

## RINGKASAN DISERTASI

# INTERGROUP CONTACT AVOIDANCE IN INDONESIA

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### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara identifikasi etno-religius dan perilaku menghindari interaksi antarkelompok, antara Muslim dan Kristen di Ambon dan Yogyakarta, dengan mempertimbangkan faktor-faktor pada tingkat individu. Selain itu, studi ini juga dimaksudkan untuk mengisi kesenjangan dalam literatur antara studi yang menekankan kontestasi ekonomi dan politik sebagai sumber utama konflik dan studi yang berfokus pada prasangka dan diskriminasi sebagai penyebab konflik. Terakhir, penelitian ini difokuskan pada menguji teori konflik etnis yang relevan dengan analisis konflik etnik-agama di negara-negara Barat pada konteks Asia Tenggara. Pertanyaan penelitian studi ini adalah sejauh mana hubungan antara identifikasi etnik-religius di antara komunitas Muslim dan Kristiani di Ambon dan Yogyakarta dengan perilaku mereka menghindari interaksi antarkelompok etnik-religius dengan mempertimbangkan faktor-faktor individu, seperti perceived threat, religious pluralism, perceived discrimination, dan kontak antarkelompok serta memori kekerasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan mix method untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data. Metode pengumpulan data termasuk survei, wawancara, studi literatur, dan observasi. Survei dilakukan di kalangan mahasiswa tingkat sarjana dengan minimal tahun kedua di enam universitas di Ambon dan Yogyakarta.*

**Kata kunci:** *perilaku menghindari interaksi, identifikasi etno-religius, perasaan terancam, pluralism keagamaan*

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between ethno-religious identification and the avoidance of intergroup contact between Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta with considering individual factors. Also, this study aims to fill the gap in literature between studies that emphasize economic and political contestation as the main sources of conflict and studies that focus on prejudice and discrimination as the causes of conflict. Lastly, this study focuses on examining ethnic group conflict theory, which is relevant to the analysis of ethno-religious conflicts in Western countries. The central research question is to what extent is there a relationship between ethno-religious identification among Christians and Muslims in Ambon and Yogyakarta, and avoidance of intergroup contact considering other individual-level determinants and particular intermediate determinants (salience of identity, perceived threats, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, attitudes toward religious plurality, interpretation of sacred writing, perceived discrimination, individual memory of violence, nationalistic attitudes, distrust, and social dominance orientation). I use both qualitative and quantitative methods as approaches to gathering and analysing data to support this study. The data collection methods included surveys, interviews, literature studies, and observations. Surveys were conducted among students at the undergraduate level with a minimum of second year standing from six universities in Ambon and Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** contact avoidance, ethno-religious identification, perceived-threat, religious pluralism

## INTRODUCTION

The general objective of this study was to find out about the relationship between ethno-religious identification and the avoidance of intergroup contact between Muslims and Christians in two regions in Indonesia, Ambon and Yogyakarta, with considering some of the individual factors. Following Tajfel's concept of social identity (1978b, 63), we define ethno-religious identification as part of a self-concept that is built based on the knowledge of membership of a social group and the simultaneous attribution of emotional's value and significance attached to that membership. Referring to Phinney and Rotheram (1987, 14), we can further define this concept as an individual's sense of belonging to an ethno-religious group, including their perceptions, feelings, behaviours, and attitudes related to their ethno-religious affiliation. Avoidance of intergroup contact is the degree to which people evade to interact with out-group members, rooted in cognitive and emotional distance from these out-groups. We have endeavoured to observe avoidance of intergroup contact with three indicators, such as contact avoidance of official and intimate out-group persons, avoidance of out-group members as future spouses, and support for residential segregation (cf. Bogardus, 1925a; Sterkens, 2009, 6). In this study, we have investigated the relationship of ethno-religious identification with intergroup contact avoidance at the individual level, including individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours related to religious in-groups and out-groups.

This study also addresses a gap in the literature between studies that emphasize economic and political competition as main sources of conflict and studies that focus on prejudice and discrimination as causes of conflict. As mentioned before, previous studies on conflict tend to focus predominantly on actual competition as a source of intergroup conflict or on prejudice and discrimination (Green & Seher, 2003, 510). According to Adam (2010, 43), empirical studies on how individuals support conflicts and hostilities are unsatisfactory because they discuss very limited aspects of the problem. This study focuses on the individual level to provide an empirical

perspective on latent conflicts which refer to the less explicit and unintended consequences of disputed relationships. In contrast with studies on contextual levels, this research explores on how people's ethnic and religious identities play a role in their support of exclusionary reactions against religious out-groups. We focus on the role of ethno-religious identification in latent conflict at the individual level, controlling for other personal characteristics and several intermediate determinants derived from well-developed theories, such as perceived threat, salience of ethnic identity, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, pluralism, monism, regiocentrism, and distrust.

In studying ethno-religious conflict in Indonesia, this study aims to examine ethnic group conflict theory, which is relevant to the analysis of ethno-religious conflicts in Western countries. This theory postulates that the social context of actual interethnic competition may foster stronger perceived ethnic threat, inducing the mechanisms of social (contra-) identification, which in turn contribute to stronger nationalist attitudes and exclusionary reactions (Gijssberts et al., 2004, 18). Many studies use this theory to explain the support for exclusionary reactions against minority ethnic groups in Europe, such as Scheepers et al., (2002), Coenders et al., (2007), Tolsma et al., (2008), and Savelkoul et al., (2010). Where those studies provide strong evidence on the significance of actual competition and group identities in exclusionary attitudes, this study uses the theory of ethnic group conflict to analyze intergroup contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians in the cities of Ambon and Yogyakarta in Indonesia. We also utilize several theoretical propositions from other theories as intermediate determinants between different measures of ethno-religious identification and exclusionary attitudes, which will be described in section 6.3. These intermediate determinants are salience of identity, perceived threat, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, attitudes towards religious plurality, interpretation of sacred writing, perceived discrimination, memory of violence, nationalistic attitudes, distrust, and social dominance orientation.

## CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

As mentioned above, the research questions for this study consist of descriptive and explanatory questions at the individual level.

