



**Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**  
**Facultad de Filosofía y Letras**  
**Departamento de Historia Contemporánea**

**Local Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation in Indonesia**

**Tesis Doctoral**

**Directora: Darina Martykánová**  
**Doctorando: Idham Badruzaman**

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## ABSTRACT

Title : **Local Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation in Indonesia**

Author : **Idham Badruzaman**

Supervisor: **Dr. Darina Martykánová**

After the fall of Suharto's authoritarian regime in 1998, Indonesia experienced severe and intractable conflicts resulting in thousands of casualties, primarily civilians. While fighting and civil unrest emerged in many parts of Indonesia, in three areas such conflicts proved more prone to escalation into bloody violence, due to the clashes being fueled by political, ethnic, and religious tensions and grievances. These areas include: 1) the province of Aceh, where the issue of separatism resulted in numerous deaths, estimated to be over 1,000 victims; 2) Sampit in Central Kalimantan, where more than 500 people from both Dayak and Madurese ethnic groups lost their lives in what have been labeled as ethnic clashes; and 3) Ambon in the Maluku Islands, where religious conflict culminated in more than 1,000 deaths of both Muslims and Christians. This research aims to document and examine local forms of conflict transformation and reconciliation in Indonesia. The research found that local values and local actors played a significant role in transforming the conflict in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh. In the case of Ambon, local values are firmly in place and local actors use all their creative potential to craft peace. Beginning with *pela* and *gandong*, the relationship between villages which is ancestor-and-agreement-based, the people of Ambon have strived to regain their previous condition: one in which people did not see religion as a barrier to interacting extensively with each other. In the case of Sampit, the Dayak local people conducted an assembly which was responded to with a Madurese local people's assembly in the refugee camp. Intense efforts and points of contact have been made between the Dayak and Madurese to find ways to live together again peacefully. Finally, the government of Indonesia was able to make peace in Aceh by involving the local people and valuing Aceh local traditions. The mission that was carried out by the Indonesian government was described by Jusuf Kalla as 'conflict resolution with dignity for all' (both for the Indonesian government and *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or Free Aceh Movement – GAM).

**Keywords:** Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation, Locals, Indonesia

## RESUMEN

Título: **Transformación del conflicto local y reconciliación en Indonesia**

Autor: **Idham Badruzaman**

Diretora: **Dra. Darina Martykánová**

Tras la caída del régimen autoritario de Suharto en 1998, Indonesia experimentó graves y complejos conflictos que causaron miles de víctimas, principalmente civiles. Aunque en muchas partes del país se produjeron enfrentamientos y disturbios civiles, en tres zonas los conflictos resultaron más propensos a alcanzar una violencia sangrienta, debido a que estaban marcados por tensiones y agravios políticos, étnicos y religiosos. Estas áreas incluyen: 1) la provincia de Aceh, donde la cuestión del separatismo provocó numerosas muertes, estimadas en más de 1000 víctimas; 2) Sampit, en Kalimantan Central, donde más de 500 personas de los grupos étnicos dakak y madurese perdieron la vida en lo que se ha calificado de enfrentamientos étnicos; y 3) Ambon, en las Islas Maluku, donde el conflicto religioso culminó con más de 1000 muertes tanto de musulmanes como de cristianos. Esta investigación pretende documentar y examinar las formas locales de transformación del conflicto y de reconciliación en Indonesia. El trabajo ha descubierto que los valores y los actores locales desempeñaron un papel importante en la transformación del conflicto en Ambon, Sampit y Aceh. En el caso de Ambon, los valores locales están firmemente arraigados y los actores locales utilizaron todo su potencial creativo para construir la paz. Partiendo del *pela* y el *gandong* —la relación entre pueblos basada en los ancestros y en los acuerdos—, los habitantes de Ambon se han esforzado para recuperar su condición previa: una en la que la población no consideraba la religión como una barrera para interactuar con los demás. En el caso de Sampit, el pueblo dayak celebró una asamblea que fue contestada con otra por parte del pueblo madurese en el campo de refugiados. Se han hecho intensos esfuerzos y desarrollado puntos de contacto entre ambos pueblos para encontrar la forma de vivir pacíficamente de nuevo. Finalmente, el gobierno de Indonesia pudo lograr la paz en Aceh involucrando a la población local y valorando las tradiciones locales de la provincia. La misión llevada a cabo por el gobierno indonesio fue descrita por Jusuf Kalla como una “resolución del conflicto con dignidad para todos” (tanto para el gobierno indonesio como para el *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* o Movimiento Aceh Libre - GAM).

**Palabras clave:** construcción de paz, transformación del conflicto, población local, Indonesia

## Content (Provisional)

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## INTRODUCTION

After the fall of President Suharto's authoritarian regime (12 March 1967–21 May 1998) in 1998, Indonesia introduced a new governmental system with decentralization as one of its key features. Decentralization made the central government give up most aspects of its authority to local government. According to Law No. 22, enacted in 1999, local government is responsible for all aspects except foreign policy, security and defense, justice, monetary and fiscal, and the following elements below:

*The authority in other fields as referred to in paragraph (1) includes policies on national planning and control of national development at a macro level, financial balance funds, the state administration system and state economic institutions, fostering and empowerment of human resources, utilization of natural resources and high technology strategic, conservation, and national standardization.*<sup>1</sup>

However, during this transition, Indonesia experienced severe and intractable conflicts resulting in thousands of casualties, primarily civilians. While fighting and civil unrest emerged in many parts of Indonesia, in three areas such conflicts proved more prone to escalation into bloody violence, due to the clashes being fueled by political, ethnic, and religious tensions and grievances. These areas include: 1) the province of Aceh, where the issue of separatism resulted in numerous deaths, estimated to be over 1,000 victims;<sup>2</sup> 2) Sampit in Central Kalimantan, where more than 500 people from both Dayak and Madurese ethnic groups lost their lives in what have been labeled as ethnic clashes;<sup>3</sup> and 3) Ambon in the Maluku Islands, where religious conflict culminated in more than 1,000 deaths of both Muslims and Christians.<sup>4</sup> I will explain each case in further detail, each in a separate chapter.

This thesis examines the use of local forms of conflict transformation, dialogue and reconciliation to resolve or transform conflict in these three areas and to build peace. It focuses mainly on the role, in peacebuilding processes, of local people living in these areas. The

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Law on Local-Government* (Jakarta, 1999) <<http://www.bphn.go.id/data/documents/99uu022.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> Michelle Ann Miller, 'The Conflict in Aceh: Context, Precursors and Catalysts', *Accord*, 20, 2003, 12–15 <[https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Accord\\_20\\_3The conflict in Aceh\\_2008\\_ENG.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Accord_20_3The%20conflict%20in%20Aceh_2008_ENG.pdf)>; Paul Collier, Sambanis Nicholas, and World Bank, *Understanding Civil War : Evidence and Analysis / Edited by Paul Collier, Nicholas Sambanis* (World Bank Washington, D.C, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Frank Fanselow, 'Indigenous and Anthropological Theories of Ethnic Conflict in Kalimantan', *Zinbun*, 45 (2015), 131–47 <<https://doi.org/10.14989/197513>>.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Wilson, *Overcoming Violent Conflict*, ed. by Eugenia; Melina Nathan; Suzanne Charlé Piza-Lopez, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit -UNDP, Bappenas, CSPS, Labsosio and LIPI*, Vol 4 (Jakarta, 2005); Kirsten E Schulze, 'The "Ethnic" in Indonesia's Communal Conflicts: Violence in Ambon, Poso, and Sambas', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40.12 (2017), 2096–2114 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1277030>>.

research entails analysis of the historical, cultural, religious, and political dimensions of conventional conflict transformation practices, dialogue, and peacebuilding. Most scholarly works on conflict transformation and reconciliation tend to ignore or neglect local or customary practices, or to minimize their role and focus instead on externally imposed conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies. In the Indonesian context, two recent studies by Birgit Bräuchler and Qurtubi have highlighted the success of local forms of conflict transformation and reconciliation in Ambon.<sup>5</sup> One example is *musyawarah*, which loosely translates into English as ‘dialogue.’ It is an approach to conflict with a long history within a local minority group (around 80 families) called *rukun tetangga* (‘peaceful neighbors’). Within this community, *musyawarah* is routinely practiced once a month, sometimes more often where necessary. These practices appear to be highly effective in mitigating violence within communities.<sup>6</sup> Another example found in Maluku is *pela* and *gandong*, both of which refer to cultural agreements between two villages, regardless of their religions. Both *pela* and *gandong* also appear to have been very useful in terms of reconciliation and conflict transformation.<sup>7</sup> In Sampit, *Mapas Lewu* united both the Madurese and Dayak peoples in one activity annually, and it helped to nurture the reconciliation and peacekeeping process in the area. Last but not least, *pemulia jamek* means ‘welcoming the guest,’ which has been the tradition of Aceh people; this practice enabled Farid, an informal negotiator of the government, to succeed in bringing about a peace agreement, ending the violent conflict of more than 28 years. The use of such local wisdom is elaborated upon in the respective chapters of the case study.

Finally, people have created memorials to commemorate past events and to remind them not to make the same mistakes in the future. For example, an enormous peace gong was erected in the city center in Ambon; Sampit has a peace monument standing at the roundabout of the city’s main road; in Aceh a peace memorial hall has been established in this province’s capital city. Similar reminders of human tragedies embodied in monuments occur in many locations, such as the Gernika Peace Museum Foundation in Spain, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Japan, and the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing, China.

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<sup>5</sup> Birgit Bräuchler did research on how the cultural dimension helped the people of Ambon to contribute significantly to peacebuilding efforts; while Qurtubi looked at the religious aspect as motivation for the people of Ambon to involve themselves in the peacemaking process.

<sup>6</sup> M. Iqbal Ahnaf, *Papua Mengelola Kebaragaman*, 1st edn (Yogyakarta: CRCS, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Birgit Bräuchler, *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Maluku*. In: *The Cultural Dimension of Peace. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) <[https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137504357\\_3](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137504357_3)>.



## The objective of the research

This research aims to document and examine local forms of conflict transformation and reconciliation in Indonesia. One part of the hypothesis states that conflict transformation essentially takes place in the region where the conflict arises. Beginning in the 1990s, the role of local people in peace efforts began to surface, following the acknowledgment that international actors had failed to carry out peace efforts in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. In 2000 UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the importance of local roles in peace efforts: “... *an approach to peacebuilding that emphasizes the importance of building local capacity for conflict resolution.*”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, due to growing criticism of the condescending nature of international aid and cooperation schemes, international funding organizations now require local involvement as a condition of receiving funding. Taken together, these trends have stimulated not only active local participation in peacebuilding but also researchers’ growing interest in it. Hanna and Gustav elaborated on the phenomenon with what they called “the local turn.” They argued that this term includes two dimensions: firstly, that the local has the potential to be an effective means in peacebuilding; secondly, the dimension of equality, where locals could voice their aspirations from below.

This research will also build on existing knowledge of local forms of conflict transformation and reconciliation in Indonesia and elsewhere. Several scholars have written on the subject, especially concerning Ambon, where many researchers are interested in studying the fascinating forms of brotherhood among people in the region regardless of their religious differences. Birgit Bräuchler wrote a book entitled *The Cultural Dimension of Peace: Decentralization and Reconciliation in Indonesia*, which elaborates on cultural revival in the reconciliation process. In Birgit’s words: “... *this study highlights the importance of culture for the restoration of sustainable peace in a society that has been torn apart by an alleged religious war.*”<sup>9</sup>

Sumanto Al Qurtuby, on the other hand, published a book with the title *Religious Violence and Conciliation in Indonesia: Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas*.

Furthermore, the thesis is intended to contribute to the growing literature on the study of peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and reconciliation. This research will fill a perceived

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<sup>8</sup> Hanna Leonardsson and Gustav Rudd, ‘The “Local Turn” in Peacebuilding: A Literature Review of Effective and Emancipatory Local Peacebuilding’, *Third World Quarterly*, 36.5 (2015), 825–39  
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1029905>>.

<sup>9</sup> Bräuchler, p. xvii.

gap in the literature, by serving as an alternative reference within the subject of ‘conflict transformation and reconciliation based on local values and the actions of key local players.’ It can also be referred to as a case study of Indonesia, especially regarding the events of the political transition between 1998 and 2005.

Finally, the study aims to provide data on conflict prevention, management and resolution, and group peacebuilding to contribute toward policy formulation and renovation. Consultation of research results can be one of the considerations for all stakeholders in local government, central government, and even non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before any decisions relating to security, stability, and peacebuilding in the region are made.

My research is guided by theoretical insights on conflict transformation and reconciliation in scholarly work by philosophers of peace and conflict transformation such as Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach, Vicent Martínez Guzmán, Fransisco A. Muñoz, and Wolfgang Dietrich. Johan Galtung stated that the absence of war or violence does not mean that we have achieved peace. Galtung refers to the absence of war or violence as ‘negative peace’; he refers to ‘positive peace’ where a person or group of people has achieved justice, fearlessness, comfort, and restoration of relations between warring parties after war or acts of violence.<sup>10</sup> Lederach continues the firm foundation of thought on conflict and peace with a ‘bottom-up’ idea of peacebuilding, in which he creates a pyramid of peace interventions intended for different levels, including grassroots, middle range, and top leaders.<sup>11</sup> These theories and concepts will be explored further in chapter one.

Vicent Martínez Guzmán is the figure who laid the foundations for peace studies in Spain and several other countries worldwide. His phenomenal work is *Filosofía para hacer las paces*, in which he explains that the philosophy of peace is “*the normative reconstruction of the capacities and competencies for transforming human suffering and conflicts by peaceful means.*”<sup>12</sup> Like Lederach, he is a scholar who believes that civil society has a vital role in peace efforts. He believes that peace research must transcend the nation-state’s boundaries, seeing conflicts and peace in the context of an interconnected global system.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Johan Galtung, ‘Violence, Peace, and Peace Research’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6.3 (1969), 167–91 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>>.

<sup>11</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace [Microform] : Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies / John Paul Lederach*, ed. by United States Institute of Peace Press (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Vicent Martínez Guzmán, *Filosofía para hacer las paces* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Fabricio Forastelli, ‘Peace Profile: Vicent Martínez Guzmán’, *Peace Review*, 25.3 (2013), 439–46 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2013.816573>>.

Meanwhile, Wolfgang Dietrich and Francisco A. Muñoz hold similar opinions to one another about peace. Dietrich believes that peace is not singular; this is why he often refers to it as ‘many peace(s)’ divided into two main categories, namely internal (or inside humans), and external (or outside humans).<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Muñoz believes that peace is not singular, but he describes it in terms of imperfect peace or, in other words, what he terms unfinished peace. Hence, “imperfect peace” means that peacebuilding never ends because peace is relative and a never-ending process.<sup>15</sup>

I will examine the following scholars’ works from an anthropological perspective: Alberto Gomes, Birgit Bräuchler, and Sumanto Al Qurtubi. These three researchers hold a similar view of the values that exist in ‘local.’ Those values serve as the keepers of equilibrium among them. Although the three scholars agree on respecting local values, their starting points are different. Alberto Gomes is more concerned with the ecology of local peoples. According to him, locals have a strong attachment to ecology, as he observed primarily in Malaysia’s *Semai* indigenous community. In contrast, the government seeks only benefits and often ignores the relationship between the indigenous people and their environment and ecology.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the government has ambitious plans for development, which disrupt the equilibrium in society and often result in the persistence of violent conflict. Alberto terms it ‘4G Syndrome,’ which stands for Growth, Glut, Greed, and Grievance. Simply put, growth makes the government compete to maximize excess production, which produces a glut. Later, the glut leads to an attitude of greed, and, in the end, this results in a grievance, mostly among ‘local’ residents as a consequence of being exploited.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, Qurtubi and Bräuchler believe that the values held by local people have a role in creating peace. Qurtubi thought that religion, while initially a critical element in the conflict, could later lead people back to peace, as they realized that it was not religion that had made them fight, but rather people. Unlike Qurtubi, Bräuchler investigated traditions that had nothing

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<sup>14</sup> Wolfgang Dietrich, ‘Imperfect and Transrational Interpretations of Peace(S)’, *Prospectiva*, 1213.26 (2018), 195–210 <<https://doi.org/10.25100/prts.v0i26.6623>>.

<sup>15</sup> Joanna Swanger, ‘Nigel J. Young (Ed.), The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace’, *Peace Review*, 25.2 (2013), 313–17 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2013.785777>>; Francisco A. Muñoz, ‘Imperfect Peace’, *Universidad de Granada*, 2010 <<http://www.ugr.es/~fmunoz/documentos/ImperfectPeacepisa.pdf>> [accessed 5 May 2021].

<sup>16</sup> Alberto Gomes, ‘Alter-Native “Development”: Indigenous Forms of Social Ecology’, *Third World Quarterly*, 33.6 (2012), 1059–73 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.681491>>.

<sup>17</sup> Gomes.

to do with religion. According to her, such traditions can reunite people since they are unaffected by the differences in the respective faiths.<sup>18</sup>

In respect of the historical aspect, I use collective memory theory by Maurice Halbwachs, which Marie-Claire Lavabre later complemented with her work.<sup>19</sup> Maurice Halbwachs is the sociologist who first articulated the theory of collective memory, in 1925. According to Halbwachs, collective memory is a socially constructed idea. It does not just appear to a group of people; rather, collective memory needs validation by social institutions or recognition from certain groups.<sup>20</sup> Thus, each group may have different collective memories of the same thing. Collective memory has the property of sorting which memories must be produced, maintained, changed, or destroyed, and this is all adjusted to the interests of the group. A group will defend the collective memory if they benefit from it, and will instead try to change or destroy it if it is detrimental to the group. Furthermore, Marie-Claire Lavabre complemented this theory in the context of the late twentieth century. According to Lavabre, every social thought is a memory, where the presence of things in the past is sometimes blind to itself and sometimes becomes a choice of reference to the past as a twofold dimension. Memory, as an image of similarity between past and present, is also the everyday experience of social worlds, groups, and the individuals who belong to or identify with these groups, resulting in “collective” or “socially shared” memories.<sup>21</sup> Nicolas Russell argues in his article that Lavabre’s opinion about collective memory in the late twentieth century has something to do with episodic memory, where a specific group experienced it.<sup>22</sup>

## Methodology

I used various methods to collect data for my research, including library research, content analysis (media reports and official documents), key-informant interviewing, and surveys. I carried out field research in Aceh, Sampit, and Ambon in Indonesia in order to conduct interviews and to study and collect official documents. I interviewed and consulted significant

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<sup>18</sup> Bräuchler.

<sup>19</sup> Marie Claire Lavabre, ‘Circulation, Internationalization, Globalization of the Question of Memory’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 25.2 (2012), 261–74 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6443.2012.01426.x>>.

<sup>20</sup> M Halbwachs and L A Coser, *On Collective Memory*, Heritage of Sociology Series (University of Chicago Press, 1992) <<https://books.google.es/books?id=ejfnDwAAQBAJ>>; Nicolas Russell, ‘Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs’, *The French Review*, 79.4 (2006), 792–804 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25480359>>; Idham Badruzaman, ‘Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a Case Study’, *CLCWeb - Comparative Literature and Culture*, 20.2 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3234>>.

<sup>21</sup> Lavabre.

<sup>22</sup> Russell.

informants during my field research, such as community stakeholders, the leaders of various organizations, and relevant NGOs and state departments.

As the primary resources of this research, I used in-depth interviews, newspapers, magazines, and notes made by journalists and other figures in the region when the conflict broke out, which had been later published as a book. I used newspapers and magazines that are considered to be among the country's oldest mass media, which have been covering the events since Indonesia's early independence, *Kompas* and *Tempo*. Army Commander General Ahmad Yani suggested the establishment of a newspaper by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) in order to counter the monopoly of the national media; this was called *Harian Rakyat (People's Daily)*. Later, Petrus Kanisius Ojong and Jakob Oetama picked up the idea and founded *Bentara Rakyat (People's Servant)* as an initial name on 28 June 1964. The name *Kompas*, which is written 'compass' in English and has the same meaning, was given by President Soekarno when the first newspaper was published on 28 June 1965.

In respect of the magazines, I used *Tempo*, which was set up by Goenawan Mohamad and five other journalists: Harjoko Trisnadi, Fikri Jufri, Lukman Setiawan, Usamah, and Christianto Wibisono, in 1971. *Tempo* means 'time,' and they chose it because of its simplicity, commonality (in the world of journalism), neutrality (in a sense that the word does not provoke anything), and impartiality (it does not represent any group in Indonesia).<sup>23</sup> There is a famous magazine in the US, also named 'Time.'

According to most Indonesians, both publications have always been relatively critical and independent, so they are often used as references. Furthermore, Suharto had banned both *Kompas* and *Tempo* during his rule as an authoritarian leader due to criticisms made toward his administration. The government banned *Kompas* and *Tempo* in 1978 and 1982, respectively. *Kompas* published an article about the students' movement against the New Order of Suharto, while *Tempo* became a critic toward Suharto and his new political vehicle, the Golkar Party.<sup>24</sup> After several negotiations, *Tempo* was eventually able to start publishing again, until it received a new ban in 1994 for criticisms concerning the purchase by the Indonesian authorities of

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<sup>23</sup> 'History of Tempo', *Tempo Official Website* <<https://www.tempo.id/corporate.php#:~:text=Pendirian majalah Tempo pada 1971,Samola yang menjabat sebagai sekretaris.>> [accessed 27 May 2021].

<sup>24</sup> During the Suharto era civil servants had to vote for the Golkar Political Party, which meant he could maintain power as a president for more than 31 years.

worthless second-hand warships, and the associated implication of corruption. *Tempo* could only reappear when the dictatorship fell in 1998.<sup>25</sup>

Before departing for my field research, I conducted extensive library research in order to formulate and elaborate upon the study's analytical and theoretical framework, and to develop leads for the field research, especially regarding acquisition of the interview schedule and survey questions. One of the primary issues I confirmed through interviews was how these key figures saw the start of the violent conflict. Secondly, I wanted to hear what the 'locals' did during and after the battle, in terms of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Finally, I went to see the local monuments and to observe their contribution to peacebuilding, reconciliation, and anticipation.

I was able to meet key figures of the conflict in each area: Ternate, Ambon, Sampit, Banda Aceh, Lhokseumawe, and Langsa. Some of them were actors (and victims) during the conflict. In Ambon, I met Ronald Regan and Iskandar Slameth, both of whom were child soldiers in the Christian and Muslim groups, respectively. In Sampit, I interviewed the head of the Madurese ethnic community, who was responsible for negotiating with the Dayak ethnic community. In Aceh, I interviewed one of the negotiators during a historic meeting in Helsinki, Finland.

The research has impacts in providing new insights into existing and proven practices of conflict transformation and reconciliation, particularly in the neglected area of *local forms* of conflict transformation and reconciliation. It also helps to revitalize and regenerate local forms of conflict transformation and reconciliation and, in the process, to rebuild marginalized communities. Finally, the research may help in the formulation of much-needed appropriate policies related to conflict management, peacebuilding, and peace education in both Indonesia and elsewhere.

## Filling the gap

Several scholars have examined the dialogue on conflict and peace, and have analyzed case studies around the world. Johan Galtung is considered to be the first scholar to have addressed this subject, long before the concepts of peace and conflict became known as such. One of his

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<sup>25</sup> Felix Nathaniel, 'Pemberedelan Tempo, DeTik, Dan Editor: Benih Penggulingan Soeharto', *Tirto*, 21 June 2020 <<https://tirto.id/pemberedelan-tempo-detik-dan-editor-benih-penggulingan-soeharto-fJ79>>; Gerin Rio, '50 Tahun Tempo, Satu Kisah Di Belakang Layar Pembredelan Majalah Tempo', *Tempo* (Jakarta, 6 March 2021) <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1439435/50-tahun-tempo-satu-kisah-di-belakang-layar-pembredelan-majalah-tempo/full&view=ok>>.

famous theories is that of positive and negative peace, which goes beyond the general understanding of seeing peace as a condition without violence or war. The US scholar John Paul Lederach is influential in the same field as Galtung but focuses more on resolving conflict philosophically and spiritually. In Spain, Vicent Martínez Guzmán insists that making peace is something to be *done*, and describes an epistemological framework called ‘the task of making peace(s).’ His passion and dedication is reflected in many ways, including his being one of the Bancaja International Centre for Peace and Development founders in 1996. Also, he promoted peace studies programs at universities around the world from a non-violent, cooperative, and political perspective.

Furthermore, Guzmán’s most essential and lasting commitment is creation of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace at Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana, in respect of which he was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Gold Medal for Peace and Non-violence in 1999. Serving as chairman of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, Wolfgang Dietrich maintained a strong friendship with the late Vicent Martínez Guzmán and developed the UNESCO Chairs of Philosophy in both Austria and Spain into a network of peace studies in Europe. Wolfgang introduced a theory he termed transrational peace philosophy. According to him, transrational peace is a different interpretation of peace within history and culture. In principle, there are four categories of peace: the energetic, the moral, the modern, and the postmodern peace families. The energetic is all about harmony, the moral is about justice, the modern is about security, and the postmodern is about truth.<sup>26</sup>

In the Indonesian context, the number of scholars who write about peace studies is still somewhat limited. Ichsan Malik is one of a few who have focused on peacebuilding practices in several violent conflicts in Indonesia, such as Ambon and Aceh, and in other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Myanmar, and North Korea. Ichsan Malik took a psychological peace approach and involved local actors directly in Ambon’s peace efforts in early 2000, a few months after the violent conflict occurred. As he valued the local, Ichsan Malik named the movement he launched (involving local actors) the *Baku Bae* Movement, using a word from the local language – *baku bae* – which means ‘reconciliation,’ or improving relations after a dispute. After succeeding with the *Baku Bae* Movement and contributing to the peace process in Ambon – along with other local peacebuilding actors using their own practices – Ichsan

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<sup>26</sup> Vicent Martínez Guzmán wrote *Filosofía para hacer las paces* (2001) and *El papel de la sociedad civil en la construcción de la paz* (2009) as his most influential works in this field; while Wolfgang Dietrich wrote a peace trilogy: *Elicitive Conflict Mapping* (2018), *Elicitive Conflict Transformation and the Transrational Shift in Peace Politics* (2013), and *Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture* (2012).

Malik wrote a book on his reflections and the experiences of the *Baku Bae*, the community-based movement for the reconciliation process in Maluku.<sup>27</sup> He wrote a second book about peace with the title, *Conflict Resolution: Peace Bridge*, in 2017.<sup>28</sup>

The anthropologist Birgit Bräuchler is one from among younger researchers who has researched the cultural dimension of peace in the Maluku Islands. Her book is one of the key sources for my thesis, as she provides an excellent explanation of the principles of peacebuilding found in local wisdom. However, she approaches peacebuilding from the lens of anthropology, and her study is confined only to the island of Ambon in the Maluku Islands. Sumanto Al Qurtuby is another young researcher who has analyzed peace and conflict in Indonesia; he has also made a serious study of the location of Ambon. Like Brigit Bräuchler, however, he uses the perspective of anthropology, and religion is the main subject of his research in this area. According to him, beliefs are central to the conflict that began in Ambon in 1999.

Meanwhile, some researchers, such as Samsu Rizal Panggabean and Muhammad Najib Azka from Universitas Gadjah Mada, focus more on conflict studies than peace studies. Samsu wrote a book called *Ethnic Conflict and Peace in Indonesia*,<sup>29</sup> and Muhammad wrote *After the Communal War: Understanding and Addressing Post-conflict Violence in Eastern Indonesia*.<sup>30</sup>

With this in mind, this study would like to fill the gap in the knowledge about Indonesia's local forms of conflict transformation. Many scholars have done impressive work concerning Ambon, but it is not the only example of communal violence in Indonesia. The study will therefore concentrate on three case studies that represent geographically the western, central, and eastern parts of Indonesia: Aceh is in the west, Sampit is in the middle, and Ambon is in the east of Indonesia.

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<sup>27</sup> Ichsan Malik, *Bakubae : Gerakan Dari Akar Rumput Untuk Penghentian Kekerasan Di Maluku*, ed. by Joint-Committee of Baku Bae Maluku, Yayasan Kemala, and Yayasan Tifa (Jakarta: diterbitkan atas kerja sama BakuBae Maluku, Tifa Foundation dan Yayasan Kemala, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> I Malik, *Resolusi Konflik: Jembatan Perdamaian* (Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2017)  
<<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=fG0dswEACAAJ>>.

<sup>29</sup> Syamsu Rizal Panggabean, *Konflik Dan Perdamaian Etnis Di Indonesia*, ed. by Titi Firawati and Irsyad Rafsadie (Tangerang Selatan: Alvabet dan Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi, Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Patrick Barron and Muhammad Najib Azca, *After the Communal War : Understanding and Addressing Post-Conflict Violence in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. by M Najib Azca and Tri Susdinarjanti (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: CSPA Books, 2012).



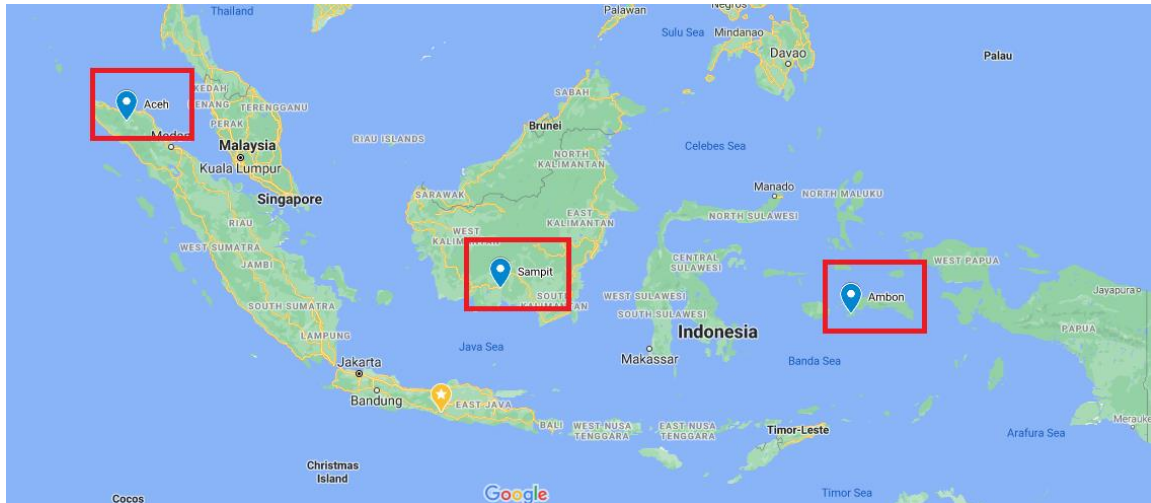


Figure 1 Map shows the three case studies

Among Indonesia's four forms of violent conflict based on research by Zulfan Tadjoeidin – center–periphery conflict, ethnic conflict, electoral conflict, and routine conflict – this study will concentrate on the first two categories: center–periphery and ethnic conflict. I do not consider the other two kinds of disputes – routine and electoral – relevant to my thesis, because they are beyond the scope of the research time span (1998–2005) and are considerably less impactful in terms of the scale of communal violence and the numbers of fatalities.

Another void this study would like to fill is that the viewpoints examined will include consideration of my own background in political and peace studies. Furthermore, this thesis also strives to frame the analysis from a historical perspective, a feature that is lacking in much of the published research done from this perspective. In this respect, I have profited from the Doctoral Programme in Modern History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and from the guidance of my supervisor, Darina Martykánová.

## INTRODUCCIÓN (en español)

Tras la caída del régimen autoritario del presidente Suharto (12 de marzo de 1967 - 21 de mayo de 1998) Indonesia introdujo un nuevo sistema gubernamental en el que la descentralización se erigió como una de sus características principales. Esta implicó que el gobierno central cediera gran parte de su autoridad al gobierno local. Según la ley n.º 22, promulgada en 1999, el gobierno local asume la responsabilidad de todas las competencias, a excepción de la política exterior, la seguridad y defensa, la justicia, la monetaria y fiscal y los siguientes elementos:

*La autoridad en otros campos que se refleja en el párrafo (1) incluye las políticas de planificación nacional y control del desarrollo nacional a nivel macro, los fondos de equilibrio financiero, el sistema de administración estatal y las instituciones económicas estatales, el fomento y fortalecimiento de los recursos humanos, el uso de los recursos naturales y la alta tecnología estratégica, la conservación y la estandarización nacional.*<sup>31</sup>

Sin embargo, durante su transición, Indonesia experimentó graves e intratables conflictos que causaron miles de víctimas, principalmente civiles. Aunque en muchas partes del país se produjeron enfrentamientos y disturbios civiles, en tres zonas estos conflictos llegaron a alcanzar una violencia sangrienta debido a que los enfrentamientos estaban alimentados por tensiones y reclamaciones políticas, étnicas y religiosas. Estas zonas son: 1) la provincia de Aceh, donde la cuestión del separatismo provocó numerosas muertes, estimadas en más de 1000 víctimas;<sup>32</sup> 2) Sampit, en Kalimantan Central, donde más de 500 personas de los grupos étnicos dayak y madurese perdieron la vida en lo que se ha calificado de enfrentamientos étnicos;<sup>33</sup> y 3) Ambon, en las Islas Maluku, donde el conflicto religioso culminó con más de 1000 muertes tanto de musulmanes como de cristianos.<sup>34</sup> Explicaré cada caso con más detalle, cada uno en un capítulo concreto.

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<sup>31</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Law on Local-Government* (Jakarta, 1999) <<http://www.bphn.go.id/data/documents/99uu022.pdf>>.

<sup>32</sup> Michelle Ann Miller, 'The Conflict in Aceh: Context, Precursors and Catalysts', *Accord*, 20, 2003, 12–15 <[https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Accord\\_20\\_3The conflict in Aceh\\_2008\\_ENG.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Accord_20_3The%20conflict%20in%20Aceh_2008_ENG.pdf)>; Paul Collier, Sambanis Nicholas, and World Bank, *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis / Edited by Paul Collier, Nicholas Sambanis* (World Bank Washington, D.C, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Frank Fanselow, 'Indigenous and Anthropological Theories of Ethnic Conflict in Kalimantan', *Zinbun*, 45 (2015), 131–47 <<https://doi.org/10.14989/197513>>.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Wilson, *Overcoming Violent Conflict*, ed. by Eugenia; Melina Nathan; Suzanne Charlé Piza-Lopez, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit -UNDP, Bappenas, CSPS, Labsosio and LIPI*, Vol 4 (Jakarta, 2005); Kirsten E Schulze, 'The "Ethnic" in Indonesia's Communal Conflicts: Violence in Ambon, Poso, and Sambas', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40.12 (2017), 2096–2114 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1277030>>.

Esta tesis examina el uso de formas locales de transformación de conflictos, de diálogo y de reconciliación para resolver o transformar el conflicto en estas tres zonas y construir la paz. Se centra principalmente en el papel de la población local en los procesos de construcción de paz. La investigación conlleva el análisis de las dimensiones histórica, cultural, religiosa y política de las prácticas convencionales de transformación de conflictos, el diálogo y la construcción de la paz. La mayoría de los trabajos académicos sobre la transformación de conflictos y reconciliación tienden a ignorar o descuidar las prácticas locales o habituales, o a minimizar su papel, centrándose en cambio en las estrategias de resolución de conflictos y consolidación de la paz impuestas desde el exterior. En el contexto indonesio, dos estudios recientes de Birgit Bräuchler y Qurtubi han destacado el éxito de las formas locales de transformación de conflictos y reconciliación en Ambon.<sup>35</sup> Un ejemplo es el *musyawarah*, que se traduce vagamente al inglés como *dialogue* (“diálogo”). Se trata de un enfoque del conflicto con una larga historia dentro de un grupo minoritario local (unas 80 familias) llamado *rukun tetangga* (“vecinos pacíficos”). En esta comunidad, el *musyawarah* se practica normalmente una vez al mes, y a veces con más frecuencia si es necesario. Estas prácticas parecen ser muy eficaces para mitigar la violencia dentro de las comunidades.<sup>36</sup> Otro ejemplo hallado en Maluku es el *pela* y el *gandong*, ambos referidos a acuerdos culturales entre dos pueblos, independientemente de su religión. Tanto el *pela* como el *gandong* parecen haber sido muy útiles en términos de reconciliación y transformación de conflictos.<sup>37</sup> En Smpit, *mapas lewu* unió a los pueblos *madurese* y *dayak* en una sola actividad anual y contribuyó a alimentar el proceso de reconciliación y mantenimiento de la paz en la zona.

Por último, pero no por ello menos importante, *pemulia jamek* significa “dar la bienvenida al invitado”, una tradición del pueblo Aceh; esta práctica permitió a Farid, un negociador informal del gobierno, conseguir un acuerdo de paz que puso fin al violento conflicto de más de 28 años. El uso de esta sabiduría local se desarrolla en los respectivos capítulos de cada estudio de caso. aspecto

Por último, se han creado monumentos para conmemorar los acontecimientos pasados y recordar que no se deben cometer los mismos errores en el futuro. Por ejemplo, en Ambon se

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<sup>35</sup> Birgit Bräuchler investigó cómo la dimensión cultural ayudó a los habitantes de Ambon a contribuir significativamente a los esfuerzos de consolidación de la paz; mientras que Qurtubi estudió el factor religioso como motivación para que los habitantes de Ambon se implicaran en el proceso de pacificación.

<sup>36</sup> M. Iqbal Ahnaf, *Papua Mengelola Kebaragaman*, 1st edn (Yogyakarta: CRCs, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Birgit Bräuchler, *Conflict and Peacebuilding in Maluku*. In: *The Cultural Dimension of Peace. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) <[https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137504357\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137504357_3)>.

erigió un enorme gong de la paz en el centro de la ciudad; en Sampit hay un monumento a la paz en la rotonda de la carretera principal de la ciudad; en Aceh se ha creado un museo de la paz en la capital de la provincia. Encontramos monumentos erigidos para conmemorar tragedias humanas similares en muchos lugares, como la Fundación Museo de la Paz de Gernika, en España, el Museo Memorial de la Paz de Hiroshima, en Japón, o el Salón Conmemorativo de las Víctimas de Nanjing, en China.

