
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHEAST SULAWESI, 1906-1942

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ABSTRACT

The social movement in period of 1906-1942 started with the intervention of the Dutch colonial government to the economic income resources of the people which then triggered social chaos and unrest marked by open conflict and opposition between the Dutch and the indigenous people of South East Celebes. The collection of personal tax, the reduction of economic resources of traditional authorities such as port tax and levy, tobacco tax, export import tax, and others created instability and unrest at the level of traditional authorities as well as low class people who had been always the objects of tax. The opposition of the local people indicated the existence of strong refusal to the economic condition which was going on among the indigenous people, even when it was done by the local authorities or sultanate of Buton. So, it can be understood that the social movement was caused not only by political factors, but also by economic factors intervened by the intervention of external power.

Key Words : social movements, Dutch intervention, Southeast Sulawesi, 1906-1942, La Ode Boha

ABSTRAK

Gerakan sosial pada periode 1906-1942 berawal dari intervensi pemerintah kolonial Belanda pada sumber pendapatan ekonomi penduduk yang kemudian menimbulkan gejolak sosial yang ditandai dengan adanya penentangan dan konflik terbuka antara Belanda dan penduduk pribumi Sulawesi Tenggara. Pemungutan pajak kepala, pengurangan lahan ekonomi penguasa tradisional seperti pajak/bea pelabuhan, cukai tembakau, pajak ekspor impor, dan sebagainya telah menimbulkan keresahan baik pada tingkat penguasa tradisional maupun pada tingkat rakyat bawah yang senantiasa menjadi objek pajak. Perlawanan penduduk lokal itu menunjukkan adanya penolakan yang kuat terhadap eksistensi ekonomi yang telah berlangsung pada tingkat pribumi, meskipun dilakukan oleh penguasa setempat (kesultanan) Buton sekalipun. Dengan demikian, dapat dipahami bahwa gerakan sosial terjadi bukan hanya disebabkan oleh faktor politik tetapi juga karena faktor ekonomi yang terganggu oleh intervensi kekuasaan dari luar.

Kata Kunci: gerakan sosial, intervensi Belanda, Sulawesi Tenggara, 1906-1942, La Ode Boha

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INTRODUCTION

Political movements that occurred in the beginning of the 20th Century in some regions in Indonesia were closely related to earlier situations and conditions. Some of these were World War I and the chaos of the world economy, which led to the Great Depression of the 1930s.¹

At the same time, European countries with colonies, such as the Dutch who occupied Indonesia, tried to optimize their colonies to fulfill their necessities, such as state finance through economy exploitation and taxation in many sectors. These efforts were undertaken without any consideration concerning the condition of the people in the colony. Personal taxation, the decrease of the economic area of the traditional reign, such as port taxes, the tobacco tax, the export import tax, etc., caused discomfort to both the traditional rulers and the people as the object of the taxation. In result, efforts were undertaken by the Dutch in order to fulfill their necessities and to recover from financial problems.

This paper analyzes why social movements occurred in Southeast Sulawesi between 1906-1942. Moreover, this paper also discusses the process of these social movements and their significance.

DUTCH INTERVENTION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movement as a collective activity aims to reject changes in society through radical or revolutionary ways. Social movements' dynamics are defined by collective acts marked by a demand to change legislation via political revolution.² Locally, social movements are commonly conducted to decrease the power of a new source of intervention that forces change upon an existing society. This pattern of these movements is usually evident in areas where an outside power is forcing its will upon the local populace.

The relation between the local society and a foreign power, especially the Dutch in Southeast Sulawesi, can be seen from two different points of view, that of the Dutch as

well as that of the local society. The intentions of the Dutch were to become involved in the existing local government structure as a means to take control of essential economical resources in the region. The Dutch forced policies upon the locals to reach their goals, such as changing the social system of the local elites (*pribumi*) and interfering in the division of regional-level administration, which had already been determined by the local power.

The creation of the *afdeeling* area through to the lowest structure, or *onderdistrik*, evidences how the Dutch forced their policies upon local society.³ The personal tax and other taxes caused some troubles for the people since they were not accustomed to tax and monetary systems. On the local level, as in Buton, this force caused some conflicts. The promotion of new authorities, such as district heads, was considered as a threat and a disturbance, as was the requirement of tax payments, as applied by the Dutch to any new region they occupied, which were considered too high.⁴ In the matter of interfering in local power, the Dutch sometimes eliminated traditional institutions that had an authority to manage the local people and had been acknowledged by the people as a legal institution. The elimination of some local institutions as a part of the Dutch intervention in maintaining their power were always answered by protests from society, although in the end the locals were compelled to accept these changes.

