur
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, Regional People's Representative Council
FPI	Front Pembela Islam, Islamic Defender Front
GMIM	Gereja Masehi Injil Minahasa, the Minahasan Evangelical Protestant Church
IWWM	Ikatan Waraney Wulan Minahasa; Male's and female's union of Minahasa
Jakarta Charter	A neglected part of the constitution which requires from Muslims to adhere to Islamic law
Kabupaten	District
KKN	Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotism; Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger; Dutch colonial army
KRIS	Kebaktian Rakjat Indonesia Sulawesi; Devotion of the Indonesian People from Sulawesi, an armed unit from Sulawesi
Kotamadya	Municipality, same function as a Kabupaten
Minduk	Minahasa Induk, Central Minahasa
Minsel	Minahasa Selatan, South Minahasa
Minut	Minahasa Utara, North Minahasa
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republic Indonesia, The unity of Indonesia
NU	Nadhlatul Ulama
Orang	a person
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party, an Islamic party
Pancasila	The state philosophy

PD	Partai Demokrat
PDS	Partai Damai Sejahtera; Prosperous Peace Party, a Christian party
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan; Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle, a nationalist party
Pisok	Perkumpulan Inti Semua Orang Kawanua, the “core association for all the Minahasan people”
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; National Awakening Party, a moderate Islamic party attached to NU
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera; Prosperous Justice Party, an Islamic party
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United Development Party, an Islamic party
Raja Raja kecil	Small king, a label for Bupatis after the decentralization
RW	Rintek Wuuk; Dog meat
Sate Babi	Pork Sate sticks
Sulut	Sulawesi Utara, North Sulawesi
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian army
UUD	Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia; Indonesia’s constitution
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, the Dutch East India Company

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The thesis at hand deals with Minahasa, a part of Indonesia's province North Sulawesi and its main ethnic group, the Minahasans. Firstly, the thesis provides information about Indonesia in general, mainly about ethnicity and religion, so that the reader has sufficient background to later acknowledge the description of Minahasa.

After that, Minahasa and North Sulawesi will be focussed on. In the beginning, a historic overview is given where Minahasa's and North Sulawesi's history is briefly outlined. This is followed by a detailed analysis of Minahasa's culture with a focus on contemporary culture. The thesis then proceeds by presenting the politics, education, religion and economics of Minahasa and North Sulawesi. A focus is put on contemporary politics including the latest election results in both the province North Sulawesi and in the Kabupaten Minahasa. A case study which connects a national issue with local resentments concludes that chapter.

Before the final conclusion, an outlook is given where various scenarios for the future of Minahasa, North Sulawesi and Indonesia are outlined and assessed. These scenarios cover autonomy as well as the possibility of a "free Minahasa". However, the outlook aims at presenting reasonable and realistic options. It gets clear that current Minahasa is a vital part in Indonesia and the likeliness of a "free Minahasa" is very low.

The conclusion sums up the main points of the thesis and, together with the outlook, ends with some ideas and hints about Minahasa and Indonesia's future.

1.1 Objectives and Hypothesis

The main hypothesis of this paper can be stated as

“Contemporary Minahasa is an integral part of today’s Indonesia, despite certain grievances towards the centre and its different history, religion and culture.”

I argue in the thesis that despite the fact that the Dutch had a strong influence on the Minahasans in terms of education, politics, religion and culture, Minahasa integrated rather smoothly into the newly created state of Indonesia and actually proved to be one of its backbones in the first years of independence. Since then, Minahasa has found its place in today’s Indonesia. Nevertheless, certain grievances seem to prevail and various groups and organisations aim at challenging the central government in Jakarta to a certain extent. The objectives of this thesis are the following three.

First, I aim at presenting the ethnicity, religion and culture of the Minahasans, an ethnic group from North Sulawesi in Indonesia. With this I provide a background to understand Minahasa in Indonesia. By briefly mentioning the ethnic clashes in Ambon and Poso in chapter II, I give the reader the possibility to relate these events with Minahasa.

Second, as most books about Minahasa only cover the period up until the 1990s, I provide the reader with a contemporary account of Minahasa in terms of religion, politics and economy. The reader therefore gets a good understanding of current issues in Minahasa.

Third, I want to show the impact of ethnic diversity in Indonesia and how it affects Minahasa. Therefore, current political issues and incidents are included in the paper to give an in-depth analysis. By presenting an outlook, the future of Minahasa will be assessed and possible scenarios will be presented. With this third objective, the thesis concludes with giving a brief historic overview, a detailed analysis of current events and shows a possible future for Minahasa.

Research questions can be considered part of the objectives and hypothesis, as they basically give answers to the objectives. I define four main research questions that this thesis is based upon.

1. What is Minahasa's role in Indonesia today in terms of politics, religion, ethnicity and economy?
2. How did Minahasa change over the time towards an integral part of Indonesia?
3. Are there any indicators for separatist movements in Minahasa and North Sulawesi?
4. Why have there not been any inter-ethnic clashes in Minahasa and North Sulawesi yet?

1.2 Scope of Study

This thesis aims at presenting a concise picture of Minahasa, including its past, present and future. This includes Minahasa's culture, politics and its people. However, there needs to be a focus in the thesis. After reviewing the literature, it appeared that the little literature that has been published about Minahasa does not cover recent and current issues and events. The reason for this is simple: Most books were written in the 1990s and before. Scholars who contributed not only much to the understanding of Minahasa but also much to this thesis are David Henley, Maria Schouten, Michael Jacobsen, Paul Richard Renwarin and others. Interestingly, the latest accounts come from Maria Schouten and Michael Jacobsen with journal publications a few years ago. Therefore, I saw the opportunity to look at the outlooks the different scholars took and approve, reject and alter them. I see my paper as a good starting point for readers who are interested in the Minahasa region of Indonesia. I have a comparable objective as Peter Church who writes in the Preface to his book that many books are

“written by scholars absorbed by their topics and at a much greater depth than required...”¹

Therefore, I aim at giving an overview about Minahasa in the chapters III and IV with further reading suggestions plus, and that is the added value of the thesis, present the contemporary situation in Minahasa including politics and economy in chapter V. By including a case study dealing with a current political issue, it becomes clear how issues and problems in contemporary Indonesia can affect Minahasa.

1.3 Literature Review

One of the arguments for writing this thesis is that only few books are available dealing with Minahasa and North Sulawesi. Most books that mention Minahasa deal with the colonial period and only mention Minahasa briefly. The few books about Minahasa in particular mostly cover the colonial time and the early days of independence. The following three books can be considered a good starting point for conducting research about Minahasa and Indonesia.

**Schouten, Maria J.C., *Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society-
Minahasa, 1677-1983, The Netherlands: KITLV Press, 1998***

The book at hand delivers a very clear insight into Minahasa and its people from the early colonial time until the early 1980s. Its focus is clearly on anthropological topics as well as social science aspects such as, as the title indicates, leadership in Minahasa.

It begins in the late 17th century, when the Dutch started influencing life in Minahasa, a time where headhunting and hereditary village heads were still very common in that area.

¹ Peter Church, *A Short History of South-East Asia*, (4th ed) (Singapore: John Wiley and sons, 2006), p.vii.

Due to Dutch influence, the whole recognition and behaviour of the people and its villages heads changed towards a more structured and administrative authority. Along with that the Dutch forced Minahasans to grow cash crops, mainly coffee beans.

Two rather new social groups were introduced by the Dutch in the colonial times. First, the Minahasans who served as soldiers for the Dutch army, the KNIL. These soldiers fought, interestingly, against their own Indonesian fellowmen in Java and other wars around the archipelago. Upon return, these soldiers had a high prestige.

The second group would be the teachers and educated people, who appeared when the Dutch and the missionaries opened the first schools in Minahasa. Schouten gives good insight about how Minahasa was Christianized and how schools were set up and how and by whom these schools were visited.

The book then turns its focus on the highlands of Minahasa, towards one certain village, Sonder. There, Schouten again explains in a detailed and precise way the way of living of the inhabitants.

Towards the end of the book, the new influences by the occupying Japanese and later by the globalization are presented and how it affects everyday life in Minahasa. The change in crops, towards cloves, is also presented by Schouten. The book with its observations ends in the early 1980s.

To sum it up, the book gives good and precise insight into the Minahasa society with a focus on leadership in the region. It provides valuable information about the Dutch, how their influence looked like in Minahasa and how the Minahasans changed over the centuries of Dutch influence. For this thesis, this book is a good source for more general information about Minahasa and for getting a holistic picture of the region. However, as the observations end in 1983, the book is of limited use when it comes to explain the recent developments in Minahasa, especially the post-Suharto era since 1998.

Buchholt, Helmut, Ulrich Mai, *Continuity, Change and aspirations: Social and Cultural Life in Minahasa, Indonesia, Singapore: ISEAS, 1994*

The second book I want to present here is a collection of essays. The book's focus is also on social scientific aspects, such as religion and social changes in the culture of Minahasa.

Especially the first essay by Helmut Buchholt is interesting. It deals with the impact of the Dutch and the arrival of Christianity in Minahasa and how that changed the Minahasans.

It gets clear how the Dutch changed the life and habits of Minahasa's inhabitants and throughout the centuries how the Minahasans adapted willingly more and more the lifestyle of the Dutch colonialists, such as their language and their habits.

This makes the Minahasans a very interesting ethnic group in Indonesia as they accepted Dutch influence as a positive aspect for their lives. Additionally, the obviously successful work of missionaries to spread Christianity in Minahasa, is also covered in this essay. Along with this came the set up of various schools which together led to Minahasa as being one of the few areas in Indonesia where both Christianity and education could be found.

Buchholt, in contrast to Schouten, concludes by saying that this strong Dutch influence led to the vanishing of typical Minahasa traditions.

Another good contribution in this book deals with social changes and how this goes along with Christianity in Minahasa. It gives a good historical background about missionary activities in Minahasa and the results of that. After that the essay goes into detail about the different churches that are present in Minahasa, such as the various Protestant churches and how they differentiate from each other. This is valuable since many sources only mention "Protestants" in Minahasa but do not go further into detail.

However, this is necessary since there are many different streams within the Protestant church.

In general, this book, like Schouten's book, gives general in-depth information about Minahasa, its history and its religion. Some of the contributions may not be of importance for this thesis, but the above mentioned ones provide good information that are useful, especially in terms of religion in Minahasa and how that leads to different social behaviour of the Minahasans.

Bertrand, Jacques, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004

This book is very interesting when it comes to explain Indonesia's nationalism and how this affects the different ethnic groups in Indonesia. In a detailed way, the book covers the conflicts in Maluku, Papua, East Timor and Aceh. In addition, it gives a brief introduction into Indonesia's Islam and its relation to Christianity. Since it was published in 2004, the book also deals with the post-Suharto era which is very useful and valuable. In the end, the author elaborates on the various stages of autonomy and how Indonesia's future could look like. Especially in terms of outlook and the political ways that Indonesia might go, this book is very useful for this thesis as it gives a good account on political, historical and religious aspects.

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1.4 Methodology

The research part of the methodology consists of two parts that are both vital for the report at hand. The first part is the desk research and the second part the field research. Both parts will be explained in detail and in how far they contributed to the final paper. The interviews conducted during the field research will be presented in this chapter as well.

However, before turning to the research part of the methodology, it needs to be explained how the preceding steps were conducted, namely how the research topic was formulated, how the literature was reviewed, which approach to the research was selected and how the access to the data was achieved. These steps follow an acknowledged way of conducting research, called the “research cycle”².

Firstly, the formulation of the research topic followed various steps. After it became clear that the topic of the thesis would deal with Minahasa in Indonesia, a matching research topic had to be found. The initial idea was then presented to various lecturers at the university who gave valuable feedback about how to alter the research topic. Therefore, the topic was changed to meet the suggestions of the thesis committee.

After that was agreed upon, the next step was to review the existing literature. Three different kinds of literature were reviewed in order to get a clear picture what kind of literature about the topic is already available and what kind could be used to support the thesis. Primary literature in this case would be books and other forms of literature about Minahasa as part of Indonesia and even in more detail, articles or books about politics or religion in Minahasa. Such primary literature is quite important and valuable because it has a high level of insight and provides the reader with details that are not found in secondary or tertiary literature³.

² Amara Prasithrathsint, *Doing Research and Writing a Thesis Proposal*, Special lecture (PowerPoint) at Chulalongkorn University Bangkok, July 6, 2007.

³ Mark Saunders, Philipp Lewis, Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (2nd Edn) (UK: Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2000), p.51.

In the case of this report, these primary data proved to be very useful. To give one example, the local statistics office in Manado provided very useful and in-depth information about religion, population and many other aspects of life in the province of North Sulawesi and its Kabupaten in particular. Such kind of detailed and in-depth information is hardly available in internationally published books or the internet.

Apart from that, secondary literature was often used, as it is easier to find and provide interesting opinions and information. The main sources for information were professional journals, as they publish detailed articles about the topic. Additionally, few books about Indonesia and Minahasa were available to obtain important information. In addition to these journals and books, the internet can be allocated as one vital source of information. Many journals offer online services with interesting links that were used to get to other homepages with facts that were used to come up with a valuable thesis.

After the literature screening, where it became apparent that various sources are available to obtain information, a research approach was decided upon. Since an in-depth thesis was the aim of the research, I decided to follow two steps that are explained hereunder. Besides the inevitable desk research, field research was considered very important in order to get in touch with local people and observe the way of living in Minahasa and North Sulawesi.

1.4.1 Desk research

The desk research that I have conducted for this thesis would be best described by dividing it into two different parts. The first one was the time before the actual thesis writing while the second one was the time dedicated to writing the thesis.

In the first two semesters at Chulalongkorn University, I have already written two term papers that can be seen as supplementary for this thesis. One paper for the compulsory class “Colonialism, Nationalism and Democratization in Southeast Asia” dealt with Minahasa, North Sulawesi and Indonesia in a broader sense. The title of that term paper was “Indonesia: Too diverse to be unified”. This was also the preliminary

title for this thesis, but after consultation with various lecturers from Chulalongkorn University, this title was changed. Basic information for this report was used for this thesis. An advantage is that since a lot of books had already been read for that term paper, I already had an extensive basis of knowledge about the subject, Minahasa and Indonesia. The second term paper that was used in this thesis was for the elective class “Local Autonomy”. In that term paper, I discussed the so called “RMS” movement in the Maluku in Indonesia. This predominantly Christian movement attempted to split from Indonesia in 1950 and keeps being on the agenda in Indonesia and Netherlands since then. The information that I have gathered for that term paper were useful for this paper as well.

The second part of the desk research was conducted during the time dedicated to the thesis. The above mentioned literature was reviewed, primary, secondary and tertiary literature. As already mentioned, these three kinds of literature are reviewed for different objectives.

Here again, the internet needs to be mentioned as a valuable, yet not always credible and valid source of information. However, information from the internet was always cross-checked to avoid bias and wrong information. A very positive aspect of the internet was that due to the lack of resources in Bangkok, many book reviews and articles from respected scholars, for example from Leiden University in The Netherlands, could be found in the internet. Therefore, the internet helped overcoming the sometimes occurring lack of sources.

These two parts of the desk research combined ensured a well-researched thesis with in-depth information and thoroughly researched sources. In addition to the desk research, field research had also been conducted and proved as a very useful source of information.

1.4.2 Field research

Field research was chosen as one part of collecting the data. One of the reasons why field research was chosen for collecting data was because I had spent six months in Manado, North Sulawesi, as part of my undergraduate study from August 2004 until February 2005. During that stay, various contacts with local people were established. These contacts were useful for the second visit that took place in November and December 2007. In order to use the limited time best, the above mentioned people were contacted before the field research so that several arrangements had already been made before the actual field visit.

During the field research, two kinds of interviews were conducted. The first ones were semi-structured interviews with various people. The second ones were unstructured interviews. Both types of interviews provide qualitative data, since they rely on data expressed through words, whereas quantitative data relies on numbers⁴. Before the data collection it was considered to create questionnaires to hand out during the field research, but this thought proved not applicable for three main reasons.

The first one would be that such kind of information gathering would be both time and money consuming. Secondly, if one hands out questionnaires, the response rate is normally rather low which would affect the outcome of the research. Thirdly, the purpose of the interviews was to get in-depth information, which cannot be collected through questionnaires, as they only allow standardized answers, whereas semi and unstructured interviews allow the participant to express his own points of view in a detailed way.

Therefore the decision was made to conduct a small amount of qualitative interviews where detailed information could be gathered. The following chapter describes how these interviews were organized and conducted.

⁴ Mark Saunders, *Research Methods*, p.381.

Besides the interviews, another method of data collection was used during the field research, namely observation. In this case, observation took place at various locations, for example at the local university, at famous meeting points or at restaurants. The observations were useful in so far as they gave insight into the people's behaviour and interaction with each other.

One interesting thing that set in during the interviews was the so-called "snowball effect"⁵, because almost each interviewee had colleagues or other sources for further information. They were all willing to help providing information for the report. This is one very useful and positive aspect of both field research in general and in-depth interviews in particular.

1.4.3 The interviews

Like mentioned before, the interviews were qualitative, in-depth interviews in order to get valuable insight information about the subject. The interviews covered a wide range of Minahasans, from politicians over university lecturers to church members. These interviews with people that may be called "key informants" were well prepared to ensure a valuable outcome. Before the interviews, a number of questions were set up which were then asked during the interview. However, since face-to-face talks often evolve in different, but nevertheless interesting, directions, it was always possible to leave the set of questions and talk about other issues, keeping the overall topic in mind. This way of conducting interviews is called "semi-structured" interviews, where an overall framework of questions is given but detailed and specific questions can be added during the interview⁶.

The method used to save the data during the interview was twofold. First, interviews were taped in the beginning. These interviews were mostly in Bahasa Indonesia, with the help of a friend who translated the questions and answers. However, since that did not prove to be most accurate way to save the data, in my view, I decided

⁵ Mark Saunders, *Research Methods*, p.175.

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5307e/x5307e08.htm> (accessed January 12, 2008).

to take notes during the interviews. These notes were immediately put on the computer after the interview, along with other observations taken during the day.

The interviews included many interesting people, such as a lecturer from the local university in Manado, who had studied philosophy and sociology and can therefore be seen as a very credible and reliable source for information. Furthermore, I was able to interview a member of the local parliament, the DPRD. After that interview, I was invited to take part in an election campaign which gave me the opportunity to collect various data through observation. Another interview was conducted with a local politician who used to work in the Ministry of Transportation under Suharto. He was responsible for the set up and enlargement of the Sam Ratulangi Airport in Manado. Currently, he is involved in provincial politics and it appears that he might have ambitions to enter the political stage. Another very informative interview was done with a scholar who now works in a Catholic seminary outside Manado. He holds a PhD and was referred to as one of the persons having broad knowledge about Minahasa.

Many of the rather unstructured interviews were carried out with members of the Sam Ratulangi University in Manado. In order to get an objective picture, the opinions expressed throughout these interviews were checked with other people's opinions to guarantee validity. Due to the fact that I have lived with a quite influential Minahasan family, I was able to obtain information through many informal talks and debates with members of this family. Additionally, observations within this family and their relatives proved very interesting.

To sum it up, the combination of desk and field research proved to be a very efficient and essential form of conducting research. The information that I have gained were in-depth and useful.

1.5 Restraints

There are four restraints that occurred during the research process and the data collection.

First and foremost, the language barrier proved to be a minor problem, since many Indonesians only speak English a little bit and my knowledge of the Indonesian language is also limited to small talk and not useful for in-depth interviews about politics and culture of Minahasa and Indonesia. However, thanks to the help of various students from Manado, this language barrier was minimized so that the required information could be gathered.

Second, the research was limited by the time factor. I only spent around four weeks in Jakarta and Manado, so that only a limited number of interviews could be conducted. However, since I had prepared the research trip carefully, I could manage to work effectively and efficiently. Naturally, more time would have led to more interviews, in-depth information and observations.

Third, financial aspects also played a role in doing research. As I did not have any scholarship available, all costs had to be covered by me. However, thanks to the help of many friends in Jakarta and Manado, the overall costs of the field research could be kept within an acceptable limit.

The fourth and last problem that I faced during the research is that the libraries in Bangkok only provide few books about Minahasa. Due to the fact that Indonesia used to be a Dutch colony, far more books about the topic are available in the Netherlands. Especially the University of Leiden can be considered a stronghold when it comes to studies about Indonesia and Minahasa in particular. Fortunately, I managed to obtain one important book from that university.

CHAPTER II

INDONESIA- AN INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

This chapter looks at the diversity of Indonesia as this is the key to this study. A brief introduction about Indonesia's diversity in terms of population, geography and religion is given. After that Indonesia's ethnic structure and clashes that have occurred in the Malukus and Central Sulawesi are presented.

Obviously scholars are right when they label Indonesia to be one of the most diverse countries in the world. Besides, it also ranks number four on the list of the most populated countries in the world. Many people are also familiar with the fact that Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country in the world. To fill these facts with figures, the present population, religion and geography related data are outlined. After that, the Pancasila as the state's main ideology is explained.

2.2 Population

At the latest census in 2000, Indonesia's population was estimated at 205 million¹. Now, seven years later, approximations range from around 220 from the official Indonesian statistics bureau to 235 million². Worth mentioning is the fact that the distribution of the population is far from even. Around 60% of the population live

¹ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, Aris Anata, *Indonesia's population- Ethnicity and Religion in a changing political landscape* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p. 2.

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html> (accessed February 2, 2008).

on the island of Java, including Jakarta, alone. This is a sharp contrast to Papua, an island that is far bigger than Java, but only home to around 2 million people.

Generally speaking, one can roughly conclude that Java, Sumatra and parts of Sulawesi are rather densely populated whereas Kalimantan and Papua have a low density.

2.3 Ethnicity and religion

Religion and ethnicity in Indonesia are topics on its own and various books have been published about aspects of religion and ethnicity in Indonesia³, so I am going to briefly present this topic so that the reader has a good overview about Indonesia's ethnic groups.

2.3.1 Ethnicity

A common definition of ethnicity or features that are included in defining an ethnic group are common ancestry, some form of shared historical past and a common language and religion. There are much more aspects that one can include such as common rites and rituals, but the main aspects are religion, history and language⁴. I personally want to include a geographical aspect, so to speak a common piece of land or region that the ethnic group inhabits. This is done for two reasons. One, ethnic groups in Indonesia as an island state can often be defined along geographical lines, for example islands. Very generally speaking, Javanese are found on Java and Hindu Balinese are found on Bali. Second, when I talk about Minahasa later, it becomes clear that the ethnic group of Minahasa also lives in a rather well definable territory.

More than 1000 ethnic groups live on the somewhat 6.000 populated islands of Indonesia. 1000 ethnic groups mean 1000 different values, beliefs, customs and

³ For example: Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, a documented history 1808-1900* (The Netherlands: KITVL Press, 2003) or books by the author Leo Suryadinata who published various books on ethnicity in Indonesia, especially on ethnic Chinese.

⁴ Colin Mackerras, *Ethnicity in Asia* (UK: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p.73.

languages. The biggest ones are the Javanese, Sundanese, Malay and Madurese, whereas most of these ethnic groups except for the Malay mainly live on the island of Java. Sundanese populate the western part of Java, the Madurese the island Madura just off the northeast coast of Java and the Javanese the central and eastern parts of the island. Such a break down can be done with every island, and one could actually go further and define various sub-ethnic groups so that one would definitely come up with more than 1000 ethnic groups. In the later part where Minahasa and North Sulawesi are examined, the ethnic group of the Minahasans will be further studied.

Apart from these huge ethnic groups mentioned above, most of the other ethnic groups only make up a minimum percentage of the overall population. Only the 15 biggest groups have a number exceeding 1.000.000⁵. If one compares this with the population of Indonesia, it would only be around 0.5%. The Javanese ethnic group makes up around 41% of the population and is by far the biggest ethnic group followed by the Sundanese with 15%. The next biggest ethnic group, the Malays, only constitute around 3.5% of the population⁶. This huge gap between the biggest, Java-based ethnic groups and the “others” remains interesting. So apart from the domination of Java-based ethnic groups there are no other “leading” ones, because how can an ethnic group make a claim or aim at domination if it only represents one or two percent of the population.

To sum the definition of ethnicity and the presentation of Indonesia’s plurality up, I say that the variety of ethnic groups with different religions, customs, histories and to a certain degree, languages, is nowhere as huge as in Indonesia. A native tribe in the jungles of Papua, Balinese Hindus, Muslim Acehese and Christian Minahasans: That all is part of Indonesia.