### Objetivo de la investigación

Esta investigación pretende documentar y examinar formas locales de transformación de conflictos y de reconciliación en Indonesia. Una parte de la hipótesis afirma que la transformación del conflicto tiene lugar básicamente en la región donde surge. A partir de la década de 1990, el papel de la población local en los efectos de paz comenzó a salir a la luz tras el reconocimiento del fracaso de los actores internacionales en sus esfuerzos por lograr la paz en Somalia, Ruanda y Bosnia. En el año 2000, el secretario general de la ONU Kofi Annan anunció la importancia de los actores locales en los esfuerzos de paz: "... un enfoque de la consolidación de la paz que enfatiza la importancia de crear capacidad local para la resolución de conflictos".<sup>38</sup> Además, debido a las crecientes críticas al carácter condescendiente de los planes de ayuda y cooperación internacional, las organizaciones de financiación internacionales exigen ahora la participación local como condición para recibir los fondos.

En conjunto, estas tendencias han estimulado no solo la participación local activa en la consolidación de la paz, sino también un creciente interés por parte de los investigadores. Hanna y Gustav desarrollaron el concepto de lo que llamaron "el giro local". Argumentaron que este término incluye dos dimensiones: en primer lugar, que lo local tiene el potencial de ser un medio eficaz en la construcción de la paz; en segundo lugar, la dimensión de la igualdad, donde los locales podrían expresar sus aspiraciones desde abajo.

Esta investigación también se basará en los conocimientos existentes sobre las formas locales de transformación de conflictos y reconciliación en Indonesia y otros lugares. Varios académicos han escrito sobre el tema, especialmente en lo que respecta a Ambon, donde muchos investigadores están interesados en estudiar las fascinantes formas de hermandad entre los habitantes de la región, independientemente de sus diferencias religiosas. Birgit Bräuchler escribió un libro titulado *The Cultural Dimension of Peace: Decentralization and*

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<sup>38</sup> Hanna Leonardsson and Gustav Rudd, 'The "Local Turn" in Peacebuilding: A Literature Review of Effective and Emancipatory Local Peacebuilding', *Third World Quarterly*, 36.5 (2015), 825–39 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1029905>>.

*Reconciliation in Indonesia*, que profundiza en el renacimiento cultural durante el proceso de reconciliación. En palabras de Birgit: "... este estudio destaca la importancia de la cultura para el restablecimiento de una paz sostenible en una sociedad desgarrada por una supuesta guerra religiosa."<sup>39</sup>

Sumanto Al Qurtuby, por otra parte, publicó un libro titulado *Religious Violence and Conciliation in Indonesia: Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas*.

Además, esta tesis pretende contribuir a la creciente literatura sobre el estudio de la construcción de la paz, la transformación de conflictos y la reconciliación. Esta investigación llenará un vacío que se ha percibido en la bibliografía, al servir de referencia alternativa dentro del tema "transformación de conflictos y reconciliación basada en los valores locales y en las acciones de los principales actores locales". También puede considerarse un estudio de caso de Indonesia, especialmente en lo que respecta a los acontecimientos de la transición política entre 1998 y 2005.

Finalmente, esta investigación pretende aportar datos sobre la prevención, gestión y resolución de conflictos y la consolidación grupal de la paz para contribuir a la formulación y renovación de políticas. La consulta de los resultados de esta investigación puede ser una de las gestiones iniciales que debería hacer cualquier parte interesada del gobierno local, del gobierno central e incluso de las organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG) antes de tomar cualquier decisión relacionada con la seguridad, la estabilidad y la consolidación de la paz en la región.

Mi investigación se guía por los conocimientos teóricos sobre la transformación de conflictos y la reconciliación de los trabajos académicos de los filósofos de paz y transformación de conflictos, como Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach, Vicent Martínez Guzmán, Francisco A. Muñoz y Wolfgang Dietrich. Johan Galtung afirmó que la ausencia de guerra o violencia no significa que hayamos alcanzado la paz. Se refiere a la ausencia de guerra o violencia como "paz negativa"; utilizando el concepto de "paz positiva" para referirse al momento en que una persona o grupo de personas ha logrado la justicia, la ausencia de miedo, el bienestar y el restablecimiento de las relaciones entre las partes enfrentadas después de la guerra o los actos de violencia.<sup>40</sup> Lederach perpetúa la sólida línea de pensamiento sobre el conflicto y la paz con una idea "de abajo hacia arriba" de la construcción de la paz, en la que crea una pirámide de

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<sup>39</sup> Bräuchler, p. xvii.

<sup>40</sup> Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6.3 (1969), 167-91 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>>.

intervenciones para la paz destinada a diferentes niveles, incluyendo las bases, los mandos intermedios y los altos dirigentes.<sup>41</sup> Estas teorías y conceptos se estudiarán en mayor profundidad en el capítulo uno.

Vicent Martínez Guzmán fue quien sentó las bases de los estudios de paz en España y en otros países del mundo. Su magistral obra es *Filosofía para hacer las paces*, en la que explica que la filosofía de la paz es “la reconstrucción normativa de las capacidades y competencias para transformar el sufrimiento humano y los conflictos por medios pacíficos.”<sup>42</sup> Al igual que Lederach, es un académico que cree que la sociedad civil tiene un papel vital en los esfuerzos por la paz. Entiende que la investigación sobre la paz debe trascender las fronteras del estado-nación, considerando los conflictos y la paz en el contexto de un sistema global interconectado.<sup>43</sup>

Por su parte, Wolfgang Dietrich y Francisco A. Muñoz comparten opiniones similares sobre la paz. Dietrich cree que la paz no es singular, por eso suele referirse a ella como muchas paces divididas en dos categorías principales, denominadas la interna (o dentro de los humanos) y la externa (o fuera de los humanos).<sup>44</sup> Por su parte, Muñoz cree que la palabra “paz” no es singular, y la describe en términos de paz imperfecta o, en otras palabras, lo que él denomina paz inacabada. Por lo tanto, la “paz imperfecta” significa que la construcción de la paz nunca termina porque la paz es relativa y es un proceso interminable.<sup>45</sup>

Examinaré los trabajos de los siguientes académicos desde una perspectiva antropológica: Alberto Gomes, Birgit Bräuchler y Sumanto Al Qurtubi. Estos tres investigadores tienen una visión similar de los valores que existen en lo “local”. Esos valores sirven para mantener el equilibrio entre ellos. Aunque los tres coinciden en respetar los valores locales, sus puntos de partida son diferentes. Alberto Gomes está más interesado por la ecología de los pueblos locales. Según él, la población local tiene un fuerte apego a la ecología, como observó

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<sup>41</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace [Microform] : Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies / John Paul Lederach*, ed. by United States Institute of Peace Press (Washington, D.C: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

<sup>42</sup> Vicent Martínez Guzmán, *Filosofía para hacer las paces* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Fabricio Forastelli, ‘Peace Profile: Vicent Martínez Guzmán’, *Peace Review*, 25.3 (2013), 439–46 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2013.816573>>.

<sup>44</sup> Wolfgang Dietrich, ‘Imperfect and Transrational Interpretations of Peace(S)’, *Prospectiva*, 1213.26 (2018), 195–210 <<https://doi.org/10.25100/prts.v0i26.6623>>.

<sup>45</sup> Joanna Swanger, ‘Nigel J. Young (Ed.), The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace’, *Peace Review*, 25.2 (2013), 313–17 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2013.785777>>; Francisco A. Muñoz, ‘Imperfect Peace’, *Universidad de Granada*, 2010 <<http://www.ugr.es/~fmunoz/documentos/ImperfectPeacepisa.pdf>> [accessed 5 May 2021].

principalmente en la comunidad indígena semai de Malasia. En cambio, el gobierno solo busca beneficios y a menudo ignora la relación de los indígenas con su entorno y con la ecología.<sup>46</sup>

Además, el gobierno tiene planes ambiciosos para el desarrollo que alteran el equilibrio de la sociedad y a menudo dan lugar a la persistencia de conflictos violentos. Gomes lo denomina “Síndrome 4G”, que corresponde a “Growth, Glut, Greed, and Grievance” (Crecimiento, Superabundancia, Codicia e Injusticia). En pocas palabras, el crecimiento hace que el gobierno compita para maximizar el exceso de producción, lo que produce una superabundancia. Más tarde, esta conduce a una actitud de codicia y, al final, esto da lugar a una injusticia, sobre todo entre los residentes “locales” debido a la explotación que sufren.<sup>47</sup>

Por su parte, Qurtubi y Bräuchler creen que los valores de la población local tienen un papel fundamental en la creación de la paz. Qurtubi consideraba que la religión, aunque inicialmente era un elemento crítico en el conflicto, podía conducir a la gente posteriormente a la paz, al darse cuenta de que no era la religión lo que les había hecho luchar, sino las personas. A diferencia de Qurtubi, Bräuchler investigó tradiciones que no tenían nada que ver con la religión. Según ella, estas prácticas pueden unir a la gente, ya que no se ven afectadas por las diferencias de los respectivos cultos.<sup>48</sup>

En cuanto al aspecto histórico, utilizo la teoría de la memoria colectiva de Maurice Halbwachs, que Marie-Claire Lavabre complementó posteriormente con su trabajo.<sup>49</sup> Maurice Halbwachs es el sociólogo que articuló por primera vez la teoría de la memoria colectiva, en 1925. Según él, la memoria colectiva es una idea socialmente construida. No aparece simplemente en un grupo de personas, sino que necesita la validación de las instituciones sociales o el reconocimiento de determinados grupos.<sup>50</sup> Así, cada grupo puede tener diferentes memorias colectivas de un mismo hecho. La memoria colectiva tiene la propiedad de establecer qué recuerdos deben producirse, mantenerse, cambiarse o destruirse, todo ello ajustado a los intereses del grupo. Un grupo defenderá la memoria colectiva si se beneficia de ella y, en

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<sup>46</sup> Alberto Gomes, ‘Alter-Native “Development”: Indigenous Forms of Social Ecology’, *Third World Quarterly*, 33.6 (2012), 1059–73 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.681491>>.

<sup>47</sup> Gomes.

<sup>48</sup> Bräuchler.

<sup>49</sup> Marie Claire Lavabre, ‘Circulation, Internationalization, Globalization of the Question of Memory’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 25.2 (2012), 261–74 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6443.2012.01426.x>>.

<sup>50</sup> M Halbwachs and L A Coser, *On Collective Memory*, Heritage of Sociology Series (University of Chicago Press, 1992) <<https://books.google.es/books?id=ejfnDwAAQBAJ>>; Nicolas Russell, ‘Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs’, *The French Review*, 79.4 (2006), 792–804 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25480359>>; Idham Badruzaman, ‘Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a Case Study’, *CLCWeb - Comparative Literature and Culture*, 20.2 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3234>>.

cambio, tratará de cambiarla o destruirla si le es perjudicial. Además, Marie-Claire Lavabre complementó esta teoría en el contexto de finales del siglo XX. Según ella, todo pensamiento social es un recuerdo, en el que la presencia de las cosas en el pasado es a veces invisible, mientras que en otras ocasiones se convierte en una opción de referencia al pasado como una doble dimensión. La memoria, como imagen de similitud entre el pasado y el presente, es también la experiencia cotidiana de los mundos sociales, de los grupos y de individuos pertenecen o se identifican con estos grupos, dando lugar a memorias “colectivas” o “socialmente compartidas”.<sup>51</sup> Nicholas Russel discute en su artículo que la opinión de Lavabre sobre la memoria colectiva a finales del siglo XX tiene algo que ver con la memoria episódica, donde un grupo específico experimentó un episodio concreto.<sup>52</sup>

## Metodología

He utilizado varios métodos para recopilar datos para esta tesis doctoral, como la investigación en bibliotecas, el análisis de contenido (informes de los medios de comunicación y documentos oficiales), entrevistas a informantes relevantes y encuestas. Llevé a cabo una investigación de campo en Aceh, Sampit y Ambon, en Indonesia, para realizar entrevistas y recopilar y estudiar documentos oficiales. Durante el trabajo de campo entrevisté y consulté a informantes clave, como las partes interesadas de la comunidad, los dirigentes de diversas ONG y departamentos estatales pertinentes.

Como fuentes primarias de esta investigación he utilizado entrevistas en profundidad, periódicos, revistas y notas tomadas por periodistas y otras figuras de la región cuando estalló el conflicto, que posteriormente se publicaron como libro. He usado periódicos y revistas que se sitúan entre los medios de comunicación de masas más antiguos del país, *Kompas* y *Tempo*, que han estado cubriendo los acontecimientos desde la temprana independencia de Indonesia. El comandante del ejército general Ahmad Yani sugirió la creación de un periódico por parte del Partido Comunista de Indonesia (PKI) para contrarrestar el monopolio de los medios de comunicación nacionales, que se llamó *Harian Rakyat* (*Diario del Pueblo*). Más tarde, Petrus Kanisius Ojong y Jakob Oetama retomaron la idea y fundaron *Betara Rakyat* (*Siervo del Pueblo*) nombre que recibió en sus inicios, el 28 de junio de 1964. El nombre *Kompas*, que se escribe “compass” en inglés y tiene el mismo significado (brújula), le fue otorgado por el presidente Soekarno cuando se publicó el primer periódico el 28 de junio de 1965.

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<sup>51</sup> Lavabre.

<sup>52</sup> Russell.



Respecto a las revistas, he usado *Tempo*, creada en 1971 por Goenawan Mohamad y otros cinco periodistas: Harjoko Trisnadi, Fikri Jufri, Lukman Setiawan, Usamah y Christianto Wibisono. *Tempo* significa “tiempo”, y lo eligieron por su sencillez, su carácter de comunidad (en el mundo del periodismo), su neutralidad (en el sentido de que la palabra no provoca nada) y su imparcialidad (no representa a ningún grupo de Indonesia).<sup>53</sup> En Estados Unidos hay una famosa revista que también se llama *Time*.

Según la mayoría de indonesios, ambas publicaciones siempre han sido relativamente críticas e independientes, por lo que suelen utilizarse como referencia. Además, Suharto prohibió tanto *Kompas* como *Tempo* durante su mandato como líder autoritario debido a las críticas vertidas contra su administración —el gobierno prohibió *Kompas* y *Tempo* en 1978 y 1982, respectivamente—. *Kompas* publicó un artículo sobre el movimiento estudiantil contra el Nuevo Orden de Suharto y su nuevo vehículo político, el Partido Golkar.<sup>54</sup> Tras varias negociaciones, *Tempo* pudo finalmente volver a publicarse, hasta que fue prohibida de nuevo en 1994 por las críticas relativas a la compra por parte de las autoridades indonesias de buques de guerra de segunda mano inútiles y la implícita corrupción asociada. *Tempo* solo pudo reaparecer cuando cayó la dictadura en 1998.<sup>55</sup>

Antes de embarcarme en el trabajo de campo, desarrollé una amplia investigación bibliográfica para formular y elaborar el marco analítico y teórico del estudio, y para desarrollar pistas para la investigación de campo, especialmente en lo que respecta a la organización de las entrevistas y las preguntas de la encuesta. Una de las cuestiones primordiales que confirmé a través de estas entrevistas fue cómo veían estas figuras clave el inicio del conflicto violento. En segundo lugar, quería saber qué hicieron los “locales” durante y después de la batalla, en términos de esfuerzos de pacificación y construcción de la paz. Por último, acudí a los monumentos locales para observar su contribución a la construcción de la paz, la reconciliación y la anticipación.

Pude conocer a las figuras clave del conflicto en cada zona: Ternate, Ambon, Sampit, Banda Aceh, Lhokseumawe y Langsa. Algunos de ellos fueron actores (y víctimas) durante el

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<sup>53</sup> ‘History of Tempo’, *Tempo Official Website* <[<sup>54</sup> Durante la época de Suharto, los funcionarios tenían que votar al Partido Golkar, mediante el que pudo mantener el poder como presidente durante más de 31 años.](https://www.tempo.id/corporate.php#:~:text=Pendirian%20majalah%20Tempo%20pada%201971,Samola%20yang%20menjabat%20sebagai%20sekretaris.> [accessed 27 May 2021].</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

<sup>55</sup> Felix Nathaniel, ‘Pemberedelan Tempo, DeTik, Dan Editor: Benih Penggulingan Soeharto’, *Tirto*, 21 June 2020 <

enfrentamiento. En Ambon conocí a Ronald Reagan y a Iskandar Slameth, niños soldado de los grupos cristiano y musulmán, respectivamente. En Sampit entrevisté al jefe de la comunidad étnica madurese responsable de las negociaciones con la comunidad étnica dayak. En Aceh entrevisté a uno de los negociadores durante una reunión histórica en Helsinki (Finlandia).

La investigación contribuye a la aportación de nuevos conocimientos sobre las prácticas existentes y probadas de transformación de conflictos y reconciliación, en particular en el desatendido ámbito de las *formas locales* de transformación de conflictos y reconciliación. También ayuda a revitalizarlas y regenerarlas y, en el proceso, a reconstruir comunidades marginadas. Por último, la investigación puede contribuir a la formulación de las tan necesarias políticas relacionadas con la gestión de conflictos, la construcción de la paz y la educación para la paz, tanto en Indonesia como en otros países.

### Llenando el vacío

Varios académicos han examinado el diálogo sobre el conflicto y la paz y han analizado estudios de caso en todo el mundo. Se considera que Johan Galtung fue el primer erudito que abordó este tema, mucho antes de que los conceptos de paz y conflicto se entendieran como tales. Una de sus teorías más famosas es la de la paz positiva y negativa, que va más allá de la concepción general de la paz como una situación sin violencia ni guerra. El académico estadounidense John Paul Lederach es una figura influyente en el mismo campo que Galtung, pero se centra más en la resolución de conflictos desde el punto de vista filosófico y espiritual. En España, Vicent Martínez Guzmán insiste en que construir la paz es algo que hay que *hacer*, y describe un marco epistemológico llamado “la tarea de hacer la(s) paz(ces)”. Su pasión y dedicación se reflejan de muchas maneras, como por ejemplo en su participación como miembro fundador del Centro Internacional Bancaja para la Paz y el Desarrollo en 1996. Además, promovió programas de estudios sobre paz en universidades de todo el mundo desde una perspectiva no violenta, cooperativa y política.

El compromiso más esencial y duradero de Martínez Guzmán fue la creación de la Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía para la Paz en la Universitat Jaume I de Castellón de la Plana, por la que recibió la medalla de Oro Mahatma Gandhi a la Paz y la No Violencia en 1999. Como presidente de la Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía para la Paz de la Universidad de Innsbruck (Austria), Wolfgang Dietrich mantuvo una gran amistad con Vicent Martínez de Guzmán y desarrolló las Cátedras UNESCO de Filosofía, tanto en Austria como en España, hasta convertirlas en una red de estudios sobre la paz en Europa. Dietrich introdujo una teoría que

denominó filosofía de la paz transracional. Según él, la paz transracional es una interpretación diferente de la paz dentro de la historia y la cultura. En principio, hay cuatro categorías de paz: la energética, la moral, la moderna y la postmoderna. La energética tiene que ver con la armonía, la moral con la justicia, la moderna con la seguridad y la postmoderna con la verdad.<sup>56</sup>

En el contexto indonesio, el número de académicos que escriben sobre estudios de paz es todavía algo escaso. Ichsan Malik es uno de los pocos que se han centrado en las prácticas de construcción de la paz en varios conflictos violentos en Indonesia, como Ambon y Aceh, y en otros países asiáticos, como Filipinas, Myanmar y Corea del Norte. Ichsan Malik adoptó un enfoque de paz psicológico e involucró a los actores locales directamente en los esfuerzos de paz de Ambon a principios de 2000, unos meses después de que se produjera el conflicto violento. Como valoraba lo local, Ichsan Malik bautizó el movimiento que lanzó (con la participación de actores locales) como Movimiento *Baku Bae*, utilizando una palabra de la lengua local —*baku bae*— que significa “reconciliación” o “mejora de las relaciones tras una disputa”. Tras su éxito con el Movimiento *Baku Bae* y su contribución al proceso de paz de Ambon —junto a otros actores locales de la construcción de la paz que usaron sus propias prácticas—, Ichsan Malik escribió un libro sobre sus reflexiones y las experiencias del *Baku Bae*, el movimiento comunitario para el proceso de reconciliación en Maluku.<sup>57</sup> Escribió un segundo libro sobre la paz, titulado *Conflict Resolution: Peace Bridge*, en 2017.<sup>58</sup>

La antropóloga Birgit Bräuchler es una de las investigadoras más jóvenes que ha trabajado la dimensión cultural de la paz en las islas Maluku. Su libro es una de las fuentes principales de mi tesis, ya que ofrece una excelente explicación de los principios de construcción de la paz que se encuentran en la sabiduría local. Sin embargo, aborda la construcción de la paz desde el punto de vista de la antropología y su estudio se limita a la isla de Ambon en las islas Maluku. Sumanto Al Qurbuty es otro joven investigador que ha analizado la paz y el conflicto en Indonesia. También ha hecho un estudio serio en la localidad de Ambon. Sin embargo, al igual que Birgit Bräuchler, utiliza la perspectiva antropológica, y la religión es el tema principal de

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<sup>56</sup> Vicent Martínez Guzman escribió *Filosofía para hacer las paces* (2001) y *El papel de la sociedad civil en la construcción de la paz* (2009), sus obras más influyentes en este campo; mientras que Wolfgang Dietrich escribió una trilogía sobre la paz: *Elicitive Conflict Mapping* (2018), *Elicitive Conflict Transformation and the Transrational Shift in Peace Politics* (2013) y *Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture* (2012).

<sup>57</sup> Ichsan Malik, *Bakubae : Gerakan Dari Akar Rumput Untuk Penghentian Kekerasan Di Maluku*, ed. by Joint-Committee of Baku Bae Maluku, Yayasan Kemala, and Yayasan Tifa (Jakarta: diterbitkan atas kerja sama BakuBae Maluku, Tifa Foundation dan Yayasan Kemala, 2003).

<sup>58</sup> I Malik, *Resolusi Konflik: Jembatan Perdamaian* (Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2017) <<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=fG0dswEACAAJ>>.

su investigación. Según él, las creencias son fundamentales en el conflicto que comenzó en Ambon en 1999.

Mientras tanto, algunos investigadores, como Samsu Rizal Panggabean y Muhammad Najib Azka, de la Universitas Gadjah Mada, se centran más en los estudios de los conflictos que en los de la paz. Samsu escribió un libro titulado *Ethnic Conflict and Peace in Indonesia*<sup>59</sup> y Muhammad escribió *After the Communal War: Understanding and Addressing Post-conflict Violence in Eastern Indonesia*.<sup>60</sup>

Teniendo esto en cuenta, este estudio pretende llenar el vacío en el conocimiento de las formas locales de transformación de conflictos en Indonesia. Muchos académicos han realizado un impresionante trabajo sobre Ambon, pero no es el único ejemplo de violencia comunitaria en Indonesia. Por lo tanto, la tesis aborda tres casos que representan geográficamente las partes occidental, central y oriental de Indonesia: Aceh está en el oeste, Sampit en el centro y Ambon en el este.



Entre las cuatro formas de conflicto violento de Indonesia basadas en la investigación de Zulfan Tadjoeeddin —conflicto centro-periferia, conflicto étnico, conflicto electoral y conflicto rutinario—, este estudio se centrará en las dos primeras categorías: conflicto centro-periferia y conflicto étnico. No considero relevantes para mi tesis los otros dos tipos de disputa, las

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<sup>59</sup> Syamsu Rizal Panggabean, *Konflik Dan Perdamaian Etnis Di Indonesia*, ed. by Titi Firawati and Irsyad Rafsadie (Tangerang Selatan: Alvabet dan Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi, Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 2018).

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Barron and Muhammad Najib Azka, *After the Communal War : Understanding and Addressing Post-Conflict Violence in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. by M Najib Azca and Tri Susdinarjanti (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: CSPA Books, 2012).

rutinarias y las electorales, porque quedan fuera del ámbito temporal de la investigación (1998-2005) y son considerablemente menos importantes en cuanto a la escala de la violencia comunitaria y el número de víctimas mortales.

Otra aportación novedosa de esta tesis es que los puntos de vista examinados incluirán la consideración de mi propia formación en estudios políticos y de paz. Además, esta tesis también pretende enmarcar el análisis desde una perspectiva histórica, rasgo que se echa en falta en muchas de las investigaciones publicadas desde esta perspectiva. En este aspecto me he beneficiado del Programa de Doctorado en Historia Contemporánea de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid y de la orientación de mi supervisora, Darina Martykánová.

## CHAPTER I: COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

### Theoretical framework

In order to lay a foundation for later analysis, I will be using the lenses of the following theoretical frameworks. It will be seen that this theoretical foundation is relevant to all subsequent chapters, rather than to this chapter only. I think this is the beauty of academic work, where one object will have many different people examining it from multiple perspectives. Therefore, there is no right or wrong in academia; what exists reflects the perspective of how and from where you look.

### Monopoly of violence

Max Weber argued that the state is the only institution that has the legitimacy of violence. The state is allowed to have weapons and can legally use them against humans. The government is authorized to withdraw money in tax from its citizens, and the state may confine those of its citizens who do not obey the rules.

Max Weber popularized the notion of the state's monopoly of violence and stated that all forms of violence committed by the government gained legitimacy.<sup>61</sup> Weber even concluded that the state itself has a violent nature. There is a negative aspect to the establishment within a nation, in that a person can commit acts of violence against others on behalf of the government. People can be detained in jail for trespassing over the borders of a nation. In the name of the nation, people can lose their sense of humanity and kill their fellow human beings, including the elderly and children. In a war between nations, people kill one another in the name of the state.

Noam Chomsky coincides with Weber regarding the violent nature of the nation-state. Furthermore, Chomsky argues that the imperial state has inherited a system that potentially gives birth to violence by the government, in the form of national borders or the formation of a state based on the racial equality of a particular nation or majority of the population. He explained that national borders breed violence among humans, such as the border between the US and Mexico. When these two countries were established, the border divided communities and even families.<sup>62</sup> We only need notice how cities' names in the south of the US have Spanish names, such as San Antonio, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Previously, there were no firmly established national boundaries in the region, and people were free to travel, since, for a long

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<sup>61</sup> Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 1919  
<[http://archive.org/details/weber\\_max\\_1864\\_1920\\_politics\\_as\\_a\\_vocation](http://archive.org/details/weber_max_1864_1920_politics_as_a_vocation)>.

<sup>62</sup> Gordon Asher; Leigh French; and Stuart Platt, 'Noam Chomsky on Scottish Independence' (USA, 2014)  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7HpE4k5JLc>>.

time, they had been part of the same community. Today, people consider someone who crosses the border without permission to be a criminal or even a terrorist. However, in reality, people want to see their families or to do things as their ancestors have traditionally done. The boundaries prevent them and control their travel and interactions.

According to Ariel Heryanto, it is highly unlikely that civil riots will cause a significant number of victims. If there is a violent conflict that kills hundreds of thousands of people, Heryanto argues, the state certainly has a role in it.<sup>63</sup> If a violent conflict lasts for months or even for more than a year, the government must be involved in it.<sup>64</sup> No matter how destructive the war is, civil society does not have the ability to make a conflict last for months or years, or to cause thousands of people to be killed, without backing from the authorities.

Besides, Ariel Heryanto has argued that Indonesia is an important example, or even a proof, confirming Weber's theory about the state's monopoly of violence. Indonesia experienced much violence during the era of the president-dictator Suharto, and he kept people in fear. People feared that PKI members could rise again at any time and remove *Pancasila* as the final ideology of the Indonesian nation. Many people were afraid of being critical of the government as they could be jailed or even killed. In Ariel Heryanto's words, the policies of Suharto's regime can be described as state terrorism.<sup>65</sup> Suharto used this strategy for as long as he remained in power. Ariel argues that state terrorism began after the so-called events of 1965–66, when PKI members, or anyone even allegedly related to Indonesia's Communist Party (PKI), were massacred. Since that time, Suharto has continued to spread fear among the Indonesian people through various policies. For example, he ordered schools across the country to screen the film of a failed coup by the PKI. Furthermore, he instructed the military to carry out mysterious shootings toward thugs, and silenced opponents using any means possible, and by manipulating identity politics.<sup>66</sup>

Zulfan Tadjoeddin categorizes the types of violent conflict that have recently existed in Indonesia into four categories. First, the violence caused by disputes between the central and regional governments. Second, the violence caused by ethnicity, including religiously inspired conflict. Third, conflict involving electoral violence or violent conflict caused by disputes over

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<sup>63</sup> Ariel Heryanto, 'Uraian Lengkap Dr Ariel Heryanto Saat Simposium 65 Di Jakarta' (Indonesia: YouTube, 2016) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S14Pi8i597E>>.

<sup>64</sup> Heryanto, 'Uraian Lengkap Dr Ariel Heryanto Saat Simposium 65 Di Jakarta'.

<sup>65</sup> Ariel Heryanto, 'State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging', *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*, 2005, 1–242 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203099827>>.

<sup>66</sup> Joshua Barker, 'State of Fear: Controlling the Criminal Contagion in Suharto's New Order', *Indonesia*, 66.66 (1998), 6 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3351446>>.

general elections, either concerning the vice president, president, legislative member, or regional head. Fourth, routine violent conflict or conflict that can occur every day.<sup>67</sup> However, the state can play a role and participate in triggering a dispute or escalating it into a bigger one. According to Ariel, civilians are not capable of doing this, thus whenever a conflict escalates, the government are likely to be behind it.<sup>68</sup>

### Conflict transformation

As the founding father of peace studies, Johan Galtung introduced the concept of conflict transformation. However, it was John Paul Lederach who wrote in more depth about the idea and made it one of his best-known theories. In a book entitled *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Lederach compared the perspective with similar concepts such as conflict resolution and conflict management.

What is fundamental to the concept of conflict transformation is that its view of conflict differs somewhat from the other two (conflict resolution and management). Conflict transformation theory sees conflict as something positive which can change or transform into better conditions for each conflicting party. Therefore, people should not seek to eliminate conflict; rather, they should look for some opportunity to effect change through conflict. In contrast, conflict resolution and management both see conflict as something negative, and the theory suggests that people should avoid or eliminate conflict.<sup>69</sup>

Lederach outlined at least seven essential points in defining conflict transformation theory. First, the theory focuses on a positive view of conflict. Second, it emphasizes a person's willingness to interact with conflict for constructive change. Third, the theory's conception of conflict is that it is a natural relationship that is always present with humans. Fourth, conflict creates new opportunities. Fifth, the theory sees conflict as a constructive change process. Sixth, this perspective does not define conflict as violence: these are two different things. Seventh, this theory believes in the importance of direct interaction both between individual humans and between groups, and creates plenty of space for encounters between them. Finally, the theory focuses on the relationship between parties rather than on the dispute's object.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeeddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeeddin*, Critical Studies of the Asia Pacific Series. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>68</sup> Heryanto, 'State Terror. Polit. Identity Indones. Fatal. Belong.'

<sup>69</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (New York, 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Paul Lederach.



Conflict can change things, including the personal, the relational, the structural, and the cultural. For example, a person can experience a change in becoming more empathetic toward other people after a conflict. Conflict can also change the relationship between the two conflicting parties. We often see how quarrels in a family end up bringing both parties closer together. Conflict can even change social norms that have existed for generations.

In general, the concept of conflict transformation has some similarity with ideas in Christianity and Islam. Both Muslims and Christians believe that when anything unexpected happens, there must be a reason behind it, and that there are positive aspects to it. There is an expression in English that ‘things happen for a reason.’ This expression in Indonesian is known as *Hikmah* for Muslims and *Hikmat* for Christians.

### Positive and negative peace

This theory was introduced by Johan, according to whom there are two kinds of peace: negative and positive. Negative peace simply means an absence of war or violence. Therefore, as long as there is no war or violence, it is known as peace, or negative peace to be precise.

Meanwhile, positive peace means the absence of a wider set of conditions, including injustice, non-physical violence, and other uncomfortable circumstances. Positive peace also consists of an improvement in human relations. This theory suggests that there are many necessary actions after a war or violence ends between two (or more) warring parties. For example, the victims and offenders have to recover from the trauma of fighting. Both parties need to regain the trust among themselves in order to go back to interacting again as before.

Three types of violence become the basis of the concept above: direct, structural, and cultural. Direct violence is physical violence between individuals and groups in a personal or group fight. Structural and cultural violence are non-physical, and consist, for example, in issues such as unequal opportunities between men and women in certain cultures, or social structures and institutions that prevent a person from meeting their basic needs as a human. Thus, direct violence prevents negative peace, while cultural and structural violence destroy positive peace.

### Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process after violence or war has ended. In Galtung’s terms, this process is an effort made in order to return to positive peace. Many aspects of the damage resulting from war and violence are scattered over many domains and much more time and attention is needed in order to resolve these effects once the physical conflict is over. In other words, reconciliation

takes longer and has longer-term effects than conflict resolution in ending violence or war. Reconciliation helps to normalize the relationships between or among conflicting parties, restore the neighborhood's equilibrium, and rehabilitate many other aspects related to positive peace.

Diah Kusumaningrum is a researcher from Gadjah Mada University who has been researching Ambon's conflict since 2002. Diah concluded that Ambon's reconciliation process takes place within three domains: 1) the surrounding environment, 2) the functional, and 3) the narrative. Reconciliation in the surrounding environment, or neighborhood, concerns the relationships between individuals and groups relating to demographic reasons, such as good relations between neighbors of different religions before the conflict occurred. Following violent conflict, people initiated meeting again because they were never actually involved in any clashes. They even promoted peace in their new neighborhood and started gathering and restoring relationships among themselves.<sup>71</sup>

The second domain is the functional, or interaction that emphasizes the factors of profession, hobbies, and social roles. Because of their job, people can interact in official institutions or community places that accommodate them within equally popular arts, such as music and literature. As kings or village heads, people can also engage in significant interactions because of the existence of internal and external aspirations related to improving good relations between villages of different religions.

The third domain is narrative reconciliation, which focuses on stories from the past that bind citizens between religions and connect different religions, such as the legacy of the *pela* and *gandong* social contracts that have tied the bonds of brotherhood between Maluku people for decades. Published stories of friendship between people of different religions have also contributed to narrative reconciliation in Ambon.

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<sup>71</sup> Diah Kusumaningrum, 'Interdependence versus Truth and Justice: Lessons from Reconciliation Processes in Maluku', *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 20.1 (2017), 34 <<https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.17998>>.

## Indonesia at a glance

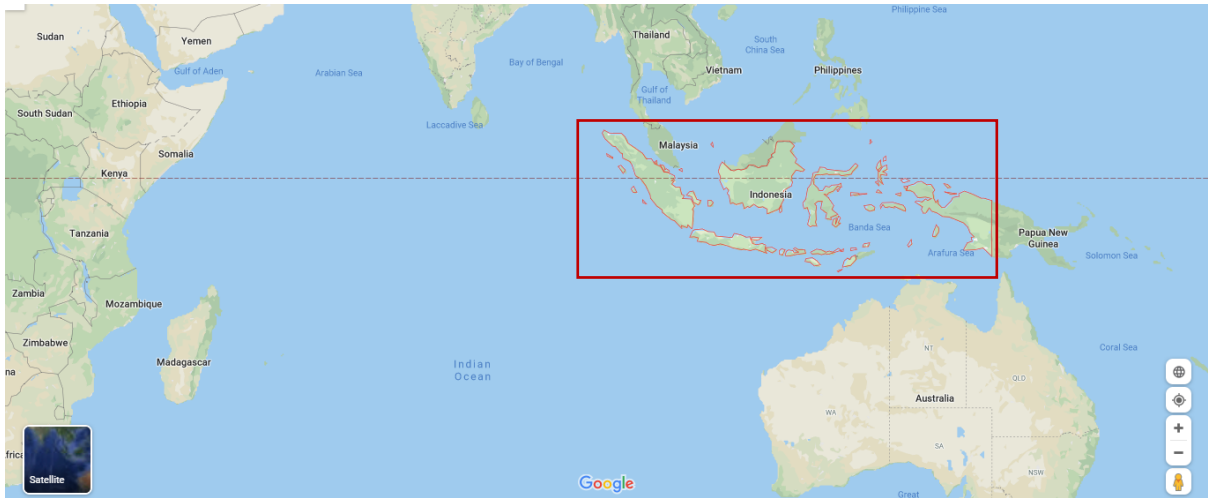


Figure 2 Maps shows the entire Republic of Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with approximately 17,000 islands, out of which Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua are among the largest. According to Google Maps, the distance from Sumatra (in the west) to Papua (in the east) is 5,200.42 kilometers, which is further than from Maine (in the southwest) to California (in the northeast), a distance of 4,581.99 kilometers.

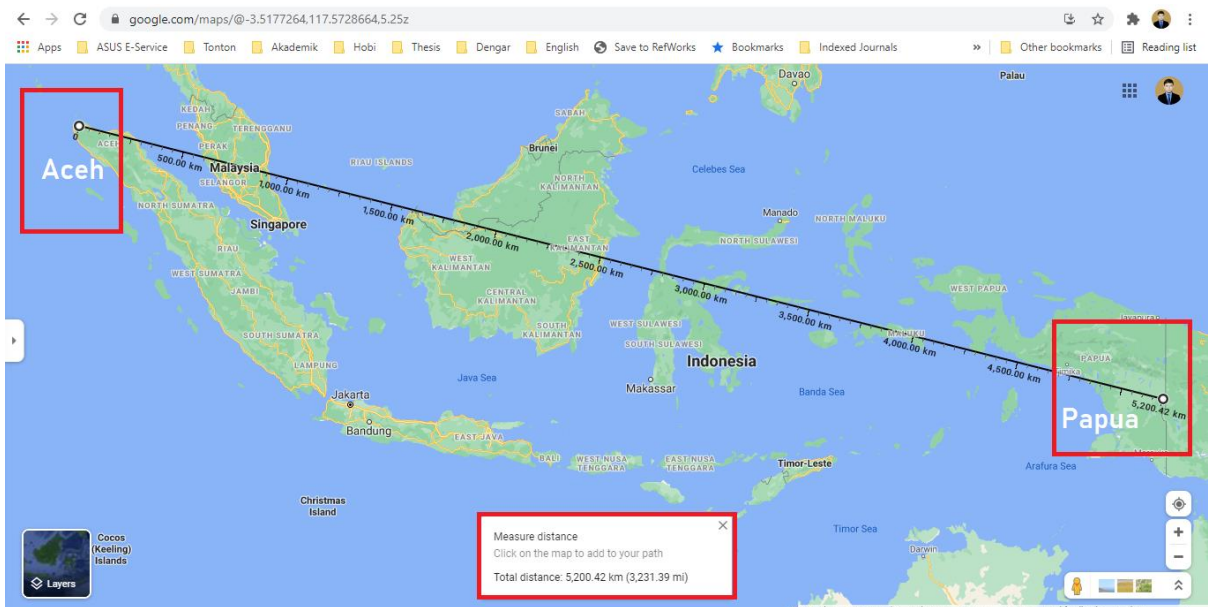


Figure 3 Maps shows the distance between Aceh and Papua<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Measured using Google Maps.

