

Chapter V

Political Process, Public Policy, and Peace Building Process: Case of Ambon City, Maluku

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

To fully understand the communal conflict in Maluku Province (the Maluku conflict), we need to explore a comprehensive and integrated approach so that we would not only be able to identify the roots, the source and the process of the conflict, but also the other measures involved in building and maintaining peace in this region. This is considered very important to have a holistic profile of the people of Maluku (particularly Ambon City) and to understand how the people respond to the conflict.

Many considered that it would need a lengthy process to settle the Maluku conflict, however in a relative short period, the conflict was resolved and community security and peace was restored. This certainly was correlated to all the processes both from the vertical level (state and public policy) and from the horizontal level (social community processes). How could both of these processes synergized positively and gained strength that enabled the resolution of the conflict in Maluku Province particularly in Ambon city? The City of Ambon is intentionally chosen as the *locus* for this study, since its strategic position and role for Maluku Province. Ambon is not only the capital city of the province but also is the trend-setter for the development process in the region.

This chapter aims to trace and explore one perspective related to the political process and public policy that is regarded as a functional element towards the peace building process in Ambon City. The critical questions posed are: what and how did the political process and the public policies issued during the period of the Maluku conflict contribute to the peace building measures in Ambon City?

The analysis of the political process and public policy is a very crucial matter in any socio-political situation, particularly in a conflict. The people that have been “divided” will only respond to any political process and/or public policy that are in accordance with their own perceived values (perceived reality). Therefore, faulty political process and/or public policies, are presumed to have negative impact on the efforts of the conflict resolution; on the other hand, political processes and/or public policies that take into consideration an objective conflict reality within the community, will be effective for building and preserving harmony towards sustainable peace.

2. DYNAMICS OF THE MALUKU CONFLICT AND AMBON CITY

2.1. Implications of the Transformation “Wave”

Toffler identified the social transformation as a “wave” of objective reality taking place in various countries worldwide. Fukuyama views this transformation change referred to Toffler as the third shift from an industrial society to an informational society or also known as the post-industrial era¹. This is believed to create a big shock towards the civil society system in many countries [Fukuyama, 2005:3-9].

In the international level, the fall of the socialism in the Soviet Union and the unification of West Germany and East Germany are viewed as the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy [Fukuyama, 2004]. Quoting Salmi [1993:4-5]:

The collapse of the Berlin Wall on October 12, 1989 was the symbol of the victory of democracy and freedom that triumphantly tore down completely the boundaries and the cold-blooded trappings of land mines. In just a few weeks, the authoritarian government of East Germany, Poland, Cekoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria were wiped out by the spirit of democracy. In one year, the two German nations were united meanwhile the Soviet Union became disintegrated. ... In Algeria, Zaire, Congo, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Gabon and Ivory Coast, for example, these authoritarian governments had to face the strong demand from the society to apply a multi-party system and free elections.

These revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe apparently were in line with the conquest of the Western capitalism and liberal ideology.

¹ The first wave is the shift from a hunting society to an agricultural society; the second wave is from an agricultural society to an industrial society.

These transformation waves that accompanied the global changes, is presumed to have contributed to the dynamics of the society in the national level in various countries including Indonesia. The political reformation in 1998 in Indonesia was triggered by the monetary crisis that expanded to an economic crisis that eventually transpired to a social political movement to oust the New Order Regime. These changes brought in social political implications and instability that shook up the social system. The changes in political and economic policies during reformation and post-reformation movement have created new dynamic interactions within the society, the nation and the state – requiring all the elements of the nation, particularly the people to adapt to the new situation. The intense dynamics of the society that took advantage of the available and open space for democracy – although unknowingly or unwillingly – has created social political instability in the form of riots and conflicts in several regions in Indonesia including Maluku Province, particularly Ambon City. This may be viewed as the government’s weakness in their capacity to govern effectively and the flaw of the government’s extended role [Fukuyama, 2005b]. On the other hand, this could be viewed as the society being unprepared to adapt to the social-political changes. This basically is correlated to unsuccessful transformation of the *ethnic nation*² to become a *civic nation*³ in such a heterogeneous nation as in Indonesia. Related to the heterogeneity, Pariela [2005:180], wrote:

Diversity in any context always has the potential of conflict, particularly for Indonesia that has such a huge population, consisting of many ethnicities, sub-ethnics and groups with various religious links and residing in scattered islands within the Republic of Indonesia.

Diversity, as stated, has the risk of conflict since the development management under the New Order Regime was based on the security approach that did not allow sufficient room for the participation and expression from the heterogeneous people. As a result, in the event of a change in the national socio-political constellation (read: reformation) that implies a democratization process, the society was “forced” to confront the anomic reality which therefore was easily maneuvered as a momentum for political experimentation that possessed a high risk. The social political instability is basically the “fruit” of this political experimentation that has a negative effect on the consolidation process of democracy in the society system. Syamsul Hadi, et.al [2007:2-3], stated:

² This concept prioritizes race and origins [Hardiman dalam Kymlicka, 2002: xv].

³ Political relations in a society that is not based on religion, race, ethnicity, group and so forth [Hardiman in Kymlicka, 2002: xv].

... After the fall of the Soeharto administration (New Order Regime) in 1998, an upsetting phenomenon emerged, i.e. local conflicts in various regions escalated. The transition towards a democratic country, on one hand, had brought in more freedom to the people, but on the other hand, revealed the fragility of the nation-building process.

... local conflicts also bear quite significant international dimensions.