### Descriptive Questions

This study originated four descriptive questions in order to find out how and to what extent ethno-religious identifications and avoidance of intergroup contact are present amongst Muslim and Christian respondents in Ambon and Yogyakarta. Also, we describe how Muslim and Christian respondents in both cities express ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact in their daily lives. The complete descriptive research questions are as follows:

*“To what extent is ethno-religious identification present among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta?”* (Question 1a)

*“To what extent is avoidance of intergroup contact present among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta?”* (Question 1b)

*“In which ways is ethno-religious identification among Muslims and Christians observable in their daily lives?”* (Question 1c)

*“In which ways is avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians observable in their daily lives?”* (Question 1d)

### Explanatory questions

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Gijssberts et al., 2004), this study focuses on how ethno-religious identification is related to avoidance of intergroup contact. Thus, the first explanatory question is:

*“To what extent is there a relationship between ethno-religious identification among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta and avoidance of intergroup contact?”* (Question 2a)

In line with ethnic group conflict theory, we also developed a question that examines whether the influence of ethno-religious identification on avoidance of intergroup contact varies according to individual determinants, such as gender,

parents' religion, household income, parents' education, occupation, and occupational status. Therefore, the second explanatory question is:

*“To what extent is there a relationship between ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians in Ambon, considering individual determinants such as gender, parents' religion, household income, parents' education, occupation and occupational status?”* (Question 2b)

The last question we proposed is how ethno-religious identification influences the avoidance of intergroup contact, considering particular intermediate determinants, such as salience of identity, perceived threat, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, attitudes toward religious plurality, interpretation of sacred writing, perceived discrimination, experience of violence, nationalistic attitudes, distrust, and social dominance orientation. Hence, the third explanatory question is formulated as follows:

*“To what extent can we explain the relationship between ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta with particular intermediate determinants such as salience of identity, perceived threat, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, attitudes toward religious plurality, interpretation of sacred writing, perceived discrimination, experience of violence, nationalistic attitudes, distrust, and social dominance orientation?”* (Question 2c)

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Here we describe the empirical analysis to both descriptive and explanatory questions based on our descriptive and multivariate analyses.

### Question 1a: “To what extent is ethno-religious identification present among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta?”

From the results of the survey, we find high levels of religious identification among Muslim respondents, demonstrated by their participation in religious practices, which we define as frequency of praying, attending religious services, and reading the Holy Scriptures. Most Muslims surveyed pray several times a day, almost half of them go to the mosque more than once a week,

and a little over half of those surveyed read the Quran more than once a week. Moreover, Muslim respondents show high levels of religious identification indicated by their levels of friendship by religion and participation in religious ceremonies. Almost all of their friends are from the same religion, nevertheless they have some religious out-group friends. The Muslims surveyed also frequently attend religious ceremonies, including rites of passage and collective rites. We find a similar pattern among Christian respondents, a high level of religious practices and having more religious in-group friends and fewer religious out-group friends. Most Christians surveyed pray several times a day, almost half of them go to church more than once a week, and a little over half of those surveyed read the Bible once a day. Also, Christian respondents show high levels of religious identification indicated by the level of attendance at religious ceremonies. In general, religious identification is strong among both Muslim and Christian respondents.

Besides religious identification, our research also addresses ethnic self-definition and ethnic identification. Ethnic self-definition refers to respondents' statements that they consider themselves to be a member of a specific ethnicity (for example, Javanese or Ambonese). Muslim respondents state that they are Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Ambonese or Butonese as well as members of some additional, smaller ethnic groups. A little less than half of the Muslim respondents surveyed are Javanese and almost one-third of them are Ambonese. There were no Muslim respondents identifying as Toraja and Minahasa. Christian respondents identified themselves as Ambonese, Javanese, Chinese, Batak, Toraja, and some other smaller ethnicities. More than half of the Christian respondents identified themselves as Ambonese, with the remainder identifying as Javanese, Chinese, Batak, and some other ethnicities. There were no Christian respondents who identified as Madurese, Minangkabau, Buginese, or Butonese. We combined ethnicity and religion in ethno-religious self-definition because of the considerable overlap. The overwhelming majority (if not all) members of a specific ethnicity in our samples of students are also members of a specific religious group.

With respect to ethnic identification among Muslim respondents, our survey results reveal that they rarely use their ethnic languages, and only within their families. Muslim respondents participate frequently in only a few kind of ethnic ceremonies, particularly wedding and funeral ceremonies. In addition, differences between mean scores indicate that Muslim respondents have many friends from the same ethnicity. Similarly, Christian respondents reported low levels of ethnic language use, infrequent participation in ethnic ceremonies, and many ethnic in-group friends. In general, this indicates lower levels of ethnic identification compared to religious identification among our both Muslim and Christian respondents.

Significant differences between Muslim and Christian respondents in regards to religious and ethnic identification can be observed from the mean values. Muslim respondents tend to participate in collective rites more often, and have more friends from the same religion, than Christian respondents. In contrast, Christian respondents are more likely to participate in rites of passage and have more friends from different religions than Muslim respondents. Moreover, Muslim respondents tend to attend ethnic ceremonies and use ethnic languages more often than Christian respondents. Compared to Muslim respondents, Christian respondents have more friends from the same ethnicity, both in Ambon and in Yogyakarta. In addition, regional differences can be observed. Both Muslim and Christian respondents in Ambon show higher levels of religious identification and lower levels of ethnic identification than respondents in Yogyakarta.

#### **Question 1b: "To what extent is avoidance of intergroup contact present among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta?"**

As was previously mentioned, avoidance of intergroup contact consists of contact avoidance, avoidance of future spouses from another religion, and the support for residential segregation.

In assessing contact avoidance, a distinction can be made between relationships with 'official people' (mayor, police officers, and civil servants),

and ‘intimate people’ (classmates, neighbours, board mates, and close friends). We have tested a set of indicators of contact avoidance, which resulted in valid and reliable measurements. The measurement we used to assess contact avoidance employs a ranking order from the most avoided subjects to the most accepted subjects. We observed that most Muslims are likely to avoid having a Christian mayor. Next, many Muslim respondents are reluctant to have Christians as their board mates and close friends. Only a few Muslim respondents do not accept Christians as their neighbours, policemen, civil servants, and classmates. Most Christian respondents indicated they would prefer not to have a Muslim mayor. Christian respondents also indicated that they are reluctant to have Muslims serving as policemen and civil servants. Only a few Christian respondents do not accept Muslims as their close friends, board mates, neighbours, and classmates.