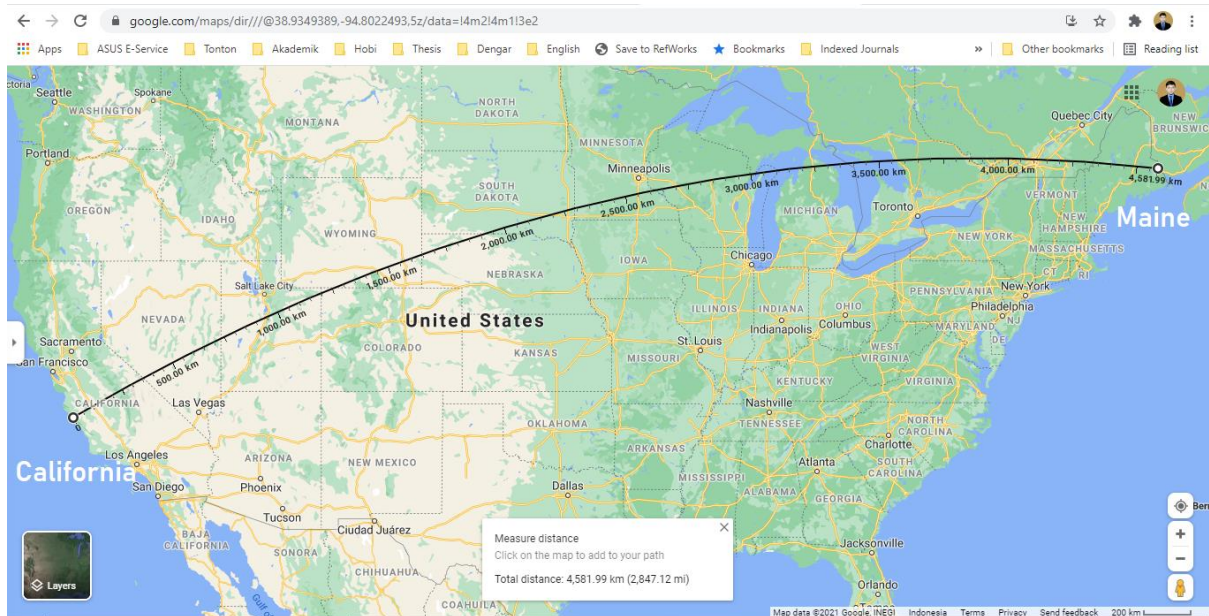


Figure 4 Map shows the distance between California and Maine<sup>73</sup>

In order to appreciate that Indonesia consists of thousands of islands stretching from Papua New Guinea in the east to the Indian Ocean in the west, we can examine the history of the legendary kingdom of Majapahit, which was the largest empire in the archipelago in the thirteenth century.

The famous prime minister of this empire was Gadjah Mada (1329–64).<sup>74</sup> He was the most critical person in enlarging the kingdom’s influence and power through his famous oath, namely the oath of *Palapa*. “*If I have defeated the archipelago, I (will) break my fast. If I beat Gurun, Seram, Tanjung Pura, Pahang, Domp, Bali, Sunda, Palembang, Tumasik, then I (will) break my fast.*”<sup>75</sup> Hard labor, firmness, boldness, and responsibility for his pledge were all demonstrated by Gadjah Mada. Outside Majapahit, more than 30 areas were effectively controlled till the end. The mottos *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, *tan hana dharma mangrwa*, and *Mitreka Satata* helped to defend the vast territory.<sup>76</sup> Mpu Tantular wrote a book entitled *Sutasoma* which explains these mottos.

On 17 August 1950, the Republic of Indonesia inaugurated the logo with its slogan, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which means ‘Unity in Diversity,’ upon celebrating the fifth anniversary of

<sup>73</sup> Measured using Google Maps.

<sup>74</sup> M C (Merle Calvin) Ricklefs, *Sejarah Indonesia Modern, 1200-2004* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2005), p. 19.

<sup>75</sup> Ari Welianto, ‘Makna Sumpah Palapa’, *Kompas*, 20 December 2019  
<<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2019/12/20/130000869/makna-sumpah-palapa?page=all>>.

<sup>76</sup> Serafica Gischa, ‘Cita-Cita Gajah Mada Dan Perjuangannya’, *Kompas*, 15 January 2021.

independence day.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the government introduced the five basic principles, known as the *Pancasila*, which are partly derived from the oath's essence, and are aimed at making the country inclusive to all citizens, and equal in the law.

***Pancasila: Indonesian political philosophy***<sup>78</sup>

1. *the belief in one God,*
2. *just and civilized humanity,*
3. *Indonesian unity,*
4. *democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultations,*
5. *and social justice for all the peoples of Indonesia.*

However, reality is not always compatible with ideas and expectations, where differences have been a factor in the turmoil and violence between citizens in *Nusantara* (during the kingdom and colonization eras) or Indonesia (after Indonesia's independence). Moreover, the rulers often exploited and benefited from the fragile relationships between society's different components. The rulers forced the citizens to go to war and fight among themselves, or divided the people between their various classes or royal families, promoting notions of difference and superiority. In the kingdom era, when Hindus and then Buddhists set foot in old Indonesia, the rulers introduced four castes into the society, *brahmins*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas*, and *shudras*. During the most prolonged period of colonization by the Dutch, they categorized people into three social classes: Europeans, those of foreign descent, and locals. The Europeans were certainly the highest class among them. The sense of superiority derived from this class system led to discrimination against people based on their nationality.<sup>79</sup>

Considering that Indonesia is a large state, it is not surprising that the country has 1,331 ethnic groups and 652 local languages across the archipelago.<sup>80</sup> Personally, I cannot even name all of them. Unlike in the case of Indonesia, I have been able to quickly memorize the names of the local languages in Spain, even since my arrival to Spain: Castillian, Valenciano, Catalan, Galego, and Euskera. Indonesian derives from the Malay language, which mixed with other languages in Indonesia until it became the lingua franca. In Indonesia, the old Malay language

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<sup>77</sup> Arum Sutrisni Putri, 'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Pengertian Dan Asal Kata', *Kompas* (Jakarta, 6 February 2020) <[<sup>78</sup> T. Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Pancasila', in \*Encyclopedia Britannica\*, 2013 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pancasila>>.](https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/02/06/150000969/bhinneka-tunggal-ika--pengertian-dan-asal-kata?page=all#:~:text=Semboyan%20Bhinneka%20Tunggal%20Ika&text=Pemakaian%20Garuda%20Pancasila%20sebagai%20Lambang,Serikat%20pada%2011%20Februari%201950.></a>>.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

<sup>79</sup> Abdul Hafid, 'Diskriminasi Bangsa Belanda Dalam Novel Salah Asuhan Karya Abdoel Moeis (Kajian Postkolonial)', *Kembara*, 3.2 (2017), 123–34 <<http://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/>>.

<sup>80</sup> 'Mengulik Data Suku Di Indonesia', *Statistics Indonesia* <<https://www.bps.go.id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>> [accessed 20 January 2019].

is the mother tongue of several Sumatran towns, such as Minangkabau. However, this language has existed in several other areas where the original language is not Malay. The following inscriptions, namely: Kedukan Bukit (AD683), Talang Tuo (AD684), Kota Kapur (AD686), and Karah Barahi (AD686), are evidence for this assertion. In 1521, Pigafetta, who was part of the Magellan expedition, wrote words in Malay when he docked in Tidore, which is in North Maluku. In 1928, Bahasa Indonesia officially became the name of this lingua franca through the pledge of Indonesian youth who aspired to establish their own country under the name of Indonesia:

*First: we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, claim to be shed with one blood, Indonesian soil. Second: we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, claim to be one nation, Indonesia. Third: we, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, uphold the language of unity, Bahasa Indonesia.*<sup>81</sup>

However, the above ethnic data may not include originally foreign ethnicities that came to Indonesia long before Indonesia's independence in 1945. Such ethnic groups are: Chinese-Indonesian, Arabic-Indonesian, Indian-Indonesian, Dutch-Indonesian, and Portuguese-Indonesian.

Among the foreign ethnicities mentioned above, throughout the colonial era, the Soekarno period, and Suharto's regime, the Chinese were the ethnic group that suffered the most. The ethnic Chinese were also the objects of abuse by rulers from the colonial era until the time of independent Indonesia, under Soekarno (born in 1901) and Suharto (born in 1921). For example, during the colonization period, Valckenier, the governor-general of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), found Chinese merchants to be major competitors in Indonesia. Thus, he issued a resolution in October 1740 to arrest and kill Chinese citizens, demanding 10,000 lives.<sup>82</sup> Following the collapse of the VOC on 31 December 1799,<sup>83</sup> ethnic Chinese were used, during the Dutch ruling era, as tax collecting officers for other residents. Hence, the kingdom and ordinary residents despised the Chinese presence. During the Soekarno period, under government regulation No. 10, of 1959,<sup>84</sup> a trade ban was issued against ethnic Chinese.

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<sup>81</sup> Nur Fitriatus Shalihah and Rizal Setyo Nugroho(ed), '92 Tahun Sejarah Dan Isi Teks Sumpah Pemuda 28 Oktober 1928', *Kompas*, 28 October 2020 <<https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/10/28/060000965/92-tahun-sejarah-dan-isi-teks-sumpah-pemuda-28-oktober-1928?page=all>>.

<sup>82</sup> Hendri F Isnaeni, 'Duka Warga Tionghoa', *Historia*, 25 May 2010 <<https://historia.id/politik/articles/duka-warga-tionghoa-DbKmv/page/1>>.

<sup>83</sup> Serafica Gischa, 'Runtuhnya VOC', *Kompas*, 3 July 2020 <<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/07/03/080000669/runtuhnya-voc?page=all>>.

<sup>84</sup> President Soekarno, *Peraturan Presiden (PERPRES) Tentang Larangan Bagi Usaha Perdagangan Kecil Dan Eceran Yang Bersifat Asing Diluar Ibu Kota Daerah Swatantra Tingkat I Dan II Serta Karesidenan* (Jakarta: President, 1959) <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/69320/perpres-no-10-tahun-1959>>.

Although Soekarno aimed the legislation against foreign Chinese citizens, Chinese-Indonesians were also affected, with hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese returning to China using Chinese government-supplied vessels.<sup>85</sup> Finally, ethnic Chinese had to assimilate into Indonesian society during the Suharto period. The government banned all aspects of Chinese indigenous culture, including names, languages, beliefs, and other cultural traditions.

Furthermore, ethnic Chinese were often collectively associated with the PKI, which had been behind the failed coup in 1965, during the Suharto period. People thought that the Chinese government was behind the coup, and this resulted in waves of anger toward Chinese-Indonesians in several cities in Indonesia, when they became victims of the violence.

In 1998, when protesters rattled Suharto's dominance, the dictator again sparked anti-Chinese sentiment as a diversionary issue, resulting in hundreds of thousands of casualties, including sexual harassment against ethnic Chinese women. During the Suharto period, the Chinese-Indonesians became the target of state violence.

Suharto favored a military approach to many situations in Indonesia in order to secure stability, but it resulted in an authoritarian regime. The use of an iron fist in the name of security was always justifiable for Suharto. The goal of stability became the justification for Suharto to do whatever it took, including trampling on human rights principles. Suharto was well aware that stability was the key to economic growth, and sought to encourage investors to come to the country and invest. Therefore, Suharto would do anything to ensure national stability including the use of large-scale violence. To cite a couple of examples, Suharto made both Aceh and Papua pay very heavily for demanding independence by declaring each of them to be a *Daerah Operasi Militer* (DOM, Military Operation Area). Either without trial or by manipulating the court, he put critical political opponents into prison.<sup>86</sup>

When the Suharto regime finally collapsed in 1998, Indonesia became very susceptible to horizontal unrest. Clashes over identities happened in several parts of Indonesia. Beginning from the western part of Indonesia and due to unfair economic distribution, Aceh wished to separate itself from Indonesia. Although the conflict between periphery and center began much earlier, in 1976, the transition made the demand for a referendum re-emerge stronger.

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<sup>85</sup> Michael Williams, 'China and Indonesia Make up: Reflections on a Troubled Relationship', *Indonesia*, 51 (1991), 145 (p. 148) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3351260>>.

<sup>86</sup> Tempo.co, 'Kontroversi Suharto', *Tempo*, 28 November 2005 <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/69776/kontroversi-soeharto>>.

In the geographic center of Indonesia, Sampit was filled with burning houses and severed heads as the Dayak ethnic group, the original settlers, clashed with the Madurese ethnic group, who were considered to be outsiders as they originally come from Madura island. After some days of apparent Madurese victory, ethnic Dayaks came from many places in Kalimantan in solidarity and finally took over the city and managed to evict all the Madurese from Sampit.

Timor Leste in the east re-ignited their demand for independence from Indonesia and their wish to be a completely separate country. East Timor (today Timor Leste) officially became the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia on 17 July 1976. East Timor's integration process was preceded by a series of military invasions by the New Order dictatorship, which is alleged to have had help from the US government, according to historical record. It should be borne in mind that the context for this situation was the Cold War. Therefore, the containment policy of the US continued to influence Indonesia after it had previously demolished the significant Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), in 1965. Furthermore, Apodeti (Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor), one of three political parties in Portuguese Timor, wanted to be part of Indonesia.<sup>87</sup> However, the UN never recognized the integration of East Timor to Indonesia. During this transition, after Suharto stepped down in 1998, the Timorese took advantage of the momentum and seized the moment to seek independence.

In the eastern part of Indonesia, bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims took place in the Maluku Islands, which involved the burning of mosques and churches as their attendants attacked one another. More to the east, the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM, Free Papua Movement) rebelled with arms and demanded independence from 1963.

For this research, the focus of analysis will be on only three case studies from the above-mentioned: Aceh, Sampit, and Ambon. Each case will be explained, elaborated upon, and analyzed in greater detail in each of the respective chapters of this thesis.

No matter how severe the clashes were, the level of casualties and duration would not have been as extreme and long-lasting if the government did not participate. Civil society is not capable of creating long-lasting turmoil, but the state is. Ariel Heryanto and Gerry van Klinken have both argued that the government were involved with what happened in this communal

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<sup>87</sup> Gama Prabowo and Serafica Gischa(ed), 'Integrasi Timor Timur Ke Indonesia Masa Orde Baru', *Kompas*, 1 November 2020 <<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/11/01/123036269/integrasi-timor-timur-ke-ind>>.



violence.<sup>88</sup> The following section will explore a critical question: how communal violence in Indonesia has occurred historically.

## The history of violence in Indonesia

Indonesia has a deeply rooted experience of violence, even since before it became a republic, in 1945. The kingdom, the colonial period, and the formation of the country were all colored with historical violence. The struggle for power through politics – where a man can control other men, according to Hans Morgenthau<sup>89</sup> – including the use of violence, is a popular method to achieve this goal.

State violence in Indonesia is often associated with the dictator-president Suharto, who ran the country for about 32 years (1966–98). He took power violently in 1965–66 by seizing it from Indonesia's previous president and founding father, Soekarno. He then continued to use violence to keep himself in control for three decades. However, state violence has been present throughout the history of power in Indonesia. Thus, state violence has a broader meaning in the Indonesian context, meaning that country and kingdom, colonizers, and nation have all committed violence. It began in the era of the realm, where the king had unlimited and absolute power. It continued into the era of imperialism, where the colonizers came and violently exploited both natural resources and people in their own interests. Finally, state violence remained in Indonesia even after it became an independent republic, where both Soekarno and Suharto acted violently toward the citizens on several occasions. For example, Soekarno issued a policy forbidding the Chinese to open businesses in the city. However, in the implementation of this policy, the government prohibited both Chinese and Chinese-Indonesian people. In the era of Suharto, killing a member of the PKI was somehow justified and even encouraged by the government. Therefore, the military endorsed some social organizations to commit such crimes, killing PKI members or sympathizers.<sup>90</sup>

This sub-chapter will critically analyze state violence throughout the history of power in Indonesia, ranging from the kingdom era until the president's period after Indonesia obtained its independence. This section will use Max Weber's theory of the monopoly of violence, and

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<sup>88</sup> Gerry van Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia, Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars* (Routledge, 2007) <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203965115>>; Heryanto, 'State Terror. Polit. Identity Indones. Fatal. Belong.'

<sup>89</sup> Jaap W. Nobel, 'Morgenthau's Struggle with Power: The Theory of Power Politics and the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 21.1 (1995), 61–85 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117528>>.

<sup>90</sup> Joshua Oppenheimer and others, *The act of killing* (USA, 2014).

the work of some of Indonesia's local scholars, such as: Ariel Heryanto, who did outstanding work on state terrorism in Indonesia; Zulfan Tadjoeddin, whose work detailed types of violence in Indonesia; and, finally, Vedi R. Hadiz, who wrote a book on reorganizing power after Suharto.<sup>91</sup>

### Pre-colonial period

Rulers had committed violence even before the Republic of Indonesia came into existence, during the pre-colonial era. In this period, when Indonesia was still a kingdom, violent behavior often occurred because the king's authority was absolute and was not limited by regulations. Furthermore, the king's power itself was the highest in the territory. This arbitrary power enabled the king to commit or authorize violence against his soldiers, people, and even his own family. For example, King Amangkurat I, who killed his brother, Prince Alit, to get to the throne,<sup>92</sup> or Sultan Iskandar Muda, who killed his son so that his daughter would be heir to the throne.<sup>93</sup>

On a larger scale, the king could cause a thousand casualties by going to war. In order to keep their territory or expand their domain, the king would challenge other kings by combat, entailing the sacrifice of his people for him. For instance, in the year AD363, the Salakanagara kingdom went to war against Maurya's kingdom and lost. While in the Javanese empire, the Kingdom of Kediri, under Sri Kertajaya, had to submit when they lost the war against the Singasari kingdom. Battles took place between two kingdoms and between family members in order to take power, such as the war of Paregreg, in the realm of Majapahit in 1404–06.<sup>94</sup>

There is a tragic story about King Majapahit (1350–89), who executed the king of Sunda, Prabu Linggabuana (1350–57), who happened to be his future father-in-law. The contingent from the Sunda kingdom, including the princess, was on its way to attend the invitation of the Kingdom of Majapahit for the wedding proposal. When they arrived in an area called Bubad, the Majapahit kingdom representatives, led by the prime minister Gadjah Mada, stopped them and asked them to submit to the Majapahit kingdom as they were more significant in terms of territory and power. However, the Kingdom of Sunda rejected the request and chose war

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<sup>91</sup> Heryanto, *State Terror. Polit. Identity Indones. Fatal. Belong*; Tadjoeddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin*; Vedi; Richard Robison Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia : The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets* (Routledge, 2004) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=200639>>.

<sup>92</sup> Rahadian Rundjan, 'Inilah Daftar Kekejaman Raja-Raja Di Nusantara', *Historia*, 2015 <Inilah Daftar Kekejaman Raja-raja di Nusantara> [accessed 15 May 2020].

<sup>93</sup> Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Krisis Arab Dan Masa Depan Dunia Islam* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Bunyan, 2018).

<sup>94</sup> Sri Wintala Achmad, *Sejarah Perang Kerajaan-Kerajaan Di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Araska, 2017).

instead. The event was unexpected, and they lost the battle as the Majapahit troops outnumbered Sunda's. Miserably, the princess and her entourage of women committed suicide to maintain their dignity and purity.<sup>95</sup>

## Colonial period

When the Europeans arrived in *Nusantara* (Indonesia's name before independence) intending to colonize it, the kings engaged in resistance in order to maintain power in their respective territories; this led them into great wars which took many lives. For example, the Saparua people in the Maluku Islands, led by Thomas Matualessi (or better known as Pattimura) and blessed by the Saparua kings, went to war against the Dutch. In another region, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin was one of the kings in the archipelago who opposed the Dutch occupation. In Palembang, the king who inherited his father's power appeared in a great war and managed to cripple the Netherlands on 14 September 1811. Finally, however, Palembang fell into British hands the following year through a war led by Hugh Robert Rollo Gillespie on 24 April 1812.

<sup>96</sup>

The colonizers did not hesitate to use violence on the local people, and their aims and methods were not peaceful either. Five countries came to Indonesia during the colonization period: the Portuguese, Spanish, British, Dutch, and Japanese. All of them used violence to get what they wanted from the local people. When the Portuguese came to Nusantara in 1512, Alfonso de Albuquerque was the expedition leader, and he made a deal with the king of Ternate in order to help him go to war against the king of Tidore. In return, the Portuguese were allowed to build the fortress named Sao Paolo. Not only that, but the Portuguese were also able to monopolize the trade with Ternate.<sup>97</sup>

On the other hand, the Spanish helped the kingdom of Tidore to fight against Ternate's kingdom with the backup of the Portuguese. A Spanish expedition, under Ferdinand Magellan and Captain Sebastian del Cano, landed at Cebu Island (in the Philippines) and then continued to Tidore (Indonesia). After only a few years in Tidore, the Spanish returned to Cebu after

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<sup>95</sup> Risa Herdahita Putri, 'Gajah Mada Segan Pada Kerajaan Sunda', *Historia*, 2018

<<https://historia.id/kuno/articles/gajah-mada-segan-pada-kerajaan-sunda-PGpzo>> [accessed 1 August 2020].

<sup>96</sup> A Kardiyat Wiharyanto, 'Perlawanan Indonesia Terhadap Belanda Pada Abad XIX', *Historia Vitae*, 23.2 (2009) <[https://www.usd.ac.id/lembaga/lppm/f113/Jurnal Historia Vitae/vol23no2oktober2009/PERLAWANAN INDONESIA TERHADAP BELANDA kardiyat.pdf](https://www.usd.ac.id/lembaga/lppm/f113/Jurnal%20Historia%20Vitae/vol23no2oktober2009/PERLAWANAN%20INDONESIA%20TERHADAP%20BELANDA%20kardiyat.pdf)>.

<sup>97</sup> Ari Welianto, 'Portugis, Bangsa Eropa Pertama Yang Masuk Ke Indonesia', *Kompas*, 2020

<<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/05/29/200000969/portugis-bangsa-eropa-pertama-yang-masuk-ke-indonesia?page=all>> [accessed 1 August 2020].

formulating an agreement with the Portuguese, which was called the Treaty of Saragossa.<sup>98</sup> The agreement was to continue the Treaties of Tordesillas, made to resolve the dispute between Portugal and Spain over the Maluku Islands (now Indonesia). The Treaties of Tordesillas and Saragossa in 1494 and 1529 defined the limits of westward Spanish exploration and the eastern ventures of Portugal.<sup>99</sup>

Between 1885 and 1910, the Netherlands killed around 75,000 Aceh people (approximately 15 percent of the area's total population) in order to defend their control over the territory from local resistance.<sup>100</sup> During the Japanese occupation, authorities crushed the publication of *Pedoman Masyarakat (Society Guidance)*, which had been the voice of the people, on 13 March 1942;<sup>101</sup> they also forced young men to perform labor (called *romusha*), and young girls to be sex slaves, known as *ianfu*.<sup>102</sup>

Sometimes violence is used in politics as a strategy, following the principle of *divide et impera*, where rulers would divide people or make them fight one another. Hence, resistance toward the colonizers was diminished and became weaker. In this condition, it was easier for the colonizers to conquer them. For example, the civil war of Paderi on Sumatra Island lasted from 1803 to 1837.<sup>103</sup> The war destroyed both parties, while the colonizers benefited the most. Another example of dividing people is the use of racial issues to make people hate each other. A prominent scholar in Indonesia, Dr Hamka, mentioned that the politicization of race had been designed centuries ago, when colonialism was still entrenched.<sup>104</sup> In addition, the colonizers institutionalized violence through discriminative regulations toward both locals (Indonesian) and non-locals.

### After the declaration of independence, the Soekarno era (1945–67)

When Indonesia unilaterally declared its independence on 17 August 1945, utilizing the power vacuum just after Japan surrendered to the Allies in reaction to the atomic bombings of

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<sup>98</sup> Nibras Nada Nailuflar, 'Kedatangan Bangsa Spanyol Di Indonesia', *Kompas*, 2020 <<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/02/05/153000269/kedatangan-bangsa-spanyol-di-indonesia?page=all>> [accessed 1 August 2020].

<sup>99</sup> 'Treaty of Saragossa', *Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Treaty-of-Saragossa>> [accessed 16 May 2021].

<sup>100</sup> Asvi Warman Adam, *Membongkar Manipulasi Sejarah: Kontroversi Pelaku Dan Peristiwa*, ed. by Irwan Suhanda (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2009).

<sup>101</sup> Hamka: *Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, ed. by Hendri F Isnaeni, Seri Historia. (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2018), p. 68.

<sup>102</sup> Isnaeni, Hamka: *Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. 68.

<sup>103</sup> Isnaeni, Hamka: *Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. 53.

<sup>104</sup> Isnaeni, Hamka: *Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. x.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Dutch did not remain silent. Instead, they tried to regain power over Indonesia. The Dutch made several attempts to get Indonesia back through military aggression. Finally, the Dutch had to cease efforts and admitted Indonesia's independence through the Hague's roundtable agreement in 1949.

Hence, violence continued during the period between 1945 and 1949. Many people were killed, both Indonesian and Dutch, soldiers and civilians. Some historians estimate that the number of victims on the Dutch side was around 4,751 soldiers and between 5,000 and 30,000 civilian casualties; in contrast, on the Indonesian side, some historians estimate between around 45,000 and 100,000 soldiers and between 25,000 and 100,000 civilian casualties.<sup>105</sup>

However, the Netherlands' war was not the only violence during this period (1945–49). More violence resulted from the inter-group disputes related to Indonesia's state ideology at this time. The first cluster is the violence resulting from the war against the Dutch. The second is the inter-group violence among Indonesians who wanted to change the ideology of Indonesia, such as the PKI rebellion which began on 18 September 1948 and the *Darul Islam* (Islamic State of Indonesia) rebellion which began on 7 August 1949.

The PKI rebellion took place in Madiun and took the lives of around 500,000 people. Several parties, including the PKI, combined under the *Front Demokrasi Rakyat* (FDR, the People's Democratic Front), and declared the Soviet Republic of Indonesia on 18 September 1948.<sup>106</sup> Initially, Amir Sjarifuddin was deposed from the position of prime minister because he was in charge of the Renville Agreement, which unfortunately benefited the Dutch. The agreement, which took place on a US warship docked in Jakarta, aimed to mediate a dispute left unresolved by an earlier Dutch–Indonesia settlement, the *Linggarjati* Agreement of 1946.<sup>107</sup> However, the agreement gave legitimacy to the Dutch to regain power over Indonesia and left only some areas for Indonesia: Central Java, Yogyakarta, and Sumatra. Previously, in the Linggarjati

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<sup>105</sup> Horn; Christiaan Harinck; Nico Van and Bart Lutikhuis, 'Do the Indonesians Count? Calculating the Number of Indonesian Victims during the Dutch-Indonesian Decolonization War, 1945-1949', *Imperial and Global Forum*, 2017 <<https://imperialglobalexeter.com/2017/08/14/do-the-indonesians-count-calculating-the-number-of-indonesian-victims-during-the-dutch-indonesian-decolonization-war-1945-1949/>> [accessed 2 August 2020].

<sup>106</sup> Viriya Paramita Singgih, 'Survivors of 1948 Madiun Affair Speak Out', *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, 8 June 2016) <<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/06/08/survivors-of-1948-madiun-affair-speak-out.html>>; Martinus Danang, 'Operasi Penumpasan Gerakan Separatis: PKI Madiun 1948', *Kompaspedia* (Kompas, 2020) <<https://kompaspedia.kompas.id/baca/infografik/kronologi/operasi-penumpasan-gerakan-separatis-pki-madiun-1948>>.

<sup>107</sup> T. Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Renville Agreement', *Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021) <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Renville-Agreement>>.

Agreement, the Dutch had recognized Java, Madura, and Sumatra, but in the Renville Agreement, only Central Java, Madura, and Sumatra.

Amir was disappointed with the decision and established the *Front Demokrasi Rakyat* (FDR, the People's Democratic Front). The organization consisted of several parties and organizations, such as the Socialist Party, Socialist Youth of Indonesia, the Labour Party, the PKI, the All-Indonesian Federation of Workers' Organizations (SOBSI), and *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (BTI, Peasants Front of Indonesia).

As a result of the Renville Agreement, a charismatic Muslim leader, Soekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwiryo, proclaimed *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII, the Islamic State of Indonesia) or *Darul Islam*, which means 'Islamic State' in Arabic.<sup>108</sup> According to the Renville Agreement, West Java was under the authority of the Dutch; therefore, the people of West Java did not accept this. Instead of fighting for integration with Indonesia, they declared an independent state on 7 August 1949. Previously, the group had formed the *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII, the Islamic Soldiers of Indonesia) in February 1948. Hence, the group was called *Darul Islam–Tentara Islam Indonesia* (DI–TII, Islamic State–Islamic Soldiers of Indonesia). Even after the Dutch recognized the complete independence of Indonesia through the roundtable agreement between the Dutch government and Indonesia on 23 August 1949, DI–TII carried on their struggle for an independent state until 4 June 1962.<sup>109</sup>

Several leaders supported the initiation of the Islamic State in other regions, such as Tengku Daud Beureueh from Aceh, who declared they would join the Islamic State of Indonesia in 1953. Tengku was disappointed with President Soekarno as he had failed to fulfill his promise of applying Islamic law in Aceh. Other leaders also participated in the declaration of the Islamic State, such as Ibnu Hadjar from South Borneo in 1962, Amir Fathah from Central Java in 1949, and Kahar Muzakir from South Sulawesi in 1953. Later, when several other regions had collapsed, Aceh continued to demand independence from Indonesia through the second generation of leadership, Tengku Hasan di Tiro, for as long as the war lasted, until 2005. The complete story of this struggle will be explained, elaborated upon, and analyzed in chapter four.

During the period of political instability in Indonesia's early years, there was also an attempt to form another state in the Maluku Islands. In 1950, *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS, the South

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<sup>108</sup> C V A N DIJK, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (Brill, 1981), xciv <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs6vx>>.

<sup>109</sup> Yuda Prinada, 'Sejarah Pemberontakan DI-TII Kartosoewirjo Di Jawa Barat', *Tirto*, February 2021 <<https://tirto.id/sejarah-pemberontakan-di-tii-kartosoewirjo-di-jawa-barat-gajF>>.

Maluku Republic) was proclaimed as an autonomous nation. The Indonesian military moved to undermine this attempt, and the violence resulted in the deaths of at least 5,000 people, with the majority being locals. Approximately 12,000 Maluku civilians subsequently moved to the Netherlands with their families and set up an RMS government in exile, which exists to the present day.

A famous story has been passed from generation to generation in Aceh about a conversation between President Soekarno and Tengku Daud Beureueh (born 1899), who was the military governor of Aceh at that time (1945–53).<sup>110</sup> In June 1948, Soekarno visited him in Aceh and asked for support to fight against the Dutch. Daud Beureueh agreed, but wanted something in return: implementation of Islamic law in Aceh. Soekarno saw no problem in this, and promised to realize it. Aceh's support was in the form of a willingness of the public to fight the Dutch and to donate their jewelry in order to purchase an aircraft for Soekarno so that he could carry out his job of uniting Indonesia and engage in diplomacy abroad. However, when Daud Beureueh asked for such an agreement on paper, Soekarno politely rejected it and answered instead: "*we are brothers, why do we need such a paper (of agreement). Just trust me, and I will do my promise.*"<sup>111</sup> In brief, the government purchased an airplane, and the people of Aceh went to war alongside the Indonesian soldiers, giving their full support. However, until the fight against the Dutch was over, Soekarno never materialized his promise of allowing the Acehnese to have their own sharia law.<sup>112</sup> This narrative was the primary motivation used by Daud Beureueh to command Aceh's people to fight against Indonesia's government in 1953.

Although Suharto's rule is generally acknowledged as having been a dictatorship, Soekarno was no different. Soekarno introduced what was called 'guided democracy,' where he had the final say in any decision, and there was no balance of power. During this time, one of Indonesia's most prominent scholars, Prof. Dr Hamka<sup>113</sup> (1908–81), called Soekarno a dictator.<sup>114</sup> He stated that "*It's totalitarian, but the name was not popular enough, so he (Soekarno) named it guided democracy.*"<sup>115</sup> Soekarno sent Hamka, Sutan Sjahrir, Anak Agung

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<sup>110</sup> Most people I interviewed in Aceh know the story, such as Nurdin Abdul Rahman, one of the negotiators before the Helsinki Peace Agreement in 2005 and Usman Abdullah, the former GAM commander Area III. It's a collective memory among Aceh people.

<sup>111</sup> M Nur El Ibrahimy, *Kisah Kembalinya Tgk. Muhd. Daud Beureueh Ke Pangkuan Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: M. Nur El Ibrahimy, 1980).

<sup>112</sup> Hendi Jo, 'Air Mata Bung Karno Meleleh Di Aceh', *Historia* (Jakarta, October 2015) <<https://historia.id/politik/articles/air-mata-bung-karno-meleleh-di-aceh-vqrx1>>.

<sup>113</sup> His real name is Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, but most people know him as HAMKA, which stands for his full name.

<sup>114</sup> Isnaeni, *Hamka: Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. 48.

<sup>115</sup> Isnaeni, *Hamka: Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. 81.

Gde Agung, and Mohammad Roem to jail because of their critical opinions.<sup>116</sup> Just like Suharto, Soekarno crushed his critics, including shutting down the media that often criticized him. Soekarno and Suharto revoked the licenses of critical media in 1960 and 1974, involving around 40 and 12 media organizations respectively.<sup>117</sup>

However, it has to be admitted that Suharto was not the only leader to become a dictator at this time. He was one among other authoritarian nationalist modernizers, such as Lee Kuan Yew (5 June 1959–28 November 1990) in Singapore, Mahathir Mohamad (16 July 1981–30 October 2003) in Malaysia, Gamal Abdel Nasser (23 June 1956–28 September 1970) in Egypt, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (29 October 1923–10 November 1938) in Turkey. Jose Ramos Horta considered Suharto to be a dictator, but one who was somehow different. Unlike Salazar in Portugal and several dictators in Latin America, Suharto sent many Indonesians to study abroad.

*According to him, Suharto is a dictator who has successfully led Indonesia to become a country with a promising economy. “Suharto is more like the dictator in South Korea,” he told BBC Indonesia’s Ging Ginanjar during a conversation at his home in Dili.*<sup>118</sup>

Some people adored him until even recently. There was a meme spread all over social media saying, “It’s better in my time, isn’t it?” This expression confirmed that Suharto was credited with significant matters during his presidency other than being authoritarian and creating victims of violence. Ramos Horta confirms this in the testimonial above.

However, many people in certain other areas have confirmed otherwise. The people of Timor Leste would see Suharto as an iron-fist president, who sent troops to Portuguese Timor (now Timor Leste) in response to the Balibo Declaration on 30 November 1975.<sup>119</sup> Many acts of violence and cases of human rights abuse happened under Suharto’s rule in East Timor (now Timor Leste) between 1975 and 1999.

Papua and Aceh would see Suharto as a hostile leader. To crack down on the separatist movement in the region, Suharto used a heavily militarized approach, which caused many civilians to fall victim. In Aceh one of the most prolonged military operations was carried out from 1990 to 1998. The operation would probably have continued if Suharto had not resigned

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<sup>116</sup> M. Fazil Pamungkas, ‘Ramadhan Hamka Di Penjara’, *Historia*, May 2020 <<https://historia.id/agama/articles/ramadan-hamka-di-penjara-DB8E5/page/1>>.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Harmoko’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, January 2003) <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/investigasi/84130/harmoko>>.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Suharto, Suara Dari Timur: Antara “diktator Sukses” Dan “Penindas Kejam”’, *BBC News Indonesia*, 11 May 2018 <<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-43513185>>.

<sup>119</sup> The Balibo Declaration was a declaration made by the people of Portuguese Timor Leste to integrate with the Republic of Indonesia on 30 November 1975.



from the presidency. At the same time, the people of Papua would see Suharto as someone who forced them to vote for integration with Indonesia during the ‘Act of Free Choice’ enacted from 14 July to 2 August 1969.<sup>120</sup>

Some groups and races would consider Suharto to be a cruel leader. The Chinese community would hate Suharto very much as they could not express their culture while under his rule. Chinese names, language, and traditions were banned during the Suharto era. Not only that, the Chinese community were used as a scapegoat by Suharto on a couple of occasions in order to secure his image as a president who sided with the native Indonesians.

Regarding international developments, Cold War competition between the Soviet Union and the US also affected Indonesia. Through a containment policy wherein the US tried everything to stop the influence of communist ideology spreading throughout the world, including Indonesia, they attempted to stop Soekarno, who, though not himself communist, nevertheless allowed the development of Indonesia’s Communist Party as a counterbalance to conservative forces.