2.2. Brief Description of Ambon City, Maluku Conflict, and Its Impact

As the capital of the Province, the position and role of Ambon City have an important and strategic value for the entire Maluku. It is the main gate for the exchange of goods, services and people from and to Maluku Province, as well as the center for socio cultural, economic and political/government activities. Therefore, Ambon City indeed is the trend setter for the people and the advancement of Maluku Province. The city that is situated in the island of Ambon⁴, geographically is located 3° - 4° Southern Latitude and 128° - 129° Eastern Longitude, covering an area of 377 Km². This includes 359.45 Km² of land and 17.55 Km² of sea with a coast line of 98 Km⁵. In 2006, the population of Ambon City was 263,146 persons, consisting of 132.152 males (50.22%) and 130,994 females (49.78%)⁶.

The Maluku conflict, that started on January 19, 1999 and continued for more than three years, has caused changes in the aspects of the people's lives and of the government of Ambon City. The conflict, that was never before imagined by the people of Maluku, particularly the people of Ambon City, was massive and destructive in rupturing the lives of the people. In the social-cultural aspect, for example, the social interaction of cross-religion citizens became seriously distorted that induced social distance within the society. This fact was worsened by the weak cultural relations such as *pela*⁷ and *gandong*⁸ that usually serve as the safety valve in the relations among the *negeri*⁹ particularly in Central Maluku including Ambon City¹⁰. Disruptions in the social and cultural inter-relations in Ambon City were exacerbated by the unstable security of the city and were due to the segregated residential areas that inhibit social

⁴ Part of the Ambon Island region includes the region of the Central Maluku District.

⁵ The Ambon Island includes Ambon City and part of Central Maluku District under Law No. No. 13/1979 that designates the area of Ambon City of 377 Km² or 2/5 of the area of the Ambon Island.

⁶ *Ambon City in Figures 2007*.

⁷ *Pela* is a bond between two *negeri* (villages) formed under certain historical events.

⁸ *Gandong* (in Indonesia: *kandung* or *kandungan* which means womb or uterus) is a bond between two *negeri* (villages) formed historically from the same ancestors.

⁹ *Negeri* is a customary/traditional region headed by a king, *Pati*, or a wealthy person. The word *negeri*, is generally known in Central Maluku including Ambon City; meanwhile in other regions of Maluku they use a different terminology but having the same meaning.

¹⁰ From various researches, it is believed that the application of Law No. 5/1979 on Village Government has weakened the function of several traditional institutions such as the customary government system, including the *pela* and *gandong* institution.

interactions¹¹. In other words, the public arena as a means for interaction among groups of cross-ethnicity, cross-religion, cross-race, have become limited and therefore has generated a pattern of exclusivity. Barricades were set up along the roads particularly to separate two different communities – which affirm the segregation of the residential areas and further dramatizes the distressing situation. The drastic decline of the population due to migration (seeking refuge) has also added the gloomy picture. The 1999 statistics shows that the population of Ambon City was 265.830 persons, falling 5.4% compared to the previous year; and it further sharply dropped 16.4 % in 2000 but gradually showed an increasing trend in 2006 to reach a population of 263.146 persons. Another major drawback is the destruction of schools and health facilities including public service facilities that become inoperative. The limited human resources in the public sector (following a segregated pattern) also have impeded optimal government service to the public.

In the economy sector, the Maluku conflict has devastated the business facilities, constrained the distribution access and marketing channel, and caused capital flight that affected the overall economy in Ambon City. These factors have once resulted in a negative growth rate of 7.18% in 2000 and further pushed unemployment to 31% and the poverty level went up to 29% in 2001.

In terms of politics, government and law institutions, the condition of security in Ambon was so threatening that these institutions were unable to function optimally. Since several of the offices were located in the residential area of a certain community and many of the government officials fled from Ambon City after the conflict had escalated, therefore the political, government activities and law institutions became stagnant. Having limited activities, the three institutions particularly the regional government office were stereotyped as bias towards a certain religion. Comments from a politician of one religion are often regarded as giving preferential treatment towards one's group, even though the comments are based on objective facts. The regional government policy in the recruitment of public officials and the slow response in penalizing officials involved in the conflict are considered as discriminating a certain group. In short, no what matter public policy is offered, the logical implications from the conflict have brought the people to face a reality that is often politicized and tends to trigger and sustain the conflict.

All these issues reflect the socio-psychology of the people of Ambon City that is “divided” due to the conflict. This condition has brought in prejudice and distrust among the community and the people have become segregated in residential clusters of a particular religion. This religion-based conflict is viewed as a reflection of the

¹¹ Since the conflict intensified, citizens of Ambon from a heterogenous community sought refuge to a homogenous community of a certain religion.

destruction of the social asset due to the excess of the development dynamics particularly the political process during the New Order Regime. Quoting Shoemake:

How could the community ties in Maluku be torn apart, making neighbors killing each other? How can we explain this sudden change and the devastation of social trust? ... In my opinion, the traditional mechanism to reproduce social capital has been replaced and has been destructed since the New Order Regime under the Suharto administration in 1965. The government policies from Suharto's militaristic dictatorship for 32 years have significantly destroyed the traditional resources and social assets by ruining the communicative ties of the people and have made this region prone to conflict after the fall in 1998 [Conflict Resolution Homepage, August 17, 2004:2]¹².

2.3. Background of the Political Process, Public Policy and Peace Building

In a situation of such conflict, in 1999, the elections for the parliament members (legislative) were held in relatively peaceful circumstances, and in 2001 followed by the elections for the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City for the term of 2001-2006. Even though the voting was done by the local parliament members, many people hoped to have this process as a momentum for reconciliation for the people of Ambon City; as reflected in the appointment of the Vice Mayor¹³. In other words, the accommodative political process (balanced politics) is regarded as a representation of the interests of the disputing parties and well as the gate to access the conflicting parties and will minimize any potential conflict as well as encourage reconciliation.