The survey results also show that most Muslim respondents in both Yogyakarta and Ambon do not accept people from different religions as possible future spouses and they do not want to live in a neighbourhood inhabited by people from other religions. Christian respondents in both cities demonstrated a similar pattern, a high level of avoidance of future spouses from a different religion and support for residential segregation.

Overall, the level of contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians is fairly low in our samples of students in Ambon and Yogyakarta, but the level of avoidance of future spouse however is relatively high. Total mean scores of contact avoidance and avoidance of future spouse are .11 and .64 respectively (Likert scale between zero and one). The level of support for residential segregation is moderate with a total mean score of .33. Still, there are significant differences between the two religions with Muslim respondents showing higher level of contact avoidance. Also, in both cities, Muslim respondents generally show higher levels of contact avoidance of future spouses from a different religion, and support for residential segregation, than Christians. These phenomena show that there are several barriers to contact between Muslims and Christians. Our respondents mentioned that differences in religion,

values, and attitudes are barriers to interreligious contact.

As was the case with ethno-religious identification, we discovered significant regional differences in patterns of contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians. Survey data indicates that Muslim respondents in Ambon are more likely to avoid contact with Christians compared with those in Yogyakarta. Similarly, Muslim respondents in Ambon have a higher preference for living in religiously homogenous neighbourhoods than Muslims in Yogyakarta. Compared to Muslim respondents in Ambon, Muslim respondents in Yogyakarta are more likely to avoid Christians and having future spouses from other religions. A similar pattern is apparent for Christian respondents in Ambon who avoid contact with Muslims and avoid Muslims as their possible future spouses. In addition, Christians in Ambon show more support for residential segregation than those in Yogyakarta. The prolonged rivalry between Muslims and Christians, and the recent violence in Ambon in 2011, apparently affected the answers of respondents in that region. Overall, Muslim and Christian respondents in Ambon have higher levels of intergroup contact avoidance than respondents in Yogyakarta.

### **Question 1c: “In which ways is ethno-religious identification among Muslims and Christians observable in their daily lives?”**

Findings from the interviews we conducted help to confirm the data from survey results, adding to observations on religious identification among Muslim and Christian respondents in their daily lives by documenting their religious practice, participation in religious ceremonies, and the religious identities of their friends. In the interviews, we found that Muslim respondents attend Friday prayers at mosques that are located inside or around campus, celebrate several religious ceremonies (including fasting and Eid Mubarak (*Idul Fitri* and *Idul Adha*)), perform collective religious services at campus preaching institutes (for example *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*, LDK), recite the Quran in the evenings, and pray before starting an activity. Most Christian respondents attend weekly mass on Sunday at churches that

are located inside or around campus, celebrate some religious ceremonies (including Christmas, Easter, and baptisms), pray collectively on campus, recite the Bible in the morning, and pray before doing something. Students' patterns of interaction on campus could serve as an indicator of their religious identification. In reality, however, many institutes of higher education in Indonesia are affiliated with a religious tradition or even a particular religious denomination, which means that there is little or no opportunity to interact with people outside of a student's religious group.

Findings from interviews were also used to support survey data on how Muslims and Christians use local languages, maintain friendships with people of the same ethnicity, and view attendance at ethnic ceremonies (like funerals and weddings) as expressions of their ethnic identification in daily life. The responses we gathered in interviews provided additional information about the processes of ethnic identification in both regions. Despite the fact that several kinds of ethnic ceremony are still practiced in Ambon and Yogyakarta, these ceremonies are often mixed with religious ceremonies. Interviewees indicated that religious groups in both regions, especially those in more urban areas, have abandoned such ethnic ceremonies and now only attend religious ceremonies, with the exception of weddings and funerals. In addition, quite a few respondents reported that they make use of their ethnic identities in pursuit of profitable interactions with people who share the same ethnic identification. Moreover, many respondents no longer affiliate with their ethnic traditions and rituals or ethnic ceremonies due to the influence of stricter or more conservative religious values.

No additional dimensions of ethnic and religious identification emerged in our interviews that were not covered by the survey findings. However, interviews did provide some contrast to sections of the survey findings. For instance, the survey data indicate that few respondents are members of religious and ethnic organizations, while in interviews many respondents reported that many students become members or followers of these kinds of organizations in both Ambon and Yogyakarta. The campus-based

religious organizations that are easily observed in both cities are the Campus Preaching Institutes (LDK), the Christian Students Associations (*Perkumpulan Mahasiswa Kristen*, PMK), and the Catholic Students Associations (*Keluarga Mahasiswa Katolik*, KMK). In Ambon, many campus-based ethnic organizations represent the various ethno-linguistic groups in Maluku, such as *Sepa*, *Kei*, and *East Seram*. Local politicians and government officials in Maluku often make use of campus-based ethnic organizations in Ambon to promote their interests and their bids for leadership in gubernatorial and mayoral elections. In Yogyakarta, there are thirty campus-based ethnic organizations representing ethnic groups from outside of Java, complete with provisions for student housing from regional governments.

**Question 1d: “In which ways is avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians observable in their daily lives?”**

Findings from the interviews generally confirm survey results demonstrating that intergroup contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians can be observed in daily life through the use of measurements on contact avoidance, avoidance of future spouses from another religion, and support for residential segregation. Additional information on contact avoidance emerged in interviews conducted in the two sites. For example, contact avoidance between Muslim and Christian respondents can be seen in daily life in both cities, mainly with respect to the respondents' tendency to avoid voting for a mayor or expressing support for hiring police forces from the religious out-group. Consequently, in the elections for governor and city mayor, both groups indicated that they prefer to have a governor and a mayor that share their own religion. Many Muslim respondents in Yogyakarta mention that their reason for electing officials who share their religion is in accordance with the religious conviction that Muslims should select a leader from the ranks of their religious fellows. Muslim respondents in Ambon said that Christian leaders tend to care only their fellow coreligionists. In the city of Ambon, both groups rejected the idea of hiring police from religious out-groups, as they suspect police officers of only

protecting their religious fellows during periods of religious conflict.