In this period, the US foreign-containment policy also often meant persecuting anti-imperialist nationalist movements in developing countries, and Indonesia was one such target in Southeast Asia. *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* (Gerwani, Indonesian Women’s Movement) was an active participant in the anti-imperialist movement. Gerwani was part of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), which supported socialist countries and former colonial countries worldwide. Furthermore, Gerwani’s leader stated in a speech that Gerwani’s international political agenda was to build an international front of anti-imperialists, to develop the NEFO (New Emerging Forces) of women, and to counter the revisionism in the pacific global women’s movement.

*The US carried out bloody aggression and terror in Latin America, Korea, Japan, and South Vietnam. In South Vietnam, the US carried out the spread of poisons in agricultural fields and made farmers as nuclear guinea pigs in South Korea, then interfered in the internal affairs of Panama and Venezuela. As one of the main points of contradiction globally, there has been a fierce people’s struggle against various forms of imperialism and neocolonialism in Southeast Asia. As a women’s movement based in Southeast Asia, Gerwani is obliged to increase its activities in winning the people’s revolutions in Southeast Asia. In addition, Gerwani supports*

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<sup>120</sup> Felix Nathaniel, ‘Papua Di Bawah 7 Presiden’, *Tirto*, 2020 <<https://tirto.id/papua-di-bawah-tujuh-presiden-indonesia-ehpY>> [accessed 1 December 2021].

*the struggles of women in Cuba, Japan, Korea, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, who are persistently relentless against US imperialism.*<sup>121</sup>

Soekarno was very vocal in the anti-imperialist movement. Knowing that he did not want to be trapped in the crossfire between the US and the Soviet Union, he initiated the non-aligned movement, along with other world leaders, such as the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito. Drawing on the principles agreed at the Bandung (Indonesia) Asia–Africa Conference in 1955, the group was established in Belgrade, Serbia, Yugoslavia in 1961, and became the largest grouping after the United Nations, consisting of 120 countries.

Indonesia was already a significant country, and both major powers tried to get Soekarno on their side. Eventually, once he thought that Indonesia was strong enough to make a choice, Soekarno decided to move closer to the East. Within Southeast Asia, Indonesia became the most prominent recipient of USSR aid, even higher than that of a communist country such as Vietnam: with 789 million rubles and 389 million rubles, respectively.<sup>122</sup>

However, Soekarno was not a communist. He stated this firmly to Maulwi Saellan, former deputy chief of the presidential guard, and Cindy Adams wrote it in her book, *Sukarno: An Autobiography as Told to Cindy Adams*.<sup>123</sup> In February 1956, Soekarno had the idea of uniting all Indonesians through *Nasakom*, which stands for *Nasinonalisme* or nationalism, *Agama* or religion, and *Komunisme* or communism. Previously, in 1926, Soekarno had put forward the idea of *Nasakom* through the media *Soeoleh Indonesia Moeda*. “*Imperfectly, we are trying to prove that the understanding of Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism are complementing each other for the people all over Asia. This understanding inspired the spirit of the movements in Asia, including Indonesia.*”<sup>124</sup>

According to Soekarno, *Nasakom* succeeded in inflating the spirit of struggle by seizing Indonesian independence from the colonialists’ control through the existence of political

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<sup>121</sup> Ruth Indiah Rahayu, ‘Feminisme Anti-Imperialis Gerwani Di Panggung Perang Dingin’, *Indoprogress*, 2020 <<https://indoprogress.com/2020/02/feminisme-anti-imperialis-gerwani-di-panggung-perang-dingin/>> [accessed 7 June 2021].

<sup>122</sup> Ragna Boden, ‘Cold War Economics’, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10.3 (2008), 110–28 (p. 116) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26922777>>.

<sup>123</sup> Rama Pratama, ‘Sukarno Dalam Pusaran Islam, Nasionalisme, Dan Komunisme’, *Historia*, June 2020 <<https://historia.id/politik/articles/sukarno-dalam-pusaran-islam-nasionalisme-dan-komunisme-6kXpm/page/1>>; Asvi Warman Adam, *Maulwi Saellan: Penjaga Terakhir Soekarno*, ed. by Bonnie Triyana, Hendri F Isnaeni 1986-, and M F Mukthi 1980- (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2014).

<sup>124</sup> Iswara N Raditya, ‘Sejarah Nasakom: Upaya Soekarno Menyatukan Tiga Kekuatan Politik’, *Tirto*, 30 April 2019 <<https://tirto.id/sejarah-nasakom-upaya-sukarno-menyatukan-tiga-kekuatan-politik-dnlt>>. (Personal translation.)

parties. The nationalist group formed the *Indische Partij* (IP, Indies Party), the religious group formed the *Sarekat Islam* (SI, Islamic Union), and the communist group formed the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party). Later, after Indonesia's independence, *Nasakom* was revived, especially while the Cold War was still going on. In his speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Soekarno emphasized that even the Indonesian state's basic principles were not contradictory with *Nasakom*.<sup>125</sup>

Soekarno even developed the idea into an ideology called 'Marhaenism,' which drew from Marxism, incorporating some adjustments for the Indonesian context. According to Soekarno, Marhaenism struggled to defend the poor from imperialism and colonialism while Marxism worked for the rights of laborers.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, while the Marxists called for the proletariat to unite: 'you have nothing to lose but your chains,' so Soekarno called out, "O, all Indonesian people, unite and fight for independence."<sup>127</sup>

As a consequence of Soekarno's orientation to the East (Beijing–Moscow–Jakarta axis), a disaster happened to Indonesia, affecting especially Soekarno, the PKI, and Gerwani. On 2 March 1957, a group of military leaders in the east of Indonesia declared *Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (PRRI, Republic of Indonesia Revolutionary Government) and *Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta* (PERMESTA, Universal People's Struggle).<sup>128</sup> The US, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), supported the group, as it was in line with their containment policy.<sup>129</sup> These groups (PRRI, PERMESTA) instigated conflict with the government, taking place mainly in Sumatra and Sulawesi. During this conflict, a CIA aircraft was shot down by the Indonesian army through Operation Merdeka. With the CIA's disclosure of support for the rebels, they finally withdrew their support and assistance from the insurrection.<sup>130</sup>

A consequence of Soekarno's orientation to the East was the attempt by foreign intelligence to eliminate the PKI starting with the event of 30 September 1965. The weekly *Der Spiegel* of 1971 reported that *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND, foreign intelligence agency of the West

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<sup>125</sup> President Soekarno, *To Build the World a New* (New York, NY, 1960) <[https://kepuustakaan-presiden.perpusnas.go.id/speech/?box=detail&id=41&from\\_box=list\\_1XX\\_245&hlm=1&search\\_7XX=Soekarno&presiden\\_id=1&presiden=sukarno](https://kepuustakaan-presiden.perpusnas.go.id/speech/?box=detail&id=41&from_box=list_1XX_245&hlm=1&search_7XX=Soekarno&presiden_id=1&presiden=sukarno)>.

<sup>126</sup> Asvi Warman Adam, *Maulwi Saelan: Penjaga Terakhir Soekarno*.

<sup>127</sup> Asvi Warman Adam, *Maulwi Saelan: Penjaga Terakhir Soekarno*.

<sup>128</sup> Iswara N Raditya, 'Permesta, Pemberontakan Atau Bukan?', *Tirto*, March 2019 <<https://tirto.id/permesta-pemberontakan-atau-bukan-didQ>>.

<sup>129</sup> Rizki Nugraha, 'Keterlibatan Asing Dalam Pembantaian 1965', *DW*, 26 April 2016 <<https://www.dw.com/id/keterlibatan-asing-dalam-pembantaian-1965/g-19202789>>.

<sup>130</sup> Tadjoeuddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeuddin*, p. 28.

German government) cooperated with the CIA in order to eliminate the PKI.<sup>131</sup> The year 1965 was also the year of the collapse of the 'old order' regime, or the fall from power of President Soekarno. The PKI, which he had tolerated and even favored, carried out a military coup against the government on 30 September 1965, commonly known as the 30 September Movement. The military coup led by the *Cakrabirawa* presidential guard was carried out by order of the PKI supreme leader, D.N. Aidit, in order to overthrow President Soekarno and change the ideology from Pancasila to communism. This attempt was successfully thwarted by troops led by Major General Suharto, even though Soekarno had then to lose his presidential seat one year later. The fourth general session of *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara* (MPRS, the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly) dismissed Soekarno from the presidency on 22 June 1966. However, Suharto's achievements in eliminating the PKI led him to be the Republic of Indonesia's acting president through the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly No. XXXIII / 1967 on 22 February 1967.

However, the above narrative was created during Suharto's rule, or the 'New Order' regime. Since the fall of the Suharto government in 1998, interpretation of the 1965 incident concerning the coup carried out by the PKI has been open to controversies. Some scholars and historians such as Asvi Warman Adam and John Roosa have argued that Suharto carried out political maneuvers in order to get the presidency for himself. Both John Roosa and Asvi Warman Adam believed that Suharto was responsible for the coup, but with a 'crawling coup' model, which means that the coup was taking place step by step from 1965 to 1967. The first step was to initiate the failed coup by the PKI in 1965; the second was retaliation toward the Communist Party after the failed PKI coup between 1965 and 1967. The last step was to strip Soekarno's strong support from within the government until he was forced to issue the *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (Supersemar, Order Letter of 11 March) in 1966 and eventually became the acting president in 1967. One year later, the crawling coup succeeded completely, and Suharto became the president of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>132</sup>

Suharto became the most powerful person in the Indonesian military when Military Commander General Ahmad Yani (who had been immediately above him) was among the victims during the 30 September 1965 Movement incident. Soekarno had no other choice but to hand over power to Suharto because the two great forces who were supporting him no longer

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<sup>131</sup> Nugraha.

<sup>132</sup> Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia and Tempo Publishing, *Soeharto: Setelah Sang Jenderal Besar Pergi*, Seri Buku Tempo (KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia) bekerja sama dengan Tempo Publishing, 2018) <<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=F4pPuwEACAAJ>>.

existed: the military and the PKI. The PKI became the scapegoat of the coup, and the army was under Suharto's control. Nevertheless, although the national history of the events of 1965 has not changed, to the present day the government has tended to leave the events unclarified.

### Violence during president-dictator Suharto era: state terrorism

The regime of President Suharto has been widely associated with violence, in particular since his resignation in 1998, when more details became public. People accused him of corruption, collusion, and nepotism, and, at the same time, the memory of anything positive about his rule faded away. The public were able to access information which revealed what Suharto had been doing for the past 32 years. It is now no longer a secret that Suharto used violence in order to take power and to maintain it for three decades.

Eventually, the public learned that Suharto was one of the key figures behind the 1965 incident, which led him to the presidency and to 32 years in power. Suharto was an opportunist who took advantage of the global conditions in which the US was relentless in applying a containment policy that provided support and assistance to social forces or countries that wanted to close themselves off from communist influence or even broadly defined left-wing movements. The evidence of a secret document (National Security Archive of the US), released in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) at Suharto's funeral in 2008, supports the fact that the US was one of Suharto's sources of support in gaining power during the Cold War. Although it remains a mystery as to whether Suharto himself orchestrated the event of 30 September 1965, it is clear that Suharto was the person who benefited the most from this event. According to historian Asvi Warman Adam, Suharto's meeting with Colonel Latief a few hours before the coup happened showed that Suharto already knew the plan. Even so, he did not report it to Ahmad Yani, an army commander who was also his superior. Asvi Warman Adam argues that what Suharto had brought about was a crawling coup. According to Subandrio, the crawling coup brought about by Suharto had four stages, namely: first, eliminating his competitors in the army, such as Yani and others; second, disbanding the PKI, which at that time was the strongest rival of the army; third, weakening the power of President Soekarno's supporters by arresting fifteen ministers who were loyal to Soekarno, including Subandrio, and returning President Soekarno's escort forces to their respective troops; fourth, taking power from President Soekarno; Suharto became acting president in 1967 then became president a year after that.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Gramedia and Publishing.

The violent seizing of power unleashed a great wave of violence that continued for the next couple of years. Suharto's government used the issue of communism to justify the massive killings that took place, mainly in 1965–66. Beginning his rule with violence made it easy for President Suharto to resort to it in order to maintain his control as the second president of the Republic of Indonesia, which he achieved for 32 years. For example, Suharto sent several political prisoners who were involved (or allegedly involved) in the PKI to prison on the island of Buru, without due process. In addition, the government encouraged and supported unofficial actors, such as thugs and community organizations to carry out massacres of people who were considered to be PKI members or sympathizers. Again, another striking use of violence was the way Suharto ordered military operations against Aceh, Papua, and East Timor (now Timor Leste). Furthermore, Suharto's government used accusations of communism to terrorize people in the following years, which Ariel Heryanto has termed state terrorism.

The case of the coup in 1965 is a controversial issue even nowadays. The official narrative of Suharto's regime was that the PKI had organized the coup, and Suharto was the hero who aborted it. In contrast, after Suharto stepped down from power in 1998, several historians have suggested that Suharto knew about the plan. Instead of reporting it to his superior, General Ahmad Yani as the chief commander of the military, he allowed events to unfold, even until his top commander was killed. However, because Suharto won the battle, he has been able to write the history (as an official history) since then.

In order to clear the path for him to write the history, Suharto managed to engineer several actions, which mainly got rid of some potential evidence and silenced possible sources. First of all, he took the highest power as president, by means of what some scholars have called a crawling coup, which I have explained previously above.<sup>134</sup> Second, he used the event to project his image as the country's hero by screening a documentary film (sponsored by the state) every year both on television and in cinemas. Suharto ensured that people watched it, especially at state institutions, state-owned enterprises, and schools. Third, Suharto built a Museum of Communist Betrayal in 1967, which displays dioramas and plays recordings about the brutality of PKI members toward generals who were kidnapped and tortured in the 30 September movement of the PKI. Fourth, a textbook distributed in school contained the New Order's version of the history of the 1965 tragedy, where Suharto was depicted as the country's hero.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Gramedia and Publishing, pp. 231–32.

<sup>135</sup> 'Museum Still Conveys New Order Version of History', *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, 29 September 2015) <<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/29/museum-still-conveys-new-order-version-history.html>>.

Fifth, Suharto declared 1 October as a national holiday – Pancasila Reverence Day – a day after the PKI event of 30 September (abbreviated as G 30 S/PKI). During the New Order, the government instructed that government institutions and members of the public should fly the nation’s flag at half-mast on 30 September and fly the flag at full-mast on 1 October.<sup>136</sup> Only recently, in 2016, President Joko Widodo declared 1 June as a national holiday for commemoration of the birth of *Pancasila* state ideology, which had been buried under Suharto, in order to weaken the association of Soekarno with *Pancasila*.<sup>137</sup>

One of Indonesia’s most extraordinarily violent histories concerns the killing of those involved (or allegedly involved) with the PKI in 1965–66. More than one million people died in this incident; most were arrested without trial and killed.<sup>138</sup> Historical records confirm that the narratives rolled out by the government justified the ‘street’ judgments. In other words, the justification granted the violence official legitimacy, which further fueled the killings, causing a significant number of victims. Anyone could eliminate a business rival simply by applying the communist label on any person they pleased. Because of this dark history, Ariel Heryanto has termed it ‘state terrorism,’ where the state, on the one hand, maintained its citizens in fear and legitimized certain forms of violence, while, on the other hand, promoting narratives of the PKI’s crime and savagery. The Suharto regime kept producing propaganda about the cruelty of the PKI; however, the government itself was no less cruel in killing many PKI members (or those so-accused), not to mention blaming the ‘street’ killings on the PKI. As the government encouraged this kind of street justice, anyone could accuse anyone else of being involved with those banned organizations.

After the massacre of people who were considered to be communists, the narrative continued to resonate. The campaign of hunting down communists became a source of terror for the whole nation, and Suharto maintained this situation as it was. People were afraid because they could be accused of being PKI members or sympathizers and the authorities did not have to win a trial to prove it. Civil organizations were also encouraged to do the job of killing, without, of course, the intervention of a court. People could, therefore, claim anybody they hated was a communist in order to have them killed. Thus, Ariel Heryanto uses the term ‘state terrorism’ in which the state continues to spread fear. In Ariel Heryanto’s words, state terrorism is a series

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<sup>136</sup> Asvi Warman Adam, *Membongkar Manipulasi Sejarah: Kontroversi Pelaku Dan Peristiwa*.

<sup>137</sup> Ayomi Amindoni, ‘Jokowi Declares June 1 as National Holiday to Commemorate Pancasila’, *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, 1 June 2016) <<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/06/01/jokowi-declares-june-1-as-national-holiday-to-commemorate-pancasila>>.

<sup>138</sup> *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966 : Studies from Java and Bali*, ed. by R B Cribb, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia ; No. 21. (Clayton, Vic: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990).

of state-sponsored campaigns that induce intense and widespread fear over a large population.<sup>139</sup>

Other than using communism, Suharto also used racial matters, especially those pertaining to ethnic Chinese-Indonesians, to further his own interests. Suharto elaborated a particular policy toward the Chinese-Indonesians; they were marginalized, discriminated against, and stigmatized.<sup>140</sup> Ariel Heryanto argued that the New Order held a double-standard policy toward this ethnic group in Indonesia. While the Chinese-Indonesians were labeled as a threat to the national economy, at the same time, protection fees were collected from Chinese-Indonesian businessmen.

*Periodic anti-Chinese riots have been reported, narrated, analysed and remembered as something natural and spontaneous, as a populist search for justice. While security officers usually act to restore order, in the final analysis the violence serves the interest of the regime. It reproduces the Chinese dependence on state protection, and defers, if not undercuts, the potential emergence of a domestic bourgeoisie.*<sup>141</sup>

Suharto framed himself as a hero who was a native Indonesian and always stood up for ‘natives’ against ‘non-natives’ such as the Chinese-Indonesians. He applied the policies of ‘othering,’ which assigned negative characteristics to the Chinese-Indonesians and identified them as representing the enemy of the native Indonesians.<sup>142</sup> The terms used were no longer ‘native’ and ‘non-native,’ but ‘Chinese’ and ‘local.’ The narrative was intended to stir up public opinion so that the public would need Suharto to respond to the ‘threat’ of the Chinese-Indonesians, which he himself had created as part of a double-standard policy toward the Chinese-Indonesians.

Only a few days before Suharto finally stepped down from power, violence also colored a number of incidents. Some activists were abducted, tortured, and intimidated. Four student activists were even killed – by the end of an army rifle – during a demonstration by students to demand Suharto’s resignation in 1998. Furthermore, the government secretly used racism to create instability by igniting hatred against Chinese ethnic groups, so looting at Chinese shops became inevitable, and incidents of gang rape and murder against this ethnic group were

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<sup>139</sup> Heryanto, ‘State Terror. Polit. Identity Indones. Fatal. Belong.’

<sup>140</sup> Chua Christian, ‘Defining Indonesian Chineseness Under the New Order.’, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34.4 (2004), 465–79

<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=poh&AN=14842928&lang=es&site=ehost-live&scope=site>>.

<sup>141</sup> Ariel Heryanto, ‘Ethnic Identities and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in Public Culture’, *Asian Identities: Culture and Politics of Representations in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore*, 1998, 273 (p. 102).

<sup>142</sup> Poul Rohleder, ‘Othering’, in *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, ed. by Thomas Teo (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2014), pp. 1306–8 <[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7\\_414](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_414)>.



rampant. Later, a joint investigation team’s findings established that the group of people who had perpetrated violence against ethnic Chinese comprised people who were similar in characteristics to the soldiers, namely having crew-cut hair and army-specific shoes.<sup>143</sup> No less important, this event seemed systematic in nature and was massive in scale, with an apparent uniform command and action. The purpose of the riot was to create chaos so that the government would be needed and expected to restore order, which would in turn lead them back to power.

During Suharto’s leadership, internal violence between groups diminished compared to its incidence during Soekarno’s administration, but violence carried out by the state, in order to eliminate political opponents, escalated.

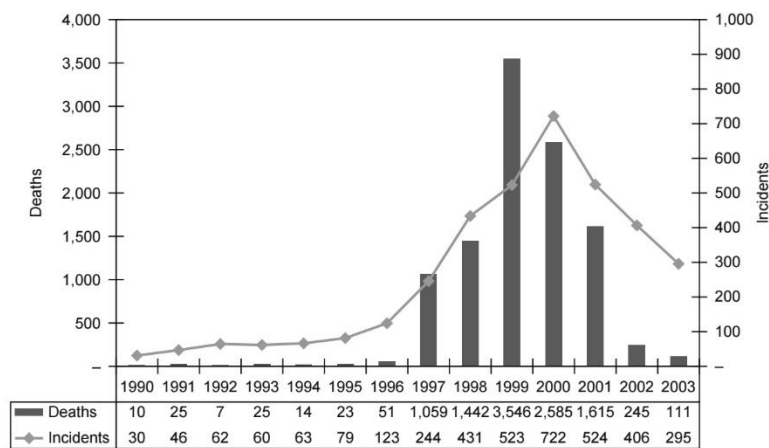


Figure 5 Deaths and incidents of (non-secessionist) violence in Indonesia, 1990–2003<sup>144</sup>

The *reformasi* (reform) initiated in Indonesia in 1998 dramatically changed people’s perceptions about Suharto so that he became known as a dictator or ‘iron-handed’ president. Previously, people had known him as the father of development, with several achievements articulated in the *Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun* (Repelita, five-year national development plans). His image was able to remain positive during those years because he controlled the media and repressed all opponents; he even silenced his critics. If there were activists or critics who addressed him, that person would most likely disappear without a

<sup>143</sup> Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta, *Temuan Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta Peristiwa Kerusuhan Mei 1998*, ed. by Andy Yentriyani, 2nd edn (Jakarta: Publikasi Komnas Perempuan bekerjasama dengan New Zealand Official Development Assistance, 2002) <<https://kontras.or.id/perpustakaan/temuan-tim-gabungan-pencari-fakta-peristiwa-kerusuhan-mei-1998/>>.

<sup>144</sup> Tadjoeeddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation* / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeeddin, p. 32.

judicial process. Such acts of violence enabled him to remain free from criticism in public. Furthermore, any such criticisms would soon disappear, along with the people who dared to voice them.

### *The way Suharto violently handled the conflict*

Conflict is something that comes naturally at all times. People should not seek to avoid or eliminate conflict. Instead, people should consider it to be a motor of change, which can transform circumstances for the better.<sup>145</sup> Johan Galtung outlines the notion that conflict can be either a destroyer or a transformer, depending on the way people manage it. In other words, people have a deciding role in determining which direction the conflict will take. However, the New Order regime leaders thought that all conflicts were harmful to society and a sign of the regime's weakness, and should therefore be eliminated. Consequently, the approach taken by the New Order military was to suppress, destroy, and prevent conflicts.

It is for this reason that Suharto, in what he called the New Order period, applied a policy named *Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antar-golongan* (SARA, Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Inter-group). This policy forbade the discussion of issues relating to ethnicity, religion, and race, and was immensely destructive because it made the topic taboo, in a country<sup>146</sup> where more than 600 ethnic groups coexist, in an attempt at reducing heterogeneity and dispelling ethnic differences.<sup>147</sup> As a result of this policy, Suharto's New Order did not carry out a census based on ethnicity; this was done only in the Dutch colonial era in 1930, and then after the reformation in 2000 and 2010. As per government updates, in 2010 there were 1331 ethnic groups, updated again in 2013 to 633 large ethnic groups, with the rest categorized as ethnic subgroups.<sup>148</sup>

During Suharto's era, the military approach was the primary method of solving problems or conflicts and was also used to further his own interests, predominantly to keep him in power. For example, first, Suharto banned any political activity by students, even though he had himself benefited from such activities when the students had protested against Soekarno. Second, *Daerah Operasi Militer* (DOM, Military Operation Area) was enacted in Aceh in response to the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM, Aceh Freedom Movement) in 1989–98. Third,

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<sup>145</sup> Paul Lederach.

<sup>146</sup> Indonesia., *Bunga Rampai Sejarah Lokal : Kerawanan Sosial Dalam Perspektif Sejarah* (Direktorat Nilai Sejarah, Direktorat Jenderal Sejarah dan Purbakala, Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata [Jakarta], 2006).

<sup>147</sup> L Suryadinata, E N Arifin, and A Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*, Indonesia's Population Series (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003)

<<https://books.google.es/books?id=nFckUneBbRIC>>.

<sup>148</sup> 'Mengulik Data Suku Di Indonesia'.

mysterious shootings (assigned to the military) occurred in order to eradicate thugs without trials (1981–85). Petrus's term, *Penembak Misterius* (or the 'mysterious shooter' in English), was an open secret. Petrus was a plainclothes soldier/police officer whose job it was to kill thugs without a court process. This policy is precisely what President Duterte has been doing in the Philippines' current war on drugs, exploiting the public's wish for safety while strengthening his own power. This military approach reduced trust in the social system and resulted in many unnecessary deaths.

Ambon gradually lost its local wisdom practices during the New Order period due to the firm centralization policy. Through Law No. 5, of 1979, regarding village government, the central government did not recognize local systems that had endured for generations, such as that in Ambon. Previously, the term for a village in Ambon was *Negeri*. The new law replaced this with *Desa*, which applied to all towns in Indonesia from Sabang in Aceh to Merauke in Papua. In 2004, the central government issued a law on local government through Law No. 32, of 2004. Later, the provincial government of the Maluku Islands strengthened the law by publishing a local law on village government through Law No. 14, of 2005, which enabled the traditional society to officially use the name *Negeri* again instead of *Desa*.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, Suharto's New Order law (No. 5, of 1979) did not recognize the king as the head of the village, even though the king had legitimacy in the eyes of the people in the town.<sup>150</sup> Instead of respecting local values while applying a new system, Suharto abolished and completely changed them. At this time, efforts to increase inclusivity and homogenization were also being intensely applied.<sup>151</sup> Under the pretext of creating unity, coercive actions toward tradition and culture were carried out systematically by New Order governments at the national level.

This policy made regional groups feel vulnerable to domination, injustice, abuse, and violence. Therefore, according to Yasraf Amar Piliang, the local regions chose exclusivity in order to find their peace among this oppressive national plan, which he argues should be categorized

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<sup>149</sup> Husen Assagaf, 'Posisi Islam Dalam Sejarah Pemerintahan Negeri Adat Di Pulau Ambon', *Dialektika*, 9.2 (2015), 19–33 <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.33477/dj.v9i2.229>>; Eric Stenly Holle, 'Sistem Pengangkatan Dan Pemilihan Kepala Pemerintah Negeri Di Maluku Tengah (Kajian Dari Perspektif Pembangunan Demokrasi Di Indonesia)', *Unpatti University*, 2013 <<https://fhukum.unpatti.ac.id/sistem-pengangkatan-dan-pemilihan-kepala-pemerintah-negeri-di-maluku-tengah-kajian-dari-perspektif-pembangunan-demokrasi-di-indonesia/>> [accessed 5 June 2021].

<sup>150</sup> Holle.

<sup>151</sup> Yasraf Amir Piliang, 'Hantu-hantu politik dan matinya sosial' (Solo: Tiga Serangkai, 2003).

with the term *umwelt*.<sup>152</sup> This is a German word that means ‘environment,’ and, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term implies the world based on the experience of a particular organism.<sup>153</sup>

The New Order did not successfully manage Indonesia’s diversity, although the country’s motto is ‘Unity in Diversity.’ According to Bertrand Jacques, Suharto’s New Order ignored the value of Indonesia’s diversity, while the concept of national identity was not successfully constructed.<sup>154</sup> Besides, as an archipelagic country, Indonesia faced severe challenges in uniting the people under a single and stable national identity:

*Despite Sen’s (2006) assertion that competing identities are natural, Bertrand (2004) believed that the ambiguous concept of ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’ embraced by Indonesians and the Indonesian government, as well as the role of religion in nation-building and identity building, contribute to identity competition between, for example, being Indonesian, being Muslim (or a member of a Buddhist community in Indonesia), and being Javanese.*<sup>155</sup>

The concept of ‘them’ and ‘us’ was visibly applied to Indonesia’s society. It sharpened the social gap among ethnic groups even as did external threats such as colonialization in Ambon and Sampit. Steele (2005) has further asserted that “[a]side from the shared history of Dutch colonialism and the lingua franca of Bahasa Indonesia [Indonesian language], there was little to hold together the fragile unity of the archipelago.”<sup>156</sup>

## The outbreak of communal violence

Nobody thought that Suharto would fall in 1998, just like nobody believed that the Soviet Union would collapse in 1991. As the US’s main rival during the Cold War, the Soviet Union was mighty, with its one-party dictatorship, state-owned economy, and Kremlin’s control over the Soviet republics and most of the Central-Eastern European communist countries.<sup>157</sup> Like

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<sup>152</sup> Piliang, p. 62.

<sup>153</sup> ‘Umwelt’, *Lexico* <<https://www.lexico.com/definition/Umwelt>> [accessed 8 August 2021].

<sup>154</sup> Bertrand Jacques, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia / Jacques Bertrand* (Cambridge University Press Cambridge ; Port Melbourne, 2004).

<sup>155</sup> Rudi Sukandar, ‘Negotiating Post-Conflict Communication: A Case of Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia’ (Ohio University, 2007), p. 25 <[https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg\\_10?::NO:10:P10\\_ETD\\_SUBID:59967](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?::NO:10:P10_ETD_SUBID:59967)>.

<sup>156</sup> Sukandar, p. 26.

<sup>157</sup> Leon Aron, ‘Everything You Think You Know About the Collapse of the Soviet Union Is Wrong’, *Foreign Policy*, 2011 <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/06/20/everything-you-think-you-know-about-the-collapse-of-the-soviet-union-is-wrong/>> [accessed 1 January 2019].

the Soviet Union, Suharto was compelling after being in power for more than 30 years, assisted by his hand-picked officers, who occupied the country's most politically strategic positions.<sup>158</sup>

Indonesia began a new chapter of its political history and embraced liberal democracy after Suharto fell in 1998. It was not the first time that Indonesia had established a regime called democracy. A self-described democratic regime was implemented in the country on at least three occasions: parliamentary democracy (1949–57), guided democracy (1957–59 and 1959–65), and *Pancasila* democracy under Suharto (March 1966–May 1998).<sup>159</sup> As we can see, the notion of democracy was highly prestigious, and all Indonesian governments appealed to it, while being more or less willing to actually make it work according to the generally accepted definitions of such a political system.

When Suharto stepped down, B.J. Habibie became acting president. The appointment was made under the 1945 constitution (UUD 1945) Article 8. (1):

*In the event that the president dies, resigns, is impeached, or is not capable of implementing his/her obligations during his/her term, he/she will be replaced by the Vice President until the end of his/her term.*<sup>160</sup>

B.J. Habibie continued the governance and made the following brave decisions during his early days as president: first, via the presidential decree, Habibie released political prisoners in June and August 1998 and January 1999; second, he stopped enforcing the DOM (the Area of Military Operation) which had been in place since 1989 in Aceh; third, through a strategy of decentralization, he introduced regional autonomy; fourth, it was made possible for anybody to establish a political party. Instead of continuing to enjoy his presidency, he insisted on holding an early and first democratic election to eliminate Suharto's cronies from most positions. At the same time, he himself risked losing his seat as president. He decided to hold an early general election because the then-incumbent members of parliament were Suharto's cronies. The general election, was soon followed by Habibie's 517-day presidential report. However, unfortunately, the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (MPR, People's Consultative Assembly) rejected the report for three reasons: East Timor broke away from Indonesia;

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<sup>158</sup> California Press, 'Suharto ' s Armed Forces : Building a Power Base in New Order Indonesia , 1966-1998 Author ( s ): Salim Said Published by : University of California Press Stable URL : [Http://Www.Jstor.Org/Stable/2645838](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2645838) All Use Subject to [Http://About.Jstor.Org/Terms](http://about.jstor.org/terms) SUH', 38.6 (2018), 535–52 (p. 551).

<sup>159</sup> Ikrar Nusa Bhakti, 'The Transition to Democracy in Indonesia: Some Outstanding Problems', in *The Asia-Pacific: A Region in Transition*, ed. by James Rolfe (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004), pp. 195–206.

<sup>160</sup> Indonesia, 'U.U.D. 1945' (DPR RI, 2002) <<http://www.dpr.go.id/jdih/uu1945>> [accessed 1 January 2019].

Suharto and his cronies did not go to trial for their acts of corruption, nepotism, and collusion; and the Bali Bank scandal, which financially disadvantaged the country to the cost of 140 trillion rupiahs.<sup>161</sup> Habibie, therefore, decided to withdraw his candidacy from the next presidential election (1999–2004).

While the new government was consolidating liberal democracy, in this period of transition, deep-seated conflicts broke out across various regions, which turned into communal violence. There was social and political turbulence, including communal violence that caused thousands of deaths in several regions. For the sake of representation of the variety that characterized these conflicts, this study focuses on three such examples of communal violence. First is a center–periphery conflict between the Indonesian government and a separatist movement named *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM, Aceh Freedom Movement). Second is an ethnic conflict between Madurese and Dayak tribes in Sampit, Central Kalimantan. Third is a religious war between Christian and Muslim communities in Ambon, the Maluku Islands.

Zulfan Tadjoeddin has classified conflicts in Indonesia into four categories: secessionist, ethnic, routine, and electoral. A secessionist conflict is one motivated by the desire to separate from the unity of the Indonesian republic, for example, GAM, the *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS, the Republic of South Maluku), and *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM, Free Papua Movement). Ethnic conflict occurs due to disputes between religions or ethnicities, as happened in Ambon and Sampit. In contrast, routine conflict occurs daily and can involve anyone – for example, conflict due to interpersonal disputes on the streets or quarrels resulting from the interaction of at least two persons. Finally, electoral conflict is that which occurs due to the dissatisfaction of a person or group arising from an election or democratic practice.

According to Zulfan, the first two types of conflict (secessionist and ethnic) tended to occur before Indonesia implemented liberal democracy, during its transition period, which lasted until 2005. The other two types of conflicts (routine and electoral) proliferated from the advent of liberal democracy until the present day. These last two types of conflict tend to be residual, according to Zulfan.<sup>162</sup>

When people from many different parts of Indonesia started to become one voice, demanding the resignation of Suharto, they thought that after Suharto stepped down, there would not be

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<sup>161</sup> Mehulika Sitepu, ‘Yang Perlu Anda Ketahui Dari Kasus BLBI Terbaru’, *BBC News Indonesia* (Jakarta, 27 April 2017) <<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-39724323>>.

<sup>162</sup> Tadjoeddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin*.

any more severe chaos. When I was a kid, a few years after Suharto fell, my dad used to tell me that he had to hide his political aspirations every time a general election took place. He witnessed the person who counted the ballots using his nail to mark the Golkar Party as the chosen one, which was apparently a regular occurrence. At a higher level, a former activist, who often published a column in the newspaper critical toward the government, told me in an interview that people came to him and warned him to be careful as they knew where he and his family lived.<sup>163</sup> People believed that Suharto was the real source of all violence in Indonesia, so they expected that Indonesia would be much better after he resigned from power. However, many Indonesians, and I, were wrong, and we did not expect that serious communal violence would happen; but it did, not long after Suharto stepped down.

At least two types of communal violence can be observed after Suharto stepped down in 1998. The first falls into the category of ethnic conflict (considering that, in many cultural contexts, ethnicity can include religion), as Zulfan Tadjoeuddin puts it. This category of violence started in Jakarta, in a place called Ketapang, and continued in several areas, such as the Maluku Islands, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan. The second category is a center–periphery conflict, an already-existing conflict that was triggered again during this period in the areas of Papua and Aceh.<sup>164</sup>

On 19 January 1999, there were riots between Muslims and Christians in Maluku’s provincial capital, namely Ambon city, after previous disputes between the two religious groups had occurred in other cities in Maluku province. On 12 December 1998, there were clashes between the villagers of Wailete (majority Muslim) and those of Hative Besar (majority Christian). There were no casualties, but the incident resulted in a few houses being burnt down. On 14 January 1999, Christian and Muslim residents clashed in Dobo, Southeast Maluku, and the incident led to eight people being killed.

The rioting in the capital was the most prominent, the worst, and the most prolonged interfaith conflict in the Maluku Islands. The reason seems banal: a fight between two youths of different religions on a major Islamic holiday (Eid al-Fitr) triggered many residents in the capital to attack one another. However, many eyewitnesses and researchers noticed oddities regarding the causes of this riot. For example, a local journalist who lives near the first incident scene, saw a group of unknown people with military-style appearance (cropped hair and army shoes)

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<sup>163</sup> Personal interview with an anonymous former activist on 12 March 2021 in Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>164</sup> Sopar Peranto, ‘Dinamika Konflik Kekerasan Pasca-Orde Baru’, *Masyarakat: Jurnal Sosiologi*, 20.1 (2015) <<http://journal.ui.ac.id/index.php/mjs/article/view/5056>>.

passing by and shouting provocative words. Furthermore, it was deemed strange and suspicious that this group of unknown people were ready with a headband identity, red for Christian and white for Muslim, on the day of the incident.

A researcher from the Netherlands, Gerry van Klinken, considers that the Cendana family (related to the former president Suharto) played a role in the Ambon riots. The goal was simple: they wanted the military to regain its authority like in Suharto's era, as this would enable them to control the government again, appointing politicians who would side with Suharto and his family. We must remember that, at the time, people were trying, in court, to charge Suharto, his family, and those closest to him to take responsibility for various accusations, including corruption and crimes against humanity. Klinken saw the same pattern occurring in Jakarta, Ambon, Poso, and Sampit. Furthermore, one of the pieces of evidence that indicates the Suharto regime was behind the riots was the fact that the participation of 165 thugs was under the control of former Suharto aide Dicky Wattimena, who took them from Jakarta. One of the thugs was also a former security guard at the Sentul racing arena in Bogor, which is owned by Suharto's son, Tommy Suharto. Previously, these thugs had also caused riots by first stirring up religious sentiment in Jakarta when students and other community elements actively protested in order to ensure that the reforms would be carried through, including defense of the Special Session of the People's Consultative Assembly.<sup>165</sup>

In January and March 1999, in Sambas, West Kalimantan, an ethnic conflict between Madurese and Malay took place. There were around 40,000 Madurese who lived in a refugee camp as a result of the war.<sup>166</sup> The violence started when a Madurese person was caught as he tried to barge into a Malay's house to steal something. People in the area saw him and took the law into their hands, which led to the thief being assaulted. The people of the Madurese community became provoked and retaliated by attacking Paritsetia village in early January 1999, a raid which resulted in the death of three Malays. Retaliation after retaliation took place until Dayaks joined forces with the Malays against the Madurese, because they reacted similarly, thinking of themselves as being natives of the area.