The appointment of the candidates for the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City for this term shows that these two candidates have real political support and are prominent figures from the respective groups. The candidate for mayor from the Indonesian Struggling Democratic Party (PDIP) gained the majority for seats in the Local Parliament of Ambon City, and he then was matched with candidate for Vice Mayor from the United Development Party (PPP)¹⁴. Similarly the elections of the Mayor and Vice Mayor for 2006-2011, although elected directly by the people, but the selection of the candidates applied the same balanced notion of political representation.

¹² Shoemake's idea on the destruction of the social assets in Maluku should have been critically responded for the interest of analyzing the Maluku conflict within a different context. In reality, it shows that in limited social interaction we could still find potential to peaceful reconciliation as reflected in the social institutions in the community. The distraught condition post reformation was also observed by Nugroho, Dirdjosanjoto, and Kana (ed) [2004].

¹³ At that time, Law No. 22/1999 on Local Government introduced a new institution i.e. the Vice Mayor.

¹⁴ At that time, the PDIP fraction had the largest number of seats in the parliament (19 seats), consisting of 16 seats from PDIP, and 3 other seats from two smaller political parties that joined the coalition.

The major difference between the two elections is that the first election was done to elect the officials that control and resolve the Maluku conflict. Meanwhile the second election is aimed to accommodate the interest of all parties concerned to maintain social stability and security after the Maluku conflict.

In a situation of conflict and several years after that, indeed the Mayor and the Vice Mayor had to face the unique challenges in leading the city of Ambon City. Apparently, most of the energy spent was to drive the efforts for resolution of the conflict, rehabilitation and reconstruction and to maintain social stability and security. Besides that, the efforts to enhance the people's welfare also added the burden to the Government of Ambon City. These efforts should be taken as an integral part of the conflict resolution and conflict management. In other words, it is apparent that the government of Ambon City emphasizes or prioritizes building on areas that focus on conflict resolution and conflict management.

3. POLITICAL PROCESS AND PUBLIC POLICY (BEFORE 2006)

3.1. The General Elections in 1999

The involvement of the state through the role of the regional government to resolve the conflict of such destructive magnitude in Maluku or specifically in Ambon City is an inevitable task for the government. In this context, James Rule [1988:2] maintains that the state is often involved as a participant in civil violence both as a target and as an agent that aggressively applied coercive measures in governing. Learning from Africa [Zartman, 1995], the city of Ambon specifically and the Maluku Province in general could have experienced total disaster if the state (read: the regional government) was incapable of managing the social, political and economic activities in the situation of conflict or if the government was unable to effectively employ its authority in governing the situation [Fukuyama, 2005b]. Therefore, the succession of the leaders of Ambon City, as previously stated, is hoped to serve as the gateway in overcoming the Maluku conflict.

This situation of the General Elections (Pemilu) held in 1999, although amidst the initial stage of the conflict, apparently was already considered as tense. The politicians intentionally launched provocative issues to influence the people's political preferences. One of the provocative issues that once spread out in public was the banishment of a particular ethnic group from Maluku for the interest of one political party dominated by the Christian Ambonese ethnic group. Even though this issue could not be proven and the fact that many people regardless of their ethnicity and religion migrated from Maluku for the sake of their lives and families, the exodus of these people have affected the process and the results of the elections.

Despite the friction had begun to widen, during the process of the general elections, starting from the campaign period up to the elections day, apparently the conflict tended to recede. Up to now, there has been no acceptable argument to explain the phenomenon. However, the public opinion assumes that those involved in organizing the Maluku conflict were apprehensive in meddling with the general elections as a national agenda. If the conflict was stimulated amidst the general elections, it was feared that they would have to confront the power of the state and therefore it should be avoided. Nevertheless, a primordial religion-based sentiment was aroused by several political parties particularly those affiliated to religious platforms. This was considered as an easy tool for the political parties to gain sympathy from the mass voters.

Even upon the installment of the elected members of the Local Parliament of Ambon City, the Maluku conflict was still fluctuating and in fact, it became more uncertain in line with the intensified quality of the “war weapons” used in the conflict¹⁵. After almost one year upon their instatement, the members of the parliament were able to sufficiently run their duties, although they sometimes had to be absent due to the threatening situation. In some occasions, they had to employ security guards (law enforcement/police/military personnel) to secure the activities in the parliament office. Under this condition, the members of the parliament of Ambon City once was quite consolidated and have several times visited Jakarta to meet with the authorized officials to resolve the Maluku conflict. The solidarity among the members of the parliaments (the MPs) at least had minimized the tension within the community. However, the efforts of the MPs were not without challenges. Many of them underwent pressure and criticism from the pro-conflict groups representing the respective clan. The essential message of these groups was to claim recognition that their political struggle should not be positioned as the guilty part nor should it be regarded as the cause of the conflict. In contrary, the political process should be directed to repress other communities and justify the aggressive-destructive actions of their community.

According to the Head of the parliament at that time, he and all the leaders of the parliament of Ambon City have always consolidated their views together with all the members to establish a comprehensive understanding on the prevailing situation of conflict. It was necessary to create a common domain to accommodate their role in an objective, proportional and effective manner. This mutual understanding is then followed up by drafting of the common agenda to end the conflict. This internal network is considered as the prime basis to uphold the existence and the function of the local parliament in resolving the situation amidst the conflict.

¹⁵ Initially the people in conflict used the available tools such as swords and arrows, which then evolved to assembled guns and bombs and developed further to military weapons and grenades.

