The Relationships Between Papua And The Sultanate Of Tidore (As Local Content)

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ABSTRACT

Up to now, there have been tendencies, in the writing of national history, to generalize historical facts, ignoring the uniqueness in the past concerning certain particular region. Take for example, in the Indonesian history books, it is mentioned there that Papua was part of the Tidore Sultanate. In connection with cases like this, this study tried to deconstruct the relationships between Papua and the Sultanate of Tidore. It tried to prove if Papua was subjected to the Sultanate. To do this, structural approach i.e. an approach which is used to reveal past realities based on historical sources was used. The study indicates that contacts between the Sultanate and Papua took place only in the western and northern parts of Papua, and that these contacts have not necessarily indicated that the Sultanate ruled over all of Papua. The sense that the Sultanate authority was over Papua has been due to the various interpretations from each individual historian.

INTRODUCTION

An issue of Papua was one of the topics that heated debates between the Indonesian government and the Netherlands during the course of a conference in December 1946 and the Round Table Conference (Konferensi Meja Bundar - KMB) in 1949. The debate was based on the interests of each of the government in the Papua region. Generally, these claims were based on the historical relationship with the Sultanate of Tidore Papua. It seemed that either Indonesia or the Netherlands experienced haziness about the relationship between Papua and the sultanate of Tidore in the past.

Regarding political issue, the actual relation between Tidore and Papua is still vague. Were all the regions in Papua ruled by the Sultanate of Tidore? If the answer to this question is “Yes”, then why did the status of Papua lead into a heated debate between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the KMB? There are several versions about the involvement of Papua in the Sultanate of Tidore. Some reports suggest that, politically, Tidore had a total control over Papua. Meanwhile, other reports mention that the influence of Tidore was limited into several areas that were Raja Ampat, Biak, and Noemfoor.

There are several studies that revealed the relationship problems between Papua and the Moluccas. Among them are Katoppo in his book titled Perjuangan Irian Barat Merdeka (1955) and Andaya in his book titled The World of Maluku (1993). Both authors acknowledge the sovereignty of Tidore over Papua. Despite the similarities drawn in the reports written by Katoppo and Andaya on the influence of Tidore in Papua, there still remains a difference in determining to which extent the influence of Tidore was in Papua.

In addition, to determine the attitude of the Dutch government in resolving the problems in Papua, it can be traced through the writings of Justus van der Kroef. Through his work titled The West New Guinea Dispute (1958), he confirmed that most of the populations in Papua had never heard Tidore before. Moreover, an author such as van der Leeden (1980) asserts that there were socio-political relations between Tidore and Papua.
especially in Raja Ampat region. Meanwhile, other authors such as Leirissa and Lapian are still in doubt regarding what kind of political relations with Papua that the Tidore sultanate had.

The conflicting arguments cannot obviously be separated from both the government policy of the Netherlands and Indonesia. As said by Robert Bone (1952:117), the Netherlands had been running its political ambiguity in Papua at that time. The Dutch political ambiguity in Papua is often questioned regarding the vague motivation of the Dutch government’s existence in Papua.

From the description above, it appears that the writers either from Indonesia or abroad have not yet expressed the accurate relationship between Tidore and Papua. In addition, the authors’ work discussed previously, is merely descriptive, without any regard to the element of historiography – causality, except for that of Leirissa and Lapian.

Research Problems:
The status of Papua is one of the serious problems faced by the Indonesian government when it just declared its sovereignty. This issue became a heated debate between the government of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands such as that in the KMB in 1949. At that time, each party put forward arguments which were based on the understanding of the history that each held. However, there were indications that the claim, whether expressed or conveyed by both the Netherlands and Indonesia were based on political relations that occurred between the Sultanate of Tidore and Papua. In addition, the power base of Tidore in Papua, like the opinion stated by Katoppo, Andaya and van der Leden, was only partial; a small part of West Papua like Raja Ampat, Biak – Noemfoor and Onim. Meanwhile, most of the Papua regions remained untouched by the influence of the Tidore sultanate.

From the above descriptions and to facilitate the researchers, the above problems can be formulated in the form of questions as follows:

a. How was the relationship pattern between the Tidore sultanate with the local authorities in Papua?
b. Was the concept of “colonialism” expressed by the Sultanate of Tidore equal to the meaning of conquering of political, economic/trade relations, or else?