I therefore argue that this plurality shows the definite need for the nation’s motto “Unity in Diversity” (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika).

⁵ Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia’s population*, p. 6.

⁶ Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour- A Statistical Perspective* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), p.16.

2.3.2 Religion

Besides the diversity in terms of ethnic groups, religion leads to a further diversification of Indonesia's population. As the biggest Muslim state in the world, around 88% of the population are followers of Islam. The second biggest religion is Christianity, which in Indonesia is always subdivided into Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestants make up 6% of the population and Catholics around 3%. Christianity mainly came with the arrival of European seafarers. The Spanish and the Portuguese brought Catholicism to some parts of Indonesia in the 16th century, while the Dutch, from the 17th century onwards, introduced Protestantism in Indonesia⁷. The remaining 3% are Hindus, Buddhist and "others".

It needs to be mentioned that the size of the religious groups is very uneven. Whilst Christians in general only make up 9% of the population, there are regions and provinces in Indonesia, where Christians make up to 95% of the population. The province "East Nusa Tenggara" has almost 90% Christians and the Kabupaten (district) of Minahasa in North Sulawesi is around 95% Christian. Other strongholds of Christianity are North Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Maluku and Papua. Often the religious lines coincide with the former presence of the Spanish and Dutch. The stronger the colonial administration, the higher the degree of adherents to "their" religion.

On the contrary, parts of Java and Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara and Gorontalo only contain few percentage, lower than 2%, of Christians. In fact, the northern part of Sulawesi is an interesting area. Gorontalo as a newly created province has the highest percentage of Muslim adherents⁸ while the neighbouring province North Sulawesi has parts, as mentioned above, where Christians are by far the majority. Talking about Islam, it also has to be stated here, that there are different forms of Islam. Acehnese Muslims, as an example, follow a much stricter way of Islam than the Javanese, for

⁷ Karel Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, a Documented History 1808-1900* (The Netherlands: KITLV Press, 2003), p.6.

⁸ Michael Jacobsen, 'To be or what to be- that is the question' *On Factionalism and Secessionism in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia* in "Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper Series", No 29, 2002, City University of Hong Kong, p.13.

example. The Javanese Islam is blended with old animistic and Hindu beliefs remaining until today. Western scholars labelled these two forms of Islam in Indonesia “abangan” and “santri”. However, after an interview with a Muslim woman from Jakarta, it appeared that neither of those labels fitted her, so this distinction might need to be questioned⁹, as certainly many Indonesians are caught in between those two distinctions.

The fact that certain regions follow certain religions is a good starting point for the last part of this introduction.

2.4 Geography

Indonesia’s geography contributes further to its diversity. It is often stated that Indonesia spreads from Sabang off the coast of Aceh to Merauke which lies in Papua at the border to Papua New Guinea. These two points lie more than 5000km apart from each other. They are often referred to when Indonesian’s talk about the Indonesian territory¹⁰. In terms of broadening Europe is only slightly bigger than Indonesia, but home to so many more countries. The southernmost point is the island of Rote in East Nusa Tenggara with the northernmost point being the island of Miangas in North Sulawesi which had just recently been given a name.

The opinions about how many islands Indonesia actually harbours vary considerably. Accounts range from around 13.000¹¹ to 23.000 stated by former president Megawati Sukarnoputri.

⁹ The person considered herself a good and strict Muslim, having done the Haj, but still follows a western lifestyle. After asking her what she considers herself, she told me: neither abangan, because she follows Muslim rules, nor santri, because her life still does not turn around Islam.

¹⁰ Agus Pakpahan, *Indonesia must seek survival in its diversity*, Jakarta Post, August 15, 2007.

¹¹ Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia- The Unlikely Nation?* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm books, 2003), p.5.

To sum this part about ethnicity, religion and geography in Indonesia up, Jacques Bertrand comments on how these different aspects of ethnicity are influencing each other:

“...any single individual possesses multiple, overlapping ethnic identities as a member of a religious, cultural, or regional group. Which identity becomes a stronger source of group differentiation may vary from one set to another”¹².

2.5 Pancasila

Together with the nation’s motto “Unity in Diversity”, the Pancasila, five principles, is one of the most important guidelines for Indonesia’s politics. Some even call it the main state ideology¹³, since even clubs and organisations need to be based on these principles. These five principles define what Indonesia’s society is based upon. Since they are closely linked with religion and equality, and therefore vital for this paper, I will present them hereunder. The Pancasila was created by Indonesia’s first president in July 1945, before the Declaration of Independence which came one month later. In this, Sukarno presented what should be the main pillars of the newly created state. The hereunder presented first “Sila”, about religion, used to be the last one. It was also the most debated one, since it “only” stressed that religion is very important for Indonesia and its citizens without mentioning Islam.

1. Belief in one god: Initially, this was supposed to be the last principle. Because religion was considered important, this became the first principle. In fact, there were considerations among various groups that this principle should focus on Islam as the religion for Indonesia. In the so called “Jakarta Charter”, the idea to change this to “belief in one God with the obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out Islamic law” was suggested. As it was feared that provinces with a

¹² Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.9.

¹³ Douglas E. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.1.

strong non-Muslim population would not support such a principle it was “secretly” changed back to the original version, just before the constitution was announced¹⁴. Indonesia recognizes five (this was recently changed to six) religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism and Hinduism (recently Confucianism).

2. Just and civilized humanity. This is also sometimes referred to as “Internationalism”.

3. National unity: This one goes along with the national motto “unity in diversity”. No Indonesian should feel superior just because of the ethnicity, religion or the colour of the skin. Sukarno stated that this principle expresses the intention to create a state “all for all” . When this paper talks about the Minahasans later, this principle will be picked up again.

4. Democracy through consultation and consensus.

5. Social justice.

As this paper will later show, the so called Jakarta Charter still bears tension in it. When it was set up, the Jakarta Charter was about to function as a preamble to the initial 1945 constitution, with only few words stating that Muslims are obliged to carry out Sharia law. As stated above, this part was not put into the Pancasila eventually. Many Muslim politicians at that time were convinced that this part could later be included, since the overwhelming majority of Indonesians are Muslims¹⁵. Therefore, such an amendment would not meet harsh resistance. However, until this day, this change has not been done, but it keeps occurring on the agenda of Muslim parties that demand the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter. Almost simultaneously the non-Muslim parts of Indonesia, North Sulawesi being one of them, threaten to secede once such an amendment would be carried out.

¹⁴ Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, (3rd ed) (USA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.262.

¹⁵ Leo Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002), p.11.

2.6 Ethnic clashes

In this part, I mention some of the various clashes that have shaken Indonesia in the last decade. The reason for that is simply to better understand the situation of Minahasa which will be presented in the following chapters. Especially Poso in Central Sulawesi and Ambon in the Maluku are interesting to look at since they are geographically close to Minahasa and North Sulawesi. The Maluku are to the east of North Sulawesi, with the sultanates of Ternate and Tidore closest to it. Central Sulawesi used to be the neighbouring province of North Sulawesi before Gorontalo split and became an own province.

I do not aim at giving a thorough and in-depth picture of the clashes, however a brief introduction should be given to understand the roots of the violence in those areas. Was it only religion that caused the violence, ethnicity, a combination of both or maybe economic aspects that can be seen as the roots of the violence? By understanding Ambon and Poso, a comparison to Minahasa can be drawn and maybe an explanation can be found why North Sulawesi and Minahasa have not seen any religious clashes so far, despite dire predictions by several scholars and commentators¹⁶.

It would be too easy to see the roots of all ethnic conflicts in ethnicity or religion alone. In general, ethnic tensions, clashes or conflicts can occur due to various reasons. The main ones are historical, cultural, socio-economic and political. These reasons mostly interplay with each other and lead to what is mostly called ethnic or religious violence¹⁷. Together with these factors, a manipulation by certain elites often takes place in order to stir up tensions and create violence. These elites are mostly active behind the curtains and only get active in order to mobilize groups. The presented cases

¹⁶ Especially the internet seems to be a playground where people predict that it is only a question of time that violence will occur in North Sulawesi. I chose to show links of rather credible sources. These are some links where such opinions are expressed (interestingly, some links are dating back to 2000, and nothing has happened so far):

<http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/2000/0124/indonesia.ambon.html> (accessed December 29, 2007)

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/4a0ef68c4488a716852569ad007e9986> (accessed January 4, 2008)

http://home.snafu.de/watchin/II_April_2001/indo_zerbricht.htm (accessed: January 1, 2008)

¹⁷ David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* (USA: Routledge, 1994), p. xi.

hereunder make clear how these different factors relate to each other. For the later evaluation of Minahasa, I will come back to these factors and use them to explain the situation in Minahasa in terms of ethnicity and the “absence” of violence.

2.6.1 The Maluku

The conflict in the Maluku has so far cost more than 10.000 lives and hundreds of thousands of refugees, most of the Christians sought refuge in the neighbouring province of North Sulawesi. How the conflict actually started remains unclear until the day. Two factors were supplementary to the eruption of violence. A possible main factor of grievances in the beginning was the transmigration of Javanese and people from Sulawesi to the Maluku. These migrants changed the balance of Christians and Muslims in the region. Until then, both sides had almost equal numbers of followers with a slight Christian majority. This migration caused the first incidents between local Christians and Muslim migrants. However, soon, this conflict turned into a single Christian versus Muslim one¹⁸.

In January 1999, a minor incident caused the first large-scale riots in the Maluku, when a Christian bus driver and a Muslim passenger got into a fight. As in most cases of violence, the real causes remain unclear, and here too, no credible accounts can recall who was actually to blame for the fight. Nonetheless, this was the start of violence that lasted for months, even years with several disruptions. Churches and mosques were burnt down and people had to flee their houses and villages. Since the middle of 2000, Christians and Muslims have virtually lived separate from each other in their own villages and towns.

As mentioned in the introduction of this part, ethnic violence has several causes, so has the one in the Maluku. It was not solely the transmigration or the bus driver fight, there were more reasons for the final eruption of violence, some of them dating back to the colonial times.

¹⁸ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism*, p.123.

One of the main reason dates back to the colonial era, when the Malukus were one of the regions where the Dutch were very active both in terms of administration and in proselytizing. The population was equally divided among Muslim and Christian faith and predominantly Christians joined the administration and the army, where they were favoured due to their religion. Until the 1990s, Christians tended to dominate the bureaucracy in all the Malukus. In addition, most teachers and university staff were also Christians. Now, this dominance decreased and the Muslim governor of Maluku appointed more and more Muslims to higher positions in the administration and chose a Muslim to be the rector of the local university. This loss of dominance and the fear of Islamization clearly worried the Christians and their positions in the Malukus¹⁹. To sum it up, the situation in the Malukus changed when more and more Muslims entered important positions in the administration and by the end of the 1990s they dominated the provincial bureaucracy.

Another reason why these tensions finally erupted into violence was the involvement of the military and police in the violence. When the fighting started both the military and the police seemed not to be able to stop it. Even more, military and police were both actively involved in the violence, sometimes by passively letting the fighting continue and sometimes by actively involving in the fights, on either the Christian or the Muslim side. It even went so far that the police, tending to support Christian fighters and the military, in support of the Muslims, fought each other²⁰. In addition to that, elements of the army or even the government seemed to stir up the violence by providing help to outside militias to enter the Malukus to provoke more fights. It has been proven that logistical support had been given to Laskar Jihad fighters to come to the Malukus and assist the Muslims in fighting the Christians²¹. The Christian side was many times accused of having separatist objectives. This accusation goes back to the early times of Indonesian independence when a separatist movement in the Malukus declared independence.

¹⁹ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism*, p.120.

²⁰ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia? Implications for Regional Security* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.60.

²¹ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.56.

Therefore, one can easily conclude that Indonesia as a state with the military and the police has failed to bring order and security to the Malukus and Ambon in particular. To make things even worse for the officials, not only did Christian and Muslim soldiers tended to take sides, Balinese soldiers even deserted from the fighting and went home to Bali²². This shows clearly that Balinese certainly did not see the Maluku incident as their issue, which makes it apparent how difficult it appears for Indonesia to come up with a unifying culture or a uniting policy.

The overall picture in the Malukus with the “ethnic” or “religious” violence is a good example of the mentioned possible reasons for ethnic violence. Not only did religion or ethnicity play a role, economic, political and social aspects played an important, if not the most important role. Local competition over resources, governmental posts together with the state’s inability to intervene led to the ethnic and religious violence.

2.6.2 Central Sulawesi

Another good, yet sad, example of how different factors lead to violence is found in the province of Central Sulawesi. Again, the state failed to cope with a communal conflict, social tensions due to a change in demographics because of migration and the loss of privileges for one group eventually led to the outbreak of violence which caused over 1000 deaths and thousands of displaced people.

Here again, the actual reason for the outbreak of the violence remains unclear. For fact, drunken Christians and Muslims started to quarrel and fight in December 1998. Some said, the Christians threw rocks at the Muslims and a nearby mosque, others said, the Muslims actually started to provoke the Christians²³. This minor incident was followed by more brutal attacks by both Muslims and Christians where, again, villages,

²² Merle C. Ricklefs, *Indonesian Views of the Future*, in Lloyd, Grayson and Shannon Smith (eds), *Indonesia Today- Challenges of History* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001), p.242.

²³ Interview with a 1st Lieutenant of the TNI, December 9, 2007. He works as an intelligence officer and used to serve in Aceh and is now stationed in Manado. He is an Ambonese Muslim.

mosques and churches were burnt down. This violence took place until the end of 2001 when negotiations ended the violence.

As in the case of Ambon, it was not only the fight between drunken youth. Here again, the police did rather little to stop the violence and the military was in fact accused of helping and supporting the Muslim fighters. The TNI even sold weapons to the fighters and set up roadblocks in order to get a benefit out of the violence. This is in clear opposition to the official code of the TNI. As one interviewee told me, the TNI “does not know religions and ethnicity. The TNI is a true nationalist, Indonesian body!”.

What also happened in Central Sulawesi, comparable to the Maluku, was the arrival of Muslim militias, again the Laskar Jihad, that helped the Muslim side to gain the upper hand in fighting the Christians. Additionally, as the intelligence officer of the TNI stated, terrorists from the southern Philippines were active in keeping the tensions alive between the two sides. These terrorists came to Poso, Central Sulawesi, via Manado in North Sulawesi.

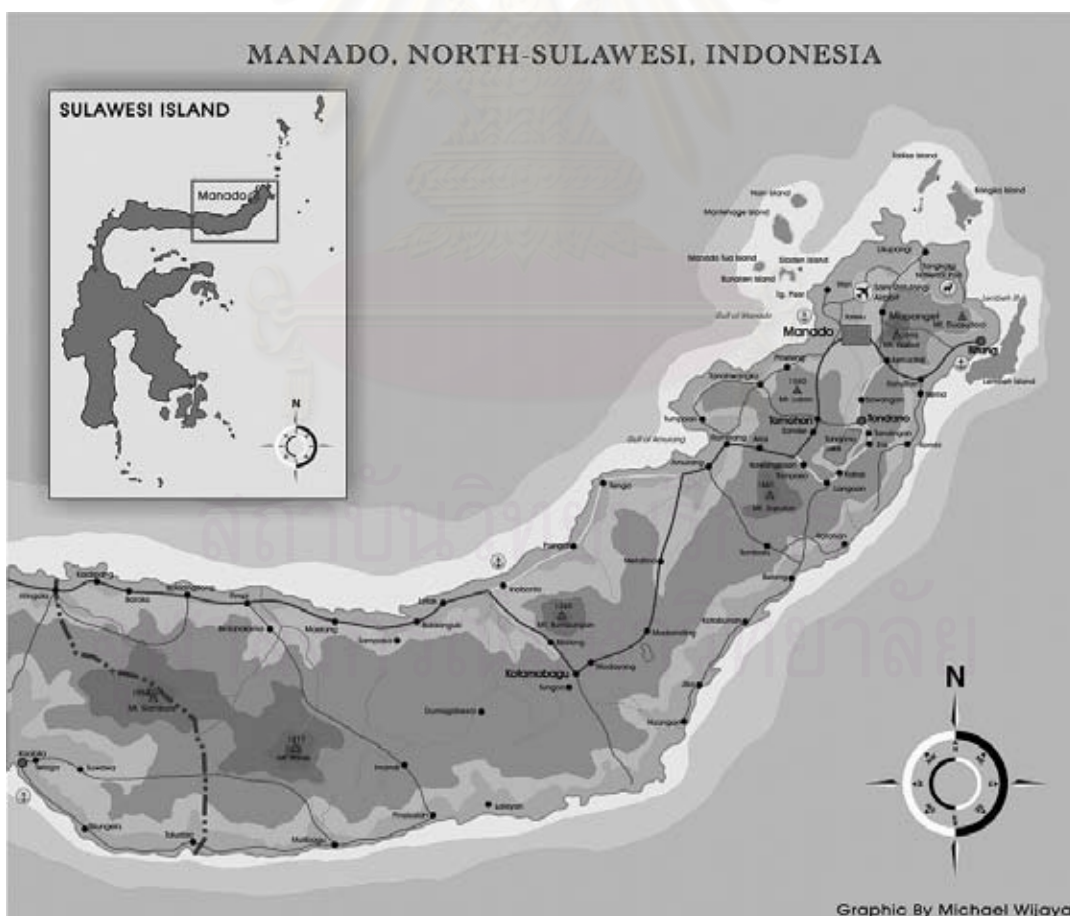
In addition to the reasons mentioned above, politics also seemed to have played a role in Poso, Central Sulawesi, as the violence occurred at the same time as local elections were held, where Christians and Muslims competed against each other. Like in the Maluku, the former Christian elite feared its exclusion from high ranking positions²⁴. This certainly fuelled the tensions between the two religious groups.

To sum the conflict in Poso up, it all seems to resemble the conflict in the Maluku, where the violence seemed to have appeared out of a minor incident between Muslims and Christians that turned into what John Sidel labelled a “pogrom”²⁵ where whole neighbourhoods and villages were attacked and cleansed of Muslims or Christians.

²⁴ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.61.

²⁵ John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad- Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), p.155.

However, the real sources of the tension can be found in demographics, economic aspects, politics and the loss of privileges of the elite, in this case the Christians. I therefore want to end this part with the four aspect that David Brown states as reasons for ethnic conflicts. History as the first one always plays a role. In both Ambon and Central Sulawesi, the split between Christians and Muslims goes back to the Dutch colonial times. The other aspects, culture, socio-economic and political ones, also play a major role in both regions, where power struggle in administration and politics easily leads to or further fuels the tensions that eventually erupted into violence. Why North Sulawesi and Minahasa have been spared so far from such violence will be evaluated later in this report. But the mentioned reasons for ethnic violence need to be kept in mind when the situation in Minahasa and the province of North Sulawesi are presented and evaluated in Chapter V and VI.



Picture 1: Map of North Sulawesi
 Source: www.northsulawesi.org

CHAPTER III

MINAHASA: HISTORY

3.1 Toar Lumimuut

Before mankind, earth only consisted of animals, trees and plants. Due to the heat on earth, a stone broke into two parts and a woman descended from it. Her name was “Karema”. When she looked around and saw all the different species and plants, she realized that she was lonely. She addressed a higher being called “Opo” and prayed to end the loneliness.

Soon after her prayer, another woman appeared out of morning dew. She was called Lumimuut, which can be translated with “the one who comes out of dew” or “someone who is wet and sweat”¹. After these two women had been living together for some time, a need arose for a man. So the two women decided to address the higher being “Opo” again and asked for a child. As it happened, Lumimuut soon became pregnant and gave birth to a child which she called Toar. Toar can be translated as “the man of the sunlight” or “the man of uncertain origin”.

When Toar grew older and became an adult, Karema told both Toar and Lumimuut to travel in order to find a partner. To avoid that they might meet each other without recognizing, both were given a stick with the same length. If one of the two meets somebody, one could use the stick to see if one is related to each other. Karema told the two to go into different directions and they started travelling. After some time of travelling, Toar and Lumimuut met each other. Without recognizing each other, they were comparing the sticks they were given. Since both were of different sizes, they were left under the impression that they were not related and wanted to get married.

¹ Paul Richard Renwarin, *Matuari and Tona’as- The Cultural Dynamics of the Tombulu in Minahasa* (PhD Thesis University of Leiden, 2006).

Karema again appeared and functioned as a female priest and married the two. After marriage, the couple got children, 9x2 in number which stands for both nine boys and girls². Then, there followed 7x3 grandchildren and 999 great-grandchildren. It should be noted that number nine is an auspicious number in Minahasa, as elsewhere.

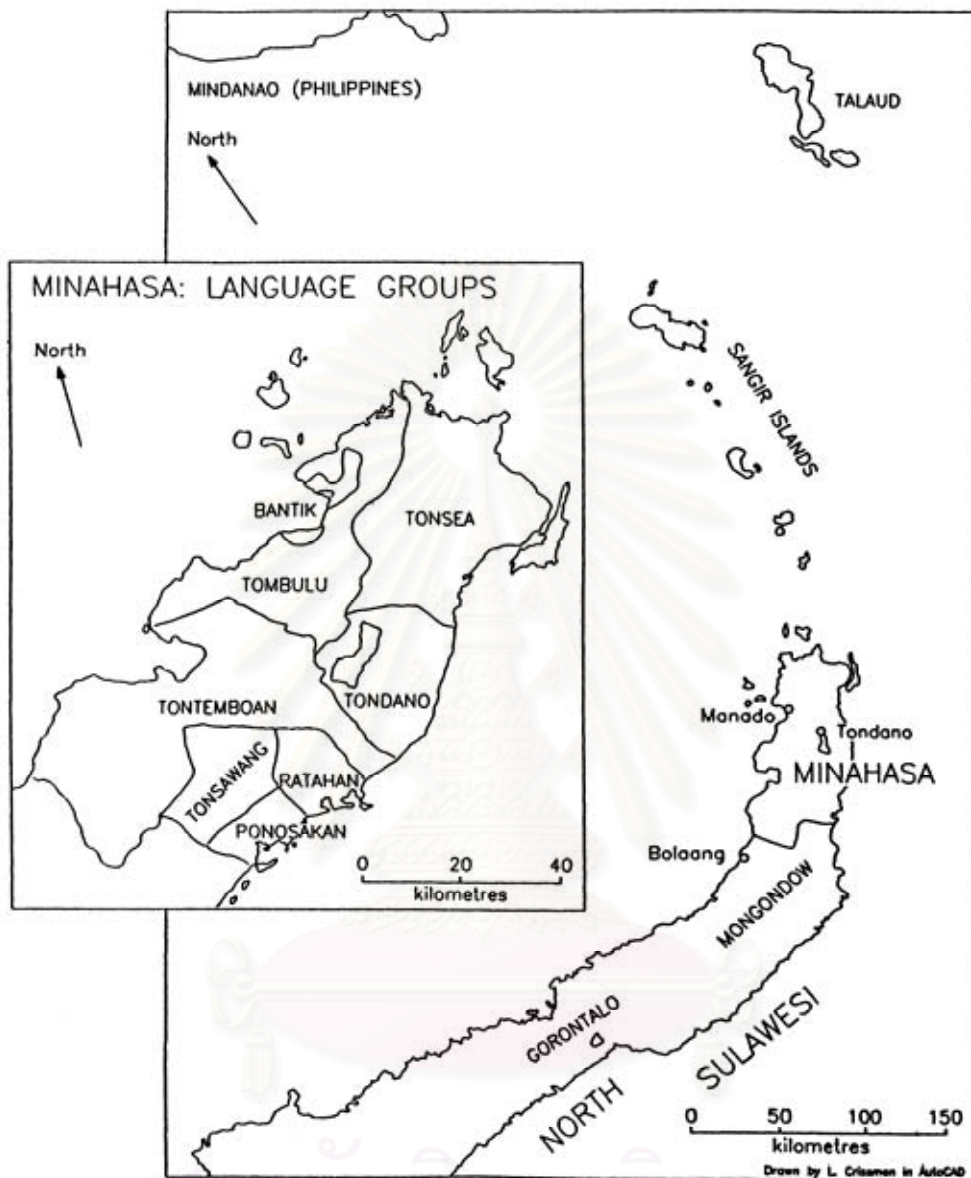
The place on the mountains in the south of Minahasa where these descendants used to live soon became too crowded, so the group split up into three sub-groups which then went on to settle down on other mountains. These three groups were called “Toumbulu”, “Tounsea” and “Toutemboan”.