3.2. The Elections of the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City in 2001

Entering 2001, as the tenure of the Mayor of Ambon City for the period of 1996-2001 approached the end, the local parliament had to prepare the local elections for the regional head for the following five years. In such situation of community conflict, the two political parties, PDIP and PPP, established a coalition and consolidated their efforts and were successful in matching two candidates for the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City respectively for the period of 2001-2006: Drs. M. J. Papilaja, MS and Syarief Hadler, BA¹⁶. The coalition of the political parties in promoting the pair of candidates most probably had a positive correlation to the parliament's success in consolidating themselves amidst the conflict. Supporters of both candidates believed that this achievement would have implication towards the reconciliation process in the community, and therefore would gradually dampen the conflict or the potential conflict. Henceforth, it would bring sustainable peace for the region. Nevertheless, the process of elections had to face serious challenges particularly in safeguarding the security of the MPs of Ambon City. A few days before and particularly in the evenings before the election, there was an issue that there have been intimidations from the grass root level towards the MPs to vote for the candidates supported by PDIP and PPP. When asked for confirmation on this issue, some of the prominent figures of the grass root groups admitted to have visited the homes of the MPs to lobby and gain support for their candidates. These grass root representatives consider this lobbying as a common practice for any campaign team. However, this issue was denied by the elected Mayor. This condition is understandable, since the process of the region-head election was held in a situation of conflict. It means that politicizing the ideas or the roles of the government is common in a *political game*, especially in a conflict that can easily develop provocative issues that tends to be sectarian and exclusive.

To ensure the security of the MPs in accessing the voting venues, it was agreed to hold the elections at the Office of the Mayor, since it was rendered easy to be reached by both communities¹⁷. The election was reported to run smoothly and having no incidence of violence. The candidates endorsed by PDIP and PPP won the elections. Interestingly, the election venue was guarded not only by the police and the military force but also was unofficially "escorted" by the grass root groups from both opposing parties. They claimed that their presence was no different from other citizens that have long waited for the local elections in Ambon. If their presence was considered as "escorting" then this should be deemed as reasonable sine it was a manifestation of their

¹⁶ In that period, M. J. Papilaja was the Head of the Local Parliament of Ambon City, and Syarief Hadler was the Head of the PPP Fraction of the Parliament.

¹⁷ The Local Parliament Office of Ambon City was located behind/adjacent to the area of Soya, a Christian residential area.

responsibility to secure the election process particularly in a situation of conflict such as in Ambon.

3.3. Public Policy in 2001-2006

3.3.1. Priority Agenda

The main idea introduced by the elected Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City is reflected in their vision to “establish Ambon City as the center for economic activity and business transits in the Maluku Province”. The basis for the obsession to develop their city is that the city of Ambon has limited natural resources that have high economic value, both in terms of quality and quantity. The two candidates believe that social stability and security is a prerequisite to achieve this goal. Therefore, the conflict resolution in Maluku is a priority and in the Strategic Plan of Development in Ambon for the years of 2001-2006, is elaborated in the five-year development process which is divided in two phases, that is the first three-year development stage (2001-2004) and the second phase of a two-year development program (2004/2005-2006).

In the first three-year development phase, in general, the focus of development is towards social stability and security as a basis for the next phase of the two-year development, which is aimed for the recovery of dynamic and productive economic activities in the region. The steps to be taken are: (1) to internally consolidate the institutions to ensure the function of the bureaucracy in Ambon City; (2) to consolidate cross-institutional bodies in the provincial level, and particularly with the law enforcement (police) and defense institutions (military force). The sole aim is to coordinate and synergize the roles of the government, military force and the police for the sake of peace and security in Ambon City; (3) to promote positive interaction and communication among the prominent figures and the conflicting communities; and (4) to coordinate along with the government of Maluku Province to address the issues of refugees in Ambon City.

The main policies in the second phase of the two-year development was oriented towards the following issues: (1) to maintain social stability and security to ensure a conducive livelihood of the people; (2) to reconstruct and rehabilitate public facilities that were destroyed during the conflict, particularly to restore the function of the traditional markets and public transportation terminals as the center for the daily economic activity; (3) to create an attractive and secure business environment especially to regain the investor’s interest in investing in Ambon City; and (4) to continue addressing the issues of refugees in Ambon City.

Some of the officials in the government of Ambon City believe that these policies are not that easy to implement in a situation of conflict, since there seems to be misinterpretation that tends to develop as a source of conflict. Therefore, the

implementation of the policies should take into consideration current situation of the conflict through intensive coordination of the security forces, the public figures and the religious leaders.

The public policies issued for 2001-2006, particularly in minimizing as well as resolving the conflict, are explained in the following sections.

3.3.2. *Fit and Proper Test*

In the period of this leadership, one of the significant policies in consolidating the Government of Ambon City is the fit and proper test used in the system for the promotion of government officials. This policy that was applied for the first time in the government of Ambon City, as explained by the mayor of Ambon City, was intended to eliminate new conflicts. The people were skeptical of the former recruitment and promotion systems that were often influenced by collusion and nepotism. This wariness certainly is risky for a community that is in conflict. Therefore, the “fit and proper test” policy was able to reduce the potential of conflicts as well as acquire competent officials for certain duties.

In carrying out the *fit and proper test*, the government of Ambon City collaborated with one university in Bandung to conduct a psycho-test, and cooperated with Pattimura University to proceed further by interviewing the candidates to assess their capacity and competence. Even though the final decision is at the discretion of the authorized officials such as the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Regional Secretary, however, this system was considered as a breakthrough, which gained support and received positive response and appreciation from many. This recruitment system was quite effective in dampening the provocative issues that usually ascends in the times of the succession within the Government of Ambon City.