The *pribumi* challenged the Dutch for policies made during their reign in Indonesia, whether they were economical or political. The taxations and the obligation that farmers plant only for export and undertake other physical work was always met with encounters from the local people who felt forced by these policies.⁵ The political policy to eliminate the Moslem community, which always presented an interference to the Dutch in carrying out their activities and applying their policies, raised concern from the Dutch government.⁶ The Aceh Case (The War for the Way of Allah), as written

by Ibrahim Alfian, and the case of the rebellion of the Banten farmers, as written by Sartono Kartodirjo, are examples of 19th Century encounters with Dutch policies. Another case was the Diponegoro encounter in Central Java and the Paderi Movement in West Sumatra.

Some of the aforementioned encounters with the local antagonists encouraged the Dutch to conduct a more intensive investigation of these events. One of the efforts was to promote a European advisor for problems concerning the local elites.⁷ In result, the Dutch could easily eliminate some movements that were intended to oppose their rule. The Paderi war in West Sumatra and the Aceh war are good examples of when the adat (traditional) class was helped to eliminate the religious class, while the Acehnese Ulee Balang could win the competition and the conflict after being supported by the Dutch in the matter of economic competition.⁸ The Dutch support to one class was a part of their economical politics to keep Indonesia as a productive area in order to maintain their economic interests.

Regions with a strong Islamic base, such as Buton, had always been a matter of Dutch concern due to the fact that these regions were considered disruptive to the economic activities and the policies made by the Dutch for the natives. Moreover, the tax policy was always challenged by the people resulting in the Dutch establishing another policy to eliminate the local opposition.

The social movements that occurred in Southeast Sulawesi began when the Dutch placed a military detachment in Buton. The people of Buton did not agree to it and conducted an encounter that resulted in the Dutch answering with a policy to eliminate it. The situation turned chaotic and the people rejected the power of Sultan Muhammad Umar (1885-1904) who was considered to be on the side of the Dutch. Local authorities and their subjects showed their displeasure with the policies and were hostile to the Dutch. In result, the Dutch repeatedly forced the people of Buton into submission and into signing several agreements.

The people of Buton continued to reject the policies until preparations for war were initiated by the construction of a fort in several areas outside Buton, such as on Kaledupa Island and the East Coast of Buton (Wasuempa) as well as other areas. Additional social acts also occurred when the governor of Sulawesi visited Buton. There was no welcome party, nor did he receive the people's sympathies. At that time, the Sultan actually was acting at the behest of the nobles in the region who were advocating for the wishes of the people. However, the Dutch had the power to force the people of Buton to obey all the colonial policies as even the Sultan was sentenced to pay fines for an infraction committed in February 1907.⁹

Another example of Dutch intervention occurred on March 21, 1889. The Dutch had prevented exporting and importing for war needs, and then following the war, subsequently levied an export-import tax and port tax.¹⁰ Government decree number 25 dated January 25, 1909, consisted of a f4.200 compensation payment for the export-import monopoly and a f 1.500 compensation payment for opium backdated to 1907.¹¹ These compensation payments only targeted the kingdom authorities. Due to such Dutch interventions, the movement against Dutch policies emerged. In accordance with the Dutch government policy concerning taxation, in 1911, they also forced Buton to pay a tax for crops and continued with the *soesoeng romang* and *sima assaparang atuwong* (personal taxes) on November 20, 1912.¹²

RESISTANCE AND THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH SULAWESI

The Dutch policy to impose taxes on its colonies resulted in certain effects. The effect of the taxation of 1911 led to the La Ode Boha Movement, which had an economic motive. The movement was a form of resistance to the tax in Warurama, Buton. This movement happened in 1907 when the Dutch conducted a registration of area residents in August of that year.¹³ This registration had the eventual aim of forcing the

people to pay the personal tax. La Ode Boha and his social group did not agree with the registration and refused to pay the tax (*belasting*). Moreover, residents would not submit to the Dutch policies in the area.

The La Ode Boha Movement had warned the Buton *Syarat* council not to come to Waruruma to impose the tax for the Dutch. They only acknowledged the traditional tax called *weti*, a zone tax, not a personal tax, levied at the Sultanate level. They suggested representatives of the Dutch colonial government should personally oversee the imposition of the tax if they wanted it to take effect.