The next step is that quarrel and fights broke out between these three groups. In order to end the fights, the groups agreed to meet at a place which later became known as “Watu Pinewetengan” which stands for the “stone of distribution”. When the three groups met there, another group, the Toundano from the lake also showed up. So, in total, three mountain groups plus one lake Group were present. They decided it would be better to end the fightings and quarrels. They unified. That is where the name “Se Mahasa” comes from which means “those who unify”. From Se Mahasa, the next step was to call the region Minahasa. In the latter part of this chapter, the name Minahasa will be explained again in more detail.

The story above is the main story of the creation and the original “parents” of the region Minahasa. However, there are various different interpretations and different emphasis on the story. As this thesis does not aim at presenting mythical or pre-historical stories, the main ideas that are shared by most interpretations of the Toar Lumimuut story are presented. For a more detailed description of the story and the related early Minahasa stories, Mr Renwarin’s PhD Thesis for the Leiden University can be recommended.

The story is presented here to give an introduction for the further analysis of the Minahasa region and its inhabitants.

² I decided to tell the story as it was told by Mr Willy Terok from UNSRAT on December 3, 2007.



Picture 2: Map of North Sulawesi and Minahasa

Source: Henley, David, *Nationalism and Regionalism in Colonial Indonesia: The Case of Minahasa*, in "Indonesia", Vol.55, April 1993

3.2 Historical development of Minahasa

This chapter aims at providing the reader with an overview over Minahasa's history, how its part in the Dutch East Indies used to be and how Minahasa has changed vis a vis the newly created Indonesia.

“...to understand the present and anticipate the future, one must know enough of the past, enough to have a sense of the history of a people.”³

In order to understand Minahasa, the description here starts with the arrival of the Dutch and the beginning of their influence in the Minahasa region. Before the Dutch, the Spanish and Portuguese had already been to Minahasa and turned a small amount of people to Catholics. The Spanish made use of the proximity between Minahasa and their Spanish colony of the Philippines to establish their presence⁴. However, since the presence was not an enduring one, these influences soon faded. The beginning of Dutch influence can be dated back to 1679, when a treaty was signed between the chiefs of Minahasa, then called “landstreek van Manado”⁵ and the Dutch VOC. In exchange for their loyalty, Minahasa was guaranteed safety and protection, mainly against the neighbouring rival of Bolaang Mongondow. Here, one can trace back the somewhat artificial creation of separation between Bolaang Mongondow and what later became known as Minahasa. Initially, the Dutch considered Minahasa mainly as a region to supply the neighbouring Malukus with food and later the European market with coffee and other crops. In the centuries to come, the Dutch made Minahasa change rapidly economically, politically and educationally.

Talking about religion, it was German and Dutch missionaries who came along with the VOC and later the Dutch state in order to promote Christianity, Protestantism, in Minahasa. Until the 19th century though, Minahasa people mainly stucked to their old

³ Peter Church, *A Short History of South-East Asia*, (4th ed) (Singapore: John Wiley and sons, 2006), p.vi.

⁴ Maria J. Schouten, *Manifold Connections- The Minahasa Region in Indonesia* in “South East Asia Research” Volume 12, Number 2, 1 July 2004, p.219.

⁵ “landstreek van Manado” is Dutch and means “area of Manado” or “swathe of land around Manado”.

beliefs. Within a short period of around 75 years, missionaries converted virtually every Minahasan into Christians⁶. These missionaries were also partly responsible for the extensive education that Minahasans were exposed to. In the beginning the schools were used to teach few people about “western” habits and life, but soon, the schools laid the foundation for a mass education among Minahasan people. This went so far that it is suggested that nowhere in the whole of Asia had the education been as advanced as in Minahasa. In figures this means that the literacy rate in 1930 was at almost 40% in Minahasa, with an average of around 6% in all of the East Indies. One figure shows quite well how deep the influence by the Dutch was in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In whole Indonesia there were 1.501 schools for around 36 million people. From these schools, 366 were in Manado and the surrounding area. And that area only had a population of 423.000⁷. So whilst around 20% of all schools were in North Sulawesi, the region was only home to less than 2% of the population. One side effect of this education was that Minahasa had two advantages. One, they were exposed to Malay and Dutch as languages of instruction. This, combined with the comparatively high education, led to the fact that many Minahasans went abroad, to other parts of the East Indies to work in the administration, where educated people were needed.

Another opportunity, besides working in the Dutch bureaucracy, was to enlist in the Dutch colonial army, the KNIL. Due to their Christian belief, Minahasans and Ambonese soldiers were subject to a preferential treatment in the army. Enlisting in the KNIL was an attractive choice for many Minahasans in order to get a rather safe and well-paid job and to gain merits and prestige, one important part in Minahasan culture⁸. The Minahasans were considered a very important part in the KNIL, which can be seen if one looks how the KNIL was made up. In 1936, more than 15%, around 5,000 out of a total number of 33,000⁹, of the KNIL was composed of Minahasans, more than any other ethnic group. Before that, Minahasans, often referred to as Manadonese, played a

⁶ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context- Minahasa in the Dutch East Indies* (PhD Thesis for Australian National University, 1992), p.96.

⁷ Bernhard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the 20th century* (London: New York Praeger, 1971), p.16.

⁸ Maria J.C. Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society- Minahasa 1677-1983* (The Netherlands: KITVL Press, 1998), p.123.

⁹ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.164.

part in the Java war in the 19th century. It was during this time that the nickname “anjing Belanda”¹⁰, meaning “Dutch dogs” came up to describe Minahasans, because they were fighting together with the colonialists against their fellow “brethren”. The active participation in the administration of the East Indies, as civil servants and as soldiers, led to a certain estrangement between Minahasa and the rest of the East Indies. The Dutch were certainly proud of “their” achievements in Minahasa. A quotation by a Dutch governor general shows this affection: “*What a land! What a civilization!*”. This together with the quotation of a Dutch officer who claimed the Minahasans to be “*one of the finest military races in the world*”¹¹ shows quite well how Minahasa was perceived by the Dutch. It was considered an outpost of civilization in a rather uncivilized archipelago. This led to the thinking of many Minahasans that they are certainly superior to their “fellow” natives in the East Indies. Partly understandable, as Minahasans seemed more educated and therefore occupying important posts in the administration. This perceived superiority of the Minahasans over the rest of the Indies also led to an estrangement of Minahasa on the side of the other to-be Indonesians¹². Minahasans were often considered arrogant, siding with the Dutch and were seen as traitors, as the above mentioned “anjing Belanda” implies.

Moving on from education and military and turning to another point that is connected to those two aspects is nationalism and regionalism. When nationalism started to grow in the East Indies, Minahasa’s development is an interesting one as it did not side with the Dutch, but rather supported the cause of independence from the Dutch.

At the same time, or even before, when various organizations were founded in the East Indies, such as the Sarekat Islam in Java¹³, simultaneously comparable organizations appeared in Minahasa as well. The Sarekat Islam was founded in 1909 under a slightly different name and changed it to Sarekat Islam in 1912. Minahasans at the same time, in 1909, founded the Minahasan association, Perserikatan Minahasa. Whereas SI grew rapidly and claimed to have around 2 million members, other sources

¹⁰ http://www.north-sulawesi.com/sul_info.html (accessed January 7, 2008).

¹¹ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.162.

¹² Helmut Buchholt, and Ulrich Mai, *Continuity, Change and Aspirations: Social and Cultural Life in Minahasa, Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1994), p.26.

¹³ Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p.210.

suggest half a million, the Minahasan association “only” attracted 10.000 members by 1917¹⁴. Nevertheless, after the SI, the Minahasan association was the biggest political association in the Indies at that time.

Once again this showed that the education that was “brought” to Minahasa by the Dutch now started to cause problems to the Dutch, as Minahasans made use of their education by publishing newspapers, criticising the Dutch administrations through protest notes and by setting up regionalist and nationalist movements. This behaviour is an interesting one as it was accompanied by constant showing of loyalty and affection towards the Dutch. So, Minahasans on one hand were the first ones to set up unions and associations to promote Minahasa as well as confronting and challenging the Dutch from as early as the late 19th century onwards. Nonetheless, on the other hand, Minahasans still showed loyalty to the Dutch, singing Dutch songs and displaying other forms of affection. One explanation for this supposed ambiguity is what can be labelled “Minahasans nationalism” was cooperative, whereas the nationalist movements in the rest of the archipelago were rather confrontational¹⁵. Therefore loyalty and nationalism in the case of Minahasa were not mutually exclusive. However, it was at this time that Minahasa gained its reputation as being the 12th province of the Netherlands, a label that was later used in political terms by some Minahasans to promote the idea of actually becoming a part of the Netherlands.

Further onwards in history, towards the struggle for independence in Indonesia, the role of Minahasa and its people remains fascinating, as Minahasa had a special role during this time again. It is known that the centre of the nationalist movements was in Java and to a lesser part in Sumatra. On Java, Sukarno proclaimed the Republic and also the main fights with the Dutch during the “police actions” took place in Java. Nevertheless, Minahasans played a vital role during this time. Especially during the fights with the Dutch, it was the so called KRIS that fought on the Republicans side against the Dutch. KRIS, which stands for "Kebaktian Rakjat Indonesia Sulawesi", was an armed organisation mainly made up by Minahasans. Initially, this organisation was

¹⁴ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.165.

found by Christian Minahasans on Java in 1945 as a protection against Muslims and other Indonesians who considered the Minahasans to be pro-Dutch.

Apart from this, another reason for the set up of KRIS was from the beginning to fight the Dutch. It was in a time where large parts of the Indonesian “army” were rather unstructured, the KRIS earned a reputation of a highly efficient unit with a high discipline and many able leaders¹⁶. So, whereas during the Dutch colonialism the Minahasans were the backbone of the colonial army KNIL, this now turned against the

Dutch, and the Minahasans as a well educated ethnic group with military experiences became the backbone of the newly found Republic of Indonesia.



Picture 3: A monument in Manado showing the Worang battalion, a famous unit in the early days of the Republic, named after the Minahasan leader Worang; picture taken by the author

Besides KRIS, other military figures became very prominent. Names such as Monginsidi, Worang, Tendean¹⁷ and Kawilarang¹⁸ are some known names for military personnel, some of which are today official “Pahlawan Nasional” or “Pahlawan Revolusi”, national and revolution heroes. Worang, as an example was the leader of the famous “Battalion

¹⁶ George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1952), p.164.

¹⁷ R.E. Elson, *Suharto- A Political Biography* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.109. Lt. Tendean was an aid to Nasution and was eventually killed during the attempted coup in 1965.

¹⁸ Benedict R.O’G Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution- Occupation and Resistance 1944-1946* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1972), p.424.

Worang”, a unit that fought in the early days of Indonesian independence¹⁹. Rumours had it that Worang was actually one of the few persons that were allowed to call Suharto “Pak (Har)to”. Whether or not this is true, Worang as a Minahasan gained prominence in the newly found Republic.

On the political scale, Minahasa was also involved in the nationalist and independence movement. Again, I only want to briefly mention some aspects of Minahasan involvement. First and foremost, it should be stated that a majority of Minahasans seemed to have supported the goal of independence for Indonesia. However, their opinion differed somewhat from the mainstream, Javanese opinion. Whereas Javanese politicians favoured a unitary state, which it later became, Minahasan politicians tended to support a federalist structure for Indonesia. The main fear was that in a unitary state, Minahasa’s identity and influence would be neglected and not play an important part.

The opponents of the independence struggle saw the future of Minahasa outside Indonesia, either as part of the Philippines, an independent nation or as part of the Netherlands. Henley argues that this movement, “Twapro”, which stands for “12th province”, had the support of half the population in Minahasa²⁰. Towards the end of the Indonesian struggle for independence, this Twapro movement decreased in importance and Minahasa seemed to agree with being part of the newly created state of Indonesia, whereas in neighbouring Maluku, former KNIL soldiers proclaimed to break away from Indonesia and set up their own country²¹. One possible reason for this might be Minahasans ability to adapt, as mentioned later in this paper, a fact that was also stated by one informant who said that

¹⁹ C.L.M. Penders, *The West Guinea Debacle- Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia 1945-1962* (USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), p.194.

²⁰ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.272.

²¹ A brief but informative overview about this movement is given here: Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separatism* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1996).

“Minahasans did not fight the Dutch with weapons, we fought them with our minds!”²²

As stated above, Minahasans did fight the Dutch physically, but the statement confirms the view that Minahasans have a certain characteristic of being able to adapt to new situations which they showed at the eve of independence.

Another step further showing the ambiguity of Minahasa and Indonesia, in the late 1950s, Minahasa and other parts of Indonesia started local rebellions against the central government. Sometimes labelled a separatist movement, Permesta was more a protest movement against the centralisation of the Republic, a response to the central government, so it cannot be labelled a secessionist movement²³. The rebellion was finally put down in the early 1960s²⁴. Interestingly one of the objects of the rebellion, more decentralization, were actually achieved in 2001 when the local autonomy laws were implemented in Indonesia.

To sum it up, Minahasa’s history is full of ambiguities, as the Minahasans were closely associated with the Dutch but on the other side appeared as one of the first groups challenging the Dutch and the colonial system. This transformation, at least by parts of the population, was finalized when Minahasans, both the military and politically active people, were on the forefront of the struggle of independence. From the very beginning though, Minahasa was perceived as an ethnic group, with clear boundaries that distinguished them from other groups. Not only geographic boundaries such as the mountains partly separating Minahasa from Bolaang Mongondow, also the surrounding sea contributed to the fact that Minahasa as a rather homogenous group evolved in the northern tip of Sulawesi. The Dutch contributed largely to this development by providing education and placing Minahasans in military and administrative positions which created a mental boundary between Minahasans and the

²² Interview with a „Manado Kart“, a Minahasan living outside Minahasa, in Jakarta; November 28, 2007. According to him, his father worked for the KRIS, however, not as a soldier, but in the administration.

²³ Robert W. Hefner, *The Politics of Multiculturalism- Pluralism and Citizenship* (USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p.294.

²⁴ A detailed account is given by Harvey, Barbara, *Permesta: Half a rebellion* (USA: Ithaca, 1977).

rest of the archipelago. Additionally, by Christianising virtually the whole area of Minahasa, another distinction was created between the ethnic group of Minahasa and other groups in the East Indies.

This rough outline of Minahasa's history does not aim at providing a detailed picture of the region, but rather points out some aspects that made Minahasa special in some ways compared to other parts of the archipelago. Further readings are found in the bibliography. The ambiguities and the facts stated above need to be kept in mind when hereunder, in chapters V and VI, the present situation is analysed and an outlook is given.

3.3 What's in a name?

To get an overview of the area this study is about, a discussion about the different names that are used to describe the area in North Sulawesi is needed. This will be done in a chronological way, from past to present. Finally, the present political names of North Sulawesi as a province and Minahasa as a part of it will be outlined.

In January 1679 a treaty was concluded between the Dutch, represented through the VOC governor of the Malukus and the community of the "landstreek van Manado". The content of this treaty was that the people of the landstreek stay loyal to the Dutch, VOC, in exchange for safety against the neighbouring kingdom of Bolaang. Additionally, the treaty stated in a detailed way which villages belong to the "landstreek van Manado"²⁵. The definition of the landstreek at that time coincides with what would later be known as Minahasa. By excluding Bolaang Mongondow from the treaty and even more, clearly stating that the VOC helps the landstreek against Bolaang Mongondow, the Dutch created a boundary and therefore what might be called two separate states or countries in that area.

²⁵ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.59.

The name Minahasa, meaning “being united”, first appeared in Dutch documents towards the end of the 18th century, not talking about the geographic region but about the council of chiefs that approached the Dutch in order to end the disputes among them²⁶. In the decades after that, the name changed from “landstreek van Manado” to Minahasa. The story of Toar Lumimuut from the beginning of this chapter ends with the gathering of chiefs at Watu Pinewetengan and the name Minahasa refers to that meeting as “being united”. I could not find the connection between this story and the treaty of 1679, but the latter one indicates a unification of the different people in what later became Minahasa against the neighbouring region. However, the name Minahasa, being united, started to be used in the 19th century.

When Dutch influence in the East Indies increased and Minahasa with its administrative centre at Manado became a stronghold of Dutch influence, Minahasa and its people, orang Minahasa, were often labelled as “orang Manado”. The same name was given to Minahasans when they joined the colonial army, the KNIL in huge numbers in the 19th century where they were called “Manadonese”²⁷. These soldiers took part in various battles within the East Indies and fought against their later fellowmen in Aceh, the Java war and Flores. It must have been at that time that the Manadonese soldiers, and maybe people from Minahasa in general, were given the nickname “anjing Belanda”, meaning “Dutch dogs”²⁸.

Yet another name that occurred predominantly in the other parts of Sulawesi to describe the Minahasans was “Belanda Manado”, meaning Manadonese Dutchmen²⁹, as there were ideas and attempts in the early 20th century to expand Minahasa and colonise other parts of Sulawesi with Minahasans. They would have acted in the same way as the Dutch by colonising the archipelago. Against the background that Minahasa was the part of Sulawesi with the strongest Dutch influence, this nickname is comprehensible.

²⁶ Paul Richard Renwarin, *Matuari and Tona'as*, p.27.

²⁷ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.161.

²⁸ This nickname must have been a real insult to Minahasans. Even during my interviews in 2007, when I asked an interviewee about that nickname, he became upset and started naming national heroes that came from Minahasa and stated that Minahasa was an important part of the national revolution. His statement subconsciously made clear the division at that time: “How can the Javanese call us like that? We were not anjing Belanda! Look at our national heroes!”

²⁹ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.154.

Around the same time, a movement in Minahasa was set up with the objective to make Minahasa part of The Netherlands. This movement was called “Twapro”. This stands for “twelfth province”. This nickname might have come from Minahasa’s reputation as being very loyal to the Dutch. Therefore, Minahasa was sometimes labelled by outsiders as the 12th province of The Netherlands³⁰. The names presented here clearly label Minahasa and its people as closely connected with the Dutch.

If we now jump to the independence struggle of Indonesia in 1945-1950, Minahasa became part of the newly founded province of Sulawesi. It had no special status or name in it. With a government regulation in 1960, the island of Sulawesi was divided into two parts, the southern and northern one. The northern part included parts of current central Sulawesi and the northern peninsula, including Gorontalo in the west, Bolaang- Mongondow further east and then Minahasa and the islands of Sangir and Talaud in the north³¹. Four years later, in 1964, another division took place, creating North and Central Sulawesi as separate provinces. This new province North Sulawesi consisted of four Kabupaten, namely Gorontalo, Bolaang- Mongondow, Minahasa and Sangir and Talaud plus the two Kotamadya, municipalities, Gorontalo and the capital Manado³². Bitung as another Kotamadya was set up in 1990. In this province, Minahasa contributed the biggest population share and formed the majority in the capital Manado. In the year 2001, the Muslim dominated Kabupaten Gorontalo became a new province, making Minahasa’s position within the province North Sulawesi even stronger. Over the next years, new Kabupaten and Kotamadya were set up or, more correctly, old ones split up.

Today, North Sulawesi (“Sulut”) consists of thirteen Kabupaten and Kotamadya, namely: Manado, the capital, Tomohon, Bitung and Kotamobagu (also referred to as “Kotakota”) as Kotamadya. The Kabupaten are: Bolaang Mongondow, North Bolaang Mongondow, Sangir islands, Talaud islands, Siau Tagolandang Biaro islands (“Sitaro”), Minahasa (“Minduk”), North Minahasa (“Minut”), South Minahasa (“Minsel”) and

³⁰ Ibid., p.167.

³¹ Jongker Rumteh, *The land of swaying coconut trees*, Jakarta Post, February 28, 2006.

³² Michael Jacobsen, ‘*To be or what to be- that is the question*’ *On Factionalism and Secessionism in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia* in “Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper Series”, No 29, 2002, City University of Hong Kong, p.9.

Southeast Minahasa³³. The names in brackets are the abbreviations of the Indonesian names. Indonesians are known to find suitable abbreviations for everything. “Minsel”, as an example, simply stands for “Minahasa Selatan”. In terms of population, the whole province of North Sulawesi has a population of around 2.2 million. Using Michael Jacobsen’s account on ethnic composition together with the latest statistical numbers³⁴, roughly half of the population is ethnically Minahasan. So far the current political break up of the province North Sulawesi.

Besides the correct political names, four nicknames exist that the region and its capital have today.

Population by District 2005

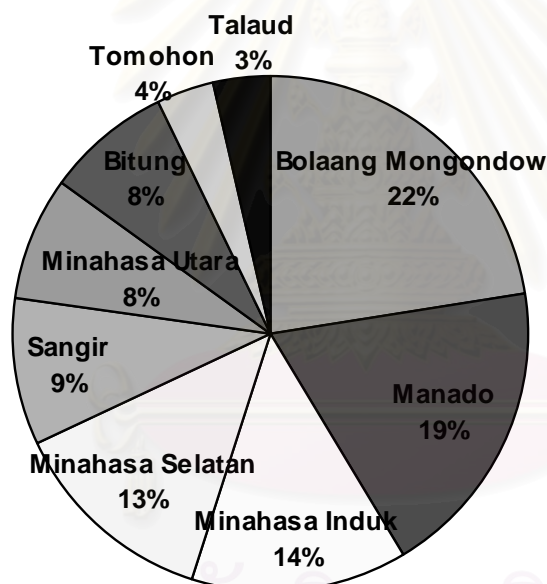


Table 1: Population by district;

Source: BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.59

despite all the differences, they all derive from the same proto parents. This nickname is used to describe Minahasa, so it only describes a part of today’s North Sulawesi.

The first one would be “Tanah Air Toar Lumimuut” (the land of the descendants of Toar and Lumimuut)³⁵. It just refers to the common ancestry of the Minahasan people and therefore makes

Minahasans aware of their history and

³³ Interview with Ferdi Rorimpandey, December 12, 2007; reference: http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulawesi_Utara (accessed November 22, 2007).

³⁴ BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.56.

³⁵ Paul Richard Renwarin, *Matuari and Tona’as*, p.60.

The second nickname, this time commonly used for the whole of North Sulawesi, is “Bumi Nyiur Melambai” (sometimes Bumi is replaced with “Tanah” or “Propinsi”), the “land of the swaying coconut”. If one looks back in history, one finds that coconuts were one of the main products that were planted in North Sulawesi. The nickname was established in the 1960s and it is a matching one. If one arrives by plane in North Sulawesi, the first thing one spots are coconut trees. Virtually everywhere you look, you find coconut trees.³⁶

One other name that one can find mainly in Manado, as North Sulawesi’s capital and mainly inhabited by Minahasans, is “Kota Tinutuan”. Tinutuan is a typical Minahasan dish which can best be described as a porridge or a stew. It appears that this name is a rather current one. During my research I was surprised to see that name being displayed virtually everywhere in Manado. Trying to get background information on that, I was not able to get a clear picture where this might come from³⁷.

The last name I want to present here is “Kawanua”. The term means “the same residents/inhabitants”. This name is used outside Minahasa when Minahasans talk about their “homeland”³⁸ and to identify themselves as belonging to the same group of people, the same ethnicity. As I was told, if two Indonesians meet and one finds out that the other one might come from Minahasa too³⁹, a possible question would be “You are from Manado? You are Kawanua?”⁴⁰. Here again, the name Manado is used to describe Minahasa, the ethnic Minahasans and, even broader, North Sulawesi.

³⁶ This was my first experience when I was about to arrive in Manado by plane in 2004. This coincides with the article *Minahasa: A subdued warrior rise again* by Froly Lelengboto Horn that I found in the Jakarta Post (August 17, 2003). If one examines the meaning of the name, one can come to the conclusion that this nickname bears inequality in it, since coconut trees only grow near the coastline and therefore, the name does not cover the whole region. Mr Renwarin gives a detailed explanation of the different names of Minahasa in his PhD thesis.

³⁷ Even a member of the Minahasa cultural team „IWWM“ could not tell me why that name is used now.

³⁸ Interview with Fernando T. Rorimpandey, Jakarta, Dec 16. 2007; reference: <http://www.theminahasa.net/rulers/stories/index.html> (accessed March 10, 2008).

³⁹ I was amazed to find out that many Indonesians can tell by someone’s name where he comes from. Therefore, when one hears another person’s name, he can often tell where he comes from. Such typical names from Minahasa can be “Manopo”, “Rorimpandey” or “Pendek”.

⁴⁰ A typical conversation piece in Indonesian language: Paul Richard Renwarin, *Matuari and Tona’as*, p.15.

To sum it up, the region now known as Minahasa and North Sulawesi has many different names, some due to the colonial past, and some due to its characteristics. Today, Minahasa is one part of the province North Sulawesi with the capital Manado.