From the results of the *fit and proper test*, the placement of the officials in various posts apparently took into account the capacity and the competence of these officers and considered the fairness of the decision, as an important part in mitigating the situation of religion-based conflict. Therefore, this instrument was very effective in reducing the probability of social disruption due to erroneous decisions made by the government. In other words, at least through these government instruments, the people of Ambon City, that were in conflict, may have an objective impression that the placement and the transfer of duty of the officers within the Government Ambon City should no longer be a source to trigger a new conflict.

3.3.3. Communication and Coordination

Many of the other public policies related to the current peace building process have been carried out discretely through communication or coordination established by the

prominent figures and religious leaders from both sides of the religious groups. This pattern was applied, since many of the reconciliation actions that were conducted openly often times were resisted and became a source of new conflicts. The Mayor's involvement in establishing a positive situation for the Maluku Meeting in Malino¹⁸ for instance was a strategic step to psychologically prepare the people for the reconciliation efforts. As recommended by the Working Group for the preparation of the Maluku Meeting in Malino that originated from both communities¹⁹, the Citra Team was formed consisting of five members and led by the Mayor of Ambon. The main task of the team was to ensure the people to become ready in time and willing to support the Maluku Meeting in Malino. The team worked in clandestine ways to develop various strategies to recruit persons of high integrity in viewing the reality of the Maluku conflict and to convey the message of peace through the various local mass media. The results were regarded as quite effective, since most of the people were looking forward to the Maluku Meeting. The Christian church for example suggested their community to fast and pray during the meeting. This was to consolidate their moral and spiritual support for the success of the meeting.

After the Maluku Meeting in Malino, the government of Ambon City still had to face the pressures from both communities directly or indirectly. There were groups that questioned the legitimacy of the Malino deal. There were others that had doubts in the integrity and the seriousness of the state in taking responsibility of the people of Maluku, since the government was regarded as incompetent in resolving the Maluku conflict. In addressing these pressures, the Mayor and the Vice Mayor not only coordinated with the security authority and local press, but also utilized the government officials of Ambon City and prominent figures to consolidate the views of the respective communities. The aim was to minimize and/or to prevent polarization in the community and to avoid any hindrance to the reconciliation process. In this connection, the Mayor of Ambon admitted that there was no special team to counter these negative issues. However, by "taking control" of the journalists of certain local media and having a network of academicians of Pattimura University, the public figures and religious leaders, the grass root community, and the officials in the government of Ambon City that are influential, the management of issues was done to neutralize the provocative issues as well as to promote issues that encourage peace.

The people took most interest in one of the popular issues of revitalization of the traditional/customary institution. This issue was regarded as an important factor in the Maluku conflict. The destruction of the traditional values is assumed to be one of the factors that indirectly instigated the Maluku conflict. To revitalize the customary

¹⁸ The Maluku Meeting in Malino was held on February 11-12, 2002 in Malino, South Sulawesi. The meeting resulted in the Maluku Agreement of Malino consisting of 11 points that was signed on February 12, 2002.

¹⁹ The Working Group worked secretly, but had regular weekly meetings.

traditional institutions, the City Government responded by forming a team of academicians to formulate the Ordinance regulating the *Negeri*²⁰.

Between 2001 and 2003, the physical development in Ambon City virtually could not be done. Despite the de-escalated condition of the conflict after the Maluku Agreement in Malino, the rehabilitation and reconstruction process of public facilities was not sufficiently accomplished. With support of the central government funds channeled through the Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 6/2003, in 2004 the recovery process gradually started to take place and the intensity grew as the condition improved.

In the recovery process, the policy of the government of Ambon City was also adjusted to the objective reality and to the community aspiration. This is the reason for the even distribution of the infrastructure development – both in terms of rehabilitation and reconstruction – in the segregated residential locations. The fairness of the distribution of assets was for public interest. The accommodative development politics under the leadership of the government of Ambon City nowadays, is still influenced by political considerations to ensure social stability and security, although upholding objectivity principles.

3.3.4. The Leihitu and Passo Case

In 2005, as the situation in Ambon became more conducive, the mayor of Ambon City initiated the idea of developing the Leihitu peninsula²¹ as an integral part of the development of Ambon City, and developing Passo²² as the new center of economic activity.

The first idea was not easy to implement as the peninsula of Leihitu was beyond the jurisdiction of the Mayor of Ambon. The idea was introduced to ensure a balance between the advancement of Ambon City on one side and the development of Central Maluku District on the other side. The rapid progress of Ambon City was deemed to provoke social resentment and could be fatal in the process of maintaining and sustaining peace in the future.

Meanwhile the second idea had to face serious challenges particularly from the people residing in the Leihitu peninsula. The establishment of a new economic center along with the transit terminal in Passo could ruin the economic activity of the Leihitu people. If formerly the Leihitu citizens could directly interact in the markets of central Ambon City, then with the development of the facilities and economic infrastructure in

²⁰ The drafting of the Ordinance has been completed. However, due to academic technical reasons, the draft was further revised. Currently the draft of the ordinance on *Negeri* has been submitted to the local parliament but has not yet been ratified.

²¹This is an administrative region of the government of Central Maluku District that is mostly occupied by Moslems.

²² Residential areas /village dominated by the Christians.

Passo, the Leihitu people must transit first in Passo before entering Ambon City; this idea could harm the economic interest of the Leihitu people.

From the view point of the government of Ambon City, specifically the Mayor, the idea was actually related to the efforts to control the traffic from and to Ambon that is quite congested in several points. Another reason is the intention to expand the economic activity for the convenience of the people of Ambon City particularly the residents in the Sub-District of Ambon Baguala Bay²³. After several meetings with the mayor and through public exposition in the local media, the idea was eventually adopted without any significant resistance.