In December 1998, and again in May 2000, clashes between Christians and Muslims occurred during the struggle for power of a regent in Poso, Sulawesi Island. A national magazine –

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<sup>165</sup> Arzia Tivany Wargadiredja, 'Di Balik Foto Tragedi Ketapang, Kerusakan Berdarah Yang Menyulut Konflik Ambon', *Vice Indonesia* (Jakarta, November 2018) <<https://www.vice.com/id/article/8x5peb/di-balik-foto-tragedi-ketapang-kerusakan-berdarah-yang-menyulut-konflik-ambon>>.

<sup>166</sup> Hermien Y Kleden; Edi Patebeng, 'Sambas Masih Terluka', *Tempo*, 52.XXIX (2001), 7 <<https://majalah.tempoco/read/nasional/78114/sambas-masih-terluka?read=true>>.



*Tempo* – reported that around 120 people were killed, and hundreds of people fled from their homes to find safety. The clashes erupted from a quarrel between young Muslim and Christian men, because of which one of them died. As happened in Ambon and Sampit, the chaos expanded through rumors spreading across the region. A witness told a reporter that an unknown person had told them to prepare themselves, as the enemy would come and attack them.<sup>167</sup>

### Symbols of identity

Violent conflicts during the transition to democracy began in 1998, involving the identities of two or more groups. The scale of the war expanded because feelings of solidarity for each identity led to others joining the war. Although the conflict started from a small quarrel between two young men, nevertheless it became enormous as the whole community was dragged into the battlefield in support of their respective identities. In January 1999, a young Muslim was in a quarrel with a young Christian over an insignificant matter, and it wasn't long before a big war started between the Christian and Muslim groups. In Sampit, Central Kalimantan, a major violent conflict broke out from a robbery incident, where the thief was from the Madurese ethnic group, and the victim was from the Dayak ethnic group.<sup>168</sup>

Clashes between identities worsened due to the use by provocateurs of symbols associated with particular groups during the conflict. First, the presence of provocateurs is mentioned several times, both in the media and in scholarly works. For example, the testimonial of journalists in Ambon noted that unknown people came from nowhere and provoked the situation on the day when the conflict happened.<sup>169</sup> *Tempo* magazine wrote:

*After kidnappers, rapists, looters, and snipers, acted in various riots that enforced fury, recently appeared 'stealth' which is often called provocateur. Their temperament is also thought to be as cold as that of their fellow kidnappers, rapists, and snipers; and no less cruel than them. The difference was probably only in one thing: their hands weren't necessarily covered in blood. But as rioters,*

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<sup>167</sup> Johan Budi S.P., Iwan Setiawan, and Darlis Muhammad, 'Tragedi Poso, Duka Kita Bersama', *Tempo* (Palu, June 2000) <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/114084/tragedi-poso-duka-kita-bersama>>.

<sup>168</sup> Borneo and Kalimantan both mean the same thing. Kalimantan is used among Indonesians, while Borneo is a term used worldwide.

<sup>169</sup> *Carita Orang Basudara : Kisah-Kisah Perdamaian Dari Maluku / Editor, Jacky Manuputty, Zairin Salampessy, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, Irsyad Rafsadi*, ed. by Jacky Manuputty and others (Ambon: Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku bekerjasama dengan Pusat Studi Agama & Demokrasi, Yayasan Paramadina, 2014).

*provocateurs are more effective in maximizing the number of human victims, houses, public facilities and property.*<sup>170</sup>

Gerry van Klinken clearly stated that Suharto's cronies played a role in creating chaos on several occasions during the transition to democracy. The purpose was clearly to sabotage the direction of revolution and the shift toward liberal democracy.<sup>171</sup>

There were two kinds of provocateurs active during the communal conflicts that happened during the transition to democracy. The first category is the provocateur who works for a group, such as Suharto's cronies, according to Gerry van Klinken, in order to achieve a specific objective which favors their interests. In Poso, where both communities dragged the conflict into a religious war, it all began with the local regent competition.<sup>172</sup> Each group manipulated religious sentiment in order to gain more supporters.

In Ketapang, Jakarta, for example, places of religious worship were used as a sign of identification. By spreading stories that the mosque was burning, unknown people spread irritation and anger among the Muslims. People began to assemble shortly after that and then attacked churches in revenge. Although not a single mosque was burnt, people were very emotional in seeking revenge.<sup>173</sup>

The second kind of provocateur is an individual or a group of people who are provoked by the provocateur's first group and then amplify and recycle the provocation. These people are even more dangerous than the original provocateurs because they will act with total willingness and are unafraid of anything. Unlike the first group, these people did not only talk, they took action; they not only talked about attacking, they were actually attacking other people's groups. In addition, these people would recruit more people in order to strengthen their action against another group.

The symbol used in violent conflicts is mostly the same: the use of color. In Ternate, Maluku, people used yellow to represent Christians and the kingdom of Ternate, which tried to protect them during this time. On the opposite side, Muslims used white to identify themselves during the war or to hang from their houses. Initially, the kingdom of Ternate used security forces

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<sup>170</sup> Hp. S., Friets Kerley, and M.D. Asnadi C.A, 'Mencari Sang Provokator', *Tempo*, April 1999 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/hukum/94666/mencari-sang-provokator>>.

<sup>171</sup> Gerry van Klinken.

<sup>172</sup> S.P., Setiawan, and Muhammad.

<sup>173</sup> Arif A Wicaksono; Iwan Setiawan; Wenseslaus Manggut, 'Api Bermula Dari Ketapang', *Tempo*, 8.XXVII (1998), 9 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/97798/api-bermula-dari-ketapang>>.

with yellow uniforms. Christians were the minority in this area, so the king of Ternate decided to protect the minority during the conflict. However, a number of people who were provoked created counter security forces that used a white symbol.

These symbols were used to instigate fighting between them. According to Muchtar, a lecturer in Khairun University in Ternate, unknown individuals told people in the south (where the majority are Muslims) that the yellow (group) was about to strike. At the same time, those anonymous actors also said that the white (group) was about to invade the people in the north (where the majority are Christian). Both groups were provoked, and clashes were finally inevitable, and broke out in the city center.<sup>174</sup>

In Ambon, the Maluku Islands, there were more symbols of identity: white or red headbands, mosque and church, and *Acang* and *Obet*. *Acang* comes from Hasan, which is a common Muslim name, while *Obet*, is a popular Christian name, which derives from Robert. These symbols were used by provocateurs, depending on which side they lived in. Usually, a provocateur would say, for example, “*Acang is in our town; please be careful and let’s get ready.*” Many people from both sides quickly became familiar with the terms *Acang* and *Obet*, so they would use them as an identification code when questioning someone who passed through their town.<sup>175</sup> As an example of the use of the mosque as a symbol, Al Fattah is the town’s largest mosque, so provocateurs decided to use it. Even so, no one had touched the Al Fattah mosque, and it had remained in one piece since the war began on 19 January 1999.

In Sambas, Kalimantan, when conflict erupted on a massive scale on 17 January 1999 between the Malay ethnic group fighting alongside the Dayak ethnic group against the Madurese, they used color symbols to distinguish them from their enemies. The Dayak ethnic group wore a red band, while the Malay ethnic group, which sided with the Dayak ethnic group, wore yellow on their heads.<sup>176</sup> The Madurese, however, did not use anything to distinguish them from their enemies. Furthermore, the use of color symbols enabled the Dayak and Malay to carry out ‘sweeping’ checkpoints or door-to-door ‘sweeping’ checks.

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<sup>174</sup> Personal interview with Muchtar on 8 July 2018.

<sup>175</sup> Mardiyah Chamim, ‘Membebat Luka Di Maluku’, *Tempo*, 37.XXXII (2003), 4  
<<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/selingan/91294/membebat-luka-di-maluku?>>.

<sup>176</sup> Rustam F Mandayun; Koresponden Pontianak, ‘Tali Kepala Merah Kembali Dikenakan’, *Tempo*, 1999  
<<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/94089/tali-kepala-merah-kembali-dikenakan?>>.

## History repeats

Philip Guedalla (1889–1944), a barrister, historical and travel writer, and biographer from England, once popularized the expression: ‘History repeats itself.’ In France a similar term is found, where Keny Arkana (1982), French-born and of Argentinian descent, wrote a song entitled ‘L’Histoire se Répète.’ Soekarno, Indonesia’s first president, coined the term *Jas Merah*, which stands for *jangan melupakan sejarah* or, in English, ‘Don’t forget history.’ A Latin expression, *nihil sub sole novum*, means ‘There is nothing new under the sun.’ Therefore, anything that happens today has happened before. Anything you do today, people have done before. Finally, there is a famous expression: “*Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it,*” as stated by Jorge Agustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana y Borrás (1863–1952), a writer and philosopher.<sup>177</sup>

Most people, including the Indonesians, seem to quickly forget things. Behind this ‘commonsense’ statement, several factors can be seen as causes, such as language, acceptance of the problem, and political factors.<sup>178</sup> Memory can become a political commodity when things are remembered or forgotten for a specific goal. During the New Order, for example, Suharto manipulated the people to remember certain things and to ignore or forget others. He screened the 30 September 1965 Movement film every year and compelled people to watch it. In other words, Suharto wanted people (and especially the new generation) to remember the brutality of the PKI, which was blamed for the attempted coup and then eradicated by the Indonesian military together with their co-opted civilian militia groups.<sup>179</sup> Conversely, Suharto wanted people to forget about the heroic Soekarno, who had first declared the *Pancasila* as Indonesia’s ideology on 1 June 1945 as preparation for the independence declaration on 17 August 1945. Instead, Suharto initiated the celebration of *Pancasila* national day on 1 October 1965, the day when he had saved the country from the attempted coup, according to the New Order history.

A number of student demonstrations against the leadership of President Suharto in 1998 marked the start of the 1998 reform movement. Deteriorating economic conditions sparked demonstrations by students outside the campus, and their rejection of Suharto’s election as

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<sup>177</sup> Nicholas Clairmont, “‘Those Who Do Not Learn History Are Doomed To Repeat It.’ Really?’, *Big Think*, 2015 <<https://bigthink.com/the-proverbial-skeptic/those-who-do-not-learn-history-doomed-to-repeat-it-really>> [accessed 9 June 2021].

<sup>178</sup> Binsar J. Pakpahan, ‘Etika Mengingat Bagi Bangsa Pelupa’, *Ledalero*, 16.01 (2017), 34–54 <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.31385/jl.v16i1>>.

<sup>179</sup> Annie Pohlman and others, ‘Janda PKI: Stigma and Sexual Violence against Communist Widows Following the 1965–1966 Massacres in Indonesia’, ed. by null, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, null, null.null (20016), null <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2015.1100873>>.

president for the seventh time at the General Assembly of *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (MPR, People's Consultative Assembly) on 10 March 1998. Suharto, who was about to begin his seventh period as president, had to resign from the presidency on 21 May 1998.

A similar story happened 32 years previously when Soekarno lost his presidential seat due to massive demonstrations by university students. The shouts of crowds from the *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia* (KAMI, the Indonesian Student Action Unit) in Jakarta filled the sky on 10 January 1966. They were enraged at President Soekarno for failing to abolish the PKI, which was blamed for the attempted coup in 1965. The controversial warrant was issued on 11 March 1966. Soekarno handed General Suharto the authority to restore security and order through the *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (Order of Eleventh March).<sup>180</sup> This event marks the beginning of Soekarno's demise.<sup>181</sup>

Suharto did not learn from what happened to Soekarno. In both eras, people started significant movements toward bringing down the leader when the country's economic condition was in crisis. During the Soekarno era, the Indonesian economy was on the verge of collapse: fuel prices increased from 4 rupiah to 250 rupiah and prices skyrocketed almost instantly. Rice and other essential commodities were no longer available in the market; the cost of what was available increased tenfold. During the economic crisis in Suharto's New Order, inflation reached 80 percent, the exchange rate with the US dollar dropped to 16,500 rupiah per one USD, loan interest rates rose to 70 percent, and economic growth slowed to minus 16 percent.<sup>182</sup>

Suharto forgot that history could repeat itself; the authoritarian leadership model, which prohibits freedom of speech, could end his presidency just like had happened to Soekarno 32 years previously. Sometime between 1945 and 1949, the left-wing newspaper *Revolutionary* (published in Yogyakarta) was closed, because President Soekarno was called 'bombastic' in the writings of Soepeno, the editor-in-chief of the daily. In 1960, around 40 media outlets in Jakarta and the regions, mainly left-leaning ones, had their licenses revoked. The military began issuing such permits, *Surat Ijin Terbit* (SIT, license issued) in 1958 for the Jakarta area. In 1960, President Soekarno imposed SITs nationally. Meanwhile, in Suharto's era, the fate of

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<sup>180</sup> Supersemar is a document signed by the Indonesian President Sukarno on 11 March 1966, giving the army commander Lt. Gen. Suharto authority to take whatever measures he "deemed necessary" to restore order to the chaotic situation during the Indonesian mass killings of 1965–66

<sup>181</sup> Ramadhian Fadillah, 'Tritura, Senjata Mahasiswa Gulingkan Presiden Soekarno', *Merdeka*, 11 January 2016 <<https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/tritura-senjata-mahasiswa-gulingkan-presiden-soekarno.html>>.

<sup>182</sup> 'Ekonomi Bisa Bangkrut?', *Tempo*, January 1999 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/opini/92725/ekonomi-bisa-bangkrut>>.

freedom of speech was no different. Around 46 out of 163 newspapers were banned in 1966 because they were Marxist. The monthly tabloid *Sendi*, published by students at Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University, was shut down in 1972. Ashadi Siregar, the magazine's editor-in-chief, was charged. The government accused *Sendi* of insulting President Suharto with its negative assessment of the *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* (Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park) project, which the president's wife, Tien Suharto, was working on at the time.<sup>183</sup>

Residents of Chinese descent in North and West Kalimantan experienced a tumultuous period from the end of 1967 until a few months later. Expulsions and mass massacres occurred. Around two to three thousand Chinese people were killed, tens of thousands more were forced to escape, and many of those who fled died.<sup>184</sup> The military under Suharto mobilized the people of Dayak to kill and expel people of Chinese descent under the pretext of retaliation for the killing of one of the Dayak's leaders, the Ledo district head. Under Suharto's ambition to clear the roots of communism from the country, troops spread rumors – under an operation called *Sapu Bersih*, which loosely translates as 'sweep completely' – that the Chinese had killed the Ledo district head.<sup>185</sup> The Dayak group searched the Chinese-descent neighborhoods one by one. At the end of October 1967, they targeted Anjungan, Mandor, and Menjalin districts. On November 14 1967, a group of other Dayak sub-tribes from the remote areas joined the fighting. There were a series of significant atrocities in the weeks that followed, with many people killed, until the violence peaked in November 1967. Assailants wielding hunting weapons began murdering and torching people of Chinese ancestry. The bodies of victims were lined up in the streets after Chinese shops were set on fire.<sup>186</sup>

When the university students' protests began in 1997 and reached their peak in 1998, with the demand that Suharto resign from the presidency, racial sentiment toward people of Chinese descent played a role again. The riot of 13–15 May 1998 cannot be separated from the anti-Chinese tragedy that took place in several big cities, mainly in Jakarta. Just as happened in 1967, Chinese descendants were the targets of killing, looting, and even gang rapes. The crowd were provoked by the rumor that the Chinese were responsible for causing the economic crisis

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<sup>183</sup> 'Tahun-Tahun Mereka Dibungkam', *Tempo*, January 2003

<<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/investigasi/84129/tahun-tahun-mereka-dibungkam>>.

<sup>184</sup> Superman, 'Peristiwa Mangkok Merah Di Kalimantan Barat Tahun 1967', *Historia*, 5.1 (2017), 1–14

<<https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/90056-ID-peristiwa-mangkok-merah-di-kalimantan-ba.pdf>>.

<sup>185</sup> Bina Bektiati; Edy Budiwarso; Darmawan Sepriyossa; L.N. Idayani; Tomi Lebang, 'Mencari Akar, Mencari Jawaban', *Tempo*, 1.XXX (2001), 4 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/laporan-utama/78390/mencari-akar-mencari-jawaban>>.

<sup>186</sup> Iswara N Raditya, 'Tragedi Berdarah Pembantaian Mangkuk Merah', *Tirto*, February 2018 <<https://tirto.id/tragedi-berdarah-pembantaian-mangkuk-merah-cEUq>>.

in the country. “When the economic crisis hit Indonesia in 1998, politically interested individuals blamed people of Chinese descent for the situation. These elements mobilized a mass consisting of the non-Chinese descendants to attack them.”<sup>187</sup>

The mastermind of the event knew precisely how to instigate chaos using identity sentiments. Regardless of whether the masterminds of the 1998 and 1967 riots were the same or not, what is clear is that racial feeling must have been stirred up very well for the riots to actually occur. It didn't just stop there. Clashes involving identity sentiments were also played out in Poso, Ambon, and Sampit. The people of Ambon were brought face to face with those whose religions differed between Islam and Christianity (1999–2002). The Sampit community was also at war between the Madurese and the Dayak tribes (2001–2003). As part of this thesis case study, I will elaborate on Sampit and Ambon in more detail, each in a separate chapter.

### The transition to democracy and decentralization policy

After a significant change in Indonesian history in 1998, where the people overthrew the president-dictator Suharto through revolution, Indonesia started a new form of democracy and launched a policy of decentralization. The Indonesian people demanded the resignation of Suharto, who had been in power for 32 years, through *reformasi* or ‘reformation,’ which has the same meaning as revolution. Suharto manipulated the election every five years, so he stayed in power and centralized the decision-making powers of 27 provinces nationally.

*All political institutions and processes under the New Order were dominated by President Soeharto. Presidential elections were a ritual whose results were known well before they commenced. Only three officially-designated parties were allowed to contest elections for the rubber-stamp parliament and campaigns were strictly controlled. Between the time of the five-yearly elections, no party was allowed to campaign and the press was subject to often arbitrary and inconsistent censorship, with newspapers and magazines liable to sudden closure. Alongside the personal authority of President Soeharto, the only important centres of institutionalised political power were the Armed Forces (which operated under a dual administrative and military function discussed in the following sections) and Golkar, the party which all government employees had to support and which was intertwined with the official administrative structure.*<sup>188</sup>

Historically speaking, Indonesia experimented with several political systems that were declared democratic by their promoters, but none was successful. The first attempt to apply a

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<sup>187</sup> Eunike Mutiara Himawan, ‘22 Tahun Setelah Kerusuhan Anti-Cina Mei 1998, Riset Ungkap Prasangka Dan Trauma Masih Ada’, *The Conversation*, 20 May 2020 <<https://theconversation.com/22-tahun-setelah-kerusuhan-anti-cina-mei-1998-riset-ungkap-prasangka-dan-trauma-masih-ada-138962>>.

<sup>188</sup> Stephen Sherlock, ‘Indonesia’s Dangerous Transition: The Politics of Recovery and Democratisation’, *Group*, 1999.

democratic system was in 1949–57, during President Soekarno’s era, and was named parliamentary democracy. Later, in 1957–59, Soekarno attempted another sort of democracy, termed ‘guided democracy.’ Finally, there was the third and longest period, which Suharto called ‘*Pancasila* (Philosophical State Ideology) democracy’ in 1966–98.

*Indonesia has been struggling with democracy for decades. It has experience with three types of democracy, all of which failed. First was the failed attempt at parliamentary democracy (1949-1957) which led to the transition from a parliamentary democracy to guided democracy (1957-1959), in which President Sukarno established the so-called Zaken or Functional Cabinet, a business cabinet which consisted of members of political parties, economists and the military. Second, there was another attempt at ‘Guided Democracy’ under President Sukarno (1959-1965). The third and longest period was that of ‘Pancasila Democracy’ under President Suharto from March 1966 to May 1998.*<sup>189</sup>

Parliamentary democracy had various names. For example, Herbert Faith named it ‘constitutional democracy,’ while most Indonesian commentators and writers called it ‘liberal democracy.’ It was called liberal because there was no prohibition against creating a union, and it facilitated the establishment of many political parties. The president would ask the victorious political parties (in the election) to form a cabinet, and the cabinet was responsible to the parliament. For example, in 1955, the following election result determined the formation of the cabinet:<sup>190</sup>

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Voters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number of Seats</b>
Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI)	8434653	22.3	57
Masjumi	7.903.886	20.9	57
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)	6.955.141	18.4	45
Partai Komunis	6.176.914	16.4	39

<sup>189</sup> Bhakti.

<sup>190</sup> Goh Cheng Teik, ‘Why Indonesia’s Attempt at Democracy in the Mid-1950s Failed’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 6.2 (1972), 225–44 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/311693>>.



Indonesia			
(PKI)			
Partai Serikat Islam	1.091.160	2.9	8
Indonesia			
(PSII)			
Partai Kresten Indonesia	1.003.325	2.6	8
(PARKINDO)			
Partai Katolik	770.740	2.0	6
Partai Socialis Indonesia	753.191	2.0	5
(PSI)			
Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia	541.306	1.4	4
(IPKI)			
Persatuan Tarbijah Islamijah	483.014	1.3	4
(PERTI)			
Partai Rakyat Nasional	242.125	0.6	2
(PRN)			
Others	3.429.844	9.2	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37.785.299</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>257</b>

The following first cabinet was formed on 26 March 1956 based on the result of the above general election.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Teik.

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence	Ali Sostroamidjojo	PNI
First Deputy Prime Minister	Mohammad Roem	MASJUMI
Second Deputy Prime Minister	Idham Chalid	NU
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Roeslan Abdulgani	PNI
Minister of Internal Affairs	Sunarjo	NU
Minister of Justice	Muljatno	MASJUMI
Minister of Information	Subibjo	PSII
Minister of Finance	Jusuf Wibisono	MASJUMI
Minister of Agriculture	Eni Karim	PNI
Deputy Minister of Agriculture	Sjech Marhaban	PSII
Minister of Economic Affairs	Burhanuddin	NU
Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs	N.F. Umbas	PARKINDO
Minister of Communications	Suchjar Tedjasukmana	MASJUMI
Deputy Minister of Communication	A.B. de Rozario	Katolik Party
Minister of Public Works & Power	Pangeran Noor	MASJUMI
Minister of Labour	Sabilal Rasjad	PNI
Minister of Social Affairs	Fatah Jasin	NU
Minister of Education & Culture	Sarino Mangunpranoto	PNI
Minister of Religion	Mohammad Iljas	NU
Minister of Health	H. Sinaga	Parkindo
Minister of Agrarian Affairs	Suhardi	Katolik Party
Minister without portofolio for Veterans' Affarirs	Rusli Abdul Wahid	Perti
Minister of Planning Affairs	Djuanda Kartawidjaja	Non-Party

Scholars have different perspectives on why parliamentary democracy (1949–57) failed. Ikrar Bhakti, head of the Center for Political Studies at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (P2P-LIPI), argued the following reasons: *“From the idealist’s perspective, the failure of constitutional democracy was the result of a lack of sufficient institutional backup for*

*democracy, namely a lack of education, a lack of democratic culture, and an insufficient economic base.*”<sup>192</sup>

Herbert Feith argued that two long-term factors caused the parliamentary democracy in the 1950s to fail: the emergence of the government’s ‘solidarity makers’ at the expense of ‘administrators’ and the widening of the political elite’s split.<sup>193</sup> Meanwhile, George Kahin offers a long list of justifications. To begin with, there is the preservation of classic authoritarian views. Second, there is a lack of agreement on important issues such as the state’s philosophy, the relationship between the federal government and the provinces, and the function of the army. Third, there is a lack of adequate governmental power at the national level. Fourth, in the intermediate levels of governance, there is poor-quality elected leadership. Finally, the bureaucratic instrument cannot convert decisions into acts.<sup>194</sup>

Another scholar believes that the failure of the parliamentary democracy was due to the following factors: during the introduction of the (new) 1950 constitution, the structure that offered a route for political aspirations through political parties produced societal unrest. Even after the first Indonesian election in 1955, no political party was able to gain a majority in the cabinet. Hence, frequent changes in the cabinet caused the cabinet to be ineffective.<sup>195</sup>

Soekarno was not completely in favor of the democratic system, which he considered to be a Western product. He was often caught mocking the course of democracy as a “*50 percent plus one democracy*.”<sup>196</sup> His meaning was that as long as you won more than 50 percent of the votes, you would win the election.

*On November 26 1956, in a speech at Airlangga University in Surabaya, Sukarno reiterated that Indonesia had its own “original form of democracy, which is not imported from abroad.” The Indonesian democracy has its own characteristics, and therefore, Sukarno continues, there must be a guided democracy in this country, a democracy with a leadership.*<sup>197</sup>

Soekarno had mentioned once that democracy was not suitable for the characteristics of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, he only once experimented with a complete form of democracy,

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<sup>192</sup> Bhakti.

<sup>193</sup> Teik.

<sup>194</sup> Teik.

<sup>195</sup> Rika Kurniaty, ‘Democracy and Human Security: Analysis on the Trajectory of Indonesia’s Democratization’, *Atlantis*, 456 (2020) <<https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125945385.pdf>>.

<sup>196</sup> Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A New History of Southeast Asia*, ed. by M C (Merle Calvin) Ricklefs (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 380.

<sup>197</sup> Justus M van der Kroef, “‘Guided Democracy’ in Indonesia”, *Far Eastern Survey*, 26.8 (1957), 113–24 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3024455>>.

as happened in a parliamentary or liberal democracy; after that, he customized democracy to become what he named guided democracy.

*According to Sukarno, the problems Indonesia faced were a result of the adoption of a foreign system that was inappropriate for Indonesia. In contrast, Sukarno presented his own 'concept' as true to the spirit of Indonesianness: "I want to propose something that is in harmony with the Indonesian spirit, the real spirit of the Indonesian Nation, that is: the spirit of family" (1970). The 'fifty-percent-plus-one' method of parliamentary democracy was to be replaced with a system that emphasized consensus through concepts that Sukarno represented as uniquely Indonesian: mutual-help (gotong-royong) and consultation-consensus (musyawarah-mufakat).<sup>198</sup>*

Indonesia implemented guided democracy from July 1959 to October 1965. However, President Soekarno had previously suggested the idea a few years earlier, and he explained it during the meeting with the Constitutional Assembly of Indonesia on 10 November 1956.<sup>199</sup> The system enabled the president to make every decision. The idea was relatively controversial as many disagreed with it, including Hatta. He resigned from being the vice president of Indonesia on 1 December 1956. Professor Dr Hamka, a prominent figure, argued that guided democracy was just a mask: it was totalitarian democracy in reality.<sup>200</sup> He had to serve time in jail for two years and four months due to his harsh criticism of Soekarno.

*It was in this political context that Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah, better known as Hamka, the son of the founder of Muhammadiyah's West Sumatra branch, Haji Rasul, began criticizing Sukarno from Jakarta. Hamka had worked in the Ministry of Religion in Jakarta from 1951 to 1960, also serving as a Masyumi member of the Indonesian Constituent Assembly representing Central Java from 1955 to 1960. Hamka challenged Sukarno's personal and political behavior, including his polygamous tendencies and his close association with communism, a view widely shared in West Sumatra. Sukarno responded by having Hamka arrested in 1964 under the Subversion Law.<sup>201</sup>*

However, the 'systematic and planned democracy' failed to produce a sustainable economic system after six years. In 1965, Indonesia's financial position was catastrophic: the pace of production had decreased significantly; exports and imports ceased, and the economy was

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<sup>198</sup> Tod Jones, *Culture, Power, and Authoritarianism in the Indonesian State: Cultural Policy across the Twentieth-Century to the Reform Era*, Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde ; v. 287. 1572-1892 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 95.

<sup>199</sup> The Constitutional Assembly (Indonesian: Konstituante) was a body elected in 1955 to draw up a permanent constitution for the Republic of Indonesia.

<sup>200</sup> Isnaeni, *Hamka: Ulama Serba Bisa Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, p. 81.

<sup>201</sup> Delmus Puneri Salim, 'The Transnational and the Local in the Politics of Islam: The Case of West Sumatra, Indonesia', 2015, p. 39 <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/11027929>>. During Indonesia's Liberal Democracy Era, the Masyumi Party was a significant Islamic political force. President Sukarno banned it in 1960 because it aided the PRRI insurgency.

crippled by hyperinflation of almost 600 percent. Following the collapse of the economy, the army and the PKI fought for power. The assassination of six army generals and one lieutenant by left-wing army elements topped the political and economic instability and paved the way for the army coup d'état on 11 March 1966, to depose President Soekarno and his guided democracy.<sup>202</sup>

In the global background, in the period of the Cold War, Soekarno's orientation was more to the East: Russia and China. Both China and the Soviet Union officially established diplomatic relations with Indonesia in 1950. According to *Russia Beyond The Headline*, Indonesia had started to become an important topic within the national committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party since the event of the Asian–African or Afro–Asian Conference, also known as the Bandung Conference (Indonesian: *Konferensi Asia–Afrika*), in 1955.<sup>203</sup> Since then, communication and interaction between Indonesia and the Soviet Union and China had become more intense.

*A new and strong impetus for the development of Soviet-Indonesian relations was given by the mutual state visits of President Sukarno to the USSR in the summer 1956 and the Head of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR K.E Voroshilov to Indonesia in May 1957. The rate and volume of mutual trade were markedly growing and various forms of economic cooperation were fast developing. In August 1956 the first Trade agreement between the Soviet Union and Indonesia was signed, and in September the first General Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation was concluded. The USSR granted Indonesia a loan of USD 100 million on favorable terms and extended technical assistance in constructing a superphosphate plant, a highway, rice plantations on Kalimantan and other projects. In January 1959 a Protocol to the General Agreement was signed which specified the details.*<sup>204</sup>

In contrast, relations between Indonesia and the US started to deteriorate. President Soekarno's shift to the left alarmed Washington, where it was feared that Indonesia would become communist.<sup>205</sup> The US continued to provide covert assistance for Indonesian outlying island rebellions until a former US Air Force pilot was shot down in the Maluku Islands in 1958.

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<sup>202</sup> Bhakti.

<sup>203</sup> Aswab Nanda Pratama and Inggried Dwi Wedhaswary (ed), 'Kisah Indonesia Dan Uni Soviet, Dari KRI Irian 201 Hingga Gelora Bung Karno', *Kompas*, 26 February 2019 <<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/02/26/18143891/kisah-indonesia-dan-uni-soviet-dari-kri-irian-201-hingga-gelora-bung-karno?page=all>>.

<sup>204</sup> Larisa M. Efimova, 'Soviet Policy in Indonesia during the "Liberal Democracy" Period, 1950-1959', *Wilson Center* <<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/soviet-policy-indonesia-during-the-liberal-democracy-period-1950-1959>> [accessed 15 June 2021].

<sup>205</sup> 'Timeline: US-Indonesia Relations', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 32.3 (2010), 395–98 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25798866>>.

Indonesia had the greatest number of Communist Party members after China and the Soviet Union at that time, and, hence, was a source of worry to the US since Indonesia was in a strategic location close to US allies, such as the Philippines in the north and Australia and New Zealand in the south. Thus, the Cold War had a considerable impact on US foreign policy, as it influenced the country's desire to keep its sphere of influence free from communism. The Truman doctrine, with its domino theory and containment policy, was one of the most well-known. The domino theory stated that if one state became communist, the rest of the region would follow suit. As a result, a left-leaning state had to be secured in order to contain the threat, hence the containment policy.<sup>206</sup>

*In the eyes of US policy makers, Sukarno posed a grave threat to US national interests. Hence it is small wonder that they worked to undermine him since the early stages of his presidency. The US push to unseat Sukarno began as early as 1955 when the US transferred one million dollars to the opposing Masjumi Party by way of the CIA during the general election campaign. In 1958, when armed insurrections against the Sukarno government erupted on several Indonesian islands, the Eisenhower administration decided to collaborate with the regional rebellion forces and launched the largest covert paramilitary action yet seen in US history.<sup>207</sup>*

However, due to the success of US covert actions in Indonesia, Soekarno failed to continue his movement toward the East, and, at the same time, he began losing power from 1965 when the coup d'état happened. The Indonesian military staged a counter-coup, which resulted in President Soekarno's removal. Major General Suharto took over as interim president of Indonesia in 1967 and was elected president in 1968, ushering in the pro-West New Order era.<sup>208</sup>

After Suharto took power on 22 February 1967, democracy was in name only, while its essence was totalitarian. Furthermore, the US did not intervene with Suharto on the grounds of his being totalitarian. The only important matter for the US was to stop the spread of communism. Some liberal international relations theorists have found the US' support for authoritarian countries perplexing. It goes against a simple ideological assumption that liberal governments should support one another and promote liberalism worldwide. It also contradicts a recent wave of

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<sup>206</sup> Devina Heriyanto, 'Q&A: Was China behind the Sept. 30 1965 Failed Coup?', *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, 20 October 2017) <<https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2017/10/20/qa-was-china-behind-the-sept-30-1965-failed-coup.html>>.

<sup>207</sup> Jaechun Kim, 'U.S. Covert Action in Indonesia in the 1960s: Assessing the Motives and Consequences', *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 9.2 (2002), 63–85 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43107065>>.

<sup>208</sup> 'Timeline: US-Indonesia Relations'.

social science research that claims democracies are better international partners. Support for authoritarianism in the US is frequently used as evidence for realism in general because it implies that the US only supports democracy when it serves its own interests.<sup>209</sup>

In the era of Suharto, democracy was named ‘*Pancasila* democracy.’ *Pancasila* has been sacred for the nation as a set of fundamental principles for the country, unifying Indonesia in its diversity, from Aceh in the western part to Papua in the eastern region. Suharto’s strategic ploy was to bind himself and *Pancasila* in one package. He wanted people to remember him as a hero of *Pancasila*, so, initially, he separated *Pancasila* from its first proponent, President Soekarno, by changing *Pancasila* Day from 1 June 1945 (as the birthday of *Pancasila*) to 1 October 1965 (as *Pancasila* Reverence Day). After that, Suharto labeled himself as the hero of *Pancasila* by having democracy under his order named as *Pancasila* democracy, so that people would remember Suharto instead of Soekarno whenever people mentioned *Pancasila*.

*The commemoration of the birthday of Pancasila was once a polemic during the reign of President Soeharto. In 1970, the New Order government, through the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib), banned the commemoration of June 1 as the Birthday of Pancasila.*<sup>210</sup>

### Decentralization policy

During the Suharto era, Indonesia operated a centralistic government model, called the Jakarta-centric government. For instance, in 1983–84, the routine operation fund was 75 percent, and the development fund was 80 percent, given from the central government through an allocation fund called *Instruksi Presiden* (Inpres, President’s Instruction).<sup>211</sup> These figures apparently showed how generous the central government was, but, in fact, it showed two things: first, that Jakarta took everything the local government earned, including taxes; and second, how dependent the local government was on the central government, as Jakarta had the last word on every decision.

In 1999, a year after Suharto stepped down from power, a new law, Law No. 22, regarding local government, was introduced, which became the central point in radically changing the center–periphery relations. The bill was highly significant because it strengthened the ability at city level to govern their own internal matters independently, and reduced the central

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<sup>209</sup> John M Owen and Michael Poznansky, ‘When Does America Drop Dictators?’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 20.4 (2014), 1072–99 (p. 1074) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113508990>>.

<sup>210</sup> Budiarti Utami Putri and Rina Widiastuti (ed), ‘Peringatan Hari Lahir Pancasila Sempat Dilarang Di Era Soeharto’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, 1 June 2018) <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1094514/peringatan-hari-lahir-pancasila-sempat-dilarang-di-era-soeharto/full&view=ok>>.

<sup>211</sup> Bachtiar HS, Suhardjo; Abdullah, ‘Menyorot Desentralisasi’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, July 1988), p. 3 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/ekonomi-dan-bisnis/27823/menyorot-desentralisasi?>>.

government's authority over local governments. Furthermore, it not only changed the dynamic of authority-sharing between the central and provincial levels but also between the provincial and the city. Hence, the bills also abolished the hierarchal structural relation between the city and the region.<sup>212</sup>

One crucial aspect of Indonesia's decentralization policy after 1998 was the proliferation of new regencies and municipalities, and even new provinces. In 1999–2005, around 148 new autonomies, consisting of seven provinces, 114 municipalities, and 27 cities were established.<sup>213</sup> According to Law No. 129, in 2000, that proliferation had the following purposes: first, the improvement of services to the people in the region; second, the acceleration of the democratization process; third, the improvement of economic growth in the area; fourth, the acceleration of the management of local potential; fifth, the improvement of security stability in the region; and, finally, the improvement of ties between center and periphery.<sup>214</sup>

According to Law No. 22, in 1999, regarding local government, in chapter four, article seven, points one and two, it is stated that the power-sharing between central and local consists in the following:

- (1) *Regional authority includes authority in all government areas, except for the authority in the fields of foreign policy, defense and security, judiciary, monetary and fiscal, religion, and authorities in other fields.*
- (2) *As referred to in paragraph (1), other areas of authority include policies on national planning and control of macro-national development, financial balance funds, state administration systems and state economic institutions, development and empowerment of human resources, utilization of natural resources and high technology that are strategic, conservative, and with national standards.*<sup>215</sup>

However, the transition was full of surprising and shocking events, including communal conflicts in several parts of Indonesia, which caused thousands of people to lose their lives.

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<sup>212</sup> Mudiwati Rahmatunnisa, 'Jalan Terjal Kebijakan Desentralisasi Di Indonesia Di Era Reformasi', *PADJADJARAN Jurnal Ilmu Hukum (Journal of Law)*, 2.3 (2015), 505–22 <<https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v2n3.a5>>.