Picture 4:This picture clearly shows what is meant by the nickname „Land of the swaying coconut trees“ ; picture taken by the author in Malalayang, Manado

What remains interesting is that the name Minahasa is actually around half a century older than the name of Indonesia⁴¹. So, before the name “Indonesia” was used to describe today’s nation, Minahasa as a region/state, or maybe better described as a political unit had already existed for quite a time. In regard to chapter IV where Minahasans are described as being friendly, the official homepage of North Sulawesi promotes the region as the “land of the smiling people”⁴², since Minahasans are known for their friendliness throughout Indonesia.

⁴¹ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.40.

⁴² <http://www.north-sulawesi.org/> (accessed February 11, 2008).

CHAPTER IV

MINAHASA: CULTURE

4.1 Introduction

As I have presented in chapter II, Indonesia consists of hundreds of different ethnic groups, each one with its own culture. Culture, again, consists of many different aspects including religion, customs, rituals, but also food and dressing habits.

Asking about Minahasan culture, answers that were given to me often seemed very shallow and superficial. An exception to the rule were two members of the so-called “Ikatan Waraney Wulan Minahasa (IWWM)” which can be translated with “Male’s and female’s union of Minahasa”. The objective of this team is to promote Minahasa within and outside Indonesia. After some days of interviewing, those “superficial” answers reappeared again and again so I aimed at proving and checking those answers with scholastic accounts.

Before summarizing their answers combined with historic accounts, I want to present one quotation by Alfred Wallace who described the Minahasans as follows:

"The inhabitants of Minahasa differ much from those of all the rest of the island, and in fact from any other people in the Archipelago. They are of light-brown or yellow tint, often approaching the fairness of a European; of a rather short stature, stout and well-made; of an open and pleasing countenance, more or less disfigured as age increase by projecting cheek-bones; and with the usual long, straight, jet-black hair of the Malayan races. In some of the inland villages where they may be supposed to be the purest race, both men and women are remarkably handsome; while nearer the coasts where the purity of their blood

*has been destroyed by the intermixture of other races, they approach to the ordinary types of the wild inhabitants of the surrounding countries."*¹

In general, three different aspects can be defined "typical" for Minahasa. These are food and feasts, religion and traditional beliefs as well as appearance and characteristics which are presented hereunder.

4.2 Food and feasts

One of the attributes mostly connected with Minahasa and its people is food. Not only outsiders, especially Minahasans are frequently telling how much eating is enjoyed in that region. Additionally, Minahasa is known for different eating habits compared to the rest of Indonesia, the Muslim parts in particular. What one finds in Minahasa is a huge variety of pork meat, which is already a huge difference from most of Indonesia, where Muslims are not permitted to eat pork. Furthermore, and that distinguishes Minahasa even more is the fact that besides pork, virtually any kind of animal is considered eatable. On the menus of Minahasan restaurants, one finds dog meat, cat, bat, snake and rat. Besides the variety of meat that is available in Minahasa, its food traditionally comes in a rather spicy (*rica rica*) way. One of the possible reasons of the spiciness of the food might be that otherwise, the taste of dog or bat might not be considered delicious, therefore, the spice covers up the "different" taste.

Two of the people I have interviewed summarized it with an Indonesian saying about Minahasan food². The first one is, roughly translated

*"If we have spices, we would even eat Satan!"*³

And the second one

¹ Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago Volume 1*, available as Ebook on <http://www.authorama.com/malay-archipelago-1-18.html> (accessed November 23, 2007).

² I am aware that these comments might be single comments and do not represent all of Minahasa or Indonesia. However, known or unknown to other Indonesians, they bring it to the point.

³ Interview with a member of the IWWM, Manado, December 12, 2007.

“Minahasans eat everything with feet, except tables”⁴.

These two quotations sum up and show quite well how Minahasa is perceived by its own people and by outsiders as well. To bring it to a more sophisticated level, food has always been an important part of Minahasan culture. Big feasts are held on every possible occasion, even if that means that the host has to go into debts.

In Minahasa, for example, a huge feast with tons of food can be considered part of the Minahasan culture. Especially when the offered food includes the infamous “RW” (rintek wuuk⁵, dog meat), different pork dishes and above all, a huge, whole roasted pig. All this food will be washed down with a good glass of saguer or cap tikus, both local drinks.

This example just shows how different the cultures and perceptions of Indonesia’s ethnic groups are. Each ethnic group has certain behaviours and rituals that might not coincide with those of another group. The example above clearly intends to show the differences between Minahasans and, generally speaking, most of Muslim Indonesia, since dog, pork and alcohol are not as widely consumed as in Minahasa.

One other typical Minahasan culture associated with food is a Thanksgiving-like event that is celebrated after the harvest. This event is called “Pengucapan sukur” and is not only celebrated by farmers. It includes an open-house policy for all participating people. Those who take part in this event cook a huge amount of food, in Minahasa that includes a lot of pork, and the prepared food is then offered to anybody who passes by and enters the house. The doors are open and virtually anybody is welcomed to join the event and enter the house in order to eat, either alone or with the hosts.

I argue that the importance of food is explained by the importance of status in Minahasa. Status appeared to be a vital part and necessity of Minahasans and their culture, both in pre-colonial times and under Dutch rule. And one gained status, among

⁴ Interview with Ferdi Rorimpandey, December 14, 2007, Manado.

⁵ “Rintek Wuuk” comes from one of Minahasa’s native languages, Tontemboan, and means “fine hair”, standing for the rather fine hair of a dog.

other things, by throwing large feasts with food and drinks. Some times these large-scale feasts exceeded the available resources and one had to go into debts to be able to finance such a feast⁶. However, offering food and drinks to visitors, friends, neighbours and others is a vital Minahasan part of gaining status in the community.

Talking about drinks, Minahasa has a reputation in Indonesia for its drinking habits. Most people that one asks about Minahasa will not only associate food but also alcoholic drinks with Minahasa. Not only Christianity is a reason for that. Minahasa, by and large, always used to be a rather rich part of both the Dutch East Indies and later, the Republic of Indonesia. This was due to various reasons, the latest one being the clove production. Minahasa used to be a main provider for Indonesia's clove industry. Many Minahasans benefited from this and became rather wealthy.

What resulted from this, according to various Minahasans during the research, was that many people did not work too excessively and in their free time, they enjoyed life, including drinking. One of the famous drinks in Minahasa is the so-called "Cap Tikus", a high percentage liquor made from palm trees.

When time changed and Minahasa as a region decreased in prosperity⁷, people kept enjoying their free time. It needs to be stated here again that these should not be considered prejudices or superficial characteristics, but attributes that most Minahasans themselves state when asked about "their" culture. In a recent newspaper article about Chinese New Year, some prejudices were presented about Chinese and other ethnic groups in Indonesia. There, the Manadonese, or Minahasans, were described as being "hedonists"⁸. Even though labelled as a prejudice, as described above, there seems to be some truth to the label "hedonist".

⁶ Maria J.C. Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society- Minahasa, 1677-1983* (The Netherlands: KITLV Press, 1998), p.171.

⁷ Maria J. Schouten, *Manifold Connections- The Minahasa Region in Indonesia*, in "South East Asia Research", Volume 12, Number 2, 1 July 2004, p.217.

⁸ Gunawan T. Sima, *Life for Chinese-Indonesians still beautiful*, Jakarta Post, February 2, 2008.

4.3 Religion and traditional beliefs

This part will deal with the deep religiosity of the people living in Minahasa. I am aware that a Minahasan culture had already existed before the arrival of the Europeans, nevertheless if one wants to describe Minahasan culture today, Christianity has to be part of such a description. Fascinatingly, despite Christianity, Minahasans still make use of old rites and rituals and believe in white and black magic among other things. This will also be mentioned later in this chapter as part of Minahasa's culture.

4.3.1 Religion

As mentioned earlier, Christianity first came with the Spanish and Portuguese who only had little lasting impact on life and culture in Minahasa. Later, along with the Dutch VOC and the Dutch state came missionaries mainly from Germany and The Netherlands that brought Christianity to Minahasa.

Since Indonesia is an overwhelmingly Muslim country with some 88% adherents according to latest numbers, it is interesting to see how different the picture looks like in North Sulawesi and Minahasa. Looking at the statistics one can get the impression that in North Sulawesi, especially leaving out the Muslim region of Bolaang Mongondow, the figures appear exactly opposite to the Indonesian ones. Not almost 90% Muslims, but almost 90% Christians constitute the solid majority in many parts of North Sulawesi.

According to the latest statistics by the province of North Sulawesi, the religion in North Sulawesi looks as follows. Out of a total population around 2.249.000, the Protestants form an overwhelming majority in the province, constituting over 62% of the whole population. Together with the other Christian denomination, the Catholics, who form around 6%, Christianity in North Sulawesi gets close to 70%. The next

biggest religion, Islam, has slightly less than 30% followers, which leaves a little more than 1% Hindus and a little less than 1% Buddhist⁹.

However, if one now breaks up these numbers and looks at the different Kabupaten, with focus on Minahasa (the three Minahasa Kabupaten plus the cities of Bitung, Manado and Tomohon), another picture appears. An interesting aspect of this province is that almost exactly 50% of all Muslims in North Sulawesi are found in Bolaang Mongondow, the Kabupaten next to Gorontalo, where two thirds of the population are Muslims.

In the Kabupaten of Minahasa, Christians form the vast majority. Here, the relative number of Christians is one of the highest in all of Indonesia. On average, slightly less than 90% are Christians, 80-85% Protestants and the remaining number Catholics. To the north of Minahasa, the island Kabupaten of Talaud even has 96% Christian followers. Even though this Kabupaten is a rather small one with only around 50.000 inhabitants, this number is remarkably high. A comparable picture can be seen in the city of Tomohon, now a Kotamadya inside Minahasa, where also around 95% are Christians, with 30% Catholics. Last but not least, the numbers for Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi, look different. Even though some of my interviewees were not completely right when they outlined that Muslims slowly but surely “take over” Manado, the number of Muslims is considerably higher than in the rest of the surrounding Minahasa¹⁰. Maybe this belief is part of the Minahasan culture: Since culture and ethnicity can also be defined as separating one group from another, this would make sense in the case of Minahasa. “They”, the Muslims, against “us”, the Minahasan Christians.

In Manado, around 37% are Muslims and roughly 60% Christians. Nonetheless, if one compares the ratio of Muslims and Christians in North Sulawesi over the past few

⁹ BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.141. It needs to be noted here that in the official statistics book of the BPS, there are some calculating mistakes when it comes to the population. Whereas all the numbers for the different Kabupaten seem to be correct, the numbers do not add up correctly. The writer recalculated these numbers and present here what should be the correct numbers.

¹⁰ This seems to be one of the popular beliefs in Manado and Minahasa that Muslims secretly take over the region. However, by only looking at the statistics, this belief seems not to be true.

years, there was no considerable change in numbers. Christians always formed around 68-69% and Muslims between 30-32%¹¹.

All in all, it gets clear that Muslims inhabit the region close to Gorontalo and form a strong minority in the bigger cities of the province, Bitung and Manado. In the rural areas of Minahasa and the island Kabupaten of Sangir and Talaud, Muslims are a small minority and these Kabupaten are actually some of those with the lowest numbers of Muslims throughout Indonesia¹². Therefore, a certain homogeneity can be found in Minahasa in terms of religion and ethnicity.

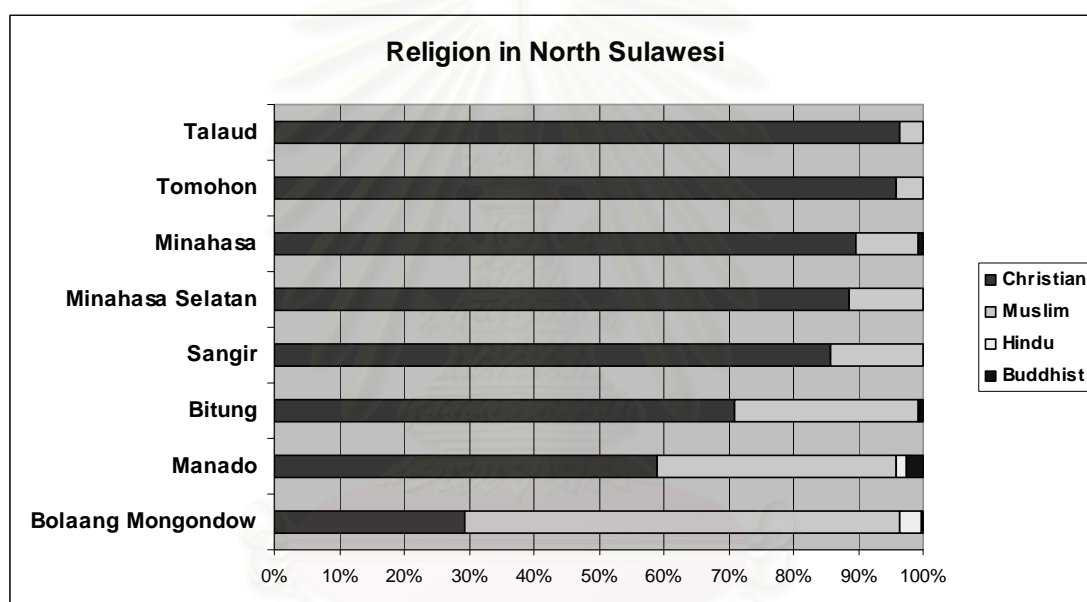


Table 2: This table shows the religion in the different Kabupaten in North Sulawesi
Source: BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.141

The sheer numbers presented above indicate the presence of religiosity in most parts of North Sulawesi. If we extend these statistics and include the number of churches in North Sulawesi, the picture gets even clearer. Sometimes Manado and Minahasa are referred to as having the highest density of churches worldwide and that Manado has one church every hundred metre or that no one has ever counted all the churches simply because there are too many to count¹³. According to the statistics of

¹¹ BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.141.

¹² Aris Ananta, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour*, p.14.

¹³ These opinions were expressed various times during my research in Manado. Compare with the accounts at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minahasa> (accessed October 30, 2007).

BPS, Manado alone has over 500 churches, which means that around 500 Christians in Manado share one church. This number truly is very high. In some parts of Minahasa, this number even gets higher, with a total number of 3.793 for all the 1.536.937 Christians in North Sulawesi. This creates a ratio of one church for around 400 Christians.

With the data above in mind, let us now have a look at how present the church is and how religion affects Minahasan's life and culture. The most present protestant church in Minahasa is the GMIM, Gereja Masehi Injil Minahasa, the Minahasan Evangelical Protestant Church. That church was found in 1934 and is today by far the church with most followers. This GMIM plays an important role in Minahasa today, as it provides communication and shapes everyday life¹⁴. Interestingly, the GMIM is also active in politics. Not in an obvious way that they have their own candidates or encourage certain voting behaviour, but it is common that a local politician or candidate for a government post who seeks to be elected needs to be attached to the GMIM in some ways. This is often shown in a way that such a person is active in both the church council and in politics before, during and after the election. This appears as a mutual cooperation between politics and church and shows the influence of the church. As GMIM is the biggest church in Minahasa, most influence comes from GMIM, however, other churches have the same way of getting influence¹⁵.

I experienced two ways where one could actually see how religious people in Minahasa are. The first one is the constant praying and weekly church attending. The latter one is a typical indicator of how religious one is. Naturally, people can also just go to church as they see it as their duty, but in Minahasa it appears that people go to church because they want to. A common question on weekends was "Have you already attended church?". The above mentioned numbers of churches in Minahasa is a good indicator that most Minahasans attend church on a regular basis. Besides church attendance, praying at various occasions is practiced by most Minahasans. Wherever

¹⁴ Lünemann, Erika, *Agama Apa? Religious Ways of Coping with Social Change*, in Helmut Buchholt and Ulrich Mai, *Continuity, Change and Aspirations: Social and Cultural Life in Minahasa, Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1994), p.33.

¹⁵ Interview with a member of the DPRD in Minahasa, November 30, 2007.

there is a wedding, a birthday or any other occasion, normally a short or long prayer is conducted. Even young people and students have a short prayer before having dinner or lunch, even if it is only at a small food stall or at the university's canteen. Thus I argue that religion as part of Minahasa's culture is vital among younger people and not only subject to older people.

I made an interesting observation at the Sam Ratulangi University in Manado, where students were about to give presentations about their business plans. One group, before starting the presentation, asked everybody to stand up and pray for a good presentation and good grades. Moreover, during the feedback session, questions were asked that were based on the bible and criticism was raised citing the bible¹⁶. Asking about the constant praying, I was told different times that it is typical for Minahasans. This can also be seen when I interviewed people and asked them about Minahasa's future within Indonesia and the fear of Islamization of Indonesia and Minahasa. What do people do for the future, was a typical question. The answers were often quite simple: "We pray! We pray to god that nothing happens here in Minahasa!"

The second very noticeable indicator for the religiosity of Minahasans is the manifold use of pictures of Jesus or slogans that can be found everywhere. As Erika Lünemann stated, these are normally "extremely kitschy"¹⁷. Wherever one goes in Minahasa, one comes across those pictures, posters, stickers and other ways of showing one's faith. As an example, the local transportation busses, called "Mikrolet", are many times packed with stickers with Jesus and slogans such as "Jesus is my homeboy" or "God is my pilot". And the bus driver would



Picture 5: The new Jesus statue in Manado.

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Blessing_%28statue%29

¹⁶ One Business idea that was presented at the university in December 2007 involved the local Cap Tikus. One of the questions after the presentation was if that was in accordance with the bible and what Jesus taught.

¹⁷ Erika Lünemann, *Agama Apa?*, p.33.

normally put a big cross next to the rear mirror to show his faith. Sometimes a CD is played in such a mikrolet, only playing a reading of the bible or obvious Christian songs. Very rarely, one can experience the same behaviour from Muslim drivers.

Just recently, another good example of Minahasan's apparent need to show their faith is the putting up of a huge Jesus figure with his arms spread out over the city of Manado, as if this statue is to show the people that Jesus will take care of and protect Manado¹⁸. The statue was put up in 2007 and is one of the biggest statues world wide and is one of Asia's biggest Jesus Christ statues¹⁹. The design of this figure appears to be as kitschy as the above mentioned pictures and stickers. However, this again is a good example of Minahasan's devotion to god and religion.

All these accounts show quite well how deep religion is rooted in the life of the Minahasans and that it can easily be described as one typical part of Minahasa's culture. However, besides Christianity, animistic rituals and traditional beliefs have survived too and they will be presented hereunder.

4.3.2 Traditional beliefs

In Minahasa it is fascinating to see how present the traditional religions and beliefs still are and how they actually coexist with Christianity. Moreover, Minahasans seem to view the use of old rites and rituals as a complementary way, together with Christianity, to cope with problems. Whatever their place in Minahasan culture and religion is, it is for certain that old rites and beliefs are still strong in Minahasa²⁰. The following accounts are mainly based on field trips conducted by the writer in 2004 and 2007.

One of those animistic rites that is still found today is the belief and use of white and black magic. Two times I could observe such occurrences. The first one was when I

¹⁸ This statue was erected recently just outside Manado on the way to Tomohon. It is located on a mountain and one has to get the impression that it actually intends to say that Jesus protects Manado.

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Blessing_%28statue%29 (accessed March 4, 2008).

²⁰ Paul Richard Renwarin, *Matuari and Tona'as*, p.35.

took part in a Minahasan family meeting and a video was shown. This video showed a Minahasan who lives in The Netherlands who was on a visit in Minahasa. He went to see a “sorcerer” who performs white magic. With the help of this white magic he was able to be relieved of his pain. The video showed how he was put in trance and the sorcerer talked to trees and other objects in order to get assistance to relieve the man of his pain²¹.

A second of those animistic beliefs was also associated with pain and disease. When a relative of a Minahasan family became seriously sick, one member of the family expressed the opinion that she might suffer from black magic. Maybe that woman might be subject to a black magic spell, I was told. Clearly, since “normal” medicine could not explain her suffering, another explanation was sought and found in old beliefs, represented here by black magic²².

Besides the belief in magic, ghosts also play a role in contemporary Minahasa. While this might sound unbelievable or even ridiculous to many western people, the belief in ghosts is shared by many people in Minahasa. One could assume that only lower educated people or the older generation believe in such phenomenons, but as experienced various times, the belief in ghosts is still present today among younger people, too. On one account, a senior student of the Sam Ratulangi University in Manado was completely absent with her mind and could not participate in evening activities organized by fellow students. After having asked various students for the reason, I was told that she had just seen a ghost. This ghost did not harm her or threaten her, it was “just there”²³. A couple of months later, a male student told that he sometimes sees ghosts near his house. He showed no sign of fear and tried to explain it in a rational way. However, it appeared to me that these beliefs in ghosts do not have a deeper meaning. It seems not to add credentials to anyone’s belief or status. What remained interesting is that these two “believers” are both devout Christians what

²¹ Since I am no expert in white magic, I hope that the story is told in an understandable way.

²² I was told by one interviewee that Minahasans, or Manadonese, people are known for being experts in black magic. He even told me that Imam Bonjol was captured by Manadonese with the help of black magic. I could not find evidences for that information. Imam Bonjol was exiled to Minahasa, but how he was captured, I cannot tell.

²³ This happened in September 2004 in Tomohon.

therefore supports the thesis from the beginning that Christianity and native beliefs are not mutually exclusive and can actually coexist.

One last evidence of these animistic beliefs is “watu pinewentengan” in the heartland of Minahasa. This stone plays an important role in Minahasa’s culture and history. As said before, this was the meeting point of some local chiefs to unify the country which was then called Minahasa, or “Mena esa”. Even today, this stone still attracts many people that have certain wants and needs. Many interviewees stated that especially for luck, this stone is still used. People visit the stone and pray to it, touch it or establish other ways of connections with the stone. Very common is to ask for luck for the lottery or other money-related issues. Besides that, some people appear to visit watu pinewentengan in order to get in contact with their deceased ancestors. This would therefore be a clear and matching example of how animism and local beliefs are still practiced among devout Christians in Minahasa.

4.4 Appearance & Characteristics

This last part of what is typical Minahasan is about how Minahasans see themselves and how they are considered by others, connected with certain characteristics.

The first characteristic of Minahasan people that can be heard by almost anyone in Minahasa and by many people who have spent time in Minahasa is that Minahasans are considered very friendly and open-minded, also towards strangers. Initially, I did not want to elaborate on this aspect as such a characteristic might be considered superficial and without any substance. However, after almost every interviewee stated “friendliness” as a Minahasan characteristic and after having experienced this friendliness, I decided to present it here as a real Minahasan attribute²⁴. Whenever a

²⁴ Not only was “friendliness” stated by most interviewees, there were various occasions where this friendliness was experienced, also towards stranger. As an example, on my flight to Manado, I was

Minahasan is asked by an outsider what he considers a typical Minahasan feature, friendliness would most definitely be mentioned. This becomes noticeable when one gets in contact with Minahasan people. It is common that outsiders get invited to one's house, for dinner or a drink. A quotation by the former Miss Indonesia, from Minahasa, sums this up in an accurate way:

“Minahasan people are all so friendly, to their family, even to their guests. There is a popular saying: 'torang samua basudara' (Manadonese language) means “we're all family” and 'si tou timou tumou tou' (one of Minahasa's traditional language) means “people live to make other people live”. They bond with each other. People from outside Minahasa wouldn't understand unless they really have been treated.”²⁵

Especially the Minahasan saying “Si tou timou tumour tou” is a good explanation for this friendliness. The saying can be seen at the airport in Manado and was formulated and used on the basis of Minahasan's philosophy to describe the kindness and openness of Minahasans towards anyone²⁶. On the official website of North Sulawesi, the region and its inhabitants are presented as the “land of the smiling people”²⁷, and it certainly appears as if this aspect is at least partly true.

The second aspect about Minahasan characteristics I want to mention here briefly is what is labelled adaptability. Minahasans are known for being able to respond quickly to new environments and situations in a suiting way. This attribute can be traced back to the colonial times when Minahasans, due to their excellent education, were sent off to the islands of the East Indies to work in the colonial administration or for the KNIL, the colonial army. As stated in this paper, this huge amount of Minahasan expatriates naturally needed to adapt to the new environments they were exposed to. Henley mentions this adaptability too when he writes about the struggle for independence and compares Ambon, where an armed separatist movement broke out,

immediately invited by a seat neighbour to come to his house. As it turned out later, he was a member of the local parliament.