The Dutch tried to eliminate the resistance of La Ode Boha and his group by boarding a boat to Waruruma. On August 10, 1911, the Dutch conducted an offensive against Waruruma village in the kampong of Kaesabu. Together with 150 men in his group, La Ode Boha approached the Dutch boat to fight them. The group's offensive was easily eliminated by the Dutch resulting in the arrest of group members and other La Ode Boha followers who were later exiled to Java. La Ode Boha died from gunshot wounds and his corpse was released to his family in Buton.¹⁴

The victims from the tragedy numbered thirty-one dead and sixteen injured. The La Ode Boha followers who escaped ran to the nearest forest. Meanwhile, King Lambelu, the brother of the Sultan of Buton, Muhammad Asyikin, moved to Kaledupa and left a message to the Sultan, which stated, "The asset in being occupied is *kamentara* [patience]."¹⁵ One of the Movement's followers named La Ode Sijaal died in the struggle while two other followers, La Ode Amane Yarone Lembelu and Ma Zaal were arrested.¹⁶

A similar movement motivated by taxation also occurred in Tiworo. In 1914, the La Ode Ebo Movement resulted in the murder of the head of Tiworo district, La Ra-Aeta.¹⁷ This movement happened in Kambara village as the result of increasing taxation forced upon the people by the head of the district, La Ra-Aeta. At the same time, a Dutch officer in Kaledupa

district named Rumagi was killed in 1914. With the involvement of the head of Kaledupa district named La Ode Rawa, he was stabbed by La Ode Manisuru. La Ode Rawa was then exiled to Bulukumba, South Sulawesi until the end of his days.

In 1941, in the Wanci district, on one of the Tukang Besi islands, the district head named La Ode Musa was murdered. The motive was similar to other movements in Southeast Sulawesi, namely, the peoples' opposition to high taxation. It can be said that all the movements in Southeast Sulawesi were similar to other social movements in Indonesia in that they lacked a person who could replace the movements' main leader should the leader be killed in battle. The pattern of the movements' reliance on a key group that did not involve all the citizenry as well as the fact that the people were separated into pro and contra factions had the tendency to make these movements weak and fragile. Moreover, superior battle technology possessed by the Dutch became a supporting factor to their victories. As a result, the policy of maintaining Dutch power continued in Southeast Sulawesi and other regions in Indonesia.

Holy wars especially by Moslems, (*perang sabil, jihad fi sabilillah*) in Java in the 19th Century were wars against *kafir* (unbelievers) waged by farmers, led by the religious elite. These movements were based upon a messianistic ideology that promised a better life under the reign of a just king (*ratu adil*). They aimed to continue the resurrection of Islam as inspired by the *wahabi* movement in the Middle East as well as movements led by the natives in their fight against non-native power. Their leaders were clergy or haji whom the Dutch disparaged as "Religious Fanatics."¹⁸

In the beginning of the 20th Century, two movements in Southeast Sulawesi followed this pattern. The movements that used the ideology of messianism and millenarianism and also the spirit of jihad were the Abdul Rahman movement, which fought for Pan-Islamism in Southeast Sulawesi and the Poeloenoi movement, which

desired to re-stabilize the unity of the territories of South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi based on the spirit of Sawerigading.

The Haji Abdul Rahman movement took place in a Bugis kampong *Onder Afdeling* in Kendari in 1915. The movement received the blessing of the Turkish government as a fight against the Dutch unbelievers who ruled over Southeast Sulawesi.¹⁹ Haji Abdul Rahman ordered the people to quickly prepare their arms, while the Turkish government readied to replace the Dutch who were to be driven from Indonesia. This movement, which extended to Poleang, was marked by the raise of Islamic activities. In order to get the people's sympathy, Haji Abdul Rahman circumcised the King of Poleang and continued with the circumcisions of 135 additional people in the area beginning in Salabangka and continuing along the length of Kendari beach. Before fighting the Dutch, Haji Abdul Rahman was arrested in Boepinang, an area in Poleang.²⁰

The Poeloenoi Movement occurred in 1915 in Andounohu district in the *Onderafdeling* area of Kendari.²¹ In his movement, Poeloenoi admitted himself as an heir of Sawerigading, the ancestor of all tribes in Central Sulawesi, East Sulawesi and even South Sulawesi.²² They fought as a group and used cannons as a weapon to honor their religious leaders and as a tool to frighten those who did not join the group. The chief objective was actually to block and to fight the Dutch patrols. Villagers who did not immediately submit to the movement were eventually pushed into agreeing to join them. On August 13, 1915, the Dutch military fought the Poeloenoi Movement. While some managed to escape, this incident led to the arrests of thirty Poeloenoi members.