Objectives and Significance:
This study is aimed at describing:
1. The relationship pattern of the Tidore sultanate with the local authorities in Papua.
2. The meaning of the concept of colonialism of the Sultanate of Tidore in Papua.

With these objectives, it is then expected to:
Motivate professional and amateur historians to pay more attention to the writing of history in Papua, especially in relation to the political issue of the Dutch and Indonesia in Papua, so as not to cast doubt on streamlining the history of Indonesia in general and Papua in particular.

Research methods:
This research employs structural approach (Lloyd, 1993:91-100), an approach of which the aim is to understand the reality of human behavior that is rooted in certain social structure of an individual/collective agent. By studying the reality of an individual/collective (agent), the social structure (role, rule, interaction, and mentality) that is intangible (obtained from historical sources), it is expected to reveal the causal factor of the Tidore sultanate relationship with the local authorities in Papua.

Historical research steps are used to trace sources, both primary and secondary sources, which are initiated with a historical observation, criticism or data analysis testing (content analysis) and explanation of causality as the final step (Bloch, 1989:23, 24).

There are several studies that have revealed the relationship problems between Papua and the Moluccas. Among them are those written by some Indonesian writers and authors of European nationality. Indonesian writers, such as Katoppo (1984:24) and foreign authors, like Leonard Andaya (1993:101) state that the authorities in Papua recognized the sovereignty of Tidore in Papua. Based on the report from Salawati Island in 1705, the community of Misool also made contact with Tidore in a couple of years before the advent of Europeans. Despite the similarities between Katoppo and Andaya, a report on the effect of Tidore in Papua was still filled with the differences in determining to what the region of Tidore in Papua.

According to Justus van der Kroef (1958:10), most of the Papuans had never heard Tidore in their life. Kroef’s argument about Tidore’s claims on Papua aims to underline that the Sultan of Tidore ruled Papua only in some parts of the region. Kroef also said that despite the existence of Tidore in Papua, there was not any establishment of administrative area in the region.

The position of the Netherlands was also inconsistent in response to the influence of Tidore on Papua when the Dutch government supported its claim over the territory of Papua. According to the Dutch government report (Report of the Committee of New Guinea, 1950) to the Irian Commission in 1950, the sovereignty of
Tidore over Papua was not real either in administration or politics. However, the argument made by the Netherlands in 1950 was contrary to the initial recognition of Tidore sovereignty over Papua.

According to the Indonesian government to the Irian commission, the agreement between VOC and the Sultanate of Tidore in 1660 proved that VOC recognized the sovereignty of Tidore over Papua. Since 1660, the Dutch had recognized Tidore’s sovereignty over Papua. It seemed that it was just for economic reason. The Dutch aimed to maintain their monopoly over the spices in the Moluccas and used the power of the Sultanate of Tidore in Papua to protect their interests from the United Kingdom and Spain (Bone 1958:30).

The conflicting arguments obviously could not be separated from the policies of both governments. As said by Robert Bone (1952:117), the Netherlands was running their political ambiguity in Papua. The Dutch political ambiguity in Papua is often questioned by some due to the vagueness of motivation of the Dutch government in Papua. Bone also added that the Dutch government had no serious intention in carrying out any political movements in Papua. Since the beginning, the Dutch only used Papua as a tool to protect Papua from being the target of other western countries. It is further said that: Papua at the beginning of the 17th century did not produce any commercial goods beside the birds of paradise and slaves. This made the Netherlands disappointed because there was no detection of minerals that were important for the sake of the trade. Besides the poor minerals, Papua had a poor soil structure, the population was very primitive and there were difficulties in communication.

From the description above, it appears that both writers from Indonesia and abroad have not expressed accurately the form of relationship between Tidore and Papua. In addition, the authors’ works are merely descriptive without any element of historiography - causality. Therefore, there is an opportunity for us to further examine the relationship between the two regions.