²⁵ Email contact with Kristania V. Besouw, January 28, 2007.

²⁶ Unknown author, *Manado and the Tumou Tou Spirit*, Jakarta Post, February 26, 2006.

²⁷ <http://www.north-sulawesi.org/> (accessed February 11, 2008).

with Minahasa, where virtually nothing happened, even though a powerful separatist movement was present in Minahasa. This is what he called a “natural pragmatism of the Minahasans”²⁸. Another hint of adaptability, or pragmatism, can be found in the 19th century, when Minahasans used legal ways to express their dissatisfactions about new regulations by sending petitions and protests to the governor general or to the Dutch parliament²⁹. The content is not what is of relevance here, it is the way the Minahasan politicians expressed their protest. While in other parts of the archipelago, wars broke out to fight the Dutch, as the Aceh or Java war, Minahasans appeared to adapt to the Dutch administration and aimed at “fighting” the Dutch by using their channels and ways of communication instead of using weapons.

The third aspect is connected to the second one. It is what I label “appearance”. Since the colonial times, many Minahasans, first and foremost the chiefs and elites, changed their old lifestyle and aimed at imitating, or adapting, the western lifestyle, the one they were exposed to by the Dutch. The most visible of these imitations and adaptations were the clothing habits, where indigenous clothes were exchanged for Dutch, western clothes³⁰. This dressing in a western manner continued and Minahasans got known throughout the archipelago for being western-oriented. Today this can maybe still be found in the way that Minahasans, especially the youth, always attempt to dress as their latest idols. Minahasans therefore seem to rather look towards the West, America and Europe, than towards Indonesia in terms of fashion and how to appear towards others.

The next characteristic, showing off, is also attached to the above mentioned one. This aspect of demonstrating apparent wealth can still be found today and appears to be deep rooted in Minahasan society. It is still extremely important for many Minahasans to show off their, sometimes non-existing, wealth. This can be found among both the younger and the older generation. One interviewee expressed this when he stated that for many Minahasans

²⁸ Henley, David E.F., *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.274.

²⁹ Ibid., p.173.

³⁰ Maria J.C. Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility*, p.98.

“It is more important to look nice than to have food to eat”³¹

Schouten mentions this phenomenon in her book that already in the colonial period, when there were feasts to be arranged, such as weddings or funerals, it was and still is common to have large feasts that sometimes exceed the personal financial frame and one goes, voluntarily, into debts to cover the expenses. This is done in order to look wealthy and increase one's prestige in the community. I argue here that in today's Minahasa, people still act in such a way. This can be considered a negative attribute as it was stated by one Batak woman, living in Manado, who stated that Minahasans are “lalu-mulu”³², which she translated with having a big mouth, bragging, showing off what you do not have. Of course, this is a single opinion, but if one compares it with the accounts above, it holds at least some truth in it.

The last aspect that I present here, is that both outsiders and Minahasans often state that Minahasans are known for their beauty and handsomeness³³. The quotation of Alfred Wallace from the beginning also mentions this and therefore seems to be present for at least over 150 years. The reason for this is quite interesting. Since Minahasa was exposed not only to Western thoughts and thinking, but also to Western people, Minahasan blood mixed with Western blood, mostly Spanish, Portuguese, later German and Dutch. Whereas in other parts of later Indonesia, such creoles or Eurasians were not fully accepted by neither the Europeans nor by the indigenous people, in Minahasa, these people were a normal part of the community. Therefore, as nowhere else in Indonesia, in Minahasa a mestizo culture was created, best comparable to the northern neighbour, the Philippines³⁴. So today, almost any Minahasan can tell a story of how much or little outside blood he/she carries. Especially in the hinterland of Manado, in the heartland of Minahasa around Tondano and Tomohon, people are considered to be very handsome, due to the mixture with outsiders. What is considered beautiful in this

³¹ This opinion was expressed various times

³² It seems as if this term is a rather new one, since many older people are not familiar with this saying. However, younger people are familiar with this “big mouth”.

³³ Interview with intelligence officer of the TNI, an Ambonese, December 9, 2007. He was actually happy to be stationed in Manado, due to the fact that the region is known for its women and alcohol.

³⁴ Henley, David E.F., *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.x.

case is that people there seem rather tall and with pale, white skin³⁵. Sometimes one can even encounter people having green or blue eyes, dating back to a great-grandfather or the like that came from The Netherlands. The fact that Miss Indonesia 2006, a tall, white skin-having woman, comes from Minahasa, contributes to the arguing.

4.5 Concluding thoughts

For the reader, the above mentioned characteristics may seem superficial. I am aware of that and actually agree with that, but it needs to be stated that after having talked to dozens of Minahasans and non-Minahasans, especially younger ones, these were the only answers given. Does that mean that Minahasa has no own culture or only a superficial one? It is up to the reader to evaluate whether the above mentioned characteristics may suit as being labelled “Minahasan culture” or just stereotypes. I want to present a quotation by Helmut Buchholt who sums up one of his essays by stating

*“Minahasan culture contains no or only few traditional elements.”*³⁶

In general, both due to the above mentioned characteristics and the work conducted by other scholars, it might appear that traditional elements really do not appear to a larger extent anymore. However, the typical Minahasan elements above, as superficial they might appear, bear some traditional aspects. To begin with the first explanation about food and drinks. Certainly, Minahasan people like to eat and drink a lot. However, the “Pengucapan sukur” for example can definitely be labelled a typical Minahasan cultural element³⁷. Together with the fact that the Minahasan kitchen offers a variety of food like dog and pig, at least distinguishes them from most of the rest of Indonesia.

³⁵ Expressed in many interviews. This corresponds with most Asians, who consider tall and pale a beauty ideal.

³⁶ Helmut Buchholt and Ulrich Mai, *Continuity, Change and Aspirations: Social and Cultural Life in Minahasa, Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1994), p.4.

³⁷ Interview with Ferdi Rorimpandey, December 12, 2007.

About religion and animism, it became obvious that Minahasans adapted both Christianity and still use old animistic rites and rituals. A comparison with Javanese Islam blended with old Javanese and Hindu beliefs might be a topic on its own, but it is common, not only for Minahasans to blend various aspect of religion into a unique, own form of religion. The last aspect discussed here, the appearance, has changed over the last decades. While Alfred Wallace and other, mostly Dutch colonial officials, were astonished by the will of some (most?) Minahasans to dress in a western way and adapt western habits, this characteristic can only be applied to a limited degree. Since western fashion, movies and ideas have penetrated Indonesian life, Minahasans are not special anymore in terms of wearing certain types of outfits or what might be considered western habits. Naturally, and that is only due to the religious beliefs, one encounters maybe more people dressed in western dresses, skirts and Jeans than in other parts of Indonesia. However, one cannot overstate this aspect.

One Minahasans summed the debate about Minahasan culture and characteristics up most to the point by saying

“Minahasa is known for two things: Priests and women”³⁸

What he meant with this statement, with a bit sarcasm, is that Minahasa is known for its religiosity and for educating priests that later preach in all of Indonesia. The other point, women, stands for the following. One, Minahasans, as mentioned above, are known for their attractive appearance throughout all of Indonesia. What goes hand in hand with this is that these women therefore are also wanted in certain entertainment industries, so that in many places of Indonesia, not only good associations seem to be made when one talks about Minahasa, especially its women.

The chapter will be finished with one story that occurred during my research trip in Manado. I asked many of my acquaintances what to buy as a souvenir from Minahasa and Manado. So the question was raised, what a typical Minahasan souvenir would be.

³⁸ The interviewee is a member of the cultural team IWWM.

Hardly anybody came up with a satisfying answer. Nobody could really tell what typical Minahasan is. I was sent to a souvenir shop on the main street in Manado, Jalan Sam Ratulangi. However, that shop mainly consisted of souvenirs from the Torajas, another ethnic group of Sulawesi. What could be found were key fobs with “Bunaken” on it, or a plastic tarsier, a small monkey-like primate that can only be found in North Sulawesi, few other parts of Indonesia and the Philippines. The same picture appeared after having visited several other shops. One could therefore conclude that there are no real Minahasan souvenirs. I ended up with buying a coconut ashtray. Certainly, coconuts are one of the main export products of North Sulawesi.



Picture 6: A whole pig as part of a buffet during a birthday party in Tomohon in December 2007. A typical scene in Minahasa during celebrations such as birthdays, weddings and other occasions; picture taken by the author.



Picture 7: Bukit Kasih in Minahasa. A place that promotes religious tolerance. One finds places of worship for all religions there; picture taken by the author



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CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY MINAHASA

5.1 Introduction

If one looks at the history of Minahasa and Indonesia presented previously, one could easily assume that resentments or reservations against the Indonesian state are deeply rooted in Minahasa and still found today. Even though Minahasa made a remarkable change from Dutch protégés to Indonesian nationalists, local rebellions like the Permesta in the late 1950s could lead to the conclusion that parts of Minahasa's society seem not to accept its place in Indonesia. This does not necessarily mean that those elements seek independence, but as Permesta has shown, grievances against Jakarta as the centre were found throughout history. This chapter presents the current situation in Minahasa in political, educational, religious and economic terms. I will examine what is left of Minahasa's prosperity and educational excellence that was experienced during Dutch colonialism.

5.2 Politics

Let us start with having a look at contemporary politics in North Sulawesi and its Kabupaten. Due to the differences in culture and history, such as being Christians and being closely associated with the Dutch, one could assume that Minahasans express their feeling of being different by voting for Christian parties or other "different" parties. Politically speaking, North Sulawesi and Minahasa used to be Golkar strongholds in Indonesia. Golkar is largely perceived as a Pancasila-based and secular party with gaining their votes predominantly from the outer islands, whereas the other big party, the PDI-P is considered a Javanese party. Additionally, interesting for this

paper, PDI-P is also considered a Christian and a nationalist party. The label as being a Christian party goes back to the 1970s, when Suharto forced the parties to merge into three big parties, Golkar, the Muslim PPP and the PDI. The PDI was made up by nationalist, Protestant and Catholic parties¹. After the 1999 election, the MP's of the PDI-P were one third non-Muslims², a very high number considering that non-Muslims only constitute around 10-12% of the population.

As will be presented later in this chapter, when the „porn bill“ case study is presented, Golkar seems to tend towards Islam lately, due to its former leaders Habibie and Akbar Tanjung³. If this trend will affect North Sulawesi remains to be seen in future elections.

5.2.1 2004 elections

To start off with the last nation-wide election, the election for the parliament in 2004, slight differences in voting behaviour between the nation-wide results and the ones in North Sulawesi are apparent. Nation-wide, Golkar garnered 22% of the votes, PDI-P 19%, the NU affiliated PKB 11% and other smaller Muslim parties between 5% and 8%. The newly established party of now president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the Partai Demokrat, PD, gained 8%. The Christian party PDS, Partai Damai Sejahtera or Prosperous Peace Party collected 2% of the votes⁴. This election therefore showed a crystallization between two big parties, the PDI-P and Golkar, various smaller Muslim parties, led by the rather secular PKB, and a huge amount of small parties within the single digits.

What did the election results look like in North Sulawesi? As mentioned in the beginning, one could have expected the results in North Sulawesi to be different for two reasons. First and foremost, due to the fact that the province is inhabited mostly by

¹ Ian Chalmers, *Indonesia- An Introduction to Contemporary Traditions* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.252.

² John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms*, p.210.

³ Aris Ananta, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour*, p.7.

⁴ Ian Chalmers, *Indonesia*, p.270.

Christians, a natural assumption would be that they vote for Christian parties, in order to counter the Muslim parties and to preserve their status in Indonesia. Second, Muslim parties such as the PPP, PKB, PBB and others should perform rather weak, since “only” 30% of North Sulawesi’s population are Muslims.

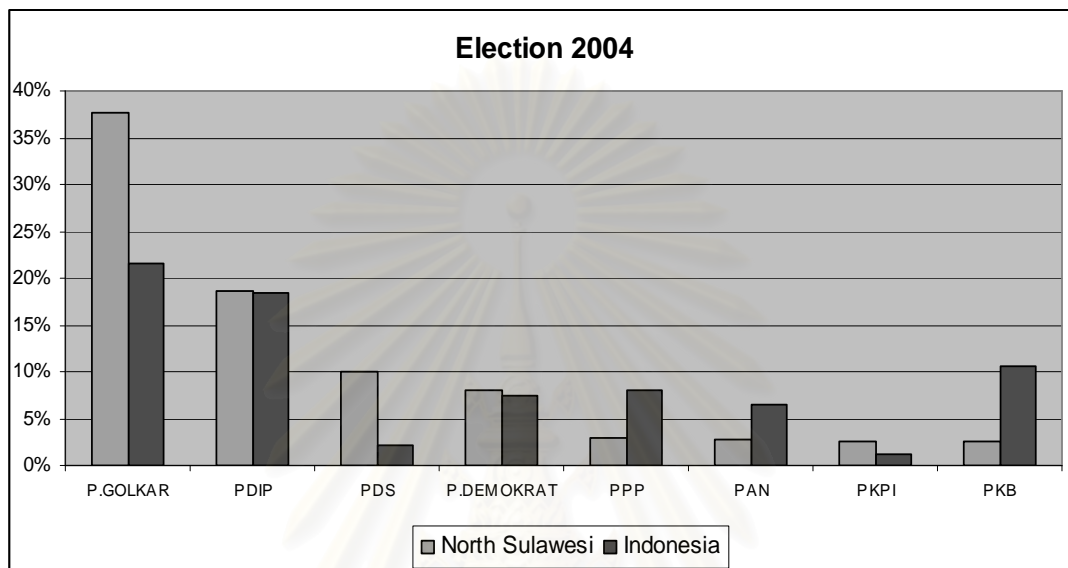


Table 3: Election results 2004

Source: www.asienhaus.de/public/archiv/Wahlergebnisse2004.xls

The table shows two main differences between the nation-wide results and North Sulawesi. One, Golkar scored much higher in North Sulawesi than nation-wide, with more than 50% more votes. The second observation is that Muslim parties as the PKB scored rather poorly, mostly around 3% in North Sulawesi. On the flipside, the Christian party PDS got a five times higher result in North Sulawesi than nation-wide. Nation-wide, only in the provinces of Java, including Jakarta, and North Sumatra with the Christian Bataks, the PDS gathered more votes in absolute terms⁵. However, one could have expected the PDS to achieve a much higher result. One possible reason why Golkar scored so high in North Sulawesi is its voting base. As initially mentioned Golkar is perceived as a non-Java party with secular roots. Furthermore, Golkar gets its votes from rather educated and non-urban people and draws most of its votes from the Outer Islands⁶. PDI-P is seen as a non-Muslim, Javanese party. When the current

⁵ www.kpu.gov.id, edited in www.asienhaus.de/public/archiv/Wahlergebnisse2004.xls (accessed January 14, 2008).

⁶ Aris Ananta, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour*, p.394.

education in North Sulawesi is presented later in this chapter, this can be seen as one main reason why Golkar scored so strongly. However, besides this electoral analysis, there is one main reason why the Christian party PDS did not score higher during the last election. As I was told various times during interviews, religion and politics are seen as two separate things. Due to the history of politics in Indonesia, including the corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN), politics are considered dirty. Therefore, religion, as something that should be clean, has to stay away from politics⁷.

Locally, the current situation in politics is the following. The governor of North Sulawesi is Sinyo Harry Sarundajang, who is a member of the PDI-P. This governor has a very good reputation and is considered “clean” and not corrupt⁸. Turning to the province’s capital, Manado, the city is now run by Golkar member Jimmy Rimba Rogi, who replaced Wempie Frederik. Frederik and his family, mainly his wife, are active parts of North Sulawesi’s politics. After an internal rivalry within Golkar, he has joined the PDI-P. His wife Adrienne Frederik Nangoy used to be an active member of Golkar as well but recently ran for Bupati in the Kabupaten Minahasa Induk, on a Partai Demokrat ticket. However, she fared very poor in those elections and the old Bupati, Stefanus Vreeke Runtu (SVR), belonging to Golkar, won the election in late December 2007. This underlines that for local and regional politicians, parties are not joined for ideology or the programs, they are rather considered as vehicles for personnel ambitions⁹.

What remains remarkable is that North Sulawesi does not give more support to Christian parties, or at least the PDI-P. As mentioned above, the PDI-P has 1/3 non-Muslim MP’s. This could be considered a good vehicle for raising North Sulawesi’s concern about an Islamization in Indonesia. However, this does not take place. One possible explanation for the absence of a truly different voting behaviour is that parties are always represented by local figures. And especially in Indonesia, persons seem more

⁷ Interview December 12, 2007.

⁸ David T. Hill, *Manoeuvres in Manado: Media and Politics in Regional Indonesia*, in “Southeast Asia Research”, Vol. 15, number 1, March 2007, p.20; this opinion was also stated by one of my interviewees who stated that instead of buying new cars for his office, he actually used the money to make education really free, without any “table renting fees” and the like.

⁹ David T. Hill, *Manoeuvres in Manado*, p.25.

important than parties. For this reason, the Fredrik's, as a Minahasan example, changed parties various times, or SBY, the current president, won the election even though he belonged to a small party, the PD.

5.2.2 Bupati elections in Minduk

The Bupati election in December 2007 was the first time that the Bupati in Minahasa, or Minahasa Induk (Minduk), was directly elected. This was in accordance with the law 32/2004 on Local Government¹⁰ which says that mayors, bupati and governors are now directly elected for five years rather than being elected by the regional parliament, DPRD. The Kabupaten “Minahasa Induk”, which stands for “chief Minahasa” or “mother Minahasa” is the remaining part of the old Kabupaten Minahasa, before it split into various new Kabupaten. The composition of the local parliament, DPRD as of December 2007, looks as follows.

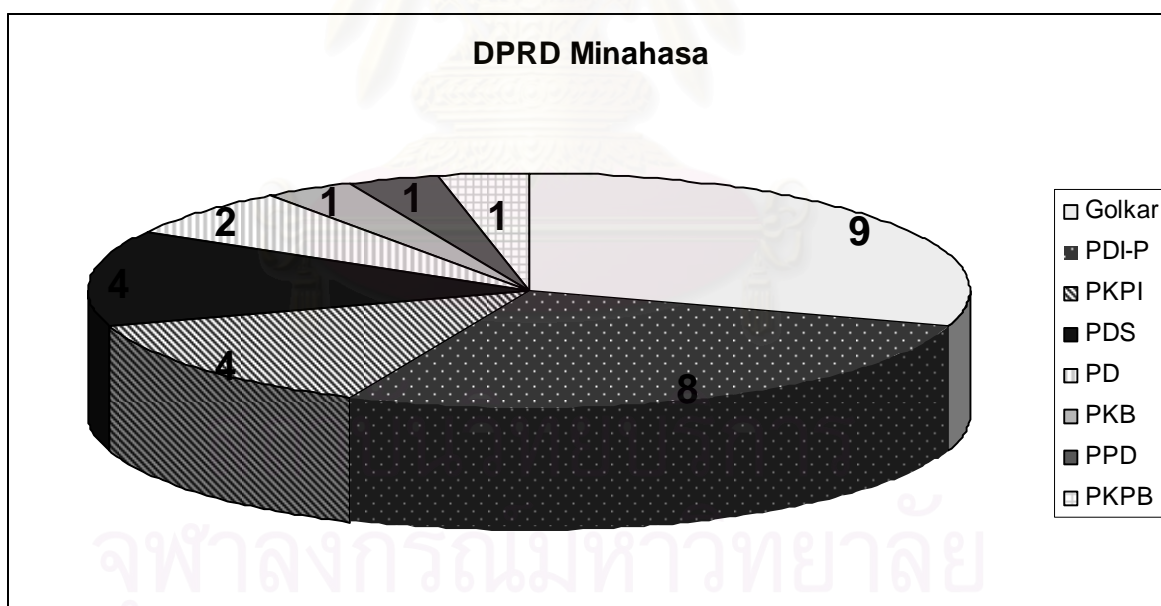


Table 4: DPRD Minahasa Induk as of December 2007

Source: BPS, *Minahasa Dalam Angka, Minahasa in Figures 2004/2005*, p. 32

Of the 30 seats, Golkar holds nine while the PDI-P has eight. The next two big parties are the PKPI which is a party connected to the military and split from Golkar in 1998 and the Christian PDS. The PKB, a Muslim party affiliated with the NU, holds

¹⁰ <http://www.adb.org/Documents/CERs/INO/2004/ino0300.asp> (accessed March 6, 2008).

one seat and in Sulawesi is actually led by a Catholic. The other small party, the PKPB is a party that is led by one of Suharto's daughters.

Until the first direct Bupati elections, the Bupati was a member of Golkar, whereas the vice Bupati was a PKPI member, due to a coalition of these parties. Since the laws have changed, the new Bupati does not have to rely on party politics within the DPRD anymore. The election campaign itself was a good example of how politics in Indonesia are done. In Minahasa there were five candidates, each with a running mate. The re-elected Bupati¹¹ is a Golkar member, the second one belonged to PDI-P, a third, rather awkward coalition consisted of PDS and PKB members. The fourth team, to which the wife of former Manado mayor Frederik belonged, was associated with the Partai Demokrat and a huge amount of small parties, insignificant in Minahasa, such as PPP, PBB or PBR. Last but not least, the fifth team was a PKPI team¹². How the campaigns were in fact conducted seem to represent Indonesia in a realistic way. During one typical car ride with a member of the DPRD, a politician from the PKPI handed out posters, calendars and buttons to people that were standing at the streets around the Tondano lake in the heartland of Minahasa. These people not only demanded gifts and gimmicks from the different candidates, but rather collected those gifts. One incident had it that a woman approached the car and directly asked how much money the candidate would be willing to give to her. After talking to the DPRD member, he mentioned that money will be handed out. As a number, he mentioned 50.000Rp, which amounts to around \$5. This was seen as a normal way of getting votes. A typical way of handing out money, or more subtle, to convince people of voting for the "right" party are the so called "morning attacks"¹³. These attacks normally occur on the election day, in the morning, to ensure the candidate votes for the party that hands out the money, or other kind of gifts.

Additionally, what candidates seem to do in order to get votes is to support families during weddings, funerals and other parties. As pointed out in chapter IV where

¹¹ The election took place in late December 2007. The outcome was sent to me by email by a member of the mentioned cultural group IWWM.

¹² Observation during a research trip to Tondano in November 29, 2007. I was lucky enough to spend a day with the campaign team of the PKPI candidate.

¹³ Interview December 14, 2007; compare with David T. Hill, *Manoeuvres in Manado*, p.23.

Minahasa's culture is presented, those feasts can be a heavy burden for Minahasans, therefore one can imagine that those financial supports are a welcomed assistance. This behaviour actually goes along with the Indonesian characteristic that a local, influential politician, in this case a Bupati or a candidate needs to spend his money freely in order to retain prestige, power and status¹⁴. This often goes along with financial abuses and nepotism-like connections between politicians and businessmen or military figures. Minahasa is therefore not an exception in Indonesia's politics.

To sum it up, the election campaign in Minahasa Induk can be considered rather typical for Indonesia, as vote buying, a low party attachment by the candidates and interesting coalitions among the parties could be observed during this Bupati election. Naturally, the candidates all seemed to involve Minahasa-related aspects in their campaign, most obvious through the use of certain symbols or Minahasan expressions. Therefore, one could often see the symbol of Minahasa, the "Manguni" (owl) on many posters as well as expressions such as "mapalus", the Minahasa form of "goyong royong", which both roughly stands for mutual help. The outcome of the election also reflects the rather normal character of Minahasa, as the re-elected Bupati is a Golkar member and the runner up is attached to the second biggest party, the PDI-P.

5.3 Minahasafication

After having looked at the "obvious" politics of Minahasa and North Sulawesi, elections, parties and their campaigns, I now want to present organizations or certain groups that are not politically active in the above presented way. These groups can certainly be called Minahasa-oriented. Their aims, be it the promotion of Minahasa or the call for separatism, will be presented hereunder¹⁵. Naturally, secessionism and

¹⁴ Wihana Kirana Jaya and Howard Dick, *The Latest Crisis of Regional Autonomy in Historical Perspective*, in Shannon Smith and Grayson Lloyd, *Indonesia Today- Challenges of History* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001), p.225.