Difficult battlefield conditions faced by the Dutch military forces compelled them to wait for further developments and to continue their observations of the Poeloenoi group's activities. Finally, on September 11, 1915, the defensive base of Abdul Rahman was discovered to be located on Baito Mountain. Armed contact was unavoidable and resulted in the escape of the

Poeloenoi group, although fourteen died and three were injured. The victims were left behind. Victims who were arrested numbered four men together with twenty-three women and children. Although he was injured, Poeloenoi himself escaped. Following a lengthy pursuit, Poeloenoi was finally caught together with his followers in October 1915 by the patrol and local supporters of the Dutch.²³

Another movement fought against the Dutch in Buton came from La Ode Manoe and La Ode Wantja who had tried to avoid paying the tax and participating in the obligatory labor for years and encouraged the people to fight against the sultanate government and the Dutch. At that time, their movement became known to the Dutch government and later the actors behind the movement were arrested. Members of the Matalagi Movement in the Laporo kampong in the Pasarwajo district of Buton in 1916 murdered the district head, a man named La Ode Sambera. La Ode Sambera was murdered in March 1916 after his house had been burned down by the people of Laporo. Several disturbances that occurred during the period propelled the Dutch to eliminate them. In result the Dutch arrested sixteen men. Matalagi and his group could not be caught, however, and were chased throughout Buton.

In July 1916, the head of the Gu and Mawasangka districts together with the Dutch army caught all the rebel groups. Meanwhile, three Matalagi followers, La Ode Ali, La Ode Samanuru and La Ode Ami spread the word throughout Wanci Island at the end of April that the people did not have to follow the order of the district head. This movement was halted by the head of the Wanci district. Later on June 20, 1916, the Matalagi Movement's leaders were finally arrested and handed to the Dutch government.²⁴

The movements opposing Dutch policies in Buton were triggered by an individual from outside Southeast Sulawesi, specifically from the Kingdom of Bone, based on the relationship between Andi Pabenteng and the Buton leaders since 1905. In the same year, the Bone people

fought against the Dutch in incursions such as the La Pawawoi Karaeng Sigeri Movement in 1905. Andi Pabenteng himself, as one of the leaders of the movement, fled to Buton and later in 1913, together with Andi Mappatola, ran to Kendari, Selayar and Kolaka, before returning to Buton.²⁵

CONCLUSION

Social movements in Southeast Sulawesi occurred due to the intervention of a foreign power that endeavored to change the well-established social order. The Dutch had tried to force a new structure upon the people of Southeast Sulawesi without paying heed to the culture that already existed, leading to resistance that took the form of the movements described above.

Between 1906 and 1942 social movements in Southeast Sulawesi were characterized by anti-colonial struggles led by the people. These struggles took the shape of formal wars, guerrilla movements, and were also waged at the bargaining table. Open warfare in Buton, Wanci, and Lasalimu occurred because the Dutch did not want to compromise with the *pribumi* leaders who previously dominated and controlled Southeast Sulawesi's economic resources. The Dutch felt that their agreement with the Sultan of Buton was already sufficient and all local leaders within the Sultanate must adhere to it. In fact, the opposite of this assumption was true. The local leaders were unwilling to acquiesce so easily, until the occurrence of anti-colonial movements became unavoidable. Armed struggle became the only way for the local people to resist the Dutch, however, victory ultimately would be in the hands of the Europeans.

The dynamics of short-term social movements did not have any significant effects upon the financial condition of the Dutch in contrast to funds spent to counter the Diponegoro war, Paderi war, and the War of Aceh. In comparison, social movements in Southeast Sulawesi were a temporary occurrence. This is due to the fact that the movements were not well planned and the

economic structure that supported them was not strong. The technology and the war strategies of the people who fought against the Dutch policies could not meet the level of what the Europeans possessed. Of note, however, is the fact that the movements did survive for at least a while due to the territorial advantage on the battlefield possessed by members of the local society.

From this framework, it is clear that the social movements analyzed above occurred not only due to political factors but also due to disruptions to the local economy. This analysis of social movements in Southeast Sulawesi distinctly shows that interventions by the Dutch that forced the people to pay taxes and the takeover of the traditional power's economic operations caused resistance both from the people and the local leaders. Meanwhile, Dutch interventions into the local power structure, for example in the election of royal authorities, apparently did not have any significant effects upon the area's social movements.