**Penetration of Tidore People in West Papua:**

Before the arrival of the Europeans to Southeast Asia, particularly to Nusantara (Indonesia) in the sixteenth century, the Papuans had been in contact with other islands in the East, some of which are the kingdoms in islands of the Moluccas, particularly with three sultanates: Bacan, Ternate, and Tidore. Of these three sultanates, the Sultanate of Tidore is the one that is discussed in this paper, because through the Sultanate of Tidore VOC began to get interested in and put their power in Papua. In addition, the issue of Papua the Netherlands and Indonesia had become more complicated because of the conquest of the past Sultanate of Tidore on Papua. In respect to the relationship between the Sultanate of Tidore and Papua will further be elaborated at this section.

**The Path and Process of Early Encounters:**

Raja Ampat archipelago which is now included in Papua province is located more to the East of Gebbe island (see map in appendix) and consists of four islands, namely Waigeo, Salawati, Misool, and Waigama islands. For centuries this archipelago is an important link for trading between the North Moluccan Kingdom and Papua.

Since the second half of the 18th century, the British (EIC) also has used these islands as a marine highway towards China in moments when the waves from South China Sea were raging. Cruising was completed through the North Kalimantan and North Sulawesi (Pitt's route or Eastern Passage) (G. Miller, 1974:32.43, the Leirissa, 1996:30) In the documents that belong to VOC and the Dutch East Indies maritime, the population was also named ‘Papua’. According to observers, some of the population of these islands consisted of migrants from the coast of Papua (Biak -Numfor). Various general reports cited above did not give any information about the number of population of these islands, except General Report in 1841 which mentioned the population number was 535. (Algemeen Verslag Ternate in 1841, also see Leirissa, 1996:31)

The main archipelagic resource in Raja Ampat at that time was sago which grew in marshy places. From the economic viewpoint, Raja Ampat Islands were considered important at this time because its marine products were sea cucumbers and sea turtles.

The large demand for sea cucumbers and sea turtles caused the region to be often visited by foreign merchants from Tidore and Ternate. In addition, there were also many merchants and fishermen from South Sulawesi who came to seek sea cucumbers which were then sold to Chinese traders (Leirissa, 1987). The political relation between Raja Ampat Islands and Tidore had also been around for a long time, although the intensity was much different from the relationship between Tidore and East Halmahera (van der Leeden, 1978/79:21; Leirissa, 1996:32, 33)

**Relationship Patterns:**

When and how the political relations happened was not certain. It was suggested that the relationship was established through two stages (Kamma, 1947/1948:178, 556; see also Leirissa, 1996). The first stage was pre-VOC, the days when governmental institutions were imported from Tidore along with the ‘Raja Ampat’ myth, thus forming a system with four rulers who ruled the four islands. In addition, based on the myth from
Gurabesi (see Kamma, 1947/48), this relationship became more intense in the second stage since VOC strengthened its position in Tidore islands through various agreements made in 1660 and 1667. The agreement was related to an extirpation contract. The content of the extirpation contract covered:

1. VOC recognized the authority of the Sultanate of Tidore over the islands of Papua and its surrounding areas;
2. VOC protected Tidore, but Tidore was not an official representatives of VOC;
3. If there were clove trees planted in the islands of Papua, the trees must be destroyed;
4. The Sultan of Tidore should be able to control the activities of Papuan pirates who threatened VOC’s trading activities in the waters of the Moluccas.

This contract was essentially intended to further strengthen the trade policy of VOC in the Moluccas, namely monopoly on spices. (Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando Indicum, vol. IV and V, in Leirissa, 1994: 32; Bruyn, 1920:134)

Moreover, the main goal for VOC was to run extirpate particularly in these islands through the authority of the Sultanate of Tidore, and thus the power of Tidore became more and more embedded in Papua. Since that time, there was gradual presence of other political institutions of the island called sangajis who were the representative of the Sultanate of Tidore. (Kamma, 1947/48:181).

Power ambiguity in the documents of VOC and the Dutch East Indies was especially apparent in the liability issues of the Sultan of Tidore’s people. On the one hand, the four kings held the full power over their people although their armies were still determined by the Sultan. On the other hand, the sangajis were obliged to force the kings to do their obligations to pay tribute to the Sultan in the form of marine products, such as sea cucumbers, sea turtles, and slaves. (Kamma, 1947/48:188,189)

Another characteristic of the Raja Ampat archipelago that appeared in VOC and the Dutch East Indies’ documents were activities which were called by the Dutch authorities as pirates. (See Dissertation A.B.Lapian, UGM, 1987). In line with the activities of the pirates, Lapian added (quoting the memory of P.F. Laging Tobias’ power transition in 1879), that the relationship between Papua and the sultanate of Tidore was based on the slavery issue. Therefore, slavery was a determining factor in the process of ‘claiming’ by the sultanate of Tidore against Papua. (Lapian in Masinambow, 1984:24, 25).