The above mentioned reality indicates that public policies that are not “comprehensive” may bring negative implications if not managed well. Despite having legal authority, the government of Ambon City cannot automatically develop nor build its city region unless the people consider it is done for their interest. In this context, wisdom is needed when interacting with the people.

3.3.5. Using Sports as a Media for Reconciliation

Another important policy from the Ambon City government towards the end of the term of the Mayor and Vice Mayor for 2001-2006 is the support to the Indonesian National Sports Committee (KONI) of Ambon City. The programs to be carried out include several sports activities as a means or a bridge for cross-community reconciliation (sports for peace). The support to KONI peaked in April 2006, with the event of the Ambon City Sports Week (Porkot). The sports event not only was intended to search and to find outstanding athletes to compete on behalf of Ambon City in the 2007 Maluku Sports Week (Popmal), but also to strengthen the social relations as well as to test the social stability and security in Ambon.

In the preparation for the Ambon City Sports Week (Porkot Ambon), the Ambon City KONI formed the Organizing Committee derived from the management of various branches of sports association that had diverse backgrounds of ethnicity and religion. This was done on purpose to minimize negative sentiments and to bridge the citizens and the athletes that were spread in both communities.

Some thought that the Porkot would create a new problem or it was thought that certain groups would take advantage of this event to probe social instability in Ambon City. However, the Porkot event - that involved almost 2000 sportsmen and sports-women competing in different venues located in both communities - ran smoothly without any incident whatsoever.

²³ Passo is the capital of the District of Ambon Baguala Bay.

3.3.6. Repatriation of Refugees

Another strategic policy that is worth noting is the effort of the Government of Ambon City together with the Government of Maluku Province in repatriating the refugees of Ambon City. Despite having many issues related to the rights of the refugees, the program - to return the Christian refugees to Poka Village and Rumahtiga along with repatriating the Moslem refugees of the Buton ethnicity to mingle with the Christian people of Latta village - should be appreciated. Ever since the repatriation of the refugees in 2005/2006 and up to now they have lived side by side without any problems. The repatriation of the refugees was not an easy task as admitted by competent government officials. They had to go through repeated coordination with the local figures and the community to ensure that the refugees were accepted to return to their homeland²⁴.

To restore the trust the people to live as neighbors that have different religions after experiencing a conflict of three years, is certainly not as easy as turning the palm of your hand. The government of Ambon City apparently is aware that the international and the local NGOs or CSOs had made significant contribution to their success. The involvement of these CSOs in advocating the people was deemed valuable in the repatriation process. Up to now the handling of refugees has not been fully settled, particularly in relation to the rights of the refugees. The Mayor and his officers explained that in this issue the responsibility is still in the hands of the government of Maluku Province and has not yet been handed over to the Ambon City government. For this reason, the government of Ambon City always urges the government of Maluku Province to settle the problem promptly to avoid further conflict. Although the public policies produced during 2001-2006, specifically the second phase of the two-year development plan, were not able to fully restore the economic condition of Ambon City as expected, however the trend was positive. This was indicated by the improvement of the economy of the City that has grown each year coupled with the recovery of the social stability and security.

²⁴ The repatriation process of the refugees could not have been done without the assistance of the international and national civil society organizations. Their role was significant in promoting public awareness to mutually accept each other. The CSO also gave assistance in different forms of other aid.

4. POLITICAL PROCESS AND PRO-PEACE PUBLIC POLICY (AFTER 2006)

4.1. The 2006 Local-Head Elections

After the tenure of the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City for the term of 2001-2006, the people of Ambon City then had to deal with the local-head election (Pilkada) held directly. In this context, five pairs of candidates competed for the office; the respective candidates reflected the representation of the communities. Four out of five pairs of the candidates for mayor were Christians meanwhile the vice mayor was Moslem; there was only one mayor-candidate who was a Moslem while his vice mayor was Catholic²⁵. These facts had to be raised since it is related to the public perception particularly the political elite's perception of the political reality in Ambon City. In their view, Ambon City is a region where Christians are the majority, therefore, it is only natural to have a mayor who is Christian²⁶. This opinion, of course is not always justified in the democratic era of objective and rational political preferences. Nevertheless, the facts show that the local political elite and the political choices are still dominated by or oriented towards religious primordial sentiments.

The political consolidation of the respective pairs of candidates nowadays is apparent across political parties, ethnicity and religion. The formation of the campaign team also shows a variety in terms of political parties, ethnicity and religion, enabling them to go beyond the limits of primordialism. For post conflicts regions such as Ambon City, this indirectly shows there is progress in the reconciliation process.

Although this process did not affect the people's political interest, however, it had a significant implication on the political parties. The functionary of the political party that disagrees with the candidates supported by their party may have the freedom to give their support to other candidates from their own political party or from other parties. As a consequence, there have been frictions among the cadres of the political parties that may influence the consolidation of the parties in supporting their candidate.

Another interesting reality to observe is the presence of one candidate for mayor who is Moslem, since the consolidation of the political parties apparently exploits the issue of religion. The votes gathered for this candidate positioned him to run the fourth place (out of five) in the elections. This indicates that the people's political choice is not completely based on their primordial sentiment, even if the candidate got quite significant votes in Moslem community. The elections were won by Drs. M. J. Papilaja,

²⁵ According to some sources, the participation of a Moslem candidate was encouraged and facilitated by a certain candidate. Based on their analysis, this was a strategy to split the support towards a pair of candidates that is assumed to have strong support from the Moslem community.

²⁶ The validity of this thesis has been tested when compared with the formation of the candidates in the election process in other districts in Maluku Province.

