Conversion and Colonialism: Islam and Christianity in North Sulawesi, c. 1700-1900

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1
Since religious identity have long served as a marker of higher social status in north Sulawesi, the non-elite strove to convert yet they were hindered by the local elite who sought to maintain status difference and social distance.

2
The colonial reforms of the nineteenth century which commercialized the economy of north Sulawesi and bureaucratized the local chiefly offices loosened the traditional patron-client bonds between the chiefs and their claimed subjects thus opening the opportunity for many to access a prestigious religious identity hitherto exclusive to local ruling elite.

3
Riding on the authority of the colonial state, aspiring apical rulers of north Sulawesi acted as sponsors of mass conversions which eroded the long-standing political and economic advantages claimed by competing chiefs and therefore appear benevolent by sharing a prestigious religious identity with their claimed subjects.

4
The contemporaneous mass conversions to Protestant Christianity in Minahasa and to Islam in Bolaang-Mongondow could be explained by the shared timing of economic and political centralization of the Dutch colonial state in these sub-regions.

5
The literature on religious conversions in pre-modern insular Southeast Asia have inadequately paid attention to the dynamics and specificities of local political contexts, in particular with regard to intra-elite rivalry.

6
Aspiring apical rulers in insular Southeast Asia utilized religion and religious conversions to centralize authority and weaken competing chiefs (H. Sutherland, "Power, Trade and Islam in the Eastern Archipelagos" (1988), 55; C. Majul, "The General Nature of Islamic Law and its Application in the Philippines" (1980), 63)

7
The pull of cosmopolitan religious identities in early modern Southeast Asia—occasioned ultimately by expanding market relations—should be understood alongside local political interests that tend to counteract such phenomenon. (A. Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, vol. 2 (1993) 136-145; V. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830*, vol. 2 (2009), 813).

8
The notion that mass conversions occur after colonial intervention due to "spiritual vacuum" is less tenable and demonstrable than the idea that that colonial interference successfully eroded the political, economic, and cultural barriers to conversion to a world religion. (H. Buchholt, "The Impact of the Christian Mission on Processes of Social Differentiation" (1996), 15; M. J. C. Schouten, *Leadership and Social Mobility in a Southeast Asian Society: Minahasa, 1677-1983* (1998), 108).

9
Universities all over often assume the possibly contradictory roles of a learning institution, commercial enterprise, and political instrument for domestic ideological control or international projection of soft power.

10
Separable verbs (*scheidbare werkwoorden*) are some of the most difficult features of the Dutch language.