¹⁵ I was long looking for a matching title for this section and I found a title in a recent paper that deals with Minahasa and possible secessionism from Indonesia: Michael Jacobsen, 'To be or what to be-that is the question'- *On Factionalism and Secessionism in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia* in

separatism are interesting topics, especially for historians and political analysts. The aim here is to provide an objective picture of today's situation in Minahasa and North Sulawesi. Intentionally I will not say that a break up of Indonesia is eminent or that Minahasa will soon break away, even though such a conclusion would make a reading much more attractive, since it would involve some "action". To defuse this chapter, today in Minahasa there is, as far as my research has shown, no organization that aims at separation from Indonesia or that wants to set up an independent Minahasa. There is also no indicator that parts of Eastern Indonesia including North Sulawesi, parts of the Maluku and Papua want to set up a "Christian East Indonesia"¹⁶ or a "Golden Triangle"¹⁷ of Christian states in Indonesia.

If one looks for hints for a possible secession or a trend towards a strong regionalism, in this case Minahasa, organizations, clubs and groupings can be considered good indicators.

5.3.1 "Deklarasi Inspirasi"

In Minahasa, one grouping was able to catch attention not only throughout Indonesia, but was also mentioned in an internationally published book¹⁸. This group held a congress in Tomohon, up in the mountains outside Manado in the heartland of Minahasa, in August 2000 and concluded with a declaration called "Deklarasi Kongres Minahasa Raya" or "Deklarasi Inspirasi"¹⁹. The background of this congress was the demand by certain groups to introduce Sharia law in Indonesia and include the Jakarta Charter in the constitution. Supporters of this idea were then found in the Muslim parties PPP, PBB and PB and were supported by the then vice-president Hamzah Haz. Additionally, Muslim militias such as the FPI, the Islamic Defender Front, were vocal

"Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper Series", No 29, 2002, City University of Hong Kong, p.22.

¹⁶ Florence Lamoureux, *Indonesia, a Global Handbook* (USA: ABC Clio, 2003), p.74.

¹⁷ <http://jongoss.info/papers/malukuwars.htm> (accessed February 12, 2008) .

¹⁸ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia*, p.66.

¹⁹ The nearest translation would be "Declaration of the Congress of Great Minahasa" and "Declaration of Inspiration".

supporters of this idea. Besides the Sharia issue, the conflict in the Maluku was also present at that time.

Against this background did some influential Minahasan politicians meet in Tomohon in 2000 and argued in the final declaration that Minahasa has always been part of Indonesia and defended and supported the cause of the Republic of Indonesia²⁰ since the beginning. Now, Minahasa rejects and disagrees with the Jakarta Charter as religion should not be part of the basic politics. If the Jakarta Charter is included in the constitution, then the Republic of Indonesia would end and Minahasa's destiny would be independence, outside Indonesia. The members of the congress then demanded the politicians to stop the debates and conflicts within Indonesia and close the legal loopholes in order to ensure the existence of the Republic Indonesia.

What then followed in the declaration were several recommendations from the congress addressed to the Republic of Indonesia. One of the points again stressed the need for religious freedom and an enactment by law. Then, the declaration turned to the violence in the Maluku and demanded the withdrawal of Laskar Jihad forces and the prosecution of the people that are involved in the violence, including the ones behind the scenes. Who these people seem to be gets clearer in a later recommendation where it is demanded that the TNI needs to be held responsible since they are the people behind Laskar Jihad. Besides that the declaration demanded the United Nations to intervene in the conflict in the Maluku.

The next statement aimed at the then current autonomy laws and the special autonomy laws that made Aceh a special region. Here, the argument is that special autonomy (daerah istimewa) should not be given to any region since all regions in Indonesia should be treated equally.

After this, the last recommendations turn around Minahasa, with the first one going back to the regional rebellion of Permesta. The congress declared that Permesta

²⁰ This is the rough translation of the declaration which was done by a friend in Manado. The original text can be found here: http://permesta.8m.net/news/2k00805_Deklarasi_Inspirasi-KMR_I.html (accessed March 6, 2008).

was not a separatist rebellion but rather one that demanded justice for Minahasa. To ensure that the declaration is not seen as a separatist pamphlet, the paper then acknowledged the then leadership under Gus Dur and Megawati and demanded the focus on the existing laws and the constitution (UUD) and demanded the UN and RI to return the Maluku refugees safely.

Naturally, most of the arguments and statements have to be seen against the background of the politics and issues at that time. The Maluku conflict with their refugees coming to North Sulawesi was definitely an important issue for the people in Minahasa. The statement that Indonesia should not introduce the Jakarta Charter, otherwise Minahasa will secede, should be seen as a bargaining power rather than a real secessionist threat. Such threats are often found in Indonesia, both from Christian sides as well as from Muslim sides, either demanding the implementation or reject it²¹. One example, the “porn bill” issue will be presented later in this chapter. It is worth mentioning that this declaration was not only signed by some small-scale politicians but actually by the then vice governor, the Bupati of Minahasa, two former mayors of Manado and other local figures. One of the signers of the document brought it to the point when he addressed Indonesia during an interview and stated

*“If you want to change the law (and introduce the Jakarta Charter and Sharia), go ahead! But then we will break away!”*²²

5.3.2 Pisok

Another indicator for regionalism, concerns and worries about political issues in Indonesia is an organization called “Pisok” which stands for “Perkumpulan Inti Semua Orang Kawanua”, the “core association for all the Minahasan people”²³. It is certainly

²¹ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.66.

²² Interview with one of the signers who used to work for the Ministry of Transportation under Suharto and who was responsible for the enlargement of the Airport Sam Ratulangi. Name known to the author.

²³ Apologies again for the poor knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia, but with the help of some Indonesian friends, this translation is the one best fitting. “Inti” is a nucleus, kernel, but in this case, maybe “core” would be the best translation.

no coincidence that a local bird and a Minahasan dance are also named “Pisok”²⁴. As we see in the name, the term “kawanua” appears again. Like mentioned in chapter III, the term kawanua is today used to refer to Minahasan people outside Minahasa. As one of the members put it, Pisok is a worldwide organization of Minahasan people that observes the political, cultural and economic situation of Indonesia and Minahasa in particular²⁵.

According to an interview partner, the organization is no structural organization with a chairman and regular meetings and the like. They only meet if there is a problem or an issue that needs to be talked about. Such an issue would certainly be the Jakarta Charter or Sharia law. According to the interviewee, this organization has more than 1.5 million members worldwide. However, this number seems exaggerated. Another Minahasan, residing in Jakarta²⁶, was aware but did not have any information about Pisok and quoted that such a number would definitely be too high. Such exaggerations in numbers seem to take place often in Indonesia and scholars seem to sometimes use such apparently wrong figures. The next part will show one case where I argue against a scholar who claims one organization to have a certain number of followers.

I therefore conclude that Pisok exists, even though no further information could be obtained about it, neither through further interviews nor through the internet. This seems to make sense since it is a loose organization that could maybe be labelled a talking club or a debate club. However, since I do not have further information, I do not want to speculate about this group but nevertheless their existence needs to be mentioned here.

²⁴ <http://www.minahasaraya.net/frame1.htm?http&&www.minahasaraya.net/dances.htm> (accessed March 1, 2008).

²⁵ The interviewee is again the signer of the Deklarasi Inspirasi. He currently joined the PDI-P and is the head of a “R&D” department of that party. Additionally, he is a member of the “Team Sukses” for the governor. This seems to be a team that works behind the scenes for the governor. This team is also considered a good recruiting ground for future politicians.

²⁶ He said that he is considered a „Manado Kart“, a Minahasan who lives outside Minahasa and only is a Minahasan nominally.

5.3.3 Militias in Minahasa

One topic of interest when one talks about Minahasa and whether or not there are separatist tendencies are the militias that are present in Minahasa and North Sulawesi.

I want to begin with accounts of Michael Jacobsen who mentions the militias in one of his papers and elaborates on them²⁷. After I present his information on the topic, I will assess them and add my findings in order to hopefully get a clear and objective picture of the sensitive topic. The following is a summary of Jacobsen's findings.

There are four Christian militias in Minahasa and North Sulawesi, namely Legium Christum which is considered Catholic, Militia Christi, a Protestant one, Bani Josua as the Pentecostal militia and finally, Brigade Manguni which consists of several denominations. These militias are a response to the violence that happened in Indonesia in the past years, especially in Central Sulawesi and in the Maluku. As Jacobsen puts it, these militias are a



Picture 8: The logo of Milisi Waraney with the Minahasan symbol, the owl. Under it, "Tanah Toar Lumimuut", the land of Toar and Lumimuut

Source:

http://permesta.8m.net/relates/wacana_milisi_waraney.html

“bulwark against ethnic and religious clashes through their efforts to protect Christian values and property. Militia Christi, Bani Josua and Brigade Manguni are regional militias that cover their particular areas within Kabupaten Minahasa. Their main aim is to defend their respective areas and the

²⁷ Michael Jacobsen, 'To be or what to be- that is the question' *On Factionalism and Secessionism in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia* in "Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper Series", No 29, 2002, City University of Hong Kong, p.22ff.

population against attacks from especially Muslim organizations from within the Kabupaten, from the province, and from more nationwide Muslim organization. According to informants Legium Christum (LC) is somewhat different in that it can be defined as a kind of rapid mobile force.”²⁸

He continues by claiming that Brigade Manguni is actually supported by high ranking GMIM members whereas Legium Christum is not formally attached to the Catholic Church. Jacobsen refers to interviews with a LC member who claims that LC has a fighting force of 6.000 men plus 23.000 supporters, including 200 men that were willing to go on suicide missions if needed. The fighters are trained in jungle camps in the province of North Sulawesi where they have two to five rifles and some dozens revolvers.

I now want to comment on these accounts. To begin with the numbers of members that are claimed by the informant. If we have a look at the statistical numbers of Catholics in Minahasa, that is Bitung, Manado, Tomohon, Minahasa, Minahasa Utara and Minahasa Selatan, we come to around 110.000. Sangir and Talaud as well as Bolaang Mongondow will be excluded here. Without any further statistical knowledge, one can assume that 50% are male, so around 55.000. Since children and the elders cannot participate in such a militia, the number can again be reduced by half, leaving around 22.500 men in Minahasa. If the above mentioned source is right, that would mean that 25% of all Catholic male adults, except the elders, are active (!) members of Legium Christum. I highly doubt these numbers and cannot support them at all. Additionally, the mentioned amount of weapons indicates that weapons training cannot be of high quality. The stated numbers can be seen as another example of the tendency to exaggerate in Indonesia.

However, this thesis does not aim at discrediting someone else's work, hence do I present my information about those militias. As far as my research went, only three militias, the above mentioned Legium Christum as a Catholic one, Brigade Manguni and Milisi Waraney are present in North Sulawesi. Waraney is the local term for “guy”

²⁸ Ibid.

or “boy”. As several informants notified, these militias predominantly consist of rather low-class people, with low education, such as taxi and motorcycle drivers and the like. One reason for joining such groups might be prestige that could be gained by joining such a grouping²⁹. Their main work at the moment seems to be comparable to the Muslim FPI, as both can be considered being subcontracted by the local police and military forces. These militias work as bodyguards and security personnel for local politicians. During the above mentioned election campaign in Minahasa, Brigade Manguni members and their logo could be seen next to party offices of the varying parties.

Without a doubt these militias were mainly set up during and after the incidents of Poso and Ambon, as a reaction since it was feared that the official police and military could not provide safety and protection for all people. According to an intelligence officer, these militias are actually welcomed by the TNI as they are considered a helper for the military. Even more, the leaders of Brigade Manguni and Milisi Waraney are frequently invited by the local TNI to share information on certain issues³⁰. The TNI therefore tries to incorporate these militias, not only to assist them in security-related issues but certainly also in order to keep them under surveillance.

To sum it up, the Christian militias that were set up partly as a response to the religious violence in Central Sulawesi and the Maluku, currently serve as bodyguards, security personnel and the like. Whether or not these militias are actually trained to conduct religious raids, or as above quoted, to carry out suicide missions, remains debatable. Personally, I am convinced that these militias are somewhat comparable to the FPI, the Muslim paramilitary troops that carry out raids in Jakarta and other places of Java. However, FPI became known for actually using violence and having already carried out certain religious-based raids. The Christian militias have not done anything like that in Minahasa so far. Nevertheless one should not overemphasize such groups, as they are not comparable to “real” police and military units. Their arms are rather lead pipes, machetes and other simple weapons. For Minahasa, I am convinced that Brigade Manguni, LC and Milisi Waraney have another agenda in mind, that is to protect

²⁹ Interview with Paul Richard Renwarin, Tomohon, December 11, 2007.

³⁰ Interview with an intelligence officer of the TNI in Manado, December 9, 2007.

Christian areas, if the police and military are not able to do so. But to consider them as an able force that could compete with military units would go too far, and also the willingness of some members to carry out suicide missions is beyond my belief.

In terms of predicting possible secessionist movements in Minahasa, one has to be careful as well. Certainly, there are threats towards Jakarta to secede if Sharia and other “Muslim” laws are introduced. As the “porn bill” case study and other political and economic issues show, provinces seem to be quick in setting up independence movements and threatening the central government to secede³¹. However, one has to see this rather as a negotiating or bargaining power, not as an actual call for secession. Of course there are organizations and seminars as the above mentioned Pisok and Deklarasi Inspirasi, but these should not be given too much weight. As in other parts of Indonesia there are uncertainties and discontents with the central government, but to label that separatist movements is not valid in my view. This does obviously not mean that one should not mention these movements. The reason why they are mentioned here is to state that a certain amount of discontent can be found in Minahasa and North Sulawesi, but to assume that these movements are well-organized and have the capabilities to threaten the central authority remains more than questionable.

5.4 Education

After I have presented the political situation in Minahasa and North Sulawesi, let me now observe the educational situation. As I have outlined in chapter III about Minahasa’s history, Minahasa under the Dutch rule had a certain vanguard position in the Netherlands East Indies in terms of religion, economy and education. Nowhere in the East Indies, and maybe even in Southeast Asia, was the literacy rate as high as in Minahasa with almost 40% being literate in comparison to a mere 5% in Java. How did this change over time, did Minahasa keep this position or did it decrease and become an average rate compared to the rest of Indonesia?

³¹ For example: Unknown author, *More groups join the chorus against education bill*, Jakarta Post, June 14, 2003, or Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.47.

If one looks at the different indicators such as the level of education or university attendance it becomes clear that the education in North Sulawesi still remains, or again is, one of the highest in the whole of Indonesia. The number of people only having the lowest form of education is the 3rd smallest one in whole Indonesia, only Jakarta and Yogyakarta have smaller numbers in this field. The senior high school attendance numbers are the 3rd highest one, again after the two Javanese cities. Slightly worse is the university education, where North Sulawesi “only” has the 4th highest number of enrolments. In total, assessing all the different educational aspects, North Sulawesi has the 3rd best educational standard in today’s Indonesia, after Jakarta and Yogyakarta³². This is interesting for several reasons. First, North Sulawesi is in Eastern Indonesia, which is known for a rather low quality of education. The lowest figures in terms of education mostly come from provinces in Eastern Indonesia. Second, North Sulawesi has the highest education outside Java. Both Jakarta and Yogyakarta are located in Java. Third, both Jakarta and Yogyakarta are cities, whereas North Sulawesi is a province with both urban and rural areas.

These statistical data clearly show that North Sulawesi remains an educational stronghold. However, one problem is present in North Sulawesi, especially in Minahasa, that negates these positive figures to a certain extent. The problem is the so called “brain drain” that can be observed in Minahasa these days. Since Minahasa mainly consists of rural areas, educated people find it difficult to find a suitable job and leave the area in order to find a job somewhere else. The first natural destination would be Manado, the province’s capital. The next step would be Jakarta and other bigger cities outside the province. This is considered a normal step for many Minahasan students. During interviews, it appeared normal for most students of the Sam Ratulangi University that one probably needs to leave the province in order to get an appropriate job. Here, we can refer to the colonial times again, when the exceptionally high education rate in Minahasa forced many Minahasans to find employment abroad³³. There were both push and pull factors. Not only did Minahasa not have enough suitable

³² Aris Ananta, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour*, p.99.

³³ David E.F.Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.149.

jobs but a high education, also did the rest of the East Indies not have high education so that outside expertise was welcomed and needed.

Going back to the brain drain problem, this leads to the problem that even though Minahasans are highly educated compared with the rest of Indonesia, the region's economic infrastructure does not benefit from it. As pointed out later in the section about North Sulawesi's economy, the problem is that brain drain refrains Minahasa, as an example, from developing real agribusinesses or other industries. Today, the farming and planting methods in Minahasa are basically the same ones as decades ago³⁴. So even though Minahasa and North Sulawesi have the potential for economic development, the fact that the educated people leave the region and only leave the rather poorly educated people behind, leads to an economic imbalance. This again connects education with economy. If there are no large-scale industries, big companies or agricultural businesses in Minahasa and North Sulawesi, people with higher education need to go to other areas, bigger cities or even abroad in order to get a job that meets their qualifications.

In conclusion, North Sulawesi's education is still formidable in comparison with the rest of Indonesia, and is the best right after the capital and the city known for its educational excellence, Yogyakarta. Therefore, North Sulawesi has a big opportunity to use this educational advantage to turn the province into a thriving one in terms of education and economy.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

³⁴ Interview with Paul Richard Renwarin, December 11, 2007.

5.5 Religion

Religion in Minahasa and North Sulawesi has already been presented in the previous chapter, therefore I will only briefly outline some aspects of religion in Minahasa to make the picture of contemporary Minahasa and North Sulawesi complete. As mentioned before, Minahasa as an ethnically defined region is almost solely Christian with the numbers being one of the highest in all of Indonesia. The second part of today's North Sulawesi province, the islands north of Minahasa, have even larger numbers of Christians with around 95% following the Christian faith. The picture is different in the two bigger cities of the province, Bitung and Manado, where Muslims form a considerable minority with around 30-35%. The region Bolaang Mongondow with its Kabupaten is predominantly Muslim with a two third, one third proportion. One can easily conclude that Muslims and Christians therefore do not actually live together, but rather apart. Besides the geographic split between Muslims in the Southwest of the province and Christians in the rest, there is also a split within the capital of Manado, where the distribution looks slightly different. Even though Muslims and Christians both have large numbers of followers in Manado, this does not necessarily mean that they live a life together. Manado is actually split with various quarters where almost only Muslims live³⁵. This area is mostly towards the north of the city, north of the harbour. Furthermore, Muslims tend to live near the coastline. Outside the capital, there is only one, rather peculiar, area in Minahasa where Muslims form a somewhat considerable minority. That is the so called "Kampung Jawa Tondano" or "Java Tondano", short "Jaton". This community was founded by Javanese who were exiled to Minahasa in the 19th century. This community has survived until today and has not blended with the surrounding communities. These people consider themselves Minahasan, but unlike virtually all Minahasans, they remain Muslims, not Christians until today³⁶.

The contact between the religions remains somewhat vague and seems to be on a superficial basis. Huxley suggests that North Sulawesi has been spared from violence

³⁵ Interview in Manado, December 5, 2007.

³⁶ Tim Babcock, *Muslim Minahasans with Roots in Java: The People of Kampung Jawa Tondano*, in "Indonesia", Vol.32, October 1981, p.75.

due to the fact that religious leaders together with politicians and the police have kept the tensions down³⁷. However, this contact seems not to be a high-profile contact. People in Minahasa do not value these contacts high and consider this only to be done in order to calm the people down, not to actually create an efficient interfaith dialogue³⁸. Being efficient or not, until this day there has not been any violence between Muslims and Christians in North Sulawesi and Minahasa. One of the reasons mentioned is that Muslims in Minahasa like the peaceful atmosphere in Minahasa and North Sulawesi. At one occasion, outsiders³⁹ have tried to create tensions between Muslims and Christians by steering up local Muslims against Christians. However, the local Muslims have called the authorities and these agents provocateurs have been captured. This behaviour appears remarkable and it is considered as such by some Minahasans, but what was mentioned in the same interview was that “they”, being the Muslims, will “change attitude”⁴⁰ once they grow stronger and get more influence in Minahasa and North Sulawesi. Whether or not this is true remains to be seen, but until now North Sulawesi has been spared from violence.

5.6 Economy

The next aspect that will be presented here is the economy of North Sulawesi and Minahasa. In order to assess the current situation in the province, it is suggesting to have a look at several statistical data.

In the previous chapter, North Sulawesi and Minahasa were outlined as former thriving regions within the East Indies and later Indonesia. This was mainly due to its copra production, cloves, coffee and other export-oriented commodities. However, in the 20th century, North Sulawesi’s economic situation worsened and the GDP, as a

³⁷ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.64.

³⁸ Most interviewees raised the opinion that these meetings are not efficient at all. Some were not even aware that such dialogue takes place.

³⁹ They were described as „those people with long beards and white outfits“.

⁴⁰ This interviewee, a Pentecost member, name known to the author, articulates this in a drastic way. However, such opinions were mentioned various times, that “the Muslims” will soon take over Manado and North Sulawesi.

measurement of wealth, declined. In the 1970s, it was at 80% of the national average and it decreased further to only two thirds of the national average in the mid 1980s⁴¹. Today's situation looks slightly different though, even though many people in Minahasa articulate this downward trend and emphasize how thriving Minahasa used to be and how "average" and below average it is nowadays⁴².

The latest economic indicators show that the per capita GDP of North Sulawesi is at 8.368 million Rupiah against a national average of 11.876 million⁴³. The ratio of North Sulawesi's GDP is therefore at around 70% of the national one, slightly above the numbers stated from the mid 1980s. If one takes other provinces into consideration, it becomes clear that even though statistically North Sulawesi is below average, in a simple table where the provinces were shown, North Sulawesi would be in the middle. In Eastern Indonesia, the GDP of North Sulawesi is almost on top, beating East Nusa Tenggara, the rest of Sulawesi, Maluku and North Maluku. The GDP is comparable to the one found in parts of Kalimantan. Higher GDPs can be found in parts of Kalimantan and Papua. However, this is solely due to the natural resources in those regions, mainly oil and gold. East Kalimantan actually has the highest GDP in all of Indonesia, leaving behind Jakarta, Banten, Riau, Aceh and Papua.

If one now analyses further, considering other indicators, a clearer picture shows up putting North Sulawesi in another light. The number of people below the poverty line is in my opinion another good indicator to show the overall economic situation and whether or not income and wealth are distributed fairly and even or not. In all Indonesia, North Sulawesi actually has one of the lowest poverty ratios with only 9% of the population being considered "poor"⁴⁴. Going more into detail, the cities Manado and Bitung and the Kabupaten of Minahasa, before it was split into various new ones, had an even lower poverty rate, only between 3.2% and 7.5%⁴⁵, which therefore leaves a considerably higher poverty rate for the predominantly Muslim part of Bolaang

⁴¹ Maria J. Schouten, *Manifold Connections- The Minahasa Region in Indonesia* in "South East Asia Research" Volume 12, Number 2, 1 July 2004, p.217.

⁴² Despite the awareness of not belonging to the economic and political elite anymore, many people still seem to see themselves as an elite, in whatever way.

⁴³ BPS, *Informasi Umum dan Indikator Penting Indonesia*, Brochure February 2007.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Aris Ananta, *Indonesian Electoral Behaviour*, p.243.

Mongondow and its Kabupaten. Only four provinces see a lower poverty level, including the capital Jakarta and the tourist island Bali. The highest poverty rates are found in Papua with almost 40%, Maluku and Aceh. Even Central Sulawesi has a rather high poverty rate with over 20%. The reason why these provinces are mentioned here is that exactly those provinces saw conflicts and violence in the past decade(s). Maluku and Central Sulawesi have been presented in this paper very briefly. A certain inequality and uneven distribution of wealth and income can therefore certainly be concluded for Papua and other parts of the archipelago. A very simple conclusion would be to say that violence and social unrest have occurred where poverty rates are above average, sometimes coalescing with a high overall GDP indicating a certain gap between the rich and poor⁴⁶. Naturally, this is only one aspect, but together with other factors and reasons, it builds a good starting point for explaining the outbreak of violence in the above mentioned regions.

Minahasa and North Sulawesi seem to have a rather equal distribution of wealth with a slightly different picture appearing in Bolaang Mongondow. Certainly, there are also gaps between rich and poor but on average, and in comparison with rest Indonesia, the distribution of wealth seems quite fair.

Let us now have a look at how North Sulawesi looks like today in terms of economy. What kind of economy can be found in North Sulawesi and Minahasa? First and foremost, copra, the product of coconut, is still a very important source of income for the province and its farmers. Together with other agricultural products, this is still the main source of income to the province's economy⁴⁷, contributing to around 20% of the regional GDP. The other contributors are the service sector, trade and tourism and construction with each around 16-17%. I now want to relate these rather dry figures with some examples, to make them more understandable.