Strategies to evade or avoid contact with classmates and board mates from different religious groups were apparent in interviews with respondents in Ambon and Yogyakarta. We also observed contact avoidance at universities in both cities after class sessions, where students were grouped or gathered according to their religion and ethnicity. To a certain degree, students in both cities seem to avoid interaction with classmates who come from different religious groups or who have different religious beliefs. Choosing not to live in a boarding house occupied by people of different religions is common in both cities, with our respondents reporting that they consider the boarding houses to be places to preserve their religious beliefs and practices. It is difficult to find any boarding houses inhabited by people of different religions in Ambon, as the city has been religiously segregated since the religious conflicts starting in 1999. Unlike the survey findings, however, interview findings did not provide much more information on the avoidance of civil servants, close friends, and neighbours from religious out-groups.

Based on the interviews we conducted, we found the evidence that respondents in both Ambon and Yogyakarta tend to avoid the possibility of a future spouse from another religion, while support for residential segregation is more prevalent among respondents in Ambon. Muslim and Christian respondents in both cities express that they avoid having a spouse from different religion because of religious laws that prohibit interreligious marriage. Both groups also avoid living in a neighbourhood inhabited by people from different religions. In daily life, therefore, both Muslim and Christian respondents live in residential segregation based on religion, instead of living in religiously heterogeneous neighbourhoods.

**Question 2a: “To what extent is there a relationship between ethno-religious identification among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta and avoidance of intergroup contact?”**

Several measures of religious and ethnic identification have significantly moderate correlations with avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslim respondents. We find that among Muslims, having religious and ethnic in-group friends is positively related to contact avoidance, while having religious out-group friends is negatively related to contact avoidance. Also, participation in rites of passage and in religious organizations is positively related to avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion, while having religious out-group friends and participation in ethnic organizations is negatively related to the avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion. Moreover, having religious and ethnic in-group friends is positively related to support for residential segregation, but having religious out-group friends is negatively related to support for residential segregation. Among Christian respondents, we observed that having ethnic in-group friends is positively related to contact avoidance. In addition, participation in ethnic ceremonies is positively related to the avoidance of future spouses from a different religion. Finally, having religious and ethnic in-group friends, and using ethnic languages, is positively related to the support for residential segregation, but having religious out-group friends is negatively related to support for residential segregation.

Our multivariate analysis demonstrate that ethno-religious self-definition, along with particular measures of ethno-religious identification, significantly account for avoidance of intergroup contact. Apart from Sundanese Muslims, all other Muslim ethnic groups are likely to score higher on contact avoidance than the reference category of ethnic groups, Javanese Muslims. In contrast, Christian ethnic groups are likely to score lower on contact avoidance than Javanese Muslims. Muslim ethnic groups also tend to show more avoidance of future spouses from a different religion than Javanese Muslims, with the exception of Sundanese Muslims and Madurese Muslims. In contrast, Christian ethnic groups tend to show less avoidance of future spouses from different religions compared with Javanese Muslims. Moreover, Muslim ethnic groups are more likely to support residential segregation than Javanese Muslims. With the exception of

Ambonese Christians, Christian ethnic groups are less likely to support residential segregation than Javanese Muslims.

The multivariate analysis reveal that some measures of religious identification and one measure of ethnic identification have considerable effects on avoidance of intergroup contact. Consistent with our hypotheses, people who participate more frequently in religious practices and those who have fewer friends from different religions and ethnicities show more avoidance of intergroup contact. In contrast, people who participate more often in rites of passage, and those who have more friends from the same religion, show less avoidance of intergroup contact. In particular, people who have more friends from the same religion and fewer friends from other religions tend to avoid contact with religious out-group members. Furthermore, people who participate more frequently in religious practices and those who have fewer friends from different religions are more likely to avoid somebody from the religious out-group as their possible future spouse. Finally, people who participate more often in rites of passage, those who have a greater number of friends who share their religion and ethnicity, and those who have fewer friends from different religions tend to support residential segregation.

Other elements of religious identification, such as participation in collective rites, and participation in religious organizations, do not have significant effects on contact avoidance, avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion, and support for residential segregation. Also, several elements of ethnic identification, such as participation in ethnic ceremonies, ethnic organizations, and the use of ethnic languages, do not contribute to the explanation of the avoidance of intergroup contact either. Overall, these findings are consistent with social identity theory. Social identity theory says that social identification is more likely to induce negative attitudes toward out-groups and positive attitudes toward in-groups (Turner, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

**Question 2b: To what extent is there a relationship between ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians in Ambon, considering individual determinants such as gender,**

**parents' religion, household income, parents' education, occupation, and occupational status?**

Our bivariate analysis displays several moderate correlations between particular individual determinants and avoidance of intergroup contact. Among Muslim respondents, we find that household income and occupational status are positively related to contact avoidance, while parents' education is negatively associated with contact avoidance. Men show lower levels of avoidance of a spouse from a different religion than women. Occupational status and occupation are positively related to support for residential segregation, while household income and parents' education are negatively associated with support for residential segregation. Among Christian respondents, we find that differences in gender, household income, and parents' education are positively related to avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion.

Based on the multivariate analysis, we find that only particular individual determinants significantly explain avoidance of intergroup contact. Respondents from families employed in trade are more likely to avoid contact with religious out-group members than those from farmer families. Women avoid future spouses from other religious traditions more than men do and respondents from middle-income households are less likely to avoid the religious out-group as a pool for future spouses compared to those from high-income households. People from families employed in trade tend to avoid members of religious out-groups as their future spouses than those from farmer families. People from families with labourers' backgrounds are more inclined to support residential segregation than those from families who are self-employed. Those from families with a background in trade are more likely to support residential segregation than those from farmer families. Overall, there are significant relationships between particular individual determinants and avoidance of intergroup contact. In contrast to our expectations, however, some individual determinants, such as parents' religion and education, do not significantly explain contact avoidance, avoidance of a future



spouse from a different religion, or support for residential segregation.