<sup>213</sup> Rekomendasi Depan and Andik Wahyun Muqoyyidin, 'Pemekaran Wilayah Dan Otonomi Daerah Pasca Reformasi Di Indonesia : Konsep , Fakta Empiris Dan', *Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia*, 10.2 (2013), 287–309 <<https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/107897-ID-pemekaran-wilayah-dan-otonomi-daerah-pas.pdf>>.

<sup>214</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Persyaratan Pembentukan Dan Kriteria Pemekaran, Penghapusan, Dan Penggabungan Daerah* (Jakarta, 2000) <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/53948/pp-no-129-tahun-2000>>.

<sup>215</sup> 'Law on Local Government', *DPR RI* (Jakarta, 1999) <[https://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdi/document/uu/UU\\_1999\\_22.pdf](https://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdi/document/uu/UU_1999_22.pdf)> [accessed 16 June 2021].



The Australian parliament called it “*Indonesia’s dangerous transition.*”<sup>216</sup> Democratization and its decentralization policy triggered deadly clashes across Indonesia.

A series of protests and demonstrations broke out across Indonesia as a result of the economic crisis, political uncertainty, and a lack of popular trust in the government. The riots of 13–15 May 1998, were sparked by the deaths of four *Trisakti* students. Not only that, but racial riots against ethnic Chinese erupted in a number of Indonesian cities, including Jakarta, Medan, Palembang, Solo, Surabaya, and others.

From the socio-political perspective, decentralization changed the situation in the region. People of the area were even more keen to compete for power because the decentralization policy gave local people a chance to become leaders. Furthermore, the authority of the locals over their region was more significant than that of the central government. In some parts of the region, the competition for positions was even stiffer due to the existence of different identities, such as those of different religions, ethnicities, and between native and non-native or newcomers. For example, while people recognize Ambon’s conflict as a religious conflict, the competition for power was also behind this bloody conflict.

### The decline of violence

In the beginning, decentralization was one factor (among many) contributing to civil unrest in various parts of Indonesia during the transition to democracy following Suharto’s fall in 1998. However, more recently, it is becoming one of the factors contributing to the *decline* of violence in Indonesia. Previously, local people competed to become a regent or governor, where they used identity to gain support among their groups. Such moves often led to social unrest between two groups with different identities. At the same time, however, decentralization policy returned authority and confidence to the locals to solve their problems, including that of social unrest.

For example, in Poso, Central Sulawesi, a clash between Muslim and Christian groups broke out due to competition between two candidates from different religions. It should be borne in mind that, previously, the regent of the region was assigned by Jakarta during the New Order of Suharto. Therefore, when Suharto was no longer in power, the locals had a chance to become

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<sup>216</sup> Sherlock.

the head of the region through the general election. In some areas, such as in Poso, the candidate used identity sentiments to attract more voters to their side.

President Habibie first introduced the law on decentralization policy on 7 May 1999: Law No. 22, regarding local government. Following that, other laws were enacted to supplement the previous law, such as Law No. 25, in 1999, which dealt with the financial balance between the central and municipal governments. Finally, in 2004, new regulations, Law No. 33 on local government and Law No. 34, on the financial balance between central and local governments, were adopted to replace the earlier laws.

Besides creating competition between locals in the region, decentralization policy also strengthened the locals to be more mature and confident. Local wisdom was not nurtured and supported during the New Order era because Suharto tended to use a security approach by default. For example, in Ambon, people have the tradition of relationship between villages, known as *pela* and *gandong*. *Pela* and *gandong* mean that the relationship between villages (which binds the people in each village) is as brothers and sisters of the same parents. Like real brothers and sisters, everybody who shares the same *pela* and *gandong* cannot marry each other.

*The community can still rely on the Pela Gandong culture to resolve conflicts, which even though in the new order era, the culture gradually lost its strength because it was replaced by the typical security forces of the new order through Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (ABRI, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia).<sup>217</sup>*

Gradually, the locals found a way to strengthen their capabilities within the social system of their people. Nobody would expend as much effort as the locals would do for the sake of their fate. Therefore, when the regime changed, and the national system was no longer centralistic, local people could do more independently. The people of Ambon strengthened the local wisdom of *pela* and *gandong* and made some innovations. Both Madurese and Dayak embraced the local culture to continue their coexistence and living in harmony. The people of Aceh changed the way they struggled for justice – from the bullet to the ballot. These three case studies will be elaborated upon in more detail, each in a separate chapter: Ambon in chapter two; Sampit in chapter three; and, finally, Aceh will be thoroughly explained in chapter four.

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<sup>217</sup> Margaretha Margawati, 'Konflik Antar Agama Atau Politisasi Agama?', *Antropologi Indonesia*, 1 (2000), 513–17 <<https://simposiumjai.ui.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/20/2020/03/1.4.08.pdf>>.

Other than ethnic and religious clashes, decentralization also contributed to the recovery of center–periphery conflict. Those rich in natural resources were very vocal in asking for implementation of decentralization policy, where they demanded a proportional share between the center and the regions.

*The provinces plagued by separatism were dealt with carefully. Irian Jaya was renamed Papua and obtained “special autonomy” where the bulk of natural resource revenue originating from the province was sent back to be used at their discretion. Similarly, Aceh was allowed special autonomy, where it could apply Sharia law and have local political parties. Throughout the country, the new decentralization laws now allow localities to decide on their own development priorities and the central government distributes the financial resources for them to do so. In a positive light, this is viewed as “new regionalism” where local stakeholders are rediscovering their regional identities, redrawing the boundaries of their territories, and renegotiating their relationship with the central government.*<sup>218</sup>

Indonesia is widely regarded as Southeast Asia’s most stable democracy, and it has served as a model for successful democratic transitions, particularly when compared to Egypt and Myanmar. Moreover, its economy quickly rebounded from the most significant economic downturn since independence, which occurred in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis in 1997.<sup>219</sup>

The incidence of communal violence gradually declined, and the decentralization policy was one of the contributing factors toward reducing the occurrence of these terrible events. Two kinds of violence which erupted during the transition to democracy were ethnic conflict, which includes tribal and religious identity, and center–periphery conflict. Some separatist movements were settled by improving the decentralization policy over the years, such as those in East Kalimantan and Riau. Some regions, such as Papua and Aceh, were even granted a ‘special autonomy’ equivalent to that of the capital city of Jakarta. There are five ‘special regions’ with privileges according to the laws in Indonesia. First, from the west, there is Aceh with its initial title, the Special Province of Aceh (or what is often called the ‘capital region’), as the government recognized its contribution to the independence of Indonesia. Law No. 44 in 1999 on the management of the Special Province of Aceh was the product of decentralization policy during the transition to liberal democracy in Indonesia. Later, in 2006, the law was

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<sup>218</sup> Mulya Amri and Faizal Rianto, ‘State Formation in Riau Island Province’, *Trends in Southeast Asia - ISEAS*, 15 (2018) <[https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/TRS15\\_18.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/TRS15_18.pdf)>.

<sup>219</sup> Tadjoeuddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeuddin*, p. 1.

improved after the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indonesian government with the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM, Free Aceh Movement).

Second, there is Jakarta, as the capital city of Indonesia, which was also granted the status *Daerah Khusus Ibukota* (DKI, Special Area of the Capital). During the transition to democracy, Law No. 34 in 1999 on the Provincial Government of the Special Region of the Capital of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta gave the capital the authority to govern its region.

Third, the *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (DIY, Special Region of Yogyakarta) was given a special title by the government through Law No. 3 in 1950 regarding the formation of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Before Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, both Dutch and Japanese governments recognized the kingdom of Yogyakarta and Pakualaman Yogyakarta. Later, during the proclamation of Indonesia's independence, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX and Sri Paku Alam VIII, the kings of Yogyakarta and Pakualaman respectively, sent a letter to Soekarno, which declared integration with the unity of the Republic of Indonesia. Soon after that, the king of Yogyakarta was inaugurated as a governor of the special province of Yogyakarta, with the king of Pakualaman as his vice governor.<sup>220</sup>

If the above regions are given the title of 'special regions,' the fourth and the fifth are given the title 'special autonomy': Papua and West Papua. The privileges these two have are that two percent of the national budget is given to them until a certain year, and a legal representation of local culture is preserved at the local government level. Law No. 21 in 2001 regarding the Special Autonomy of Papua Province is the relevant legal document in this regard, and it was issued during the transition to democracy.<sup>221</sup>

In other words, issues of separatism were addressed by the policy of decentralization: for some areas in the form of 'special regions,' such as Aceh, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta: for others in the form of 'special autonomy,' such as Papua and West Papua. As for the remaining areas in Indonesia, decentralization policy also took place under Law No. 22 in 1999 on local government, as explained previously in the sub-chapter on decentralization policy.

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<sup>220</sup> Ari Welianto, 'Mengapa Yogyakarta Dan Aceh Menjadi Daerah Istimewa?', *Kompas*, 25 June 2020 <<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/01/25/160000169/mengapa-yogyakarta-dan-aceh-menjadi-daerah-istimewa?page=all>>.

<sup>221</sup> Pandu Radea, 'Mengenai Lima Daerah Khusus Dan Istimewa Di Indonesia', *Jernih*, 2020 <<https://jernih.co/potpourri/mengenai-lima-daerah-khusus-dan-istimewa-di-indonesia/>> [accessed 23 June 2012].

However, some areas were not adequately covered by the policy due to a variety of factors, such as Aceh with its consistent demands for independence and Timor Leste with its international pressure, especially from Portugal, which had been its former colonizer. President Habibie, who was in office after the fall of Suharto, was in a difficult situation. In his book titled *Seconds that determine: The long path of Indonesia's democracy*, he notes that East Timor was deemed an issue by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a new province in Indonesia, which the UN had never recognized.<sup>222</sup> At the same time, most Indonesians expected to maintain East Timor as Indonesia's twenty-seventh province.<sup>223</sup> The international criteria prevailed: Timor Leste had a UN-sponsored referendum in 1999 and became internationally recognized as an independent nation on 20 May 2001.

As for Aceh, the decentralization policy took some years to become the solution of the center–periphery conflict between Indonesia and *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM, Free Aceh Movement). One of the reasons it did not succeed was that GAM was not involved in the discussion and decision making regarding the law of the Aceh Special Region in 1999. Finally, the conflict ended after the Indonesian government and GAM signed an MoU brokered by the Finland government on 15 August 2005. Further detail about Aceh as one of this thesis' three case studies will be explained in a separate chapter.

Another category of violence, ethnic violence, which includes conflicts over religious and tribal identity, also found decentralization as the solution. Through decentralization policy, the locals found the momentum to strengthen their capacity to manage their own problems, including the violent conflict that happened during the transition to democracy. Ambon revitalized the traditional bonds of brotherhood known as *pela* and *gandong* in order to resolve their deadly religious conflict, and Sampit accommodated gatherings between the Dayak and Madurese in a traditional culture called *Mapas Lewu*. This thesis will elaborate with more detail about Sampit and Ambon as case studies in separate chapters to follow.

According to the data shown below, the decline of violence started in 2001 and peaked in 2005. After that, both center–periphery and ethnic conflict gradually declined in violence until

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<sup>222</sup> Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, *Detik-Detik Yang Menentukan : Jalan Panjang Indonesia Menuju Demokrasi* (Jakarta: THC Mandiri, 2006).

<sup>223</sup> Habibie.

disagreements finally ended. Zulfan Tadjoeddin argued that the transition period saw a shift from conflict to cooperation, and the decline of violence resulted from this shift.<sup>224</sup>

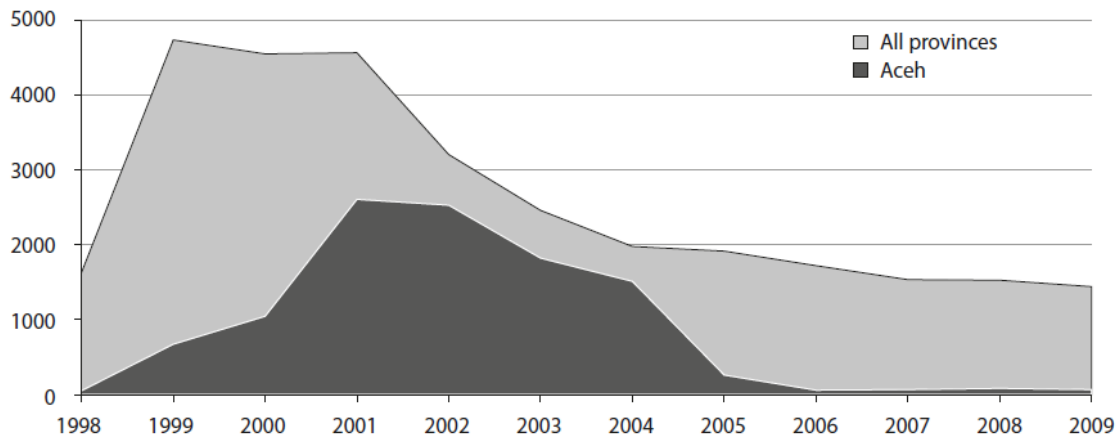


Figure 6 Decline of violence-related deaths in Indonesia<sup>225</sup>

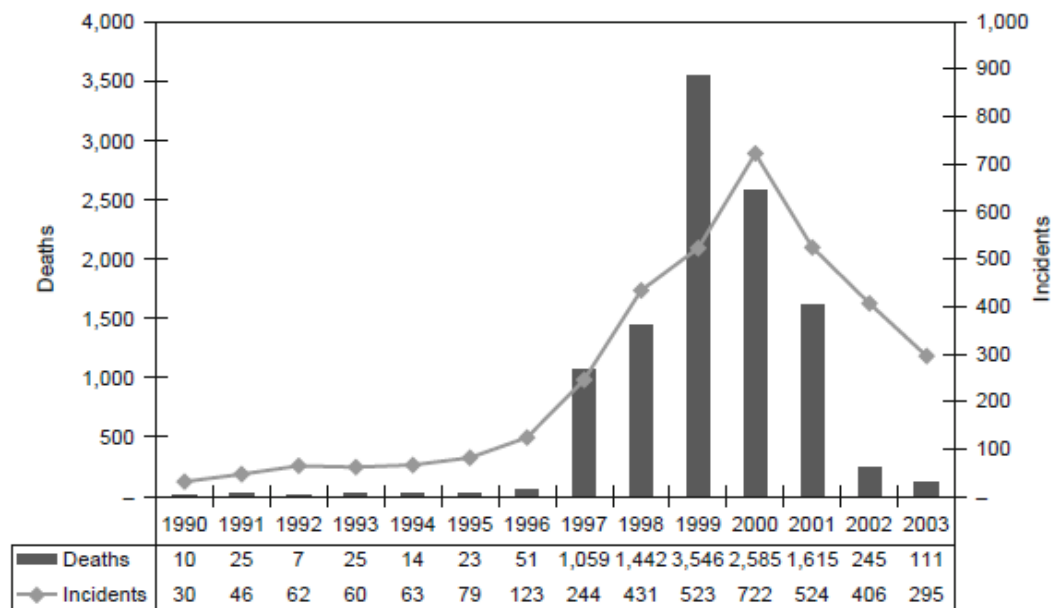


Figure 7 Statistics of deaths and incidents in Indonesia<sup>226</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin, ‘Dr Zulfan Tadjoeddin’s Lecture on “Where Did All the Previous Turbulence of Social Violence?”’ (Indonesia: YouTube, 2016) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afYRoKlzxXU>>.

<sup>225</sup> Patrick Barron and others, ‘How Large Conflicts Subside : Evidence from Indonesia How Large Conflicts Subside : Evidence from Indonesia’, *Indonesian Social Development Paper*, 18 (2014), p. 11 <<https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/HowLargeConflictsSubside.pdf>>.

<sup>226</sup> Tadjoeddin, *Explaining Collective Violence in Contemporary Indonesia : From Conflict to Cooperation / Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin*, p. 32.

## Conclusion

In Indonesia, communal violence has been going on for decades, and through all eras. It began even before Indonesia as a nation-state existed – the kingdom period – and continued until it became an independent country. The kings did not hesitate to sacrifice people in a war or kill them without any reason. The colonizers exploited the people and killed those who resisted them. Eventually, the leaders of the independent country would not be unwilling to destroy political rivals or anyone who opposed the government. These facts suggest that political power is a primary force, which can cause, promote, or shelter group abuse.

There was a significant outbreak of communal violence during the democratic transition, which shocked many. Zulfan Tadjoeddin has classified the conflicts in Indonesia into four categories: ethnic violence, which involves religious conflict; center–periphery conflict, which is usually related to separatist efforts; electoral conflict, which generally relates to disputes regarding the electoral process; and finally, routine conflict, which occurs in everyday life. Ethnic and center–periphery conflict exploded severely in many parts of Indonesia during the democratic transition, which began in 1998. This chapter argues that the government played a role in these bloody conflicts, basing the hypothesis on a closer analysis of various scholars’ suggested causes.

The transition to democracy is one of the country’s peaking points of communal violence after the PKI’s failed coup and the revenge that followed in 1965–66. Political and economic aspects played a significant role during this time. There was an extreme change nationally, which affected the region directly, so the repercussions of these events were quite challenging to contain, including communal violence. Competition for the new postings in the area after the decentralization policy; the security measures during Suharto’s New Order, which were not as tight as they had previously been; and the intentions of a group that was in favor of the New Order created prolonged communal conflict in several parts of Indonesia during this time. The above-mentioned triggering factors ignited the fire of sensitive issues such as religious and ethnic conflicts. Therefore, when clashes in Ambon (1999–2002) and Sampit (2001–03) broke out, and the confrontations in Aceh intensified, the political and economic motives were not visible. Furthermore, the fighting quickly escalated, since every individual saw it as a war of religion and ethnicity, something they were very proud of as an identity.

In general, Indonesia's history of inter-community violence is an interesting case with which to test the classical hypothesis coined by Max Weber regarding the state's monopoly of violence, since whether in the form of a monarchy, imperial, or independent state, these series of communal conflicts cannot be isolated from the intervention of Indonesia's governing power. In reality, in Indonesia, communal violence is monopolized by major powers in different forms: kingdom, colonialism, and sovereign state. Gerry van Klinken confirmed the key role the state played in Indonesia's series of ethnic violence during the democratic transition. Ariel Heryanto shares this assumption; he also argued that the state introduced state terrorism during the Suharto period. The dictator managed to hold people in terror so that they felt the need to seek government protection, and perceived the regime as a guaranteeing order. As a result, the people became weak and less critical, because they lived in fear most of the time.



## CHAPTER II: AMBON MANISE

### Ambon at a glance

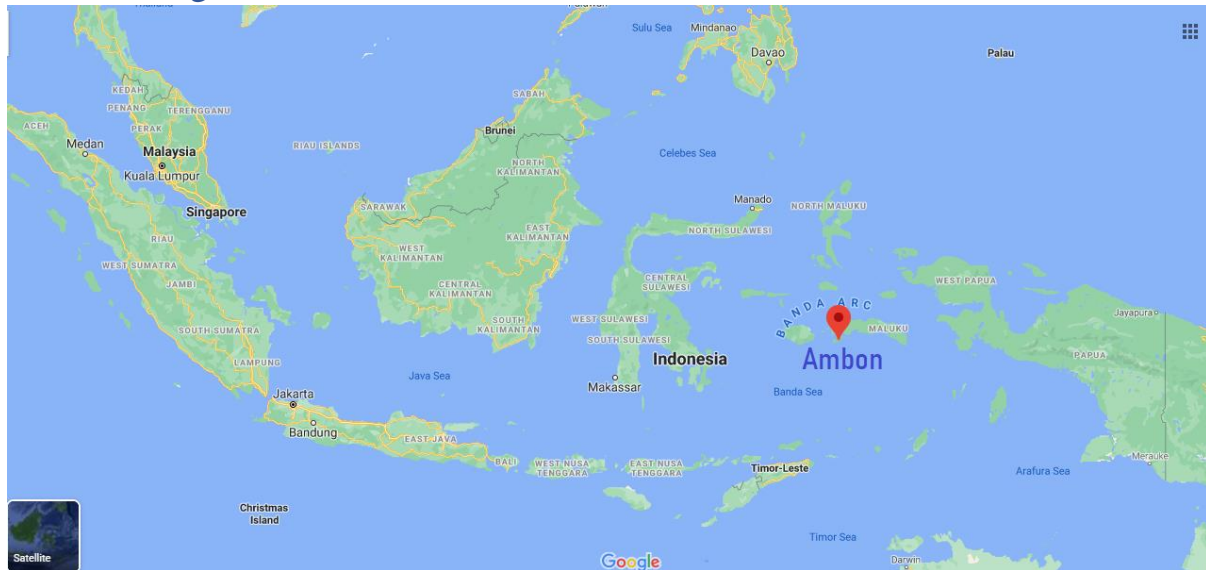


Figure 8 Map of Ambon

*The people of Ambon are like a sago palm tree. Rough outside, but soft and white inside. People of Ambon speak very loudly, but it is just the way they say, and their heart is gentle and sincere.*<sup>227</sup>

The quote above was told to me by the official guide during my tour of the Siwalima Museum, Ambon. In the museum, where I found the history of the Ambon people, I understood that Ambon has an ancient history of harmony besides the differences and conflicts that have been experienced there from time to time.

Ambon is the capital city of the Maluku province, whose area extended to North Maluku before the division in 1999. According to Law No. 46, 1999, decentralization divided Maluku into two provinces: Maluku, with Ambon as the capital city; and North Maluku with Ternate as the capital city.<sup>228</sup>

In the archipelago, Maluku was the place where the Europeans stepped for the first time. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive here, in 1511, with Afonso de Albuquerque as the expedition leader. Later, in 1519, a Spanish expedition arrived at the same island, led by

<sup>227</sup> Personal interview on 20 July 2018.

<sup>228</sup> On 4 August 2010, the local government moved the capital city to Sofifi, a city that is located in the biggest island in North Maluku, Halmahera. Republic of Indonesia, 'Pembentukan Propinsi Maluku Utara, Kabupaten Buru, Dan Kabupaten Maluku Tenggara Barat', *Badan Pengawas Keuangan RI*, 1999 <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/45384/uu-no-46-tahun-1999#:~:text=UU No. 46 Tahun 1999,Tenggara Barat %5BJDIH BPK RI%5D>> [accessed 25 June 2021].

Juan Sebastián Elcano.<sup>229</sup> However, the Spanish did not stay long in the area: they left after the Spanish and the Portuguese signed the Zaragoza Agreement. In this agreement, Spain and Portugal agreed to divide the globe (outside the European region) into two: one part for Spain, and the other part for Portugal. Later still, *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC, the Dutch East India Company) came to Indonesia, established its first government in Ambon, and installed Pieter Both as the first Governor-General of the VOC in 1602. Dutch colonization in Indonesia, therefore, began on this island and lasted for 339 years.

The *Alune* and *Wemale* tribes are considered to be the original occupants of this region. Today, they are reckoned to be the forefathers of such tribes as the *Alifuru*, *Togifil*, and *Furuaru*, who live in Seram, Halmahera, and the Buru Islands.<sup>230</sup> The second group of Maluku settlers are foreign descendants who have been on the islands for quite some time. Their ancestors are the Arabs, Indians, Portuguese, and Dutch who came to the island for the spice trade (the Portuguese and Dutch later colonized the island). The region was famous for its reputation as ‘the Spice Islands,’ and the route there was known as ‘the Spice Route.’<sup>231</sup> During the New Order of Suharto, the wave of migration from densely populated islands to less populated islands was quite significant through the transmigration program. Maluku was one of the destinations of the program, and the number of migrants was increased during the fifth government five-year plan, 1989–94.

*However, the rate of transmigration to Maluku has actually increased in the present Five Year Plan (Repelita V), and the MOT (Ministry of Transmigration) has ambitious plans for resettlement during the remainder of the decade. Resettlement in the far east of the archipelago is due in part to the fact that previous destinations, particularly Sumatra and Sulawesi, are saturated and to the recently announced eastern development initiative. Transmigration is conceived as an important agent in the further integration of the province of Maluku into the national political economy through commercialization of the agricultural economy and modernization of society.*<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Serafica Gischa, ‘Bagaimana Portugis Dan Spanyol Bertemu Di Maluku?’, *Kompas* (Jakarta, 10 August 2020) <<https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/08/10/152536369/bagaimana-portugis-dan-spanyol-bertemu-di-maluku?page=all>>.

<sup>230</sup> Antonius Purwanto, ‘Provinsi Maluku: Bumi Seribu Pulau Yang Kaya Rempah’, *Kompaspedia* (Kompas, 2021) <<https://kompaspedia.kompas.id/baca/profil/daerah/provinsi-maluku>>.

<sup>231</sup> Hasanul Rizqa and Agung Sasongko, ‘Para Pelaut Arab Pernah Singgah Di Maluku’, *Republika* (Jakarta, 5 March 2018) <<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/p540xq313/para-pelaut-arab-pernah-singgah-di-maluku>>.

<sup>232</sup> Jon D. Goss, ‘Transmigration in Maluku: Notes on Present Condition and Future Prospects’, *Cakalele*, 03 (1992), 87–98 <<http://hdl.handle.net/10125/4275>>. Repelita stands for *Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun*, or translated into English ‘the five-year development plan,’ and Repelita V was conducted in 1989–1994.

Aside from the official programs, many people migrated voluntarily, simply to seek better economic conditions. However, it was not the remote areas that attracted people, and they started to migrate to the urban areas of various islands, including Ambon.

*It also shows a change in the transmigration program, from what was initially transmigration funded by the government to transmigration carried out voluntarily by the community. This phenomenon occurred in the mid-1980s when many centers of economic growth developed in urban areas on the islands outside Java.*<sup>233</sup>

The third significant group in Maluku was people of foreign descent who had been on the island for generations, such as the Arabs, Chinese, and Portuguese. The identification of this group is through their names: for example, people of Portuguese descent have names such as da Costa, de Fretes, de Lima, and Fareire.<sup>234</sup>

Islam was first introduced to the Maluku Islands several hundred years ago by Arab traders arriving via the Strait of Malacca. The islands' name derives from the word *mamluk*, meaning 'kingdoms' in Arabic, and, to the present day, there are four kingdoms in Maluku, namely Ternate, Tidore, Jailolo, and Bacan.<sup>235</sup> Later, in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese came to *Nusantara* and introduced Catholicism. One hundred years later, the Dutch and their Protestant Christian missionaries arrived on this island.

Each religion experienced its period of dominance and privilege, and this affected the fortunes of its followers. During the periods of Portuguese and Dutch domination, respectively, the Catholics and Protestants held privileged positions in society, employed as troops and administrators. The Christians had access to higher levels of education at Dutch colleges. These privileges did not extend to the Muslims. However, during the Japanese occupation, Muslims were privileged by the occupying forces.<sup>236</sup>

Nevertheless, as the Japanese occupation period was relatively brief and ended in 1945, the Protestants and Catholics maintained their strategic positions within local government and

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<sup>233</sup> Anggy Denok Sukmawati, '1969-2015: Cerita Tiga Dekade Politik Perpindahan Masyarakat Di Indonesia', *Masyarakat & Budaya*, 18.3 (2016) <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v18i3.577>>.

<sup>234</sup> Rahmat Rahman Patty and Amir Sodikin, 'Gubernur Maluku: Fakta Kebinekaan Telah Menjadi Jati Diri Orang Maluku', *Kompas* (Ambon, 27 February 2017) <<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2017/02/27/00242621/gubernur.maluku.fakta.kebinekaan.telah.menjadi.jati.diri.orang.maluku>>.

<sup>235</sup> Yance Zadrak Rumahuru, 'Kontekstualisasi Dalam Penyebaran Islam: Analisis Pola Pembentukan Islam Di Nusantara', *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 14.1 (2018), 123–29 <<https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.14.2018.011>>.

<sup>236</sup> Sumanto Al Qurtuby, 'Christianity and Militancy in Eastern Indonesia: Revisiting the Maluku Violence', *Southeast Asian Studies*, 4.2 (2015), 313–39 <[https://doi.org/10.20495/seas.4.2\\_313](https://doi.org/10.20495/seas.4.2_313)>.

other institutions. During the colonial era, various rulers manipulated inter-religious conflict in order to weaken opposition to their occupation. However, this divide-and-rule approach failed at that time, so there were efforts to mount a united struggle against the occupiers.

### Interfaith harmony

Islam and Christianity (predominantly Protestant) are the two main religions in Ambon, and the two communities had lived in relative harmony for decades. The people in Ambon did not see faith as a barrier to the flourishing of their relationships. Although there is either a Protestant or a Muslim majority in most villages, there were a small number of heterogeneous villages. Furthermore, anyone who had a particular religion would not hesitate to live among people of a different faith.

Let us focus on the story of Zairin Salampessy and see how strong the relationships were between the people of Ambon, regardless of their religious differences. Zairin and his brother, Zulkifli, both Muslims, were cared for in their childhood by their neighbor, Ms Edy, a Catholic. They were cared for every day while their parents worked at a local school, as both were teachers. Zairin's family was an example of a Muslim family that lived in a Christian-majority village. Furthermore, Ms Edy was not the only one; there were Ms Auw, Ms De Nussy, Ms De, Ms Angky, and Ms Nyong, and they would take turns whenever possible. Not only that, the relationship, of course, covered many other significant practices, such as exchanging foods and visits. When Christmas was approaching, Zairin's family would send the women food while also eating during the religious celebration in the house. And this practice was followed vice versa; the women would send food to Zairin's family when the end of *Ramadhan* approached.<sup>237</sup>

Dian Pesiwarissa had a similar story from her childhood. Her grandparents, who are prominent Christian figures in the area, adopted many children, and some of them were Muslim. La Ata and La Duka were the ones (among many others) that Dian remembered well. La Ata and La Duka were Muslims, and they were also of different ethnicity – Buton – originating from Sulawesi Island. However, their relationship was just like that of sons and parents who love

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<sup>237</sup> Manuputty and others, pp. 41–44.

and care for each other.<sup>238</sup> Nevertheless, La Ata became an imam of a mosque, although he grew up in a Christian family.

In Ambon, the concept of *Siwa Lima* has provided guidance for the inhabitants to live in harmony among many different religions, predominantly Islam and Christianity. It is for this reason that the museum in Ambon that exhibits Maluku's culture is named the Siwalima Museum, where *Siwa* represents Christianity, and *Lima* represents Islam.<sup>239</sup> For the Maluku people, the concept of *Siwa* and *Lima* has become a way of life, passing down the native wisdom of *pela* and *gandong*, which will be explained further in a later part of this chapter.<sup>240</sup>

The life philosophy of *Siwa Lima* is not particular to Ambon alone but extends to the whole of the Maluku Islands. The story began when three brothers, named Ulisiwa, Ulilima, and Uliasa, were washed away by a flash flood, which made them live separately in different parts of the Maluku Islands. People believe that these three were the ancestors of the people of Maluku. Later, their generations of descendants became known as *Pata Siwa* and *Pata Lima*. When the Portuguese came to Maluku, the *Pata Siwa* clan established an alliance with them and, after some time, most of them converted to Christianity. Meanwhile, unlike their brother clan, *Pata Lima* held to Islam as their religion.<sup>241</sup>

Evidence of inter-religion harmony exists in the An-Nur Mosque, located in Batu Merah village, where a conflict started in 1999. There are two pillars in the mosque, which were built by two Christian towns: Ema and Paso.<sup>242</sup> As has been the custom, between villages under the social contract of *pela* or *gandong*, people must help each other, including the building of a mosque or church, regardless of their religion.

Some people admitted that the friction that happened now and then between Muslims and Christians, especially teenagers, had existed for a long time, and, therefore, quarreling and fighting among them was just a regular thing. However, they argued that, usually, the clashes would finish after a maximum of two days. Zairin stated that there is some kind of unwritten

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<sup>238</sup> Manuputty and others, pp. 79–81.

<sup>239</sup> Rita Pranawati, 'Masjid Dan Pembangunan Perdamaian: Studi Kasus Poso, Ambon, Ternate, Dan Jayapura', 2011, p. 138.

<sup>240</sup> Pranawati, p. 138.

<sup>241</sup> Hatib Abdul Kadir, 'Sapa Bale Batu, Batu Bale Dia', *Lakon*, 1.1 (2012), 61–75 <<https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/LAKON/article/download/1918/1408>>.

<sup>242</sup> 'Potong Di Kuku Rasa Di Daging', *Persekutuan Gereja Gereja Di Indonesia*, 2017 <<https://pgi.or.id/potong-di-kuku-rasa-di-daging/>> [accessed 19 October 2020].

consensus that no matter how big the conflict between them, they would end everything and get back to normal on the second day after the first fight.<sup>243</sup>

## Embryo

Maluku was the first place where new religions entered *Nusantara* (now Indonesia) due to past trade routes. Traders came from the Middle East, China, India, and even Europe. Maluku invited many traders because it was famous for its abundant spices. This fact has made the people of Maluku diverse in terms of religion.

Maluku was the entry point for new religions, and it was also where the practice and power of colonialism first took root on the archipelago. Thus, the total duration of colonialism in Indonesia stretches back more than three centuries, starting with the islands of Maluku.

As a strategy to weaken local people's resistance, the colonial rulers implemented a divide-and-rule strategy. They encouraged the separation of the settlements based on religious criteria: the Dutch sent Muslims to live with fellow Muslims, and Christians to live with fellow Christians. Territorial segregation has, therefore, existed since the colonial era. Despite this long-term development, no region is genuinely exclusive to one religion, and this has been even less so after Indonesia's independence.

There was migration in large numbers from Sulawesi and Java to Maluku through the transmigration government-sponsored program during the New Order period. Previously, the primary motivation for migration was the economy. In Maluku, the Muslim migrant community are known as 'BBM,' which is an abbreviation of *Bugis*, *Butonese*, and *Makassarese*, three ethnic groups from the nearby island of Sulawesi. Other minor migratory communities, such as the Madurese from Java or Padang, are increasingly being referred to by the term. The history of BBM migration to Ambon is that of a voluntary, long-term movement of poor people seeking a sustainable existence, which began during Dutch colonial times. The long process of this kind of migration has resulted in good acculturation in the region, but through the massive transmigration program during Suharto's era, social problems in the area started to arise.

As is the nature of migrants in general, those to Maluku are hard workers, who, over time, came to dominate the economic sector in Ambon city, especially trade. This resulted in the level of

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<sup>243</sup> Manuputty and others, p. 43.

welfare of immigrants being higher than that of the native inhabitants. People often generalized this phenomenon by making associations where migrants are predominantly Muslim and locals are Christians. This generalization caused competition between the two groups in several sectors of the economy. Furthermore, the situation became worse during the economic crisis in 1997, when many native residents became unemployed.<sup>244</sup>

In the early days of the Republic of Indonesia's independence, Christians had a better education than Muslims because the Dutch had encouraged their schooling. Thus, within the bureaucratic sector, Christians occupy a greater number of strategic positions in both regional and central governments:

*In particular, the privileged position of the Protestant community in the colonial bureaucracy has resulted in Christians in Ambon still being referred to as the 'anak emas' or 'golden boys.' The elite status of this Protestant community is also strongly related to the word 'ambtenaar.' This Dutch word is not only the literal translation of 'civil servant' - which already implies a high level of economic security - but in the Ambonese context, also reflects the high social standing, prestige and educational opportunities of the Christian community that stem from their privileged treatment during colonial times.<sup>245</sup>*

Bertrand agreed with the above statement, arguing the same thing in the passage below:

*Ambonese Christians were favoured during the colonial period, while Muslims were marginalized. The city of Amboina (Ambon) became one of the most important towns in the Dutch East Indies: it was the administrative centre and major port of the Spice Islands. The Dutch required the use of natives to staff positions in its colonial administration and to serve in the colonial army. Many Ambonese converted to Christianity, as opportunities for work in the colonial service were open only to Christians. They became one of the groups most loyal to the Dutch. They occupied staff positions in the administrative centre and were the principal group in the Dutch colonial army. Meanwhile, Muslim Ambonese were marginalized and isolated.<sup>246</sup>*

This situation started to change when the New Order government began to mobilize Islam in order to strengthen its own legitimacy, and placed Muslims in government positions, including in the regions. Starting in 1992, Maluku had its first Muslim governor, Akib Latuconsina, who began placing Muslim employees within the regional government apparatus.

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<sup>244</sup> Karel A Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam : Contacts and Conflicts, 1596–1950*, Currents of Encounter. Vol. 7. (Amsterdam ; Atlanta, Ga: Rodopi, 1993), p. 151.

<sup>245</sup> Jeroen Adam, 'Downward Social Mobility, Prestige and the Informal Economy in Postconflict Ambon', *South East Asia Research*, 16.3 (2008), 461–79 (p. 465) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23751012>>.

<sup>246</sup> Jacques Bertrand, 'Legacies of the Authoritarian Past: Religious Violence in Indonesia's Moluccan Islands', *Pacific Affairs*, 75.1 (2002), 57–85 (p. 62) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/4127241>>.

If we examine it attentively, the Ambon case began as a group dispute owing to socio-economic rivalry, notably between immigrants and indigenous people, according to Marzuki Darusman, Attorney General and member of the National Human Rights Commission. However, the subject was drawn to the respective religions' regions thanks to the provocateurs' shrewdness.<sup>247</sup> The war in Ambon in 1999, according to Jusuf Kalla, former vice president of the Republic of Indonesia (2004–09 and 2014–19), was not a religious dispute. Following the 1998 reformation, the introduction of democracy gave positions to all the factions that won regional elections, regardless of societal harmony. As a result, the balance was disrupted, and chaos ensued.<sup>248</sup>

In the New Order era, solving problems tended to involve a military approach, and Suharto ignored the potential of the locals to be independent in many ways. At the same time, this action destroyed the social institutions (also the local wisdom) in Maluku because it made the conflict-solving mechanisms of local wisdom in Maluku erode and be unable to function optimally. Every time a clash happened in the region, the military would solve it in their own way. The government did not give the locals a chance to solve their problems by themselves. As a result, the system made Maluku very vulnerable to horizontal conflicts, and resolution always depended on the central government, in this case, on the military. Thus, when regime change and the subsequent in-depth reform took place in 1998, and the military were no longer dominant throughout the country, Maluku became an area that was prone to violent conflict, and which, unfortunately, lacked an independent resolution method.