MS (PDIP) and Dra. Olivia Salampessy/Latuconsina (Golkar Party) with a significant number of votes.

4.2. Public Policy in 2006-2011

As in the vision of the elected Mayor and Vice Mayor for the period of 2006-2011 that was further accommodated in the Medium-term Development Plan (RPJM) of Ambon City, the government is focused to “coach the Ambonese as ‘sweet’ people”²⁷ as a prerequisite in developing Ambon City and to improve the dignified quality of life that is sustainable”²⁸. The essence of this vision is to stimulate and develop the awareness of the citizens of Ambon City based on religious cultural values that is hoped to become a social capital/asset for the sake of development.

Upon observing the RPJM of Ambon City for the period of 2006-2011, the Ambon City government is quite aware of the continuity of the development process. In the five year period, the development process is still oriented towards two phases, that is the first two-year stage (2006-2008) and the second three-year stage (2009-2011), with the focus of the respective stages as follow:

(a) The first stage: consolidating several competent institutions to maintain and enhance social stability and security through optimizing social capital within the society. This is to ensure that all the development activities can run safely and smoothly with the support from the society.

In the first stage, infrastructure will be built and expanded to support the dynamic development of Ambon City as the center of economic activities and business transits.

(b) The second stage: to continue the development from the first stage and putting effort to enhance the welfare of the people. This stage is done through the development of the Ambonese character towards a prosperous, just, high-morality and dignified society.

In connection with the staging of the development plan, the concentration of the past, current and future RPJM basically refers to four strategic issues: (1) cultivating the unity of the Ambones people; (2) maintenance and enhancement of social stability and security; (3) development and expansion of infrastructure; and (4) enhancing the welfare of the people in a sustainable manner. From the point of view of the government of Ambon City that refers to the ideas of the elected Mayor and Vice Mayor, the potential of new conflict either inherited from the past or from other sources should be managed well so that no destructive manifestation would disturb the development process (particularly the post conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction).

²⁷ The word ‘manis’ (sweet) was adopted from the expression of Ambon Manise; an expression that reflects the beautiful natural environment and the courtesy of the citizens of Ambon City in social interaction.

²⁸ Vision of RPJM Ambon City 2006-2011.

Besides that, the development and expansion of infrastructure that was not done in the previous five years needs to be carried out as soon as possible to allow the functions of the facilities of Ambon City to run as a business and economy center of Maluku Province. If the infrastructure can be provided in the first two-year stage, then the effort to enhance the people's welfare can be done in the second stage of the three-year period.²⁹ It is assumed that the dynamic economic process will stimulate and motivate the people to be actively involved and not recall the traumatic experience during the conflict.

Ambon City basically has the potential for social stability and security. This was indicated by the enthusiastic response from the people towards the reconciliation process, and the prompt resolution of the Maluku conflict³⁰. Meanwhile the potential of economic growth was indicated by the macro economic measures that continued to improve. If such social security could be sustained or in fact be enhanced in terms of quality, it is believed that the recovery of the regional economy will positively affect the social welfare.

In this era of leadership, the public policy - related to the maintenance and enhancement of social stability and security - should be consistent. Communication and coordination with religious leaders and public figures must often be conducted even though it may be just a social call. This is also done through the socio-cultural power as the gateway to integrate the citizens of Ambon City that are multicultural-polyethnic. The vision of the Government of Ambon City that has been previously constellated shows such effort towards the aforementioned vision and the draft ordinance on the *Negeri* that has been submitted to the local parliament is awaiting to be ratified.

5. ANALYTICAL IMPLICATIONS: POLITICAL PROCESS AND PUBLIC POLICIES OF AMBON CITY

Henk Schulte Nordhold supported by several other scholars such as William Frederick, Robert Cribb, Freek Colombijn, and Ryter for example, argued that the violence that occurred in Indonesia shows a *genealogy of violence* through the role of the regime that legitimizes the use of violence by the state (*state-sponsored violence*) [syamsul Hadi, et. al, 2007:9-10]. However, the deployment of the police and the military force to assist the mitigation of the conflict is inevitable particularly in the initial stage of the conflict resolution.

²⁹ Interview with the Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency of Ambon City and the directives from the Mayor of Ambon City to Drafting Team of the RPJM Ambon City for the period of 2006-2011.

³⁰ Some were skeptical in viewing such destructive conflict in Maluku that it was assumed that the reconciliation would be lengthy. In contrary, the conflict resolution was done in a relatively short period of time.

Various arguments assessed the development of the conflict in Indonesia and opportunely Indonesia did not become a *failed state* or even a *collapsed state* [Syamsul Hadi, et.al, 2007:8-9], however, it was overlooked that the state (the central government or the local government) had a significant contribution in the violence.

From various public policy facts (and supported by the Government of Ambon City), apparently the *peace building policies* initiated and executed by the Government either directly or indirectly has a significant meaning for the people of Ambon City that was once divided due to the social conflict. This policy can be viewed or understood as the effort to transform the conflict creatively without violence. [Galtung, 2003:595]. This means how to carry out the conflict resolution and manage the potential conflict by employing the network of authority of the Government of Ambon City. The government institution became the last resort in resolving the conflict, since the prevailing social institutions in a situation of conflict could not function as the *safety valve* - in fact some were contaminated by the conflictive situation. To give meaning on *Governance as conflict management*, Zartman [1997:1], wrote:

Governing a state is not only the prevention of conflict from destroying the country, it is the continual effort to handle the ordinary conflict among groups and their demands which arise as society plays its role in the conduct of normal politics.