The main products in the agricultural field of North Sulawesi are coconuts, cloves, nutmeg, vanilla, coffee and in the fields of fishery, it is mainly seaweed and

⁴⁶ Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia- the Unlikely Nation?* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003), p.220.

⁴⁷ BPS North Sulawesi, *Sulawesi Utara Dalam Angka 2006*, p.407.

tuna⁴⁸. In general, agriculture plays an important role in North Sulawesi and still shows huge potentials for the future. As mentioned previously, there is hardly any agribusiness in North Sulawesi, meaning huge farms managed by qualified people. North Sulawesi mainly consists of small-scale farming still using old methods of planting and harvesting. The opportunities for increasing revenue in agriculture seem to be known by people now and programs are initiated to increase efficiency, for example by cultivating seaweed on a large scale basis or giving incentives for the production of Virgin Coconut Oil, which is nationally promoted⁴⁹. North Sulawesi appears to be one of the few regions in Indonesia to produce such Virgin Coconut Oil, which is of high quality and can be used for cooking but also for certain types of beauty products⁵⁰. Besides agriculture, there are some quantities of gold and gas in North Sulawesi, but just recently a gold mining company left Minahasa due to pollution allegations and natural resources do not play a dominant part in the local income.

If I now broaden the scope of analysis a little further and include the impact of the decentralization law 25/1999 which distributes 25% of the national revenue down to the local governments, it gets clear that the high-yielding taxes such as income or value added tax remain the hands of the central government. It is then up to the provinces and Kabupaten to create own taxes to gain income. The Kabupaten may for example raise taxes on entertainment venues, hotels or restaurants⁵¹. In Minahasa Induk, this tax levying appears to be rather unstructured. According to an interviewee, what happens in Minahasa Induk is that each restaurant and hotel makes a separate “deal” with the Bupati and the district government about the amount of taxes to be paid. The reason given for that was that “Minduk” is a rather poor district and therefore special deals need to be made in order to meet the special condition of the Kabupaten⁵². Personally, I

⁴⁸ Jongker Rumteh, *The land of swaying coconut trees*, Jakarta Post, February 28, 2006.

⁴⁹ Jongker Rumteh, *N. Sulawesi to tap natural resources to raise incomes*, Jakarta Post, December 10, 2007.

⁵⁰ Students from the Sam Ratulangi University presented their business plans in December 2007. Almost all the business plans dealt with North Sulawesi’s resources and how to optimize them. The topics included coconut oil, seaweed and cap tikus.

⁵¹ Wihana Kirana Jaya and Howard Dick, *The Latest Crisis of Regional Autonomy in Historical Perspective*, in Shannon Smith and Grayson Lloyd, *Indonesia Today- Challenges of History* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001), p.227.

⁵² Interview with a member of the DPRD, November 30, 2007. He mentioned too that in Manado, a flat tax of 10% is levied on restaurants, different from Minahasa.

doubt the effectiveness of such a tax raising scheme, as it is easily subject to nepotism and other unfair arrangements.

Another interesting sector that contributes largely to North Sulawesi's economy is tourism and its related fields. Most certainly, the importance of tourism will increase in the following years, since special programs are announced to boost tourism in North Sulawesi. Right now, the province's capital Manado is labelled "Kota Pariwisata 2010"-Tourist city 2010. North Sulawesi is famous mainly among divers who consider the islands off Manado's shore as being one of the best diving spots in the world. The islands, mainly Bunaken Island, have many hotels and guesthouses where divers can get their diving certificate. On the mainland, there are some upper class, four and five star hotels available. Additionally, many hotels can be found in Manado and the surrounding area meeting the middle class demand.

Besides the beaches and diving spots that can be found in North Sulawesi, the hinterland offers a variety of activities for people that enjoy hiking, for example. There are volcanoes and mountains all over North Sulawesi. In conclusion, North Sulawesi has an interesting variety to offer to tourists. However, in 2006, there were only around 22,000 tourists visiting North Sulawesi⁵³. This is an increase from the 19,000 people that came in 2005, but still far away from tourist locations such as Bali. Wishes were expressed that North Sulawesi should turn into a second Bali by 2010, with the help of the mentioned "Kota Pariwisata 2010" program⁵⁴. Certainly, to become a second Bali by 2010 is questionable, but the objective is a realistic one. Just as Bali before 2002, North Sulawesi is promoted as a safe place for tourists and foreigners, due to the fact that the majority are Christians and no inter-religious or inter-ethnic violence has occurred so far.

Furthermore, the infrastructure of North Sulawesi can be considered very well. Besides the deep water port at Bitung, North Sulawesi has an international airport outside Manado, the Sam Ratulangi Airport. This airport offers connections to local as

⁵³ Jongker Rumteh, *N. Sulawesi to tap natural resources to raise incomes*, Jakarta Post, December 10, 2007.

⁵⁴ One interviewee said that North Sulawesi could become a second Bali by 2010.

well as international destinations. Currently, Singapore and the southern Philippines are connected to Manado. In the past, there were direct flights to Taiwan and Malaysia too, but these have been cancelled. Right now, it is tried to promote the airport internationally to get new connections to China, Japan and other surrounding countries. One concern is that the central government does not seem to welcome a too successful airport so far away from the centre⁵⁵. Just by looking at the map, it gets clear that Manado is in the centre of Asia Pacific and it would certainly make sense to offer flights from Japan or China to Manado, since Manado is far closer to those destinations than Jakarta.

Talking further about North Sulawesi's infrastructure, the streets in the province are of good quality as well and connect most parts of the province with each other. The capital Manado as a city with more than 400,000 inhabitants has without doubt big plans for the future.

While in 2004, there were only two main malls on the main street running parallel to the sea, in late 2007 there were already five, and more are planned or under construction. This gives Manado a big city and international flair, but one needs to keep in mind that the existing malls are partly less than half occupied with shops, the rest being empty. The simple demand and supply policy seems not be heard in Manado and at least three more malls are about to be built at the seaside.

To sum it up, North Sulawesi's economy right now is diversified with agriculture still on top position but tourism is very likely to become more and more important to the province. In general, the infrastructure caters quite well to rising tourism numbers but current "development" programs for Manado are questionable as they will very likely not turn out to be successful in the future.

⁵⁵ Interview with a former member of the Ministry of Transportation, responsible for the Manado airport.

5.7 Case Study: The “porn bill”

The aim of this case study is to link the before mentioned ethnic diversity in Indonesia with current events in politics in order to show the complexity and difficulties of Indonesian politics that also affect Minahasa and North Sulawesi. I will present the controversy surrounding the so called “porn bill”, sometimes labelled “pornography bill” or “anti-pornography bill”⁵⁶ and show how this might be or become a threat to the unity of Indonesia. I decided to present this issue since it is a contemporary one and is currently dealt with in Indonesian politics. It is a good example to show the struggle between defenders of Indonesia’s unity in diversity and those preferring a stronger and stricter, needless to say Muslim, society. Furthermore, it combines ethnicity, religion and culture and shows how different cultures, like food, dress and rituals, can clash with other cultures of other ethnic groups. Since the issue is a current one, most sources are taken from the internet, mostly from the Indonesian newspaper “Jakarta Post”.

As the title shows, the initial idea behind that bill was to stop the decreasing morality in Indonesia by ending the sale, consumption and distribution of pornographic material in Indonesia⁵⁷. The bill first came to prominence in 1999, after Suharto stepped down as a president. Since then, many changes have been made to that bill but it is still the topic of heated debates.

If one looks at what the bill actually suggests, it becomes clear why tensions are so high and liberal groups, secular people and non-Muslims so strongly oppose it. Besides banning pornography, including videos and pictures, the bill in a very vague way would also ban and forbid kissing in public as well as erotic poetry, dancing and writing⁵⁸. Furthermore, women would not be allowed to show any sensual parts of their body like thighs, their hips or belly buttons. It therefore seems to regulate what

⁵⁶ The Jakarta Post uses all different titles, according to which one is currently used in politics. The height of the debate was in the year 2005 and early 2006. However, at the time of writing, various articles again appear in the Jakarta Post about the „porn bill“.

⁵⁷ Thang D. Nguyen, *Beware theocracy in Indonesia*, June 7, 2006, in <http://thangthecolumnist.blogspot.com/2006/06/beware-theocracy-in-indonesia.html> (accessed December 1, 2007).

⁵⁸ http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-05-21-indonesia-rally_x.htm (accessed November 21, 2007).

Indonesian women are allowed to wear and what not. In case one does not comply with this law and, for example, wears a tank top or wants to sunbath at the beach, one can go to jail for 5 years or be subject to a fine of more than \$20,000⁵⁹. In addition to that, art would also be limited and drawings with nude models would be punished as well. Reading out poems with a sexy voice could also be punished. By showing these examples it gets clear that the bill not actually only wants to forbid and restrict the distribution of porn, which alone could be supported, it goes further and forbids actions that were considered normal until now.

The main arguments that the supporters of the bill come forward with are firstly, Indonesian women need to be protected and second, the moral decrease of Indonesia's society needs to be stopped⁶⁰. The supporters of the law are mainly conservative Muslim groups and their attached organizations. One controversial defender of this bill is the Islamic Defender Front (FPI). This group basically consists of rather low class and low educated people that are open to agitation. The group is known in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta and West Java, for conducting raids in brothels, discotheques and other entertainment venues. FPI harasses, threatens and uses violence to state their point. When "Playboy" was about to open a branch and launch its magazine in Indonesia, FPI was the spearhead in demonstrating against it, even destroying the office of Playboy Indonesia⁶¹.

Besides the FPI, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the United Development Party (PPP) have supported the bill from its beginning. The PKS is an Islamic party that focuses and gained support with its fight against corruption. Just recently, Golkar as a nationalist party started to support the bill⁶². However, it seemed that Golkar did that just after the bill had been weakened in its content.

Contrary to that, the opponents state the following. First, the vague terminology of the law makes its execution subject to personal interpretation. Who decides what is

⁵⁹ Pandaya, "The naked truth on the misguided pornography bill", Jakarta Post, March 3, 2006.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Setiawan, Michael, "A bravery test for National Police", Jakarta Post, October 9, 2007.

⁶² Agusta, Leon "A swinging anti-pornography bill", Jakarta Post, December 11, 2007.

considered “sensual” or “pornographic”? Along with that it is frequently stated that Indonesia already has existing laws covering most aspects of the „porn bill“⁶³. The only problem is that these laws are not executed properly due to Indonesia’s all present corruption or the unwillingness to do so. I do not want to go deep into Indonesia’s laws and judicative issues but the point I want to make is that if laws exist, why create new ones?

The second point that the opponents state is that such a law would definitely be incompatible with local cultures. Maybe such a law would be appropriate to some groups in Indonesia, but if one looks at the diversity of ethnic and religious groups in Indonesia, it becomes clear why the „porn bill“ is a complicated issue. In the very east, the indigenous tribes in Papua still hardly cover themselves up and still wear their native clothes which do not cover women breasts, for example. Also in other parts of Indonesia, especially Bali and the Christian areas, many women like to dress in a western way showing the shapes of their body. Additionally, if one checks out the nightclubs in Jakarta and in other cities, younger people dance not only in a sexy way, they also flirt obviously with the other sex. According to the „porn bill“, all that would be forbidden. Keeping the topic of this paper in mind, such a bill would threaten the cultural diversity in Indonesia, not paying respect to the different cultures of minority groups in Indonesia.

The opponents of the bill constitute of various groups. Starting with politics, the nationalist parties in the parliament, first and foremost the PDI-P, oppose the bill as well as moderate Muslim parties like the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the National Awakening Party (PKB). The former one is considered to be attached to and drawing support from the Muhammadiyah and the latter one from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)⁶⁴. Especially NU is known for its moderate and liberal Muslim stand and has even stated that if urged to choose it would choose Pancasila over an Islamic nation⁶⁵, which means

⁶³ Muninggar Sri Saraswati, “North Sulawesi opposes „porn bill“”, Jakarta Post, March 27, 2006.

⁶⁴ Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200* (3rd ed) (USA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.415.

⁶⁵ Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff, “Im Namen Gottes”, Tagesspiegel, October 6, 2006 The article is in German. The title means “In the name of god”. The article deals with Indonesia and how it appears to

that it reasserts its secular stand and rejects calls for stronger Islamic laws or even the introduction of Sharia.

Apart from that, artists, liberal intellectuals, actors, women and human rights groups are against the „porn bill“, naturally, as they are afraid they might be negatively affected by the outcome of the bill. Some even go further and say that the bill is an attempt to make Indonesia an Islamic state.

The most interesting groups for this paper that are against the law are the non-Muslim groups, first and foremost the Balinese and the Indonesian Christians. The provinces of North Sulawesi, Papua, East Nusa Tenggara and Bali have already stated they will reject and oppose the law. If one looks at these provinces it becomes clear why those oppose such a law. All these provinces have a non-Muslim majority, with Christians forming the majority in the first three provinces and Hindus being the majority in Bali. It appeared that these provinces even increased their threats by not only opposing the law but by threatening to break away from Indonesia if the „porn bill“ is put into action⁶⁶. Especially those groups, forming the majority in the mentioned provinces but a small minority in Indonesia, fear that such a law is a predecessor to Islamic laws and state that

“The bill should have dealt with the distribution of pornographic materials, not prescribe how citizens must behave according to the moral standards of a particular religion.”⁶⁷

Chiefly the last part of the quote is an indicator how many non-Muslims feel if it comes to the „porn bill“. Many Minahasans that I have talked to fear a general Islamization of Indonesia which would directly affect Minahasa. People in Minahasa, as certainly in other provinces as well, fear a change away from a pluralistic, tolerant society towards a more single, Islam-oriented one. The “porn bill“ is one clear example

become closer to an Islamic state. The newspaper is known in Germany and is considered having a liberal profile.

⁶⁶ Ridwan Max Sijabat, *NGOs sue house over „porn bill“, calling it threat to pluralism*, Jakarta Post, December 7, 2006.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

of how deep divisions can, or seem to be in Indonesia's society. A variety of Minahasan women stated that they want to wear whatever they want and not be told what to wear by law.

To complete the analysis of the "porn bill", it has to be stated that the bill has not been passed yet and, more important, seemed to have been weakened and changed various times. The latest stand on the bill is, as of December 2007, that it has been renamed to "Anti-Pornography Bill" and excludes arts and cultural performances as well as customary and traditional rituals from it⁶⁸. The main division remains though, between the PKS, PPP and now Golkar on one side, supporting the bill and PDI-P, PKB, PAN and various women's rights and non-Muslim groups on the other side, opposing it for the same reasons as before.

All in all, it seems that issues like the "porn bill" have the potential to make divisions between ethnic groups and religious groups, sometimes they coincide, deeper. Therefore it is mandatory for Indonesian politicians and civilians to keep in mind that Indonesia is a pluralistic society with numerous religious groups, hundreds of ethnic groups and thousands of different rituals, dress habits and beliefs. This presented case is a good example as it shows the following divisions in Indonesia: First and foremost, non-Muslims against Muslims. However, liberal and secular Muslims including the strong NU reject the law as well. This leads to the second division, liberal and secular Muslims against conservative Muslims. Going back to the first separation, non-Muslims in this case seem to be united in their opposition to the law. Christians, both Catholics and Protestants as well as Hindus, in this case represented by Bali as a province, oppose the law vehemently. To go even further, I would say that another split, coinciding with the religious split, is between West and East Indonesia. Three out of the four provinces opposing the law are all located in the East of Indonesia, Papua, East Nusa Tenggara and North Sulawesi. These manifold fronts within Indonesia show how difficult and dangerous certain issues are.

⁶⁸ Agusta, Leon, "A swinging anti-pornography bill", Jakarta Post, December 11, 2007.

Therefore, laws that would privilege one particular group, be it ethnic, religious or both, might threaten the unity of Indonesia. For Minahasa, the introduction of a law like the “porn bill” would make people demand independence⁶⁹, since many Minahasans consider such a law being a predecessor for an Islamic, Sharia based country. Again, here I argue that if this can be called a “real” secessionist threat remains debatable, as I mainly see such a threat as a bargaining power against Jakarta. Later in this paper, when Minahasa’s role in Indonesia will be assessed and summarized, this aspect will be taken up again.

5.8 Concluding thoughts

One aspect that actually connects ethnicity with religion and politics is the obvious dominance of Minahasans in the provincial politics. In the last elected assembly, 29 out of 45 seats were occupied with Minahasans and both the governor and his vice governor were Minahasans⁷⁰. So even though Minahasans are the biggest ethnic group in North Sulawesi, they are not as large as the occupation of seats in the assembly suggests. One can conclude that politics, and economy will give a similar picture, in North Sulawesi are in the hand of Minahasans. As the violent clashes in Ambon and Poso have shown, such economic and political inequalities can be one of the reasons for the occurrence of violence. The outlook chapter will elaborate on this aspect further.

This chapter has presented the current situation in North Sulawesi and Minahasa in terms of politics, economy, education and religion. The reason why these aspects have been presented is that as the introductory chapter about Indonesia has stated, ethnic clashes and violence are likely to occur where there are inequalities or grievances of one ethnic, often equalled with religious, group against another one. These inequalities can occur in politics or the economic sector. This chapter has shown that in general, the situation in North Sulawesi appears stable, with good economic figures and

⁶⁹ Such opinions were given various times during interviews.

⁷⁰ Michael Jacobsen, *Cross-Border Communities and Deterritorializing Identities. Assessing the Diaspora Triangle: Migrant-Host-Home*, in “Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper Series”, No 19, 2002, City University of Hong Kong, p.13.

political representation. However, Minahasans seem to be the dominant ethnic group in North Sulawesi which could lead to certain feelings of inequality among the Muslims that inhabit Bitung and Manado and the ethnically different group of Bolaang Mongondow. One key indicator is the different poverty rate, which is amazingly low in Minahasa while in Bolaang Mongondow, it is above average. If one includes the income per capita a comparable picture occurs which leads to the conclusion that Christian Minahasans are by far the dominant ethnic group in North Sulawesi leaving the predominantly Muslims of Bolaang Mongondow behind.

Politically, it remains interesting that North Sulawesi does not vote very different than other parts of Indonesia. Golkar and the PDI-P are the strongest parties in North Sulawesi and its Kabupaten. The Christian party PDS gains more votes than on a national level and Muslim parties score weaker than in rest-Indonesia. These differences remain small though and no expressions of grievances seem to occur during the elections. On the Kabupaten level, the research has shown that the way elections are conducted include vote buying and other gifts and spendings that the candidate shares with potential voters. This means that Minahasa and North Sulawesi are rather “normal” regions in Indonesia in terms of electoral behaviour.

There are certain separatist groups, we should maybe better call them “anti-Jakarta” groups in North Sulawesi. It looks like those groups are not actually too strong and are not likely to become a real threat to the central government. The actions these groups take, by demanding independence if the “porn bill“ is implemented, should be seen as a negotiating power, not as a real call for secession. I argue that North Sulawesi and Minahasa in particular are normal regions within Indonesia including “normal” separatist movements. It seems to be part of Indonesia that many provinces are unhappy with the status quo and attempt to change this with separatist movements which are often predominantly a bargaining power in order to increase the economic situation. Such “separatists” can be found in Riau, Timor and in known regions such as Aceh, Papua and the Maluku. Again, Minahasa is no exception to the rule. In its movements, ethnic Minahasans point out that they belong to Indonesia despite obvious differences like religion and geographic distances with the centre.

The „porn bill“ presents a good case study with a contemporary problem. The issue of stricter, by some people perceived as “Muslim” laws leads to uncertainties among various Christian and non-Muslim groups, in this case North Sulawesi with the Christian Minahasans. The bill shows very well the differences in culture and perceptions of different ethnic and religious groups. I argue that this bill is a good example to show the problems that Indonesia has faced since its existence in 1945 and that keep coming up until today. It is therefore mandatory for the central government to not enact any laws that might undermine one certain ethnic group or religion.

In terms of religion, the often praised tolerance in North Sulawesi between the religions is only one side of the medal. Granted, many Muslims visit Christian families for Christmas and vice versa during Idul Fitri, but in general, Muslims and Christians seem to live their separate lives in North Sulawesi. They live in different quarters in the capital and are also rather separated in the rest of the province. People do not talk about religion with the other faith, since it is likely that an argument might occur. This seems to be a “live and let live” mentality. Considering that Minahasans are almost exclusively Christian, this separation in living also leads to the conclusion that the ethnic Minahasans live a separate life. Only in the cities like Manado and Bitung, there seems to be some mixture of different ethnic groups.

Keeping that in mind, one could come up with a conclusion saying that violence or clashes between different ethnic and religious groups might take place in the future. However, this has been predicted before and nothing has happened. In my view, the problem with the occurrence of violence is that it cannot be predicted. Of course, after clashes have occurred, it is easy to find the indicators and relate those with other incidents, but to predict such happenings is more than difficult. Books and the internet are full of predictions not only about that North Sulawesi will certainly face violent clashes, but also the break up of Indonesia as a country. Neither of these predictions have so far taken place. As a result, I will be very careful with predictions and assumptions and the outlook chapter will present various scenarios in a careful way. What one could conclude from the observations is that if something might happen, the

cities with its ethnic mixtures would be more vulnerable than the rural areas that are, in the case of Minahasa, almost exclusively inhabited by ethnic Minahasans. Another point is the relation towards Bolaang Mongondow. As mentioned, unlike Minahasa, these people are predominantly Muslim. However, it appears that despite certain feelings of under representation, these people appear to accept their position within North Sulawesi. When Gorontalo split from North Sulawesi, Bolaang Mongondow remained with the Christian North Sulawesi and not went with the Muslim Gorontalo.



Picture 9: Manado Town Square Mall, called „Mantos“. One of the newest Malls on the Boulevard; picture taken by the author

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



Picture 10: “Tourist City 2010”. One of the many posters that are displayed in Manado that promote Manado as a tourist destination; picture taken by the author



Picture 11: A typical scene from the Bupati campaign in December 2007. People are waiting at the street, here near Tondano Lake, to get small gifts from the different campaign teams; picture taken by the author

CHAPTER VI

OUTLOOK

6.1 Background

This chapter aims at providing an outlook into Minahasa's and Indonesia's future. A huge amount of scholars writing about Indonesia come up with their own predictions about Indonesia's future. Sometimes it appears as if these predictions and forecasts only aim at attracting attention. It seems as if there are as many scenarios about Indonesia's future as ethnic groups in Indonesia. Here, I want to present four of those scenarios, especially those that are connected with Minahasa. As one cannot predict the future or forecast violence, I carefully mention different aspects that might cause a certain reaction.

6.2 Political options

In terms of Indonesian politics, it is difficult to predict Minahasa's and thus Indonesia's future. However, I am convinced that the following four different scenarios about how Minahasa and Indonesia might look like in the future are the most realistic and suitable ones.

The first one would be to keep the status quo. The current situation in Minahasa and other parts of Indonesia appears rather stable. As mentioned before, there are certainly grievances and uncertainties among certain groups, be it elites, ethnic or religious ones. However, up until today, Indonesia has survived and has not faced a break up as predicted by various sides. Indonesia is now in existence for more than half a decade and no part has broken away yet. The most likely future problem remains in

Aceh, even though the situation seems stable at the moment¹. In the case of Minahasa, despite various threats to break away, the contemporary situation appears stable and therefore representative for all of Indonesia.

In 1999, two main decentralization laws were introduced, called 22/1999 and 25/1999 dealing with political and fiscal decentralization. These laws gave more power to the Kabupaten level, and not to the province's level. They are in action since January 2001². However, the problem with these laws is that they are sidelining the province and give authority to the district level. What happens in reality is that many districts in turn also sideline the province and aim at dealing directly with the centre in Jakarta. In terms of inter-Kabupaten relations, the autonomy laws also aimed at defusing possible separatist movements, as districts are rather unlikely to secede, due to their small size and economic inability to survive³. This can be observed in Minahasa, where hardly any contact between the Kabupaten seems to take place. This would therefore mean that a possible separatist movement, provided it really exists, does not have a big power on official levels⁴. If this proves to be true, the current politics including the decentralization laws would have met their aims at defusing possible threats.

The second option for Minahasa and Indonesia is that each province makes a special deal with the central government in Jakarta. During an interview in Jakarta an interviewee complained about giving special status to Aceh, Papua and Jakarta. In his view, this implies that these provinces are superior or better than the others. If a unity of Indonesia continues to exist then it cannot be possible to give special status to one province but not the other one. Such an asymmetrical devolution of power could create grievances from regions that do not have a "special" status⁵.