Further, what actually encouraged the islanders to raid at the sea was very rarely mentioned. The Dutch officials of the liberal wing in the early 19th century, such as the Governor of the Moluccas, Pieter Merkus (1822-1828), argued that the circumstances related to the abusive power by the sultanate of Tidore, which in turn led to poverty in the Raja Ampat Islands so that the residents were forced to steal from the traders’ boat (Pieter Merkus Report, see Leirissa, 1994: 33). This opinion was already quite common among the Dutch people. Kamma, for example, who wrote articles based on the various documents of VOC and the Dutch East Indies, said the same thing. He believed that the problem lay in the tribute system that allowed the abusive power of the ruler of the Tidore sultanate (Kamma, 1947/48:184; Leirissa, 1996). At first, the kings of the Raja Ampat Islands delivered their own tribute to Tidore respectively. This was not an easy job as they had to go through the malignant sea conditions so it took a lot of energy of the scullers who had to leave their villages for a considerable period of time. But then, perhaps since the 18th century, with the permission of the VOC, it was the ruler of the kingdom of Tidore himself who picked the annual tribute to deploy the kingdom’s military officers (hongi) which were usually composed of contingents from the Central Halmahera, Gebe Island, with their leaders and the armies. According to Merkus and Kamma, it was the rulers that used the opportunity to enrich themselves by robbing people and abducting their residents to be employed as slaves. Residents who fled to the mountains were not spared, because their villages were burned. These irresponsible actions could not be prevented by the kings or the sangajis.

This situation was repeated each year so that the people experienced poverty and it was this poverty situation that, according Merkus, encouraged the raiding activities. By using fishing boats which were relatively adequate, the residents flocked across the sea to intercept the boats of the traders who were alone at the sea. The fishermen from South Sulawesi were often not able to escape from the ambush. In general, the boats were directly led by one of the kings of the islands.

The influence of Tidore on the coast of Papua, particularly around the Gulf of Berau, was more or less concerned with the condition of the means of transportation in the past. Coastal cruising system, and the movements from one island to another, causing the coast around the Gulf of Berau, for example, was highly important to be the link between the islands of Raja Ampat and East Seram.

Just like the residents of Raja Ampat, they were also called “Papua”. Tidore (and the Dutch) called the region around the Gulf of Berau as Onim. The second group was the population living in remote areas that had not been affected by the outside world; they were often called as Senonsup which may have the same definition with halefuru in Halmahera.

Political relations between Tidore and the residents of coastal Papua had long been established. Exactly when the relationship was started is still intertwined and could not be ascertained. Maybe this relationship was
established after the sultanate of Tidore put his power in Raja Ampat Islands who had already had a certain relationship with the region; especially the inhabitants of Sailolof in Salawati who had long traded with the population who lived in Sele Cape.

Through the contacts which had been put forward, the influence of Tidore started to enter Biak – Noemfoor Island. Within the process of the contact, and as a liability against the Sultanate of Tidore, the residents of Biak – Noemfoor must prepare natural products such as rosin gum, masoi skin, parrot - cendrawasih - crowned pigeon, tortoise’s shell. In return for this giving by the authorities from Papua (Biak), The Sultan of Tidore granted titles of honor which until now the titles were still used as surnames (keret/fam) such as: Kapitaraeu (Kapitan sea), Kapisa (Kapitan), Mayor, Sanadi (Sangaji), Suruan (messenger), and Urbasa (interpreters).

Another change to be encountered, besides those mentioned above, the utilization of foreign cultural objects for barter by the Biak people (there was also a connection with the shipping and trading activities of the Chinese nation). Ceramic urns and bronze, porcelain plates, silver coins, necklaces and bracelets and other jewelries also played an important role. The function and the value of these objects until now is still very important, because it has been used as dowry in the tradition of local coastal communities in some parts of the West Papua.

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