From the initial process of the elections of the Mayor and Vice Mayor, the vision and mission of the candidates were quite clear in resolving the conflict specifically in Ambon City. This was indicated by the vision and mission of the pairs of candidates that was created to represent each community. This is certainly an important asset as the turning point to bridge the differences in the community. The implication of uniting two people as a couple for the elections has also encouraged the consolidation of the people regardless of their ethnicity and religion – to support their candidate. In post conflict regions such as Maluku particularly Ambon, this reality is an important issue, since the political process could function as the bridge to unite the two conflicting communities. In other words, the political process has positioned people or groups at different poles and to some extent this turned out to be functional towards the integration process exceeding the boundaries of ethnicity, race, religion and it serves as an effective safety valve to sustain social stability and security in the post conflict period.

The public policy specifically in Ambon City within the last seven years has shown that the government of Ambon City is capable to run its duties and function. Most of the energy spent to deliberate and formulize a solution for the conflict was not wasted. The government of Ambon City is quite aware that any public policy they issue in such situation, should not allow room for bias nor taking sides of a certain community. Not all public policies were positively responded or were without challenges, however,

through persuasive approaches and explanation on certain public policy, the public could accept the policy. The plan to expand Passo as one of the economic centers in Ambon City for example was initially resisted, but upon rational argumentation and clear explanation of the plan, the public endorsed the idea.

The support from the legislative is one of the strengths in determining the success of the role of the Ambon City government. This support shows how effective the communication and coordination across institutions were. Although sometimes there were disputes between the executives and the legislatures, the notion to prevent polarization in the community was always upheld and that any dispute should be resolved and be focused to conflict resolution.

The government of Ambon City allocated much energy and time to establish peace by initiating social stability and security. The cultural-religious-based concept of social approach applied to the conflicting groups was quite effective in establishing a “common space” that allowed contact and communication among the people of different ethnicity and religion.

The consolidation of the institutions within the government of Ambon City after the instatement of the new leadership in Ambon City is one of the important policies that had positive impact to eliminate provocative issues that usually are the ammunition to trigger the conflict in Ambon City. The *Fit and proper test* as a step to rationalize the decision-making process from the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon City, has induced a positive impression towards an unbiased leader that considers performance-based assessment and competence (merit system) and a leader that prioritizes public interest.

The process of repatriating the refugees to the villages of Poka, Rumahtiga, and Latta, is one of the significant turning points to build mutual social trust within the community. Therefore, it is understandable that the effort to provoke the people by throwing a grenade in the yard of the Al Fatah Mosque in Ambon³¹ for example, did not receive any response from the people. In contrary, most of the people considered that as an attempt of the provocateur to disturb the peace and social stability. The people chose to refuse this provocation and carry on with their own business.

Using sports as a media for reconciliation is an appropriate strategy to reinforce the social stability and security. Through this *event*, at least for a week the people were able to interact intensively either with the athletes or with other citizens. The regional approach of the sub-districts in the context of the sports event (Porkot) was successful in consolidating the citizens - regardless of their ethnicity and religion - to support their representative from that particular sub-district in competing in the sports event to uphold their sub-districts pride and name

Observing the political process and public policy in the two designated periods of leadership, it can be seen that there is a difference in the focus but both are correlated.

³¹ The case occurred in May 2006 around 5 a.m. Up to now the perpetrator has not been identified.

In the period of 2001-2006, the political process and public policy was more focused on conflict resolution (to settle and minimize potential conflict). In the following period, the emphasis was on conflict management (minimizing potential conflict and maintaining peace). In this context, the *spirit* of regional autonomy has opened ample room for the local process to allow the forces in the community to be combined, to be merged and utilized to resolve the conflict in Maluku and establish peace in Ambon City.

Currently, although most of the citizens reside in segregated areas, there are public spaces to allow interaction among the people including the traditional markets that can be accessed by all citizens regardless of their ethnicity or religion. This should be noted as an important progress for the people of Ambon City that once suffered from the conflict but managed to resolve the situation in a relatively short time.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The government of Ambon City could not have settled the conflict without the assistance and collaboration from other institutions. However, the role of the local government has a significant meaning in representing the state to have the duty and responsibility to provide, to protect and to tend all the people in various aspects of their lives.

The successful political process that introduced the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Ambon amidst a situation of conflict reflects the potential to reconcile within the community. Therefore, the support towards the many public policies that are pro-peace is only natural in the community of Maluku specifically in Ambon City. The public realize that they may have been “set up” or “trapped” in a conflictive situation and this is nothing absurd. This awareness was reinforced by the government policies that were viewed as unbiased and continued as a collective movement of the people to support the social stability and security. If the ideas in the Regional Medium-term Development Plan and the Regional Long-term Development Plan particularly related to the peace building process are consistently implemented, then people of Ambon City in the future will be able to enjoy a peaceful and convenient life under a social system that cultivates sustainable peace.

To reinforce the contribution of the political process and public policy for the interest of sustainable peace in Ambon City, there is a need for *capacity building* of the government institutions and the designated citizens. The capacity building is to ensure that the political process and the future public policies are oriented towards the principles of conflict sensitivity considering that active interaction of the people Ambon City amidst the transformation wave in the local, national and international level. In this connection, local values and local wisdom should be taking into

consideration to strengthen the position and the role of civil society organization in the era of regional autonomy.

Furthermore, to ensure sustainable peace in Maluku Province particularly in Ambon City, there is a need to study further whether the post-conflict reintegration of the social and political process was appropriate and as expected. The answers to these questions are important for Indonesia particularly for Maluku Province and Ambon City in the era of regional autonomy to understand the determinant factors of establishing sustainable peace and to continue their development to enhance the prosperity of the people.

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