For the sake of Indonesian unity, the New Order saw the application of a policy of homogenization. In Maluku, the New Order brought about change which stopped the use of the term *negeri* in favor of referring to 'the village,' and completely changed the whole social system in the region by replacing the traditional role of the village 'kings' with that of a 'village head.' The role of the king was different from that of the village head: while the village head was basically just an administrator, the king's role included giving advice and blessings, and they were someone whom people listened to. Local custom functioned properly, with the king leading activities in the framework of local tradition. Instead of acknowledging the local social system, Suharto eradicated it. During my work field and interview with one of the kings in Maluku, I observed how important the king was for the people of Maluku as a cultural leader,

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<sup>247</sup> Denni Damanik, 'Posisi Militer Di Ambon', *Tempo*, January 2000  
<<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/kritik/111188/posisi-militer-di-ambon>>.

<sup>248</sup> Nasru Alam Aziz, 'Pertikaian Di Ambon Bukan Konflik Agama', *Kompas* (Poso, 2 October 2011)  
<<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2011/10/02/20394476/Pertikaian.di.Ambon.Bukan.Konflik.Agama.>>.



after the local customs had been restored by the decentralization policy. Several people waited for King Hitu Messing to give them advice and blessing as they were about to depart for a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. They waited patiently outside the house while the king was with me for the interview.<sup>249</sup>

### When religion speaks violence

Margaretha Margawati is a Christian humanitarian activist from the *Jaringan Kerja Relawan Untuk Krisis Maluku* (Volunteer Network for the Maluku Crisis). She related a story illustrating the tensions that can sometimes appear between the different religious groups. She had just returned from the end of Ramadhan celebrations with her Muslim fellow volunteers in Batu Merah (the area where most Muslims live). Her Muslim fellows gave her a box of cake to take home. When she returned to the Christian humanitarian group's base, two ladies asked her about the box. She answered that the box was a cake from Batu Merah. In response, the two ladies ran away, screaming; they were terrified that the box might be a bomb.<sup>250</sup>

Indonesia is not a religious country officially – there is no state religion in the constitution – but religion is essential for most people in Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesia has a Ministry of Religious Affairs, and a department of the ministry is in charge of managing matters relating to each (acknowledged) religion. Several religious celebrations are officially established as national holidays in the country. An indication of how vital faith is to the Indonesians, is that the national identity card of citizens has details of their religion written on it. This information is critical because some institutions need it when dealing with the person's affairs, such as when the person is getting married, getting divorced, or when the person dies. However, unfortunately, the issue of religion is fragile and loaded with the potential for conflict, and the probability of problems occurring is relatively high because most Indonesians are religious.

A period of violent chaos was triggered when many Muslims celebrated the end of Ramadhan, known as Eid al-Fitr, on 19 January 1999. There are many versions of how the conflict began that day, but all versions principally mention the same story about a fight between an Ambonese Christian minibus driver, Jopie Saia, and a group of Muslims in Batu Merah Bawah village. The group extorted Jopie and threatened him with a sharp weapon. Jopie ran away and went to get support from his fellows for retaliation. Clashes between these two groups were unavoidable. Later, rumors of the mosque being burnt spread everywhere in the predominantly

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<sup>249</sup> Personal experience when meeting the respondent for an interview on 20 July 2018.

<sup>250</sup> Margawati.

Muslim area, while rumors of the church being burnt reached people in the predominantly Christian villages. This was the beginning of how a personal dispute shifted gear into being a civil war fueled by religious sentiments.<sup>251</sup>

Dr I.J.W. Hendriks, the chairman of *Gereja Protestan Maluku* (GPM, Protestant Church of Maluku) Synod, stated that, at the time, in the early phase of the conflict, people would rather die defending their religion and would feel like traitors if they did nothing. The confusion affected not only the general public but also the religious leaders. They split into two groups with different behaviors, one that kept on spreading a message of peace, and the other which suggested responding to the violence with more violence.<sup>252</sup>

When both groups involved in the conflict admitted that the war they were having was a religious war, it strengthened the determination of each group to fight, and made reconciliation or appeasement more complicated. Each group would pray before they went to the war zone. Each one of them would think that death was not something they were afraid of because paradise would be something they attained if they died during the fighting.<sup>253</sup> Both Christian and Muslim groups believed that the war was sacred, such as a crusade or jihad, respectively. Therefore, their motivation to go to the war zone became more robust, and they felt they had nothing to lose.

The war involved not only adults from each group but also children. Ronald Regan, Iskandar Slameth, Wenand Salhuteru, Febrian Matoke, Salfatoris Rerebain, Akbar Marabessy, Mutalib Nahumarury, and Amir Lestaluhu are among the child soldiers who were involved during the war (between 1999 and 2004), whose age-range at that time was between seven and thirteen years old. Their tasks in the war zone were different from those of the adults: for example, Regan used to bring gasoline, but their belief was the same – it was a war in defense of their religion.

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<sup>251</sup> Ardi Pareanom, Yusi A; Riyanto, Agus S; Yasin, Ali Nur; Bramantyo, 'Getir Ambon Di Idul Fitri', *Tempo* (Ambon, January 1999), p. 2 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/93321/getir-ambon-di-idul-fitri>>.

<sup>252</sup> Manuputty and others.

<sup>253</sup> Adeste Adipriyanti, *The Invisible Heroes: Luka Beta Rasa* (Indonesia: Narasi, 2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uolhivo2at8>>.

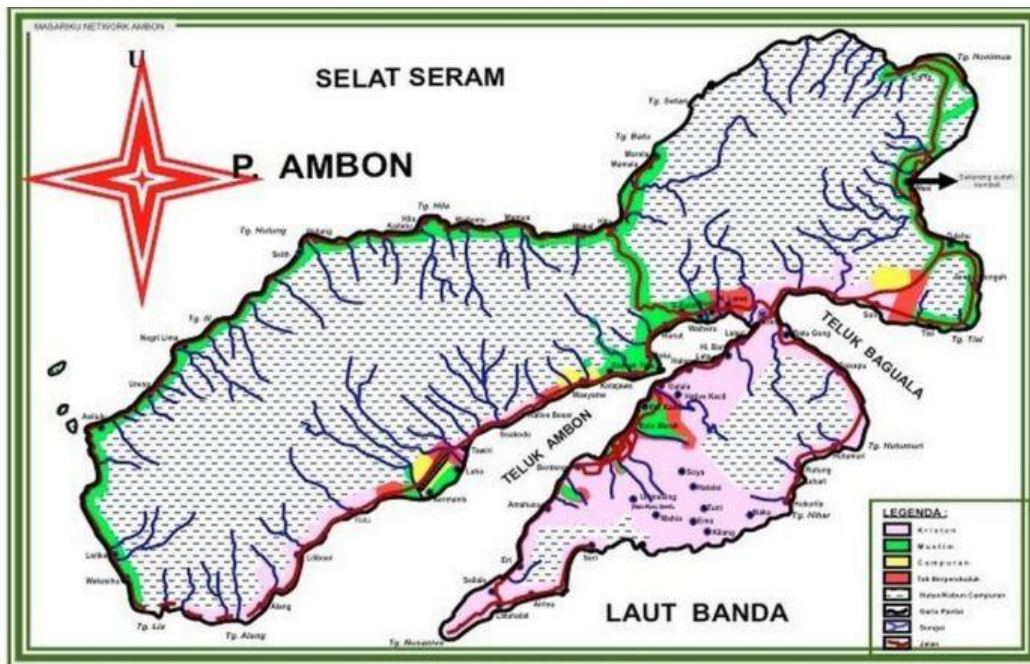


Figure 9 Segregation based on religion<sup>254</sup>

On the map in figure 9, the Christian-majority area is shown in red while the Muslim-majority region is shown in green. Meanwhile, some villages have a mixture of both religions, and are represented by the color yellow.



Figure 10 Segregation areas<sup>255</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Endang Nurdin, 'Persahabatan Pendeta Dan Ustad Mengantar Mantan Tentara Anak Ambon Menjadi Duta Damai', *BBC News Indonesia* (Jakarta, 24 April 2018) <[https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-43521909?ocid=wsindonesia.chat-apps.in-app-msg.whatsapp.trial.link1\\_auin](https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-43521909?ocid=wsindonesia.chat-apps.in-app-msg.whatsapp.trial.link1_auin)>.

<sup>255</sup> CRCS, *Beta Mau Jumpa (I Want to Meet)* (Indonesia: YouTube, 2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIsORJoEUgY>>.

Figure 10 shows the movement of minority residents toward one religious settlement. Areas with a purple line are those with a Christian population, while Muslim residents occupy villages shown with a yellow stripe. When the conflict occurred, Christians living in Muslim towns moved to Christian places and vice versa.

## Transformation

The year 1999 was a very dark one for Maluku, especially in Ambon. Hatred in the name of religion tore apart the harmony in diversity previously known in this city. Around 5,000 people died, half a million people fled from their homes, and thousands of houses, including places of worship, were destroyed and burnt, each one because of religious hatred and the desire for revenge.

However, we can also choose to describe this another way: affirming that 1999 is the year of the awakening of local wisdom in Maluku. At least two types of awakening have transformed local wisdom in Maluku into having a stronger and more diverse presence.

The government finally succeeded in getting the two sides, Christian and Muslim, to agree on the Malino II agreement. The government called it 'Malino' because this agreement took place in the city of Malino in Sulawesi. They called it 'the second' because the Malino I agreement had earlier been formulated by conflicting parties in the city of Poso. It took three long years for the government to reach the Malino II agreement: long enough for a significant war to erupt which took away thousands of lives, made half a million residents flee outside Ambon, and destroyed the city.

However, the agreement was at least a trigger for local wisdom to develop and become more effective, and for locals to be more confident. Previously, people would consider a person to be a betrayer if they initiated a peace deal with the conflicting party. Nobody would dare to do so, said Dr Abidin Wakano, a director of *Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku* (LAIM, Interfaith Board of Maluku).<sup>256</sup> When the agreement was signed, local peace activists were able to work more effectively and were more confident. In such an environment they could promote peace publicly without hesitation. The public were tired of fighting, and the provocateurs became less significant as those people who wanted peace outnumbered them.

In this phase of the conflict, the people of Ambon started to move from a situation of only negative peace to one of positive peace. Even though there were still occasional physical

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<sup>256</sup> Personal interview on 23 July 2018.

contacts between the two parties, they were considered to be under control. Also, the reconciliation process had only just started with this agreement. However, the process was not easy or short-lived. It required much effort for local wisdom to play a significant role in the reconciliation and the prevention of future outbursts of violence.

There are at least two types of local wisdom transformation in Maluku, strengthening and metamorphosing into organizations and movements. These two kinds of transitions are the reason why Maluku's local wisdom experienced a revival after the 1999 violent conflict.

### Strengthening local wisdom

In the wake of the 1999 violent conflict, local wisdom became strengthened in several ways. For example, civil society in Ambon initiated the relationship of *pela* between Muslim-majority schools and Christian-majority schools. The Interfaith Board of Ambon (LAIM), along with Dr Abidin Wakano, is behind this initiative involving the Ninth Public Middle School and the Fourth Public Middle School; most of their students are Christian and Muslim, respectively.<sup>257</sup>

As part of a natural reaction, some elements of society united and initiated various activities creatively and passionately. For example, some young people created a community consisting of Christians and Muslims who like arts in all genres, which later became *Paparisa Ambon Bergerak* (Paparisa Ambon Moves). This community has become a place for both parties interested in developing their arts skills, such as music, photography, history, poetry, and fine arts, to work together, regardless of their differences, including religious ones. Subsequently, hip-hop music became more prominent as it grew into the development of the Molukka Hip-Hop Community. *Paparisa*, other than being the name of an area of Ambon, also has the meaning 'home,' and is a bridge for Christians and Muslims to interact more and get to know each other better.

Another local wisdom of the region called *kewel* or *bacarita* means 'telling stories.' The coffee shop has been the perfect place for this tradition for generations. When the conflict had been prevalent in the area for some time, people started to establish coffee shops in the neighborhood to accommodate the *bacarita* tradition. The coffee shops opened in the demarcation line between Christian and Muslim areas and installed two doors, one entry point for each location.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Abidin Wakano, Personal Communication, 23 July 2018.

<sup>258</sup> Frans Pati Herin, 'Kisah Damai Kedai Kopi Di Ambon', *Kompas* (Ambon, 2009) <<https://jelajah.kompas.id/kopi-nusantara/baca/kisah-kedai-di-ambon/>>.

### *Pela and gandong*

Society will itself naturally find the equilibrium to keep harmony among its members. A community consists of a group of people, and each individual within the group has the natural tendency to keep the peace. Therefore, some customs within the city are supportive of peacekeeping for all. In Spain, for example, they never think twice about going to a café, restaurant, or bar as it is already a custom for them. The Center for Sociological Investigation (CIS) survey says that 60.5 percent of Spaniards go to a café, restaurant, or bar at least once a week; furthermore, one in five of this statistic say they “go every day.”<sup>259</sup> This custom encourages peacebuilding because one of the keys to keeping the peace is frequent interaction among people, resulting in better understanding or at least a peaceful interaction and coexistence. There is a cafeteria (excluding take-aways) in Spain every 50 meters, demonstrating how deeply ingrained this custom is.

In the context of Ambon, a custom that has been there for generations originally began out of necessity because the community were fighting each other. Based on a story passed on for generations, they agreed to make a social contract as brothers between villages, regardless of the inhabitants’ religion, with a scheme called *pela* and *gandong*. *Pela* means a ‘relationship of brotherhood,’ while *gandong* means ‘a womb,’ meaning that anyone under this agreement will be like brother and sister of the same mother to one another.

An implication of this social agreement is the prohibition to get married among themselves, just like brothers and sisters. Therefore, every child has to be well-informed about which villages have this agreement with their town. This could actually be seen as a way of redressing the imbalance in the prohibition in Islam against a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim, while Muslim men are allowed to marry a non-Muslim woman. Introducing an overall prohibition on intermarriage removes the inequality of the one-sided prohibition. In any case, it is standard practice when youths make friends to consider these agreements, and they would ask for guidance from the city before anything goes further in their friendship: any resulting relationship could lead to heartbreak because they would have to drop their feelings for each other. Nobody would insist on breaking this norm because people believe that something terrible would happen to them. Furthermore, if they are found out by society, they would

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<sup>259</sup> Airtor Bengoa, ‘Why Going for Coffee Beats out Cultural Activities in Spanish Society’, *Elpais* (Madrid, 17 July 2016) <[https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2016/07/12/inenglish/1468323507\\_914367.html](https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2016/07/12/inenglish/1468323507_914367.html)>.

receive a social punishment of, for example, going around the town without any clothes but banana leaves.

As an individual, someone will also have to treat those from other villages that have the *pela gandong* arrangement with their town just like brothers. For example, when they visit the house, they deserve to stay the night and take home any fruits or vegetables their brothers have in the garden.

Another socially binding rule under this agreement is that people are obliged to help each other. Hasyim Sabar, as one of the Al-Fatah Mosque imams, states that many Christian people from villages that have a relationship of *pela* or *gandong* with the town of the Al-Fatah Mosque come to clean and maintain the mosque regularly.<sup>260</sup> The same happens vice versa: Muslim people have to do the same, helping to build, clean, and keep churches in good condition.

The table below is an example of the *pela* and *gandong* relationships among villages in Ambon.<sup>261</sup>

#### Villages in **Salahutu, Ambon Island**

Village name	Title	Religion	Villages in <i>Pela</i> with	Villages in <i>Gandong</i> with
Liang	Ama Riang	Islam	Leinitu	(Waaai)
Waaai	Hunimua Risina	Christian	Suli, Kaibobo, Samasuru	Morella, (Tulehu, Tial, Tenga-tenga, Liang, Suli)
Tulehu	Amang Tuirehui (Haturessi)	Islam	–	Sila, Laimu, Asilulu, Paperu, Tial, Hulaliu

<sup>260</sup> Amelia Fauzia et al, *Masjid Dan Pembangunan Perdamaian : Studi Kasus Poso, Ambon, Ternate, Dan Jayapura*, Cet. 1. (Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Ciputat, 2011), p. 145.

<sup>261</sup> M Fikri Ansori, 'Kumpulan Pela Dan Gandong Di Maluku', *Personal Blog*, 2017  
<<https://anoktunjang.wordpress.com/2017/11/19/kumpulan-pela-dan-gandong-di-maluku/comment-page-1/>> [accessed 8 October 2017].



Tial		Islam	–	Sila, Laimu, Asilulu, Tulehu, Paperu, Hulaliu, Laha, (Tenga-tenga, Suli, Waai)
Tenga-tenga	Mowae Louruhu	Islam	Hatusua	Abubu, (Tulehu, Suli, Waai, Tial)
Suli	Lourua Aman Suritto	Christian	Kaibobo, Waai	(Tulehu, Tial, Tenga-tenga, Waai)

### *Panas pela*

*Panas pela* is a ritual of relationship renewal so that people would keep in mind the relevance of that bond. The event is crucial because it fuels the momentum for people to remember again the pact their ancestors made between villages as brothers and sisters. As newcomers arrive in the villages, they are included as new members in the social contract.

The ceremony typically starts with the *cakelelel* dance or ‘war dance’; it reminds the people that their ancestors agreed to make peace under the sacred agreement. The event would take place in turn among villages under the social contract of *pela* or *gandong*. For example, in 2015, the town of Galala, which has a Christian majority, was the host of the event, and invited the village of Hitulama, which has the largest Muslim population.

There are generally speeches from each representative at such events. Later, the last but most effective way to engage people from these two villages will be having a meal in the same space.

### *Ale rasa, beta rasa*

The phrase *ale rasa, beta rasa* is a concrete way of trying to build up a form of empathy among Maluku residents; the phrase loosely translates as: ‘I can feel what you feel.’ After a conflict has occurred, it emerges that each party feels more or less the same – namely destruction, loss, despair, and hatred. This result means that neither party has won the war; rather, both have experienced the same thing. Use of the phrase *ale rasa, beta rasa*, then, strengthens the bonds of empathy again and encourages both parties to understand each other’s circumstances in order to achieve a real victory together: namely, to make peace and live side by side harmoniously as before.



### *Baku bae*

*Baku bae* loosely translates as ‘live in peace.’ The phrase *baku bae* has become an expression in Maluku used to promote peace or reconciliation carried out after a dispute or fight (known as *baku mara*). When there was a fight – or *baku mara* – the community would usually strive for *baku bae*, or an attempt at reconciliation of the two parties. *Tempo* magazine wrote about this practice when the reconciliation process started in Ambon: “*the bitterness of hatred was almost eroded, replaced by a desire to live in harmony – commonly called baku bae by the people of Maluku.*”<sup>262</sup> When a conflict occurred, this expression returned the parties to strength and even transformed into a movement, namely the *Baku Bae* Movement, or the peace movement of *baku bae*.

### *Orang basudara*

Since the *pela* and *gandong* social contracts bind each region in Maluku with other areas, practically everyone is symbolically a relative to another. And each of your brothers is also a brother to someone else. Therefore, all Moluccans are brothers. When conflicts occur, this expression is popularly expressed. People often echo it to instill a sense of true brotherhood among the Maluku people and return the Maluku Islands to being islands full of peace.

Apart from that, several other expressions are used, which express a similar meaning. There is *sagu salempeng dibagi dua*, which means ‘brothers divide sago into two so that each gets half.’ There is also *potong di kuku rasa di daging*, which in English is ‘when you cut the nails it will be felt in the body,’ meaning ‘as siblings we feel pain when our siblings are hurt.’ And finally, the phrase *ain ni ain*, which means ‘we belong to each other as brothers to help and love each other.’

### Organizations and movements

The second part of Ambon’s local wisdom awakening is the transforming of Ambon’s peace movement and organizations. The peace movement and organizations both took their foundational inspiration from existing local wisdom, as mentioned above, which essentially strengthened after the violent conflict experienced in Ambon. Below I describe some of the peace movements and organizations in Ambon.

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<sup>262</sup> ‘Baku Bae Di Maluku’, *Tempo*, November 2003 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/opini/91283/baku-bae-di-maluku>>.

### *Peace journalism and the Maluku Media Center*

It is little known that amid all the news about violent conflict in Ambon, it emerges that initiatives for peace-promoting responsible journalism were born, for the first time in Indonesia, in this city. The situation at that time was so ‘hot’ that misrepresenting an incident could have had fatal consequences. Moreover, with cynical taglines adopted by many media, such as ‘bad news is good news,’ any means available were used to compete in writing news about Ambon, and they had only modest means with which to do research properly. Hence, they tended to use striking language and stories and exaggeration. An Ambonese journalist Rudi Fofid argued that this phenomenon could plunge the media into war journalism. *Asosiasi Jurnalis Indonesia* (AJI, the Indonesian Journalists Association) and *Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan* (LSPP, the Institute for Press and Development Studies) held a conference on peaceful journalism for the first time at Hotel Wijaya II in Ambon in January 2000 with 50 participant journalists from both Muslim and Christian communities. They also created a house together that gathered Muslim and Christian journals in Maluku under the name the Maluku Media Center to safeguard peaceful journalism about news in Maluku.

### *Concerned Women Movement*

When the conflict broke out, in general the men went to the battlefield while the women stayed at home, cooking and looking after the children. However, this situation was not acceptable to some women. Initially, women from Catholic and Protestant Christian groups initiated the *Gerakan Peduli Perempuan* (GPP, the Concerned Women Movement), which voiced their determination to contribute toward the ending of violent acts. The movement, which was officially born in August 1999, received support from the province’s deputy governor, Paula Renyaan. After that, this movement collaborated with women's networks from among Muslims, where they initiated programs that opened spaces for meeting places between Muslims and Christians. At first, the women distributed green ribbons to primary road users in Ambon and distributed pamphlets to stop the violence. Also, this movement created a program that united neighboring friendships that had been separated by conflict. They even made a successful documentary movie with the title *Beta Mau Jumpa*, which means ‘I want to meet.’

### *Baku Bae Movement*

*Baku bae* is an expression for making peace after a fight, which in Maluku is expressed as *baku mara*. This local wisdom gave birth to a movement called the *Baku Bae* Movement in 2000, which was initiated by a peace psychology lecturer Dr Ichsan Malik. He gathered representatives from various conflicting parties to open a dialogue for the first time in

Yogyakarta, 2,000 kilometers from the scene of violent conflict. The committee managed to compel representatives to attend the event. Attending representatives included: *Komando Jihad* (Jihad Command); *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (YLBHI, the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) as a non-partisan group; the *Hualopu* Foundation representing the Christian group; and the Innovation Group, which came on behalf of the Islamic groups. The dialogue spaces created by the *Baku Bae* Movement did not stop there. Instead, they continued to hold subsequent meetings, such as a meeting in Jakarta with twelve public figures, and one in Bali with 40 representatives from both sides.

### *Peace Provocateurs*

The *Provokator Perdamaian* or Peace Provocateurs are among those groups born later, in their case in September 2012. As previously emphasized, reconciliation is a long-term project and can even consist in fostering preventive measures. This movement succeeded in creating a network that counteracted war provocations that were easily spread through technology, such as SMS and social media. For example, someone may send a text message stating that a small Christian child had their hand cut off in a Muslim settlement. The Peace Provocateurs network would then immediately investigate the truth behind the news. In minutes, they were able to find the child and make a video showing that the child was unhurt. The Peace Provocateurs would also send short messages about the story to target people who do not have access to anything other than text messages.

### *Paparisa Ambon Moves*

This community is a place for young people from both parties who are interested in developing their arts skills – such as music, photography, history, poetry, and fine arts – to come together, regardless of their differences. Subsequently, hip-hop music has become more prominent as it developed into the Molukka Hip-Hop Community. *Paparisa*, other than being the name of an area of Ambon, also has the meaning ‘home,’ and is a bridge for Christians and Muslims to interact more and get to know each other better.

This community brings together young people, who are particularly prone to getting into fights. Morika Berhanan Tetelepta, who is from the community, shared his experience that conflict predominantly concerns young people. Therefore, this community brings young people together from both communities (Christians and Muslims) to intervene in the segregated

residential areas where people were afraid to cross these borders or visit areas inhabited by a different religion.<sup>263</sup>

*Anyone who wishes to come will be welcomed well. If they want to cooperate with us, we are pleased to work with them, they don't need to be members that are tied in specific regulations. Free and open for anyone to come anytime and they can leave anytime.* Pierre Adelaar Ajawaila.<sup>264</sup>

### *Molukka Hip-Hop Community (MHC)*

Morika Tetelepta is a victim of violent conflict and the founder of the Molukka Hip-Hop Community. Emerging from the desire to rebuild Maluku anew out of the wreckage following the violent conflict in 1999–2004, he initiated this community in 2008 as a forum for the meeting of Maluku youth, not limited by their religious differences. Morika's passion is to build the capacity of Maluku youth and build a positive image of Maluku in the eyes of the national and international community.

Musicians had already showered the city with songs that breathed local wisdom long before Ambon was declared a music city. Incorporating satirical lyrics, sociocultural criticism, and a yearning for Maluku, MHC's presence paved the way for the growth of hip-hop musicians in Ambon. On 31 October 2019, the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, declared Ambon as a world music city, along with 65 other towns throughout the world, as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities.<sup>265</sup>

'Puritan,' one of Morika's best-known songs, is about purification, in the sense of, for example, encouraging the Moluccans back to the *pela* and *gandong* or fraternity philosophy of life given by the elders in the past. It also tells how their forefathers still influence the Moluccans' lifestyles in various ways. The lyrics of a song by Morika Tetelepta and Frans Hayaka Nendisa became the official sound-track of the film *Cahaya Dari Timur: Beta Maluku (Lights from the East: I am Maluku)*.

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<sup>263</sup> Yayasan Kelola and Embassy of Denmark, *Ambon Art Walk Paparisa Ambon Bergerak* (Indonesia: YouTube, 2018) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeLoV3k15KY>>.

<sup>264</sup> 'Paparisa Ambon Bergerak: Scraping Conflict Partition, Building Digital Economy in Maluku', *Indonesia Development Forum*, 2018 <<https://indonesiadevelopmentforum.com/2019/knowledge-center/detail/6669-paparisa-ambon-bergerak-scraping-conflict-partition-building-digital-economy-in-maluku>> [accessed 30 June 2021].

<sup>265</sup> Priska Akwila, 'Kisah Dan Kembalinya Molukka Hip Hop Comunity Di Atas Panggung', *Kumparan* (Ambon, 11 March 2018) <<https://kumparan.com/ambonnesia/kisah-dan-kembalinya-molukka-hip-hop-comunity-di-atas-panggung/full>>; 'UNESCO Tetapkan Ambon Sebagai Kota Musik Dunia', *DW Indonesia*, 1 November 2019 <<https://www.dw.com/id/unesco-tetapkan-ambon-sebagai-kota-musik-dunia/a-51068629>>.

*Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku (LAIM, Interfaith Board of Maluku)*

Three institutions that represent major religions in Ambon established the LAIM. The Maluku branch of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI, Indonesian Ulema Council) represents Muslim groups, Amboina Diocese represents Catholics, and Maluku Protestant Church Synod represents Protestantism. The three areas that LAIM works in are community empowerment, coalition formation, and networking between communities and stakeholders, also policy advocacy, leading to post-conflict community reintegration.

When it was created by three people, Jacky Manuputty (Christian), Sven Loupatty (NGO), and Zakiyah Salam (Muslim), the name associated with this institution was *Lembaga Antar Iman dan Kemanusiaan Maluku*, with the same acronym, LAIM. Because the rise in confrontations with religious nuances was still quite sensitive, LAIM was started behind closed doors and has worked this way since 2000. The three initiators contacted several religious leaders from other faiths, particularly adherents of religions that were now involved in confrontation.

In collaboration with some institutions, LAIM has actively engaged in promoting peacebuilding. For example, in partnership with the Center of Religion and Democracy, at the University of Paramadina, LAIM published books about peacebuilding in Maluku: *Cerita Orang Basudara* or *The Story of Brothers* (2014) and *Keluar dari Extrimisme* or *Escape from Extremism* (2018). Another example of LAIM's active contribution, partnered with other parties, is that they produced a documentary movie entitled *Provokator Damai* or *Peace Provocateur* in collaboration with Eagle Institute Indonesia and PT Media Televisi Indonesia in 2013.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Rifky Husain, *Provokator Damai* (Indonesia: Eagle Awards, 2013)  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6BISiYX5xM>>.

### *Jalan Merawat Perdamaian (JMP, Road to Peacebuilding)*

In Ambon, JMP is a *Jembatan Merah Putih*, which translates as a ‘red and white bridge,’ but for youth in Ambon, JMP stands for *Jalan Merawat Perdamaian*, which translates as a ‘path to maintain peace.’ This community encourages a functional reconciliation practice where anyone, regardless of their religion, can engage in their hobbies to interact with one another. Some of them promote peace through puppet tales, and others use the medium of combining Muslim and Christian music, for example, tambourines and trumpets.

### *Institut Tifa Damai Maluku (ITDM, Maluku Peaceful Tifa Institute)*

In 2004, after violent contact between the two camps began to subside, several parties initiated an Early Warning System for Conflict (EWSC) movement and established a secretariat office in Maluku. The EWSC had the task of detecting symptoms of violent contact that may arise and immediately anticipating conflict with concrete steps using existing networks.

The Maluku EWSC was inspired by an incident on 25 April 2004, a date which marks the birthday of a separatist group, *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS, the Republic of South Maluku). A few days before the anniversary there were rumors that there would be a flag ceremony and other issues. On the anniversary of RMS, there was a ceremony and mass procession that provoked a new conflict, which happened when the crowd of civilians were met with security forces.

The events described above demonstrate that once the potential for conflict has been seen, it can be simply predicted that there will be conflict or riots. But such conditions are often allowed to develop without any genuine prevention efforts being made by the community. Peace observers argued that there was a need for an independent forum that could help the government and community leaders to provide early warning and conflict prevention efforts before conflict occurs.

In 2007, the members started to think about registering the organization formally. Finally, because of the need to become a registered organization, the secretariat changed its name to *Institut Tifa Damai Maluku* in 2008.

In 2019, there were more than 50 registered organizations in favor of peace in Maluku. The more these initiatives proliferate, the greater the number of peace organizations in Maluku. Maluku keeps spreading its wings of harmony, and is now arguably a laboratory for peace in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

The Maluku Islands were the gateway for European people to set foot in current Indonesia, making Ambon rich in history and plurality. Historically, the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the Dutch came to Maluku and colored society's vibrant life, including the Maluku people's characteristic of being multi-faith. Harmony among people with different religions in Maluku has been a feature for decades. Minor clashes among them had taken place now and then, but society had been able to keep conflict under control, until the bloody tragedy that occurred on 19 January 1999.

According to the interviewees I talked with, they could scarcely believe what had happened during the tragedy that started in January 1999. Triggered by a small clash between two teenagers from different religions in Batu Merah, the conflict soon became more significant and deadly. People acknowledged that similar disputes had occurred many times before at the same place, but had supposedly stopped within a maximum of three days. Furthermore, a lot of eyewitnesses stated that many unknown people had provoked the conflict, which had made it extremely dangerous. Nobody thought that a small commotion with massive, organized, and structured provocations could turn Ambon and several islands around it into one of the most terrible human tragedies of the twentieth century in Southeast Asia.

Previously, Ambon and the cities around it had local wisdom rules and practices that supported a harmony in diversity, bridging religious differences. *Pela* and *gandong* are the main local wisdom rules and practices of these cities, making harmony between disagreements, including religious differences. *Pela* and *gandong* were brotherly ties established and performed by the Maluku people's ancestors between villages. This brotherhood bond recognizes no differences between the people of the two towns or villages, including religious differences. This brotherhood is like a brotherhood of one womb, where the two are not allowed to marry each other. There are also numerous other local wisdom practices evolved from *pela* and *gandong*, such as the phrase *ale rasa beta rasa*, which implies that 'when you feel it, so do I,' and is used as a way of encouraging empathy. Another phrase, *sagu salempeng dibagi dua* means 'brothers divide sago into two, so that each gets half.' Another expression, *potong di kuku rasa di daging*, means 'when you cut the nails, it will be felt in the body,' and implies that 'as siblings we feel pain when our siblings are hurt.' Finally, *ain ni ain* has the sense, 'we belong to each other as brothers to help and love each other.'

When Ambon's terrible incident began on 19 January 1999, mainly due to provocation, this local wisdom strengthened and transformed as a natural reaction to the traumatic conflict. Previously, this local wisdom was born because of the need to end the war among Maluku people. This time, the people needed to end the war once again, so the existing local wisdom was transformed. Local practices have become strengthened in their existence, expanding into a broader scope and taking on institutional forms. Initially, *pela* and *gandong* were binding among Maluku people only, but then came to be applied to all residents, including migrants from other islands in Sulawesi and Java. At first, *pela* was only an inter-village agreement made by the Maluku people's ancestors; now, they also appoint *pela* between schools with different religions. In the past, people rarely did the *panas pela* ceremony, but now they perform *panas pela* every year; some regions even perform it more than once a year. Besides, *pela* and *gandong* have led to the creation of various interfaith communities that unite Muslims and Christians in universal music, dance, photography, and literature.



## CHAPTER III: SAMPIT, HABARING HURUNG TOWN

### Sampit at a glance

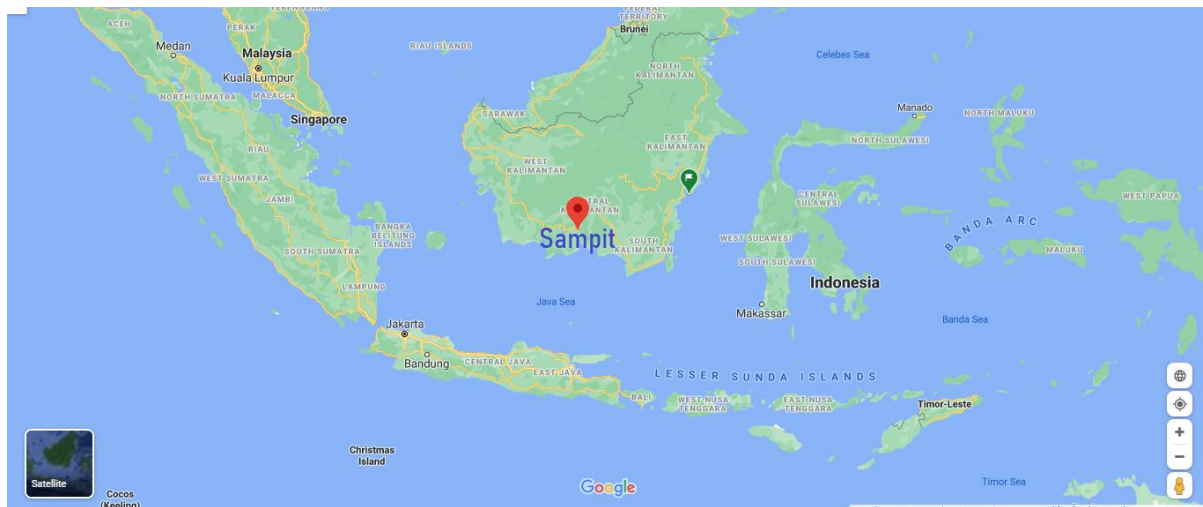


Figure 11 Map of Sampit

Sampit is a town in the district of Kotawaringin Timur, Central Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo). The area, which has as its symbol the mackerel fish, simply because the fish can be found everywhere in this region, has a strategic position because it has a large river, called the Mentaya, which can be navigated by large ships carrying containers. The Dutch East Indies colonial government built the seaport in this town and opened it on 1 May 1859 to facilitate rubber plantation and gold-mining businesses in this region. The words *habaring hurung* embedded in the city logo are from a local language, and mean *gotong royong* in Indonesian or ‘cooperation’ in English.

Originally, the Dayak tribe inhabited the island of Kalimantan. Over time, people from other islands, Java and Madura in particular, gradually migrated to this island. Central Kalimantan, and predominantly Sampit, is Madura’s leading migrant destination due to its ease of access to sea and river transport ports. Some people migrated voluntarily; however, authorities have also organized several significant migrations. The first recorded migration of Madurese to Kalimantan was in the 1830s, when the area was still under the Sultanate of Kotawaringin. The sultanate supported this migration in order to cultivate the large areas of unproductive land and to raise animals. During the colonization period, a wave of Madurese migration to Kalimantan started in 1901 as part of the Dutch government’s colonization program to recruit rubber plantation and gold-mine workers. Finally, during the New Order era, from the first five-year development plan (Repelita) in 1969 to the fourth in 1994, Suharto’s government again moved the people from one island to another in massive numbers. By 2000, just a year before the

tragedy occurred, the recorded population of Madurese people in Central Kalimantan had reached 400,000 across the regency.<sup>267</sup>

This long period was a phase of cultural assimilation, and mixed marriages took place between the ethnic groups of Madurese and Dayak, which encouraged the Madurese to be considered as no different from other residents, including the Dayak. The Madurese also spoke the languages of the Dayak and Banjar fluently, lived together with the Dayak inhabitants, and regularly engaged in cultural events where they lived. Rudi, a man of Dayak and Javanese descent, said that as they (the Madurese) are good at gardening, the Madurese worked for his parents on their plantation. Asyiqin, of Dayak decent, has a Madurese best friend named Sukriansyah, who lived not far from his house. To Asyiqin, Sukriansyah has always been his best friend, since they were children. They even became flat-mates when they went to the university in Banjarmasin, 40 minutes away by plane from Sampit.<sup>268</sup>

However, the Madurese migrants started to dominate many sectors in the region, including economics and politics. Most of the kiosks in the market belong to Madurese, and they even managed to set up a political party where they could have a representative in the local government. Their economic success indirectly marginalized the locals, including the Dayak, who were less prosperous in general. For instance, Santo, a Dayak youth, admitted how difficult the conditions were for the local people themselves during those days.<sup>269</sup> The Madurese economic expansion in the region encouraged them to invite more Madurese to work for them, which became the beginning of the problem. The Madurese who arrived during this period had the option to interact only among themselves, because the Madurese population was already large and they had little motivation to intermingle with the Dayaks. Hence, they did not have opportunities to blend in with the locals as they found it convenient to interact only within their own ethnic group. Therefore, the latest group of Madurese did not develop enough empathy and cultural sensitivity, and this often resulted in clashes with the local community or Dayak tribe. People often made generalized judgments about the Madurese: either they had been there for generations and respected the local culture, or they were those who came later and were ignorant of the local culture. They were the same in the eyes of most people because they held the same identity, Madurese descent.