Consistent with our hypothesis, the stronger that people's ethno-religious identification is (the more they participate in religious practices and the more friends they have from the same religion) the higher the level of avoidance of intergroup contact. This is true even after controlling for gender, household income, occupation, and occupational status. In summary, these findings support ethnic group conflict theory, which states that certain individual determinants are closely related to exclusionary attitudes, because the level of competition and perceived threat might be different between groups (Gijssberts et al., 2004). However, differing from Sidanius's study (2000) that states men express more prejudice than women, in this study females tend to avoid members of religious out-groups as their future spouses more than males. Also, this study is not consistent with Tolsma et al. (2008), who explained that avoidance of interethnic marriage is more prevalent among the lower classes. In contrast, this study shows that avoidance of inter-religious marriage is more prevalent among the middle class.

**Question 2c: To what extent can we explain the relationship between ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact among Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta with particular intermediate determinants such as salience of identity, perceived threat, intergroup contact, religiocentrism, attitudes toward religious plurality, interpretation of sacred writing, perceived discrimination, experience of violence, nationalistic attitudes, distrust, and social dominance orientation?**

The bivariate analysis shows several moderate correlations between particular intermediate determinants and avoidance of intergroup contact. Among Muslim respondents, we find that religious salience, perceived threat, quality of contact, positive in-group attitudes, negative out-group attitudes, monism, hermeneutic interpretation, perceived discrimination, and distrust have positive correlations to contact

avoidance; but quantity of contact and pluralism have negative correlations to contact avoidance. In addition, monism, fundamentalism, and national pride have positive correlations to avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion. Furthermore, ethnic saliency, perceived threat, positive in-group attitudes, negative out-group attitudes, monism, fundamentalism, and distrust have positive correlations to support for residential segregation, while quantity of contact, quality of contact, and pluralism have negative correlations to support for residential segregation. Among Christian respondents, we discovered that perceived threat, negative out-group attitudes, and fundamentalism have positive correlations to contact avoidance, while quality of contact has a negative correlation to contact avoidance. Also, quality of contact has a positive correlation to avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion. Finally, ethnic saliency, perceived threat, positive in-group attitudes, negative out-group attitudes, monism, fundamentalism, hermeneutic interpretation, and distrust have positive correlations to support for residential segregation, while quantity of contact has a negative correlation to support for residential segregation.

The multivariate analysis show that the relationships between ethno-religious identification and avoidance of intergroup contact can be explained by several particular intermediate determinants, such as ethnic saliency, perceived threat, quantity and quality of contact, religiocentrism (negative out-group attitudes), monism, pluralism, fundamentalism, regiocentric attitudes, and distrust of religious out-groups. Consistent with our expectations, salience of ethnic identity is linked to support for residential segregation. Also, the stronger that perceived threat is, the stronger contact avoidance and support of residential segregation are.

A few generalizations can be made based on the multivariate analyses. First, more intergroup contact and a more positive evaluation of this contact are likely to reduce support for residential segregation. Next, stronger negative attitudes toward religious out-groups induce contact avoidance. Views that support religious pluralism reduce contact avoidance, while religious mo-

nism is likely to increase the tendency to avoid a future spouse from a different religion. Religious fundamentalism is likely to reinforce support for residential segregation. Differing from our original hypothesis, stronger regiocentric attitudes reduce the tendency to avoid a future spouse from a different religion. Lastly, as we expected, stronger distrust of religious out-groups leads to more contact avoidance and a greater tendency to avoid a future spouse from a different religion. Contrary to our expectations, other intermediate variables such as religious saliency, positive (religious) in-group attitudes, hermeneutic interpretation, perceived discrimination, memories of violence, direct violence, indirect violence, nationalism, national pride, dominance, and equality orientations have no significant influence on contact avoidance, avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion, and support for residential segregation.

Overall, these findings provide evidence in support of ethnic group conflict theory and the other theories that we used in this study. Findings on perceived threat support the proposal made in ethnic group conflict theory that perceived threat is the most significant determinant of prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes toward out-groups (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Savelkoul et al., 2010). Also, our findings on ethnic saliency confirm the previous studies theorizing that there is a correlation between stronger ethnic identification and ethnic saliency, which in turn induce exclusionary attitudes (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Brewer & Miller, 1996). Also, our findings on intergroup contact are consistent with the contact hypothesis, which explains that contact with out-group members will reduce hostilities toward out-groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 766). Our findings on the topic of religiosity support previous research on regiocentrism and pluralism conducted by Anthony et al., (2005) and Sterkens and Anthony (2008). Their work demonstrated that negative attitudes toward religious out-groups induce hostility towards religious out-groups, while more pluralistic views combined with less religious monism reduces hostility. The findings from our research are also consistent with those of Williamson et al., (2010) who concluded that literal interpretations of the

Holy Scriptures contribute to prejudice toward out-groups, while nonliteral interpretations are related to less out-group derogation. Moreover, the findings on distrust confirm previous studies that emphasize how lower trust can solidify group identity, which in turn tends to reinforce exclusionary reactions (Tropp et al., 2006). However, our findings on regiocentric attitudes do not support previous studies that claim nationalistic attitudes are likely to increase exclusionary reactions (Coenders, 2001; Latcheva, 2010).

## INNOVATIONS AND PROGRESS

Based on the empirical findings, this study makes several contributions to both theoretical and methodological approaches in the field of conflict studies in Indonesia.

### a. Contribution to Empirical Research Questions

This study proposed some theory-driven explanations for contact avoidance between ethno-religious groups in Indonesia. We addressed several socially relevant research questions on the relationship of ethno-religious identification with intergroup contact avoidance as a crucial dimension of ethnic exclusionism. These are questions that have not been previously explored in the field of Indonesian conflict studies. We tested several hypotheses concerning the partial influence of individual determinants and different measures of religious identification, as well as intermediary variables on exclusionary reactions. Previous conflict studies on Indonesia were predominantly descriptive, analysing how conflicts between ethno-religious groups arose and developed.

However, our research parallels earlier empirical studies on interethnic group relations in Indonesia, such as Warnaen's study (1979) on ethnic stereotypes and Tuti's study (2008) on ethnic identity and prejudice. We adopted several questions on ethnic identification from Tuti's studies in the development of questions on ethnic and religious identifications. In contrast to these earlier studies, our research focuses on how ethno-religious identification affects contact avoidance, even after considering several

individual social characteristics and intermediate determinants. In addition, this study emphasizes the relationship between Muslims and Christians, while Warnaen and Tuti's studies were primarily focused on inter-ethnic relations. Another recent study on religious identity in Indonesia by Hadiwitanto (2014) also tests several hypotheses, but his study focuses on the influence of religious identification on generalized trust.