Using this as the basis for my argumentation, it could be possible for the central government, in accordance with the already existing decentralization laws, to make a

¹ According to a TNI intelligence officer, interviewed on December 10, 2007, the Acehese separatist are currently regaining strength and use the "peace" to get armed again.

² For a detailed explanation, see Sulistiyanto, Priyambudi and Maribeth Erb, *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (USA: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

³ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.49.

⁴ Interview with a member of the DPRD in Minahasa, November 29, 2007.

⁵ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism*, p.187.

deal with each province about its status. This could include fiscal issues, such as the amount of revenue that could be kept by the province and the Kabupaten, or giving them certain rights in terms of religion, in order to be able to set up their own religious laws or rules⁶. For Minahasa this would mean that they would be free to set up own Christian-based rules or, on the flipside, to weaken existing Muslim-oriented laws. However, such special deals, even though they might sound interesting in theory are hardly realizable as each province, or maybe even each Kabupaten would then make claims and demands towards Jakarta. In a country with over thirty provinces and almost 350 Kabupaten⁷, one can imagine how difficult and time-consuming such a solution would be. Moreover, uncertainties would remain about the future status of the provinces. Provided that each Kabupaten has a special deal with the central government, the provinces would not have any more influences and might be considered superfluous.

6.2.1 Federalism

Another option would be to introduce federalism in Indonesia. This option seems to be a realizable and realistic option for Indonesia, given its pluralistic society. During the struggle for independence this was also the view of many nationalists. Arguing that a diverse society needs federalism was in contrast to those favouring a strong central state exactly because Indonesia is so diverse⁸. Furthermore, federalism as a political concept still has a bad reputation as it is still connected with the old colonial power, the Dutch, who attempted to create a federal state of Indonesia. However, the decentralization laws were already a big step towards federalism and former president Gus Dur has already stated that the future of Indonesia will see a “*wide-ranging autonomy, a federal*”⁹ system. How controversial this topic is in Indonesia was apparent during an interview with a TNI intelligence officer, attended by two other officers. Asking them how Indonesia’s ethnic diversity needs to be dealt with, one was saying that only federalism can be the answer. Strongly opposing was the other officer who

⁶ Several Kabupaten are already implementing Sharia based laws, such as areas in West Java.

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Indonesia (accessed March 2, 2008).

⁸ Sulistiyanto, Priyambudi and Maribeth Erb, *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (USA: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p.3.

⁹ Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?*, p.53.

said the exact opposite that only a strong and central state can govern the diversity. Without going deep into governmental systems, a federal structure would surely meet the rising demands and uncertainties by many ethnic groups. In a federal structure, Minahasa could definitely remain part of Indonesia but also keep its traditions alive without fearing outside intervention. One of the advantages of federalism that would apply in the case of Minahasa is that in federalism, ethnic or other groups have the possibility to be responsible and set up their own education systems or religious institutions¹⁰. For Minahasa this would certainly mean that various groups would not fear an Islamization anymore since Minahasa and North Sulawesi would be able to introduce certain Minahasa- and Christian-oriented laws and regulations.

6.2.2 Independent Minahasa

The fourth and last option, the most unlikely but most interesting one, would be a break up of Indonesia or a break away by “only” Minahasa or North Sulawesi. Since Indonesia’s foundation, such scenarios have been found in almost each book about Indonesia. The internet goes even further with making wild predictions such as the possibility of a “Golden Triangle” of North Sulawesi, Papua and the Maluku as a Christian Indonesia¹¹. Again, such scenarios might be “riveting” and attracting for readers but lack a serious foundation. Naturally, it is normal for scholars to look into the future and try to predict what might happen. I aim at rationally assessing the possibility of an independent Minahasa.

First and foremost, in order to have an independent state, one needs to have recognition from other countries. In the case of Minahasa, this already proves to be the highest hurdle. Outside Indonesia, “Minahasa” or even “North Sulawesi” is hardly known. Even people familiar with Indonesia and its history might not be aware of that region. One can therefore safely conclude that in Europe and America, a Minahasan call for recognition would be answered with many questions. In the world, the only secessionist movement in Indonesia that is known seems to be Aceh. Against the

¹⁰ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism*, p.186.

¹¹ <http://jongoss.info/papers/malukuwars.htm> (accessed February 12, 2008).

background that Aceh has a century long history of resistance and armed struggle against both the Dutch and Indonesia, one can conclude that a “free Minahasa” lacks “credit” in that aspect as they do not have such a history of resistance.

One could think about sympathy from countries in Southeast Asia that have a similar history, fate or religion as Minahasa. This would be the Philippines in the North, sharing the Christian belief with Minahasa, even though not Protestantism. However, since the Philippines are having their own separatist insurgency in the Muslim South, it needs to be doubted that vocal support for a “free Minahasa” would be given. In the past there was already the idea of breaking away from Indonesia and join the neighbouring Philippines, given shared customs and traditions¹². East Timor as another small and Christian state might be in favour of a “free Minahasa“, provided that religious or any other form of suppressions takes place, since the Timorese are familiar with such a history. However, it can be doubted that East Timor would “dare” to confront Indonesia another time. ASEAN as the Southeast Asian Association would definitely support Indonesia and condemn a “free Minahasa“, since it is part of their policy to reject any form of separatism¹³. Furthermore, most Southeast Asian countries face similar separatist or insurgency movements, such as in southern Thailand or in parts of Burma. So without any cruelty conducted or any hard-line, probably Islamic laws implemented by Indonesia against minority groups such as the Minahasans, no support would be given. The before presented “porn bill” is one such case where minority groups including the Minahasans consider such a bill to be against their values and beliefs.

As some Minahasans have stated, there is a huge worldwide Minahasan community. Those people could and would support a “free Minahasa“ certainly, but how far such a support would go is questionable. Even if one considers the accounts by Jacobsen that there are some thousand Minahasans willing to fight, and provided that with the financial help of outside Minahasans, an armed struggle would be realizable, the TNI would crush such a movement. The stated motto by the TNI is “NKRI harga mati” which means that the army will defend the unity of Indonesia until death.

¹² David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.257.

¹³ Khoo How San, *Neighbourhood Watch and the East Timor/Aceh Crisis*, in Siddique, Sharon and Sree Kumar, *The 2nd ASEAN Reader* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p.133.

Furthermore, many members of the TNI would be even more willing to end such a “rebellion” since they were fighting not only against separatists, but even more against Christian separatists. As the neighbouring violence in the Maluku has shown, armed units and public opinions would certainly side with the army and the “need” to crush any rebellion. Turning away from such speculations, I want to turn to the economic side of a “free Minahasa“.

Rumours had it that the USA was actually planning to build a base in one of the islands north of Minahasa, in Sangir island. Such a base would certainly boost the economy in the region, but people told me that through such a base, the cause of a “free Minahasa“ would gain strength as the United States would support a “free Minahasa“ movement. Even more, it was claimed that there are already connections to the United States and that help would be given to Minahasa¹⁴. I am sure that there is hardly any substance to these rumours. The times where the United States supports separatists throughout the world are more or less over. I guess that the rumour was started to stress that a free and Christian Minahasa would be a good bastion for the US to carry on their war against terror and since Minahasa is located in, or next to, the largest Muslim country in the world, a base in North Sulawesi would be useful in terms of tactics and surveillance.

In order to survive, a country needs the economic capacities and infrastructure. As presented above, Minahasa only has little natural resources like gas, oil or gold. It largely depends on agriculture, tourism and the service sector. Overall, the province of North Sulawesi is an average province in Indonesia, neither poor nor rich. The province and the Kabupaten still depend on the general grants given to the regions by the central government. If the province’s and the Kabupaten’s bureaucracy could run independent without these grants (dana alokasi umum) remains uncertain.

I therefore conclude that a “free Minahasa“ has little to no chance of surviving since it lacks political as well as logistical support. Certainly people in and outside Minahasa and North Sulawesi might talk about the possibility, but as mentioned before,

¹⁴ Interviews at Universitas Sam Ratulangi, December 14, 2007.

this needs to be seen more as a bargaining power against Jakarta than a real threat to the unity of Indonesia. This could be observed during the “porn bill” issue presented in chapter V and other policies that offended certain groups. The first reaction always seems to be the threat of breaking away from Indonesia. I agree with Jacques Bertrand who argues that autonomy, and I add federalism, is useful to counter grievances against the centre, but not against secessionism¹⁵. Therefore, a special autonomy or, more realistic, a federal structure would definitely suit Minahasa and North Sulawesi and would reduce the uncertainties and fears by many inhabitants.

6.3 Assets and Liabilities

A huge asset that Minahasa and North Sulawesi have, regardless of being independent or not, is its good infrastructure. As I have stated before, the region has an international airport connecting the region to national and international destinations. Provided that the current efforts to get more international destinations are fruitful, the airport could gain more importance and increase the number of tourists visiting the province, therefore increasing the income. Additionally, just geographically speaking, North Sulawesi and its airport are located in the centre of Southeast and East Asia and Asia Pacific. Furthermore, North Sulawesi lies within the East Asean Growth Area, the BIMP EAGA.¹⁶ If the region could materialize this central position, the economy would certainly gain from that. The port in Bitung serves a comparable function. Additionally, the roads that run through the province are in a good condition and connect almost every part of the province. Economically speaking, such a good infrastructure is the prerequisite for further investment and hence, economic growth.

A good test for Minahasa and North Sulawesi will be the “World Ocean Conference 2009” that will be held in the capital Manado. This conference will surely contribute largely to the region’s economy, as special committees have already been set up and new hotels and other service-oriented facilities will be opened to accommodate

¹⁵ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism*, p.212.

¹⁶ <http://www.adb.org/BIMP/default.asp> (accessed February 2, 2008).

the guests of the conference. At this conference, North Sulawesi could prove that it has the

*“potential to become a gateway of trade in the eastern regions of Indonesia and Asia-Pacific regions”*¹⁷

The main point of concern, not only in the case of North Sulawesi and its Kabupaten, are the negative side effects of the decentralization laws. The key problem is that in many cases, the corruption, collusion and nepotism that the Suharto era was famous for, are now found in each district. Without monitoring and supervision, some district officials appear to act like “raja raja kecil” or “Suharto-Suharto kecil”¹⁸, meaning that the centralized corruption and authority under Suharto has now been replaced by decentralized corruption. North Sulawesi as a province and its Kabupaten are without doubt no exception to this. Without mentioning names, certain local politicians in North Sulawesi are known as being very corrupt, even for Indonesian standards. One of those politicians was considered to be in the top ten of Indonesia’s most corrupt politicians. True or not, one politician told me that in a recent survey, Indonesia proved to be the most corrupt country in Southeast Asia and North Sulawesi the most corrupt province within Indonesia.¹⁹ Therefore, what is needed in North Sulawesi is a strong and vibrant civil society that supervises the local politicians in order to minimize the effects of corruption and collusion. However, since local politicians are also strongly involved in various businesses and have access and shares in local TV stations and print media²⁰, it is questionable that a civil supervision can act effectively in North Sulawesi. Furthermore the mentioned brain drain that is present at least in Minahasa also hinders the presence of critique groups.

All in all, Minahasa and North Sulawesi have the potential to become thriving regions in Indonesia. Both the “World Ocean Conference 2009” together with the “Kota

¹⁷ http://www.woc2009.org/sulut_home.php (accessed February 2, 2008).

¹⁸ Wihana Kirana Jaya, *The Latest Crisis of Regional Autonomy in Historical Perspective*, p.228. raja raja kecil means “small king” and Suharto Suharto kecil “small Suharto”

¹⁹ The interviewee’s name is known to the author.

²⁰ David T. Hill, *Manoeuvres in Manado*, p.13.

Pariwisata 2010” to boost tourism in North Sulawesi will show whether or not the region and its politicians will be able to use the strength that the region definitely has.

6.4 Ambon, Poso and Minahasa?

In chapter II, I have briefly mentioned the violent clashes in the Malukus, mainly in Ambon, and the ones that occurred in Poso, Central Sulawesi. Since these provinces are close to North Sulawesi and also home to large numbers of Christians, one might consider that North Sulawesi will naturally face such violent clashes next. However, as pointed out various times, religion is never the sole reason for violence. Other aspects such as political influence and economic inequalities contribute largely to the eruption of violence. Additionally, one also has to keep in mind that after the clashes in Ambon, Poso and elsewhere, and the bombings in Bali in late 2005, there has not been any major violent eruption or terror attack in Indonesia in 2006 and 2007. What does this mean for the case of Minahasa?

First and foremost it needs to be stated that in the case of Poso and Ambon, the population was far more heterogenic in terms of ethnicity and religion. The region Minahasa is quite homogenous and forms an ethnic, cultural and economic unit²¹ with clear geographic boundaries. As mentioned above, Minahasa is almost exclusively Christian with no other ethnic group forming a considerable minority. This fact leads to a partial mitigation in terms of violent potential in Minahasa. If one looks at the whole province of North Sulawesi, one gets a slightly different picture. The issues that might create future problems, not necessarily violence or religious clashes, are the following.

Firstly, Minahasans are the dominant ethnic group in North Sulawesi's politics and seem overrepresented compared to their numbers in North Sulawesi. This means that other groups, such as the Sangir and Talaud inhabitants, who are almost only Christians, and the inhabitants of Bolaang Mongondow, who are mainly Muslims, are

²¹ David E.F. Henley, *Nationalism and Regionalism in a Colonial Context*, p.194.

underrepresented. This can lead both to the demand by the latter mentioned groups to gain more influence in politics on a provincial level and to the fear by Minahasans to lose influence. In Ambon and Poso, this was one of the reasons that contributed to the eruption of violence. However, I cannot predict what happens, but it is interesting that Bolaang Mongondow did not follow Gorontalo when a new province was set up. It therefore appears that they see themselves as a part of North Sulawesi. In addition to that, even when Gorontalo was still a part of North Sulawesi there had been no violent clashes between neither sides.

Secondly, the geography of the northern tip of Sulawesi is interesting in religious terms. Very roughly speaking, the further one goes southwest the lesser the numbers of Christians. Gorontalo as the province next to North Sulawesi has one of the highest numbers of Muslims in all of Indonesia. This does not at all imply possible violence among inhabitants of the two provinces but Gorontalo is also a rather poor province. In addition to that, the region around Gorontalo never had much contact with the Dutch and is today known for being strongly Islamic and for maintaining strong links with the middle East²². This corresponds with one interviewee who expressed fears that those people who have contacts with the middle East might get radicalized and try to stir up tensions. I have mentioned that in North Sulawesi there has already been an incident where outside Muslims attempted to create tensions but failed as the local Muslims did not side with those outsiders. Here again, and to a lesser degree it also goes for Bolaang Mongondow, religion alone does not cause violence and clashes, but where there is a visual gap between rich and poor, feelings of inequalities might increase and erupt into violence²³.

The third aspect I want to talk about here is what can be defined as the hot temper of Minahasans²⁴. How would this affect Minahasa's future then, one might ask. I argue that if the above mentioned aspects become real, let us say, Muslim "outsiders"

²²Ian Chalmers, *Indonesia*, p.52.

²³Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia*, p.220.

²⁴ I did not mention this aspect in chapter IV as I could not obtain information on that characteristic. However, during my first stay in Minahasa in 2004, I experienced this characteristic when students from the Law faculty attacked students of the Business faculty, throwing stones, beating people up etc. The campus in the following days needed to be protected by heavy armed policemen.

are growing stronger in number and gain influence in politics or in other fields, meaning that Minahasans lose some of their influence, then this may cause some Minahasans to be prone to violence. One statement by a Manadonese that I want to mention here was that once Muslims get stronger in Manado and Minahasa, they would “change attitude”. What this means is just that right now, Muslims are considered living peacefully with the Christians. But once they become a larger minority or even a majority,

*“nobody wants to be caught unprepared when the enemy strikes”*²⁵

Of course, this sounds very dramatic, but maybe there is some truth to it. Jacobsen draws a comparable conclusion by stating that a loss of political influence might lead to a radicalization of Minahasans towards Muslims and the potential for what he calls “*inter-ethnic cum religious tensions*”²⁶. However, as I have stated that I do not aim at making too many predictions, I only want to quote this here and leave it rather uncommented. If one analyses the clashes of Ambon and Poso, it remains interesting that without judging any of the fighting sides, many of the worst atrocities in both cases were carried out by the Christian side²⁷, maybe because of the fear of becoming marginalized or to lose certain powers and influences. This needs to be kept in mind when one assesses Minahasa’s and North Sulawesi’s future.

To sum it up, I do not think that clashes are likely to occur in Minahasa or North Sulawesi. But, and that needs to be kept in mind, violence can have many different reasons, as mentioned here. Often a small incident, a small fight between two gangs or even among two people had already erupted to inter-religious and ethnic clashes in Indonesia.

²⁵ Email contact with a Manadonese. The name is known to the author.

²⁶ Michael Jacobsen, *Appropriating the Global within the Local- Identity Formation among the Minahasa in contemporary Indonesia*, in Kinnvall, Catarina and Kristina Jönsson, *Globalization and Democratization in Asia- The construction of identity* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.240.

²⁷ John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*, p.224.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

One observation during my research trip brought the discussion about Indonesia's diversity and Minahasa's "being different" to the point. I was sitting in a small restaurant at the seaside of Manado. This restaurant was part of a strip of restaurants all facing the sea. The place is known as a Christian restaurant, as they serve mainly pork dishes, but also dog, bat and other food that Muslims do not eat. While I was eating "Sate Babi" and drinking a chilled beer, a whole roasted pork was put on a table next to me and was prepared by the staff to be picked up. Just at that time, the TV in the restaurant next door was broadcasting the Muslim evening prayer. Nobody seemed to notice it though and both sides, the pork preparers and the people watching the prayer did not pay attention to the others. Additionally, some minutes later a couple of Muslims entered the restaurant I was sitting in, both women and men dressed in a Muslim fashion. They must have been outsiders since the restaurant I dined in is known to serve non-Halal food. I was surprised, and I was not the only one, why they came to this restaurant. Once they started looking around, they might have noticed that this restaurant might not meet their demands and tastes, so finally they quickly went to the next door restaurant and ordered their food there.

The reason why I mention this story, which happened exactly as described, is that in my opinion this is exactly what Minahasa and Indonesia is about. It is about diversity, different cultures and habits. Only if these differences are accepted and tolerated will Indonesia, and Minahasa as a part of it, be able to thrive and exist in a peaceful way. As an article that refers to Clifford Geertz when talking about Indonesia's diversity puts it

„... archipelagic in geography, eclectic in civilization, and heterogeneous in culture, Indonesia flourishes when it accepts and capitalizes on its diversity and disintegrates when it denies and suppresses it”¹.

This quote sums up what this thesis is about. I began with giving a brief outline what Indonesia is about and what it is based upon. The diversity in ethnic, geographic and religious terms is what makes Indonesia so interesting to study. In order to later understand the discussion about Minahasa and North Sulawesi, I have outlined the violent clashes in the Maluku and Central Sulawesi. I chose those two, and not Aceh, Kalimantan or Papua, as these two provinces are close to the region this thesis deals with. What became clear in the presentation of the two cases is that religion is not the sole cause for the violence even though sometimes it is reduced to that. Moreover, I define four reasons that contribute to the eruption of violence, namely historical, cultural, socio-economic and political aspects. Religion and ethnicity are certainly part of it as well. In the cases of Ambon (Maluku) and Poso (Central Sulawesi), economic inequalities, political under representation and the fear of losing influences together with religious and ethnic differences led to the eventual eruption of violence that led thousands dead.

After that I have begun my analysis about Minahasa by giving a very rough overview about its history. I made it clear that Minahasa used to be very closely tied with the colonial power, the Dutch. As a result of this Minahasa became a thriving region in Indonesia. This laid the foundation for certain inequalities, mentioned above, between Minahasans who were highly educated and part of the colonial army and the rest of Indonesia. It appeared as if there existed a certain gap between the two parties. How different the ethnic Minahasans were is mirrored by the negative nickname “anjing Belanda” that some people of the archipelago gave to the Minahasans for siding with the Dutch. Interestingly, during the struggle for independence, Minahasa saw a transformation towards supporting the cause of independence. The differing opinions within Minahasa disappeared soon and Minahasa became a part of Indonesia.

¹ Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, *Rising radicalism, intolerance threaten Indonesia's diversity*, Jakarta Post, June 8, 2006.

The part about Minahasan culture is a vital part of the thesis as it shows in a detailed way what makes Minahasans different from other ethnic groups. Obviously, religion is one major difference between Minahasa and other parts of Indonesia. The other aspects of Minahasan culture and characteristics can partly be traced back to the colonial days, when Minahasa was heavily exposed to western influences. As the short story in the beginning of this chapter has shown, here again there are differences in terms of religion, ethnicity and its cultures and habits. The presentation about religion and rites shows that Minahasa is a rather homogenous region, unlike the main cities within it where larger minority groups can be found. The last aspect about the appearances was chosen intentionally as the last one as it is a more or less superficial characteristic. Nevertheless, it is part of today's Minahasan culture and can also be traced back to the colonial times. All in all, the observations and opinions expressed in the interviews correspond with most accounts about Minahasan culture and identity. Land, Christianity, education, westernization, language and history² are mostly stated when Minahasan culture is analysed. Therefore I am convinced that the presented ideas and findings are representatives and based on reasonable in-depth research.

The part where contemporary Minahasa is presented deals with current issues and happenings. I consider the descriptions in it very valuable mainly because they are based on recent field research and observations, so that an in-depth presentation about current issues is given. The "porn bill" case study combines a national issue with local opinions about it.

The attentive reader can see the link between the possible reasons for ethnic clashes and the accounts about Minahasa. I presented history, politics, religion and economy of Minahasa and aimed at showing whether or not there are certain inequalities as these are possible reasons for violent clashes. This is the leitmotif, the recurrent theme of this thesis. I take already existing findings and opinions and apply them with the case of Minahasa. However, as the outlook chapter has indicated, I do not

² Michael Jacobsen, *Appropriating the Global within the Local*, p.238.

want to speculate too much about the future and make any predictions. The scenarios about future politics, for example, are just presented and not too deeply assessed.

All in all, I am of the opinion that contemporary Minahasa is embedded within Indonesia. As my findings have shown, there are certain grievances and movements that aim at contesting Indonesia, but in total, Minahasa is a part of North Sulawesi which again is part of Indonesia. If there is no fundamental change in politics, this will very likely stay that way. Again, I do not want to criticize any scholars and their findings but I cannot agree when Jacobsen writes

*“The emergence of a new nation in this region might thus be in the pipeline.”*³

I am of the opinion that each researcher naturally comes up with different findings and outcomes of his/her research. A collection, assessment and comparison of all those different accounts can only be vital to finally come up with a reasonable and suitable evaluation of Minahasa and North Sulawesi.

As outlined in the Outlook chapter, I think that autonomy or federalism would be a realistic option for Minahasa and Indonesia in order to counter grievances with the centre.

Minahasa as a research subject remains very interesting, as it represents Indonesia in a small scale. I consider Minahasa a melting pot, where besides the dominating ethnic Minahasans, there are other indicators, including the tiny minority of Muslim Minahasans of “Jaton” or the fact that Manado is home to the oldest Buddhist temple in Eastern Indonesia, that support the idea of a mini scale Indonesia. Additionally, in the heartland of Minahasa one finds the so called “Bukit Kasih”, a place where religious tolerance is promoted by designating one place for all recognized religions in Indonesia. At that place, one finds a mosque, churches and places of worship for Buddhists and Hindus all next to each other.

³ Michael Jacobsen, *On the Question of Contemporary Identity in Minahasa, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia*, in “Asian Anthropology”. Vol. 1, 2002, p.54.

Therefore, I conclude that Minahasa as a different ethnic group is a typical example of Indonesia, exactly because it is so different from other ethnic groups. Indonesia is home to so many ethnic, cultural and religious groups that it is this diversity that makes Indonesia so interesting. This diversity should be considered a strength or an asset for Indonesia even though some times it appears as if it is considered a weakness or a liability⁴. I want to finish this paper with the, a little exaggerated, statement that I think Minahasa and Indonesia will continue to exist together as long as Minahasans are able and allowed to go to dinner and eat Sate Babi and RW and have a nice shot of cap tikus at the end, whether this will be under the current political system or a federal system.



⁴ Thang D. Nguyen, *The Indonesian Dream- Unity, Diversity and Democracy in Times of Distrust* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2004), p.ix.

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