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2. Angus Madison, "Kolonialisme Belanda di Indonesia: Suatu Perspektif Perbandingan" in Anne Both et., al., *Sejarah Ekonomi Indonesia*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988), p. 435-453.
3. Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dalam Metodologi Sejarah* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1992), p. 158; see also: Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pergerakan Sosial dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Speech presented at the 18th Anniversary of UGM on December 19, 1967. See also *Lembaran Sejarah*, number 7, June 1971, p. 38.
4. In the outer islands, the *afdeeling* area was equivalent to the Javanese *Karesidenan*.
5. Similar cases happened frequently in some regions in Java such as Banten, Jogjakarta, Pekalongan and Surakarta. See Suhartono, *Apanage dan Bekel: Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Surakarta 1930-1920* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1991).

- ⁶ Physical forced labor included the building of roads, clearing forests for plantation use, forest exploitation, illegal logging, etc.
- ⁷ Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES., 1990), p. 25-31.
- ⁸ One of these advisors was Snouck Hurgronje who worked for the Dutch Kingdom for seventeen years and handled problems concerning the natives (*Adviseur voor Inlandsche Zaken*).
- ⁹ M.G. Ismail, "Seuneuck Lada, Ulee Balang, dan Kompeni, Perkembangan Sosial Ekonomi di Daerah Batas Aceh Timur, 1840-1942". (Leiden: Academisch Proefschrift de Rijksuniversiteit, 1991). See also; Bambang Purwanto, "Merajut Jaringan di Tengah Perubahan: Komunitas Ekonomi Muslim di Indonesia pada Masa Kolonial", *Lembaran Sejarah, Vol 2 No. 2*, (Yogyakarta: History Department, faculty of Letters, Gajah Mada University, 2000) p. 49.
- ¹⁰ E.B. Kielstra, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
- ¹¹ Besluit number 4 dated June 19, 1906, concerning the takeover of imposing the port and shipping tax in Southeast Sulawesi; *Missive Gouvernements Secretaris (MGS) dated October 23, 1905 number 3650*.
- ¹² D.G. Stibbe en F.J.W.H. Sandbergen, *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie Tweede Druk* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1935), p. 108.
- ¹³ A.M. Zahari, *Sejarah dan Adat Fiy Darul Butuni (Buton)* Volume III, (Jakarta: Depdikbud, 1977), p. 99.
- ¹⁴ A.J.L. Couvers, *Memorie van Overgave (MVO) Gouvernement Celebes en Onderhoorigheden June 1924-june 1929*, (Leiden: Kolektie Korn. Or. 435 No. 71 Bibliotheek KJLJU.), p. 154.
- ¹⁵ Husein A. Chalik, et. al., *Sejarah Perlawanan terhadap Imperialisme dan Kolonialisme di Daerah Sulawesi Tenggara*, (Jakarta: Depdikbud, Direktorat Jarahnitra, 1983/1984), p. 20-28.
- ¹⁶ Laode Zaenu, *Buton dalam Sejarah Kebudayaan; Ringkasan Kejadian-Kejadian Penting Masa Raja-raja/Sultan-Sultan* (Surabaya: Suradipa, 1984), p. 120.
- ¹⁷ Husein A. Chalik *loc. cit.*, p. 24.
- ¹⁸ A.M. Zahari, III, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
- ¹⁹ Kuntowijoyo, "Agama, Negara dan Formasi Sosial," *Prisma* 8, 1984, p.42; Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movement in Rural Java* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.8-9; Sartono Kartodirdjo et.al., *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* (Jakarta: Depdikbud., 1975), p. 248.
- ²⁰ *Koloniaal Verslag (KV)*, 1916 hoofdstuk C, p. 32.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Husein A. Chalik et.al., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
- ²³ According to a folktale of Southeast Sulawesi, Sawerigading was the community base for the government in Buton (Ambuau Lasalimu) in Muna, in Kendari and in Luwu, South Sulawesi, R.A. Kern, *I La Galigo* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1989), p. 200-201; Abdurrauf Tarimana, "Sawerigading Sebagai Tokoh Legendaris Versi Sulawesi Tenggara," in: Mattulada et.al., *Sawerigading Folktales Sulawesi* (Jakarta: Depdikbud., 1990), p. 574.
- ²⁴ *Koloniaal Verslag, loc. Cit.*
- ²⁵ *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1917, hoofdstok C, p. 32.
- ²⁶ Willen Ijzereef, *De Wind en de Bladeren, Hierarchie en Autonomie in Bone en Polobangkeng, 1850-1950 (Doctoral Dissertation on Wilhelmus Theodorus Ijzereef, dated January 13, 1955)*, p. 73 and 142.

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