## **b. Contribution to Theory**

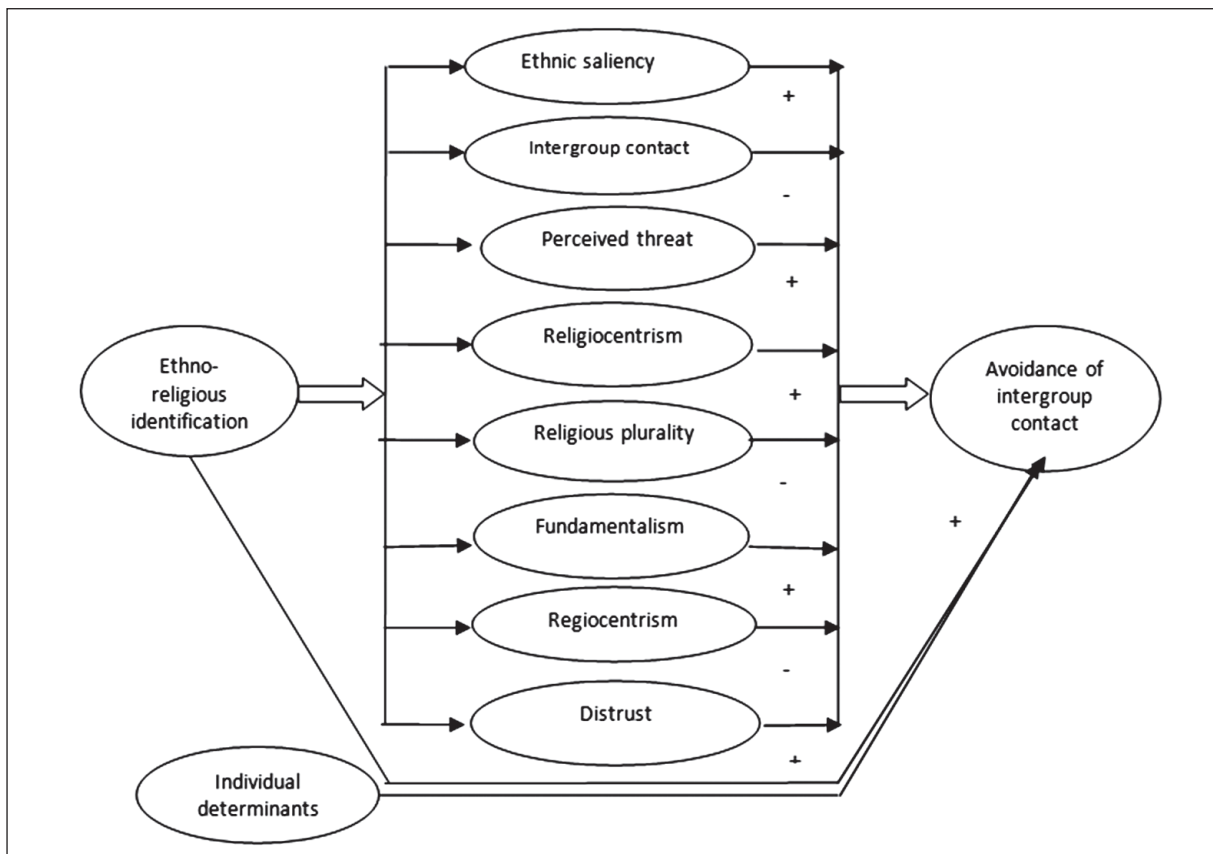
This research examined a series of theories that guided empirical research on exclusionary reactions. As previously mentioned, this study utilizes theories that are usually used to analyze conflictual relationships between ethnic groups in European countries. According to ethnic group conflict theory, perceived threat is the most important intermediate determinant between ethnic identification and exclusionary attitudes toward out-groups (Scheepers et al., 2002, 18). Other theoretical propositions identify alternative intermediate determinants as the most significant ones. Studies on salience of identity (Brewer & Miller, 1996; Duckit, 2006) propose that ethnic and religious saliency is likely to induce exclusionary reactions. The contact hypothesis (Brown et al., 2007) provides evidence that intergroup contact will likely reduce negative attitudes towards out-groups. Literature on religion (Sterkens & Hadiwitanto, 2014; Sterkens & Anthony, 2008; Anthony et al. 2015; Williamson et al., 2010) suggests that religiocentrism, monism, and fundamentalism are more likely to reinforce hostile attitudes towards out-groups, while religious pluralism and hermeneutic interpretation of Holy Scriptures are more likely to reduce those attitudes. Studies on communal violence (Doherty & Poole, 1997) emphasize that memories and experiences of violence contribute to exclusionary reactions. Studies on discrimination (Iceland & Wilkes, 2006) say that perceived discrimination induces social avoidance. Empirical studies have found that nationalism and regiocentrism increase exclusionary reactions (Coenders, 2001; Latcheva, 2010). Other studies on trust (Tropp et al., 2006) propose that distrust reinforces prejudice. Finally, according to studies by Sidanius

and Pratto (1999), social dominance orientation (SDO) is a determinant of exclusionary reactions.

Based on the results of the multivariate analyses, a combination of the aforementioned determinants can explain how ethno-religious identification is related to avoidance of intergroup contact. Consequently, the majority of the theoretical propositions outlined above are relevant for analysing contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia. We have found that perceived threat and religiocentrism increase contact avoidance, while quality of contact and religious pluralism are more likely to reduce it. Religious monism and distrust of out-groups increase the avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion, but regiocentric attitudes reduce the avoidance of contact. Ethnic saliency, perceived threat, fundamentalism, and distrust of out-groups tends to induce support for residential segregation, while quantity of contact and religious pluralism are more likely to reduce it. Other determinants, such as experience of violence, perceived discrimination, and social dominance orientation (SDO), do not significantly explain avoidance of intergroup contact. These findings are summarized in Figure 1. Overall, the ethnic group conflict theory and other theoretical propositions that are supported by evidence in Western countries are very worthwhile for analysing ethno-religious conflict in Indonesia.

## **Contribution to Research Methods**

This study contributes to the development of research methods by adopting both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This kind of mixed method approach has not previously been applied to studies of ethno-religious conflict in Indonesia. Our complementary data collection methods consisted of a survey and interviews. Topics we did not cover in the survey were covered in the interviews and findings from the survey were explored in more detail over the course of the interviews. The simultaneous application of both methods of data collection helped to improve our research. Firstly, at the analytical level, triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings increased the validity and reliability of our findings. Secondly, distinct



**Figure 1.** *Intergroup contact avoidance in Indonesia*

from conflict studies that only use a qualitative approach, this empirical study collected information from a wide group of student respondents through the application of large-scale sampling of individuals. In addition, the study was able to provide illustrations of contact avoidance and most intermediate determinants in the daily lives of our respondents, providing more context than a traditional quantitative analysis.

Overall, the triangulation of data was extremely worthwhile. Findings from the survey were illustrated and explored in more detail by findings from the interviews. In the interviews, we did not find other relevant dimensions of the measurements at the individual level that were not covered in the questionnaire. The findings from both the interviews and the surveys were complementary. Through the interviews, for example, we identified several extra reasons for avoiding contact with religious out-group members (i.e. due to balance of power in provincial government, in a moment of communal violence) and for expressing ways of utilizing

ethnic identity in daily life, but this information did not undermine the validity and reliability of our quantitative measurements. In general, most of the findings from the interviews support and confirm findings from the survey. Despite the discovery that there are still some limitations on the level of analysis (described in the next section), the mixed methods approach provided more information from fieldwork both in terms of representation of the respondents and in terms of the description of social contexts.

### **c. Contribution to Conflict Studies in Indonesia**

Following Gismar (2000) and Adam (2010), this empirical study addresses a gap in the literature in the field of conflict studies, where the scholarly literature primarily focuses on economic and political competition. While most of the previous studies on conflict in Indonesia pay more attention to the contextual levels of ethno-religious conflict in particular areas, this study comes up with a set of measurements to investigate

latent conflict at the individual level both in an area of conflict and also in an area that has not experienced conflict. This study also explains to what extent individuals support contact avoidance by making use of their ethno-religious identities, while most previous studies on conflict discuss tensions and communal violence between ethno-religious groups.

Studies on ethno-religious conflict in Indonesia generally emphasize that ethnic or religious identity are not the main causes of the conflict, but that ethnic and religious identities are mobilized and socially constructed at the moment of intergroup conflict (Van Klinken, 2007, 53–71; Spyer, 2002, 21–36). These studies predominantly focus on economic and political competition as the basis of ethnic or religious conflicts. For example, despite his focus on ethno-religious identity, Van Klinken (2007) proposes that political competition between political elites, and the prolonged rivalries between Muslims and Christians in the Moluccas, could be the main cause of the religious conflict in 1999. Another example is Wilson's study on religious conflict in North Maluku (2008) that describes how political forces at the national level, and changes in political structure during the political reformation in 1998, stimulated religious conflict between Christians and Muslims. In opposition to those approaches, this study focuses on the individual level to investigate how ordinary people support hostile attitudes toward religious out-groups by primarily referring to their ethno-religious identity.

In contrast to previous studies about conflict in Indonesia, this empirical study is innovative in that it focuses on the individual level in order to answer how, and to what extent, ethno-religious identification supports latent conflict. It is clear that ethno-religious identity itself can generate exclusionary reactions, in particular, the avoidance of intergroup contact. As we described earlier, the avoidance of intergroup contact may result from a prolonged conflict between ethno-religious groups. Findings from this study on ethno-religious identification support other studies that document how conservative religious beliefs flourished, and religious identities seemed to become stronger, in Indonesia after the

political reformation in 1998 (Van Bruinessen, 2003; Hasan, 2006; Feillard & Madinier, 2011). Nevertheless, differing from those studies that predominantly focus on the radicalization of some Muslim groups in Indonesia, this empirical research emphasizes latent conflict, particularly intergroup contact avoidance, between Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Yogyakarta.

#### **d. Contribution to the Discourse of Social Distance in non-Western Countries**

Finally, this study sheds new light on the discourse about social distance in the context of non-Western countries. As stated earlier, in this study, social distance is identified with support for contact avoidance. In addition, the avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion, and support for residential segregation have been conceptually included on in the definition of social distance, but in a separate measurement. Here, we describe several differences between contact avoidance in Western countries and in Indonesia, based on our findings. In Western countries, individuals of other ethnic groups who are traditionally avoided the most are, in order of importance, (future) spouse, close friends, neighbours, colleagues, and fellow citizens (Bogardus, 1925b; Wark & Galliher, 2007). Apparently, in Indonesia, the people prefer to have officials (mayor, police officers, and civil servants), and intimates (close friends, housemates, neighbours, and colleague) from the same religions.

In Western countries, avoidance of spouses from different out-groups is part of the social distance scale, which indicates that choosing a spouse is a part of an individual's attitudes. In this study, however, avoidance of a future spouse from a different religion is separated from the social distance scale. In our estimation, choosing a spouse in most cases is not only decided by individuals, but also by families and other social institutions to which individuals are affiliated. Lots of people have written to the contrary that in the context of Indonesia, as said before, it is difficult to register an interreligious marriage according to Indonesian marriage law; a marriage is legal if it is conducted according to religious laws that definitely prohibit interreligious marriage.

Religious practitioners respect these rules, so interreligious marriage is not common in Indonesia. Moreover, in Western countries, people seemingly avoid living in neighbourhoods inhabited by out-groups, mostly due to the unequal socioeconomic levels (Iceland & Wilkes, 2006). In Indonesia, according to this study, people prefer to live in a neighbourhood inhabited by their in-group predominantly because they want to preserve their ethno-religious identities, not due to the effects of differences in socioeconomic status.

We can identify several determinants of intergroup contact avoidance besides ethno-religious identification. People who have a less positive image of intergroup contact, a more negative attitude towards out-groups, and less belief in the concept of religious pluralism will likely avoid contact with out-group members. Those who have more religiously monistic views, less regiocentric views, and more distrust of out-groups are more likely to avoid out-group members as their future spouses. Also, people who have more ethnic saliency, perceive more threat from out-groups, have less contact with out-group members, have less belief in the concept of religious pluralism and more fundamental views, and are more distrustful of out-groups are more likely to support residential segregation. In addition, avoidance of intergroup contact is more prevalent among middle and upper classes based on their household income, occupation, and occupational status. In summary, this study is able to explore, explain, and compare social distance between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, as well as providing a set of measurements of social distance for non-Western countries derived from indicators of social distance in Western countries.

## **FURTHER RESEARCH ISSUES**

Despite the fact that we have reported a number of interesting findings from this study, research on contact avoidance can be further developed by utilizing an approach that distinguishes between individual and contextual levels, as well as by adding more research sites in cities inhabited by various ethno-religious groups, and by using more heterogeneous and representative samples. Further study, which distinguishes influences

at individual and contextual levels, will further contribute to theoretical insights.

Our study is limited because it does not analyse contextual factors such as recent migration, group size, history, and actual (versus perceived) intergroup competition by means of quantitative measurements. Although we discussed these contextual factors in our summary of the research setting and in the discussion of interviews, we did not include them in the regression analyses, because our research sites were too limited. In order to provide a better representation of Indonesian society, it is necessary to duplicate studies like this in areas affected by ethno-religious violence, such as Poso, Sambas, and Sampit between 1998 and 2001. We also suggest that such studies be conducted in religiously pluralistic areas that seem to enjoy peaceful relations between ethno-religious groups, such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. Finally, we suggest that future studies use representative samples drawn from groups in society other than university students. Conducting more studies on avoidance of intergroup contact with multilevel analyses, in more areas, and with samples that are more representative, will enable us to draw a map of latent conflicts in Indonesia.

### **a. Studies on the Importance of Ethno-religious Identity Among the Middle Classes in Daily Lives**

It is necessary to develop studies on the importance of ethno-religious identification among middle class individuals in their daily lives. This idea stems from the findings of this study, and other relevant studies on the development of fundamentalism in Indonesia. According to our research results, members of middle class, mainly students, are more likely to attend religious practices and ceremonies than to attend ethnic ceremonies. Also, avoidance of intergroup contact is more prevalent among people from the middle class, upper-level occupations, and people who are employed.

Other studies propose that most people in Indonesia display a strong sense of religious identity, and consider their religious beliefs to be important in their daily lives. For instance, Hefner (1987) and Van Bruinessen (2003) emphasize that the spread of Islamic conservatism

in Indonesia has increased since the 1980s, when the authoritarian government marginalized pious Muslims in politics. Other studies on charismatic Christians by Koning (2011) point to the spread of Christian conservatism among middle class groups in certain denominations. Consequently, religion in Indonesia has become a point of reference for creating a social identity, which has a tendency to increase negative attitudes towards out-groups and positive attitudes towards in-groups. Although ethnicity is still important in the present day Indonesia, religion seems to have become more important in decision-making and daily interactions. We hope that future studies will further develop measurements of religiosity for non-Western countries.

### **b. Studies on Perceived Threat in Competition between Ethno-religious Groups**

This study proposes that future research is needed on the development of perceived threat in political, economic, and sociocultural competition between ethno-religious groups. This idea is derived from the findings provided by this study showing that perceived threat can contribute to contact avoidance and can increase support for residential segregation. Perceived threat is the most important determinant of exclusionary reactions, which indicates that competition between ethno-religious groups has a significant effect on how these groups relate to each other in contemporary Indonesia.

Future studies should identify determinants of perceived threat and work to distinguish between symbolic and realistic threat. Furthermore, these studies could examine how differences in power, status, and group size between ethno-religious groups lead certain groups to feel more threatened in political, economic, and sociocultural fields. These kinds of studies are important at this pivotal moment in Indonesia, since certain ethno-religious groups still dominate political and economic competition in certain regions, which creates an unequal distribution of resources. As demonstrated in our research, perceived threat and competition can still be found in educational and government institutions, which are characterized by divisions

between ethno-religious groups. Consequently, several latent conflicts between ethno-religious groups that are expressed through contact avoidance have emerged, and have the potential to transform into communal violence in the future.

### **c. Studies on the Evolution of Religious Tolerance between Muslims and Christians**

With the completion of this research, we propose a new study on the evolution of religious tolerance in Indonesia, which can be identified at the level of non-cooperation between religious groups and in attitudes towards religious plurality. According to this study, both Muslims and Christians should pay attention to intergroup contact and religious pluralism in order to support religious tolerance as well as to prevent the spread of religious conservatism. Consequently, future research should emphasize the evolution of religious values among Muslims and Christians, and whether their religious values become relatively more conservative or more moderate.

Future studies could focus on the frequency of interactions between Muslims and Christians, and specifically on evidence of more or less contact avoidance between both groups of believers. In future research, intergroup contact and religious pluralism could become determinants that reduce exclusionary attitudes. Also, it is necessary to seek other predictive values that impact on the evolution of religious tolerance and on the increase of religious conservatism. For example, according to this study, regiocentric attitudes may become a determinant to reduce exclusionary reactions between ethno-religious groups.

### **d. Studies on Ethno-religious Identity and Social Cohesion in Ambon and Yogyakarta**

Given our conclusions about contact avoidance in these Indonesian cities, we also deem it necessary to study the formation of both formal and informal networks between ethno-religious groups to strengthen civic society and to prevent ethno-religious conflict in the future. This proposition is based on our analysis that contact avoidance between Muslims and Christians has become

widespread in Ambon and has started growing in Yogyakarta. This situation has the potential to disturb social cohesion and interreligious relationships. Furthermore, the absence of either formal or informal interactions between ethno-religious groups in most cases tends to evoke communal violence (Varshney, 2002, 9). Referring to several studies, ethno-religious identity also can be used in the creation of peaceful relationships. For example, studies on alliances between villages in the Moluccas, such as those by Bartels (1977) and Lowry and Littlejohn (2006), mention that hostilities between villages from different religions are reduced when these villages are tied under some cultural bonds like the *pela* and *adat* systems. Another study on Muslim and Christian relationships in Yogyakarta (Jae, 2012, 49–51) describes how moderate leaders from both groups developed many interfaith dialogues in 1998 when a series of incidents of religious violence erupted in several cities. For future research, therefore, we propose to develop an idea of how ethnic or religious identifications can generate peaceful relationships between ethno-religious groups. This hypothesis is acceptable as shared social boundaries between groups can be used to prevent hostilities and violent conflict.

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