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<sup>267</sup> Rudi Iskander: *Negotiating post conflict communication: a case of ethnic conflict in Indonesia*, Tesis doctoral, University of Ohio, 2007, pp. 33.

<sup>268</sup> Personal Communication on 6 August 2018.

<sup>269</sup> Personal Communication on 31 July 2018.

The economic competition between these two tribes could be the leading factor in the disputes (that often occurred) between them. People often associated ethnic identity with one's behavior, which led to the rise of essentialist stereotypes concerning each ethnic group. Untung, the chairman of the Dayak Customary Council, stated that the Madurese tended to be rude in their position as shopkeepers in the market, where buyers did not even have the right to bargain for an item they wanted to buy. Furthermore, the buyer was supposed to purchase an item once they had asked for it, and not change their mind.<sup>270</sup> Eventually, such claims became the stereotype of a specific ethnic identity in general, due to their being repeated frequently in everyday conversation.

In his doctoral thesis, Rudi Iskandar argues that disputes between Madurese and Dayak began because of the difference in their life orientations; rather than being about traditional values, this was about a capitalist (Madurese) versus subsistence agriculture (Dayak) economy. The Dayak managed the forests in sustainable ways. Their methods allowed the maintenance and conservation of the forest's wealth and exceptional biodiversity, following their customary laws and traditional knowledge. Madurese people, in contrast, cultivated any piece of land they could find for commercial agriculture. As time went by, the Madurese ended up owning many farms, but that was not enough. The Madurese also expanded their businesses. These circumstances resulted in a vast social gap growing between the native Dayak and the settler Madurese. The fragile relationship between the two tribes worsened because both tribes had a history of violence. The Dayak had a tradition of headhunting, and the Madurese had a habit of *carok*, fighting to the death over issues of dignity, using a sickle. Therefore, because of these pre-existing traditions, when the tragedy broke out in 2001, the Dayak began headhunting, and the Madurese fought using a sickle till the last breath.

However, during Suharto's New Order era, people were forbidden from formally expressing their identity by the government's SARA policy (governing ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations). In the public sphere, people should not mention, discuss, or express their identity, because Suharto believed this could trigger conflict locally, and cause national instability at a higher level. In reality, Indonesia is home to 1,331 ethnic groups, most of whom are immensely different from one another in various cultural aspects. Therefore, this policy showed the government's misrecognition of Indonesia's differences and is an indication of how dictatorial the approach was.

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<sup>270</sup> Personal Communication on 6 August 2018.

When every dispute had been silenced, which led to the accumulation of unfinished business during the New Order period, the hidden tensions finally broke out in a very dramatic way when the New Order apparatus was no longer there to oppress the people. On 18 February 2001, Madurese, in significant numbers, raided the Dayak community and killed four members of a Dayak family. In retaliation, a large group of Dayak struck back to chase after every Madurese, beheading them until no one was left in the town. There is no exact figure for the number of deaths in each group, but Gerry van Klinken estimated that between around 500 and 1500 people died in this incident, mostly Madurese.<sup>271</sup>

### Inter-ethnic harmony

According to Rudi, a Sampit resident of Javanese and Dayak descent, he has good memories of his neighbors, who are ethnic Madurese. As a child, he often came to their shop to buy something (such as a pencil or eraser) outside working hours. He was also often given free uncooked rice because they knew that Rudi loved to eat it.<sup>272</sup>

Furthermore, Rudi also took the view that the Madurese ethnic group is a religious ethnicity in general. They celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday each year by inviting their neighbors to come and have a big meal and enjoy themselves. Indirectly, this type of event, particularly by opening up meeting spaces, may create good relations between residents of different ethnicities. Religious differences have never been an issue between Dayak and Madurese, although they are different in religion. Dayak people adhere to *Kaharingan* as a native indigenous religion. The *Kaharingan* faith was previously known as the *Helu* religion (ancient). Tjilik Riwt coined the name *Kaharingan*, which is still in use today.<sup>273</sup> The word *Kaharingan* is derived from the word *haring*, which means 'life.'<sup>274</sup> The Madurese, on the other hand, are very religious, practicing Islam.

Matsahrah and Untung are people I interviewed representing each ethnic group, respectively, the Madurese and the Dayak. Both agreed that since the Madurese had lived in Sampit for decades, including Matsahrah, who was born and raised in Sampit, the relationship between Dayak and Madurese was pleasant.<sup>275</sup> When some ethnic Madurese groups arrived later and only lived within their own ethnic group and began to feel superior to the Dayak due to their

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<sup>271</sup> Gerry van Klinken.

<sup>272</sup> Sukandar.

<sup>273</sup> Tjilik Riwt is former governor of Central Kalimantan, and he is now considered as an Indonesian national hero.

<sup>274</sup> 'Agama Kaharingan', *Kaharingan.or.Id* <<https://www.kaharingan.or.id/tentang>> [accessed 8 July 2021].

<sup>275</sup> Personal communication: Matsahrah on 1 August 2018 and Untung on 3 August 2018.

better economic standing, this harmony began to break. The tendency to regard ethnic Dayak inhabitants as ‘indigenous people,’ has resulted in an insufficient sense of empathy and compassion toward them from the Madurese.

Santo, a young Dayak man, admitted that the Madurese and the Dayak people have an excellent collective memory of the Ngaju Dayak king’s journey to Madura Island. Although the truth is unknown, people have passed the story from generation to generation in Central Kalimantan. The story has become one of the stories recorded by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia.<sup>276</sup> The story relates that a Dayak king named King Mambang went to an island that was later known as Madura’s Island on a trip of adventure with his family. When he arrived there, the king of Madura challenged him to fight his rooster. Losing the cockfight, the king of Madura finally challenged King Mambang to a duel in a dry well. The Mambang king used a *duhung* weapon, a traditional Dayak spear, while Madura’s king used a Madurese sickle. When both of them were in the dry well and began to take their respective weapons, because of the sickle’s circular shape and the narrowness of the old dry well, the king of Madura could not take out his sickle. King Mambang, meanwhile, quickly removed his weapon from his waist and managed to kill Madura’s king. King Mambang, to summarize, eventually became the king who ruled Madura and had descendants on Madura Island until now.

Asyiqin, a Dayak resident, admitted that Sukriansyah, who is ethnically Madurese, has been a friend since childhood. In fact, because of their relationship since childhood, he did not hesitate to call him a brother. They attended the same university in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan when they grew up and even shared a place to live during their studies. They tried to find each other outside the area when the fighting broke out in Sampit, and they were heartbroken, and cried when they met.<sup>277</sup>

However, they could not deny that there are often disputes between the Madurese and the Dayak ethnic groups. Communal conflicts with a sizable number of victims have occurred at least four times. The first happened when the military used the Dayaks to eradicate PKI members or (supposed) sympathizers from 1965 to 1966. From December 1996 to March 1997 in Samalantan, West Kalimantan, the second communal conflict between Dayak and Madurese occurred. On the third occurrence, it was not only the Dayak who fought the Madurese, but

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<sup>276</sup> Toenika J. Bahen Elbaar, Lambertus; Achyar Ahmad, ‘Ceritera Rakyat Daerah Kalimantan Tengah’, in *Proyek Inventarisasi Dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah* (Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia, 1982), pp. 53–56.

<sup>277</sup> Personal Communication on 6 August 2018.

also Malay people joined the gangs of Dayaks involved in this conflict in 1999 in Sambas, West Kalimantan. The fourth event occurred in Sampit and its surroundings in Central Kalimantan in 2001. Further details of each clash will be elaborated upon in a following section, entitled *Previous incidents between Dayak and Madura*.

### The decline of local wisdom

The Madurese tribe has been living in Sampit since the 1930s when they arrived in this region through a transmigration program implemented by the Dutch East Indies government. Under the Suharto period, a much greater wave of migration occurred between the first five-year program (Repelita) in 1969 and the fourth Repelita program in 1994. People of Madurese descent who were born and raised in Sampit, according to Abdul Wahid, had gone through a period of assimilation into the local culture. According to him, there is no significant problem between the Dayak people and the Madurese descendants.<sup>278</sup>

Aurelien Francis Brule, a conservation activist from France who works to preserve wildlife on the island of Borneo, admitted that he was very impressed with the Dayak people's kindness. He was present right at the time of the incident and admitted that he had never had a negative encounter when he was there.<sup>279</sup>

The dictator-introduced policies were always imposed top-down within the New Order regime – for example, forest control – and were introduced without paying heed to local populations' needs or explaining the new measures to them. In the clearing of land for national construction under Law No. 5 of 1967, the government was very authoritarian. Below is one of the points:

*Because it cannot be justified, if the local used the customary rights of a local customary law community to obstruct the implementation of the government's general plans, for example: refusing to clear forests on a large scale for significant projects, or the benefit of transmigration and so on. It cannot be justified if customary rights are used as an excuse for the local Customary Law Community to clear forests arbitrarily.*<sup>280</sup>

This condition leaves the Dayak people, the original inhabitants of the island of Kalimantan, unhappy. Indigenous people are traditionally close to nature because their lives depend on their

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<sup>278</sup> Personal Communication on 4 August 2018.

<sup>279</sup> Aurelien Francis Brule, *My Time in Borneo during the Ethnic War* (Indonesia: YouTube, 2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ6kWQLCAvY>>.

<sup>280</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Undang-Undang (UU) Tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Kehutanan*, 1967 <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/49554/uu-no-5-tahun-1967>>.

immediate natural environment. Life became much more complicated for the Dayak people as the government started to carry out large-scale land clearing.

Furthermore, through the government's transmigration scheme, the influx of migrants from Java and Madura added to the market rivalry and competition for livelihoods between the transmigrants and the Dayak residents as the local indigenous people. The transmigrants were accustomed to the practice of farming, while the Dayaks were not. So it is unsurprising that the transmigrants quickly came to dominate the agriculture and plantation industries.

Apart from that, Suharto's policies also favored a military approach and customary law and local wisdom could hardly function correctly. Whenever there was tension between citizens, especially between religions, the military would immediately intervene without any dialogue before, during, or afterwards. The New Order regime prohibited its citizens from addressing four things: namely ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group, abbreviated as SARA. This did not result in a resolution of the conflicts but rather merely stopped the physical clashes and violence. This militarized approach did not solve the problem entirely and instead left the tensions to fester.

## When the accumulation reaches its peak

### Deadly breakout during the transition

*The man's facial expression was cold. With a red headband on his head, arms stretched, he was standing in the crowd. He was holding a five-year-old child's head in his left hand. On the other hand, he was sticking out the Mandau Sacred traditional weapon. At the same time, the crowd in the surrounding area was watching him silently. No sense of remorse or fear was apparent.*<sup>281</sup>

The description above was quoted in a national newspaper when the conflict broke out in Sampit in 2001 between Dayak and Madurese ethnic groups. From the journalist's point of view, communal violence in Sampit at that time left people with no sense of humanity. It diminished empathy even for the innocent children who did not know anything about the dispute. The newspaper also mentioned that the child was among hundreds of beheaded corpses, claimed to be a macabre nod toward the Dayak's headhunting history.

The conflict stemmed from a dispute, at the end of 2000, between two ethnic groups in Kereng Pangi village, Katingan Regency, which is about two hours' drive from Sampit. After a battle broke out at an entertainment venue in the gold-mining village of Hampalit, and an ethnic

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<sup>281</sup> Rossiana Silalahi, 'Dan Kepala Bocah Pun Dipenggal', *Liputan 6* (Palangkaraya, 5 March 2001) <<https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/9010/dan-kepala-bocah-pun-dipenggal>>.

Dayak resident named Sendong was killed, tension between the two groups escalated very significantly.

A series of provocative news stories and rumors spread to the residents at this stage. For instance, there was a claim that the police would let the offenders walk free, which led to around 300 Dayak people attempting to carry out 'street judgment.' To locate a suspect, they would go to the crime scene. Unable to find the perpetrators, this group of people vented their rage by burning and damaging property belonging to the Madurese.

According to another incendiary news item, a perpetrator hid in Sampit, so the tension spread to the Sampit area. Not only that, other rumors were snowballing as well, such as rumors about the discovery in many Madurese homes of homemade explosives. Untung also stated that it appears that the Madurese orchestrated this riot to take Sampit for themselves. He was confident that a 'red book' that lists the Madurese's plans to politically control East Kotawaringin, such as putting the Madurese in East Kotawaringin in strategic positions, existed.<sup>282</sup> These kinds of rumors remind us of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forged book outlining a plan of Jewish domination, written by a Russian anti-Semite, that circulated widely and was used to justify violent attacks on Jews in Russia and beyond. These rumors led the Dayaks to believe from the outset that the Madurese had organized the riot, despite their being the victims. The efforts to expel the Madurese community from the Katingan region made them defensive. Gerry van Klinken argues that they felt insecure and needed to arm themselves, including making homemade bombs.<sup>283</sup> Later, discovery of the homemade bombs led to the rumors that cornered the Madurese even more.<sup>284</sup>

According to Gerry van Klinken, the number of victims was between 500 and 1300, predominantly Madurese. Between around 120,000 and 130,000 individuals from Madura remained in either refugee camps or their relatives' homes.<sup>285</sup> No data showed the number of victims of each group as it was sensitive data, especially in Indonesia. As the Madurese lost the fight, there were no Madurese remaining. The Dayak people only stopped burning the Madurese properties after the last one was down to the ground.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Personal Communication on 6 Aug 2018.

<sup>283</sup> Gerry van Klinken, p. 221.

<sup>284</sup> Abdul Rachman Patji, 'Tragedi Sampit 2001 Dan Imbasnya Ke Palangkaraya', *Masyarakat & Budaya*, 05.02 (2003), 14–34 <<https://jmb.lipi.go.id/index.php/jmb/article/download/249/227>>.

<sup>285</sup> Gerry Van. Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia : Small Town Wars*. (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2009), p. 25.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 57.



## Previous incidents between Dayak and Madurese

The clashes between the two ethnic groups of Dayak and Madurese in 2001 were not the first to occur in Kalimantan. Inter-racial struggles have historically existed on this island, including between Dayaks and ethnic Chinese in 1967. Furthermore, clashes between Dayak and Madurese have occurred in 1968, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, and 1997. Additionally, a clash also took place between Madurese against Malays and Dayaks in 1999.<sup>287</sup>

The New Order government cynically used inter-tribal sentiments to destroy the ethnic Chinese community in West Kalimantan, as it feared their possible affiliation with communism and support for guerrillas of the separatist faction PGRS (Sarawak Guerrilla Forces) that emerged following the collapse of the PKI coup in September 1965. After one of the Dayak elders was slain, provocateurs worked to instigate the Dayaks to take revenge against the Chinese. Consequently, Chinese ethnic groups were displaced by Dayak ethnic groups, leading to a death toll of 300 civilians. As many as 55,000 ethnic Chinese had to escape from West Kalimantan.<sup>288</sup>

In the following years, the riots were no longer between Dayak and Chinese ethnicities but between the Dayak and the Madurese, taking place up to fourteen times during the period 1968–2001. In 1983 there was a riot between Dayak and Madurese in Bukit Batu, East Kotawaringin. However, there was a peace deal between the two ethnic groups which stated that, in the case of a comparable conflict in the future, the Madurese would willingly leave Kalimantan. Riots between the two ethnic groups, which erupted fourteen times, persisted after the riot and reached their peak in 2001.<sup>289</sup>

A murder or rape associated with an ethnic group can also trigger ethnic tensions, and it is generally expected that any ethnic group will make an effort to take vengeance. For a long time, retaliations between Dayak and Madurese circled around and the relationship between them was prone to breaking. In dealing with confrontations, the New Order agenda had always used a military strategy to minimize conflict when it was not convenient for the government's

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<sup>287</sup> Faraz Sumaya, 'Identitas Dalam Konflik Di Kalimantan Barat (Sebuah Pemetaan Konflik)', *Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik*, 2.2 (2020), 86–92 <<http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/jkrk/article/download/28149/13923>>.

<sup>288</sup> Bina Bektiati; Edy Budiwarso; Darmawan Sepriyossa; L.N. Idayani; Tomi Lebang.

<sup>289</sup> Bina Bektiati; Edy Budiwarso; Darmawan Sepriyossa; L.N. Idayani; Tomi Lebang; Sumaya.

agenda, without addressing the source of the problem. Because of this, disputes were left unresolved; they were simply hidden and were left poised to break out again at any moment.

Moreover, in order to establish a national identity, the above circumstances were compounded by the New Order plan which took the form of imposing political and cultural uniformity. The New Order simplified political parties in terms of ideology into just three groups: nationalism and Christianity; Islam; and the government and military parties. However, in terms of history, foreign ethnicities, such as the ethnic Chinese, were not accepted and were banned in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in order to preserve national unity, cultural, racial, and religious disparities were not permitted to enter mainstream discourse. In other words, the government of the New Order minimized and suppressed the many variations in Indonesia.<sup>290</sup>

### Re-welcoming

The presence of the ethnic Madurese, who were refugees on the island of Madura because of the war in Sampit with the ethnic Dayak, also created new problems in the refugee camps. Most of them were ethnic Madurese who had lived for generations in Sampit, and had been born and raised there. For years, they had had no life in Madura and no family or property. They had always seen Sampit as their permanent hometown.

The above conditions meant that these refugees wanted to return to Sampit. They had nothing on Madura. All their property was in Sampit, where they had been forced to leave their homes and contents, rice fields, and plantations when the war broke out. Thus, they thought only of Sampit as a place to live and as their home; they did not think of any other site than Sampit. Furthermore, some people took the initiative and, on an individual basis, tried to return to Sampit secretly.

In the meantime, the Dayak community became more organized, forming a district-level assembly called *Musyawarah Masyarakat Kota Waringin Timur* (MMKWT, East Waringin City Assembly). They also established a body called *Kongres Rakyat Kalimantan Tengah* (KRKT, Central Kalimantan People's Congress) at the provincial level. As a result of the KRKT's congress on 4–7 June 2001, they released a declaration where they agreed to work on peace, which included trusting the government as a mediator and encouraging law enforcement to continue the investigation process, and preparing a repatriation and reconciliation plan.

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<sup>290</sup> Mahesa Danu, 'Orde Baru Dan Isu SARA', *Berdikari Online*, 2016 <<https://www.berdikarionline.com/orde-baru-dan-isu-sara/>> [accessed 10 January 2019].

The refugees reacted by holding a Grand Conference for Refugees for Victims of the Central Kalimantan Riots on 22 August 2001 to respond to the public declaration made by the KRKT. In essence, the congress agreed to establish peace and forgive each other as a precondition before moving on to other necessary processes. As they regarded it as their hometown, the refugees also shared a high interest in returning to Sampit.

The regional government of Central Kalimantan issued regional regulation No. 9 of 2001, concerning the treatment of population impacts of ethnic violence, after considering several items, including structured contact between the two community groups through the KRKT for the Dayak ethnic group and the Central Kalimantan Riot Survivor Refugee Assembly. These regional rules acted as guidelines for all stakeholders in carrying out the recovery, repatriation, and reconstruction procedures.

However, the issuance of this regional legislation was not necessary to induce stakeholders to carry out a repatriation program. Therefore, neighborhood leaders had to continue to take action to attempt to make the situation more favorable. For instance, the youth founded a community organization in the refugee camps called *Rampak Naong*, meaning ‘shady and peaceful like a tree,’ which implies a sense of comfort and nurturing, since people find peace under a large tree when the sunshine is too hot for them. The Madurese philosophy of life, which is to live happily under a shady tree, contains these terms. *Rampak Naong* benefited from the Center for Security and Peace Studies at the University of Gadjah Mada as one of the facilitators, involved in training peace skills to 100 volunteers, who were later projected to be agents of peace.

*Rampak Naong* classified the areas in East Kotawaringin into four categories, these being: ‘very secure,’ ‘safe,’ ‘fragile,’ and ‘very vulnerable.’ Then *Rampak Naong* made personal contact based on this identification with the village heads of the first and second category areas, in other words, the ‘very secure,’ and ‘safe’ areas. When the village head of the region delivered a positive response, the next task was to return the group of Madurese discretely and in small numbers. In the meantime, the team of volunteers carried out video documentation during this process, including interviewing village heads who provided security guarantees for the Madurese who wanted to return to the village. *Rampak Naong*, however, acknowledged that this mission was still hazardous. Nevertheless, this process continued between late 2002 and early 2003 because of the refugees’ deep willingness to return, carrying out this mission with confidence and great caution.

Furthermore, what prompted the refugees to return was that their neighbors in the village where they lived had no significant issues. In other words, many people, both Dayak and Madurese, did not know what was happening during those days, especially those who lived in small towns where they had lived in harmony. Following a newspaper report, this fact was found to be in accordance with the police commenting that the Dayaks' neighbors were the ones who had informed the police of the whereabouts of the Madurese hiding during the disturbances so that the officers could take them to a safer place, escorted by security guards.<sup>291</sup> So the neighbors gladly agreed when the village heads were asked for their testimony and readiness to welcome back the displaced Madurese.

In 2004, the district government of Kotawaringin Timur released a regional regulation No. 5, concerning the care of people impacted by ethnic violence. The legislation highlighted the terms and conditions for repatriating refugees who wished to return to Sampit and the procedure of how they could demand their property back. Furthermore, the refugees were told again of the Dayak people's concept of living in harmony: 'where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld,' which merely means that the local custom applies to anyone in the region (or 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'). The reminder was necessary in order to prepare the ground for future mutual understanding. Although many Madurese descendants blended culturally with the local community, especially those born and raised in East Kotawaringin, some of the Madurese descendants who came later could not mix with the local people.

## Transformation

The war between the two ethnic groups in Sampit has claimed hundreds of lives, but it has also transformed the social system and conditions in the region. According to John Paul Lederach, we can always find positive change arising from conflict as the nature of the conflict itself is a motor for change. The provocation orchestrated by the elite may have sparked the Dayak and Madurese people to attack and kill each other for a few days; however, people's resilience is much stronger than what happened in Sampit and several regions in Central Kalimantan. The desire for peace will find a way to settle both communities in the area, and the people will find a way to return to harmony with all their potential. The human desire to make peace is stronger, no matter how great the conflict was.

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<sup>291</sup> HFS, 'Tokoh Adat Dayak Menjamin Perdamaian Kalteng' (Jakarta, 1 March 2001) <<https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/8824/tokoh-adat-dayak-menjamin-perdamaian-kalteng>>.

Numerous initiatives armed with local wisdom sprang up to end the fighting, and the transformation of the conflict in Sampit was no exception. These initiatives have arisen from different social and community elements; most of them are regional or local. They are civil and governmental because of the decentralization that took place after the New Order regime collapsed in 1998, when local government structures were invested with elemental powers.

At the district and provincial level, the *Kongres Masyarakat Dayak* or Dayak Society Congress was formed. Furthermore, the *Dewan Adat Dayak* or Dayak Customary Council was established at all levels, starting from the village as the lowest level right up to the national as the highest level.<sup>292</sup> Meanwhile, the Madurese ethnic group established a communication forum called the *Forum Keluarga Korban Kerusuhan Kalimantan Tengah* (FK4, Forum for Riot Victims of Central Kalimantan). Furthermore, the local government carried out excellent synergies, starting with mediation and issuing regional regulations, which supported the outcomes of both the congress and assembly, for the Dayak and Madurese, respectively.

Conflict transformation in Sampit is divided into two groups, based on the author's research, namely: first, the revitalization of local wisdom in expressions or narratives of peace; and, second, the organization, activities, and monuments of peacebuilding. I will elaborate more on each category in several points.

### Strengthening local wisdom

Both Dayak and Madurese have a philosophy of life, which is in line with the spirit of peacebuilding. When the violent conflict happened in 2001, people used their resilience to attempt to end the breakout and return to peace, using all their potential, including revitalizing the local wisdom. In this regard, Dayak local wisdom has a longer history and a greater depth than that of the Madurese because the Dayak are local inhabitants. However, each local wisdom played a role and they were both significant contributing factors in making peace possible in the region after the devastation of the violent conflict.

### *Rumah betang philosophy*

Following the Central Kalimantan riots, the people there, including those in Sampit, restored the notion of *betang* house as one of life's shared philosophies. A *betang* house is a traditional dwelling, and home to the Dayak tribe who lived along the rivers of the Kapuas, Kahayan,

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<sup>292</sup> City of Kotim, *Dayak Culture Administration* (Kotim: Regent, 2012) <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/39884>>.

Barito, Mentaya, and Katingan. Among some people I interviewed in Sampit, most of them mentioned the *betang* house as one of the region's philosophies that helped to keep the peace.

*Betang* house is referred to as *huma betang* in the Dayak language, which means 'a vast house.' The notion of a *betang* home conveys the philosophical sense of living without prejudice of nationality, faith, or race in peaceful coexistence with others. This large house, like the idea of its purpose, can accommodate many family members even though they differ in religion and subtribes. Most Dayak people are Kaharingan, but many of them are also Muslim.

In 1894 one of the *betang* buildings was the location for a party of Dayak people to reach a peace agreement. The deal, in which 152 members of the Dayak ethnic subgroups participated, resulted in ending the war that had been taking place between them, and, at the same time, suppressing the Dayak ethnic habit of killing people for human heads as trophies. This historical house is still well-preserved even now, and is situated in Tumbang Anoi Village, Damang Batu District, Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan.<sup>293</sup>

The legendary agreement of Tumbang Anoi cited above has brought fame to the village and the *rumah betang* or house of *betang* that accommodated the delegation when the agreement was taking place. Therefore, people have associated the peace agreement with the house of *betang* and Tumbang Anoi as symbols of peace. Untung, the head of the Dayak Customary Council in Kotawaringin Timur, believed that the city of Kotawaringin Timur itself is like the house of *betang*, in that it can accommodate many people from many different backgrounds, as he states below:

*Dayak culture is the culture of the betang house. Betang house is a big house. Now the big house is inhabited by many people. Kotawaringin Timur Regency is a large betang house and is able to accommodate all the existing ethnic groups. In this city, the betang house is full of people. Here we have no more difference – all brothers. No more expression like, you are a Dayak, or you are a Batak, you are different from me, no more. The Dayaks have recognized that all ethnic groups who live in Kotim Regency are my family.*<sup>294</sup>

*Di mana bumi dipijak, disitu langit dijunjung*

*Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung*, loosely translates as 'where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld,' and is similar in meaning to the phrase, 'when in Rome, do as the

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<sup>293</sup> Noor ; Tatau Wijaya Garib Hamidah, 'Studi Arsitektur Rumah Betang Kalimantan Tengah', *Jurnal Arsitektur Melayu Dan Lingkungan*, 1.2 (2014) <<https://journal.unilak.ac.id/index.php/arsitektur/issue/view/154>>.

<sup>294</sup> Personal Communication with the Head of the Dayak Customary Council in Kotawaringin Timur on 3 August 2018.

Romans do.’ This principle of life suggests that everyone is bound to obey the norms that are prevalent where they live. The Dayaks have stated that this is their philosophy of life. In fact, the regional regulation of Kotawaringin Timur on the care aimed at the victims of ethnic conflict, No. 5 in 2004, mentioned this life philosophy.

This philosophy of life has gone through some revitalization in Sampit, East Kotawaringin, after the experience of ethnic strife. Everyone in Sampit quotes this philosophy. It undoubtedly applies universally because of the ideals found within it, but by making it a philosophy of life held by society, it indeed becomes a vital reminder for everyone. Many people quote this expression, including the Mayor of Palangkaraya, who used it in his speech during the event of *Menaser Tatuhiang* on 11 May 2017 at the house of *betang*. He stated that “*by upholding the philosophy of Huma Betang and applying the term ‘Where the Earth is Stepped on, the Sky is Upheld,’ the community and government can jointly maintain the existence of cultures in Central Kalimantan.*”<sup>295</sup>

### *Tumbang Anoi*

Kalimantan is predominantly a Dayak territory. In the past, they had a tradition of headhunting, which was commonly known as *mengayau*. Not every Dayak upheld this tradition, and Dayak ethnic subgroups had their various reasons to engage in headhunting. For instance, the Dayak Ngaju subgroup practiced the headhunting tradition for a ritual ceremony called *tiwah*. They believed that a corpse head would allow their ancestors to achieve the most significant level in the afterlife.

The practice of headhunting ended in 1894 with a peace treaty called Tumbang Anoi (named after the village where it took place), initiated by the Dayak Kahayan’s leader, named Damang Batu. He practiced local wisdom by holding a meeting which was attended by 152 members of Dayak subtribes. The meeting yielded fruitful outcomes, including termination of the headhunting tradition, the termination of slavery, and the restoration of customary law to all Dayak people.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> ‘Pertahankan Warisan Leluhur Falsafah Huma Betang’, *Pro Sampit* (Palangkaraya, 13 May 2017) <<https://sampit.prokal.co/read/news/9385-pertahankan-warisan-leluhur-falsafah-huma-betang>>.

<sup>296</sup> Agustinus Handoko and Bayu Dwi Radius, ‘Sumbu Perdamaian Tumbang Anoi’, 3 April 2011 <<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2011/04/03/19403349/sumbu.perdamaian.tumbang.anoi>>.



When the Dayak people wanted to return to peace, they used the history of Tumbang Anoi as the foundation of this peace initiative as it was written in the Dayak community's attitude declaration at the Central Kalimantan People's Congress III in 2001.

*As a community of 'betang' [long house] that is open and peace-loving and has stopped the violence following the noble values of the Tumbang Anoi Peace Meeting 107 years ago (1894) and obeying laws and customs within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia, the Central Kalimantan People's Congress III ...*<sup>297</sup>

In addition, Tumbang Anoi was also commemorated by holding an international seminar on peace. On 22–24 July 2019, an event with the theme 'Tracing Back the Tumbang Anoi Peace Agreement of the 1894 Expedition' was held at the Damang Batu Betang House Cultural Preservation, Tumbang Anoi Village, Damang Batu District, Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan Province.<sup>298</sup>

#### *Rampak naong, korong baringin*

*Rampak Naong* is the name used in the evacuation camp for a group of 100 volunteers of the FK4 communication forum.<sup>299</sup> In compliance with the philosophy and meaning behind this term, which is that of a calm, peaceful atmosphere such as is found under a shady banyan tree, FK4 intended these volunteers to become agents of peace. In other words, this life philosophy reflects the aspiration of the Madurese community to live side by side in peace and harmony.

*Indeed, noble values can potentially give strength in binding the spiritual brotherhood in an atmosphere of harmony and peace more intense in some symbolic expression describing Madurese character. The phrase "rampak naong, bringen korong" (full shade peace is like being under a banyan tree's shade) reflects noble values of harmony in the framework of Madurese local wisdom.*<sup>300</sup>

#### *Oreng deddi taretan, taretan deddi oreng*

*Oreng deddi taretan, taretan deddi oreng* implies that other individuals can be like one's own family, while one's own family can be like other individuals.<sup>301</sup> This philosophy is well known

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<sup>297</sup> Didi Susanto, 'Interaksi Perubahan Sosial Budaya Pasca Konflik Antarsuku' (Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2019), p. 246 <[http://lib.unnes.ac.id/35172/1/UPLOAD\\_DIDI\\_SUSANTO.pdf](http://lib.unnes.ac.id/35172/1/UPLOAD_DIDI_SUSANTO.pdf)>.

<sup>298</sup> Roberto Firmino, 'Internasional Tumbang Anoi 2019 Murni Swadaya Dayak', *Independensi* (Palangkaraya, 13 July 2019) <<https://independensi.com/2019/07/13/internasional-tumbang-anoi-2019-murni-swadaya-dayak/>>.

<sup>299</sup> Abdul; Mohammad Ilyas Wahid, *Berdamai Dengan Sejarah*, ed. by N. Huda Effendi, I (Yogyakarta: Alenia Press, 2004), p. xix.

<sup>300</sup> Mohammad Takdir, 'Portret Kerukunan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal', *Studi Islam Dan Humaniora*, 16.1 (2018), 73–102 (p. 77) <<https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v16i1.2057>>.

<sup>301</sup> Muniri Chodri, 'Esensi Sosial "Remoh"-Etnik Madura', *Al Hamidiyah*, 2016 <<http://alhamidiyah.ac.id/2016/05/16/Esensi-Sosial-Remoh-Etnik-Madura.html>> [accessed 1 January 2021].



in Madura and adopted as a guide for refugees in order to instill a kinship with the people of Sampit, particularly the Dayak ethnic group, who the Madurese consider to be their brothers because for generations they have lived in the same place.<sup>302</sup>

### Organization, activities, and monuments in peacebuilding

This second category of conflict transformation completes the peace efforts made by both Dayak and Madurese. The first category talked about the philosophical aspect of peacebuilding, and is, to some extent, limited to a particular group of people and conditions: the mayors, public figures, and society leaders who usually talk about such matters at public occasions, including the discussion of local bills. This second category, therefore, concerns the majority of people in the region, including those who were not involved directly in the first category of peacebuilding efforts. For example, in cultural activities, all inhabitants engage in the events indiscriminately.

#### *Mapas Lewu (Tolak Bala)*

*Mapas Lewu* or *Ma'mapas Lewu* is a Central Kalimantan festival which people have held every year since the violent war in 2001. *Mapas Lewu* had not existed before the war, according to Santo, a Dayak youth who is also the keeper of the Cultural Miniature House; now *Mapas Lewu* is conducted annually and they begin the ceremony at the Cultural Miniature Park.<sup>303</sup>

The event starts with *mampakan sahur*, or 'saying thanksgiving and eating together,' and a stroll through the city of Sampit. It finishes with a prayer and floating offerings in the river. Although the event is carried out in accordance with the religious practice of Hindu Kaharingan, this event is held by the local government and is attended without discrimination against faith, ethnicity, or race by all East Kotawaringin residents. Indirectly, irrespective of distinctions, this practice reinforces a sense of brotherhood between citizens.

*Mapas Lewu* itself means cleaning an area of the harmful effects of both humans and spirits. The Dayak people claim that people should immediately carry out this practice if there is a threat from nature, such as flooding, forest fires, or drought. The local government plans this operation to be performed regularly at the end of the year through the culture and tourism office. In addition, the office uses the event to promote the Dayak people's culture for visitors from outside the region.

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<sup>302</sup> Wahid, p. xix.

<sup>303</sup> Personal Communication on 31 July 2018.

### *Dewan Adat Dayak (DAD, Dayak Customary Council)*

During the New Order period, the government's centralistic model and military approach to conflict caused local wisdom practices to weaken and to appear to lose their potential. Earlier, there had been Dayak customary law in Kalimantan, for instance, which encouraged kinship and was inclusive. During the Suharto period, however, this system was not permitted to operate and the top-down structure and the military strategy left citizens unaccustomed to individually settling disputes. When the Suharto regime had to resign after the reformation took effect in 1998, the government's top-down model and military approach no longer existed. However, the local wisdom structures were not ready to resume effectively because they had not been practiced for such a long time. So, when war broke out, in the absence of both the military and the local wisdom, it was difficult to prevent it.

Local wisdom has begun to steadily reclaim its place after the events of 2001 and to regain its purpose. With organizational finance from the local government, even the Dayak Customary Council has become official.<sup>304</sup> The hierarchical framework begins from the lowest, village level, and reaches to the national level. The legal basis of the Dayak Customary Council is provincial regulation No. 16 of 2008 concerning Dayak customary institutions in Central Kalimantan, and amended by provincial regulation No. 1 of 2010 concerning modifications to Dayak *adat* institutions in Central Kalimantan. Meanwhile, at the district level, the Dayak Customary Council has authorization on the basis of regional regulation No. 6 of 2012 concerning Dayak customary institutions in East Kotawaringin.

As one of its duties, the Dayak Customary Council tackles disputes between people or parties using the customary courts and customary law. This customary law, officially implemented in East Kotawaringin as of 7 January 2015, quickly and efficiently settles disagreements between residents or groups in East Kotawaringin. It is fast because it prioritizes the essentials and efficient because whenever a fine applies, neither local government nor *Dewan Adat Dayak* (DAD, Dayak Customary Council) receive the money, as it goes to the victim only.

### *Cultural Miniature Park*

One of the positive results of the reversal of the ethnic conflict between the Dayak and Madurese ethnicities in 2001 is *Rumah Miniatur Budaya*, which translates as the Cultural Miniature Park. On 15 December 2003, two years after the bloody war took place, the local

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<sup>304</sup> Norjani, 'Hukum Adat Dayak Harus Dijalankan Proporsional', *Antara* (Sampit, 23 March 2015) <<https://kalteng.antaraneews.com/berita/239495/hukum-adat-dayak-harus-dijalankan-proporsional>>.

government constructed and inaugurated this place. The park is situated not far from the peace monument, and the two sites can be visited as a package for anybody who wants to see the history and collective memory of Sampit city.

As articulated by one of the initiators, Dewin Marang, the East Kotawaringin Hindu Kaharingan Religious Council chairman, the miniature cultural park is part of a post-conflict reconciliation initiative. “*The Kotawaringin Timur Cultural Miniature Park is for all, not only for the Dayak tribe. So this is our place and space to strengthen togetherness through social and cultural approaches,*”<sup>305</sup>

So far, there are traditional ethnic Dayak, Javanese and Balinese buildings in the park. Meanwhile, on this one-hectare piece of land, other tribal houses are also being built. Additionally, there is also an art stage that can be used every month for cultural performances, and at the end of the year for the annual *Mapas Lewu* event as well.

#### *The Peace Monument*

While Sampit is the city with the greatest number of ethnic Madurese in its population, the Dayak ethnic group is more numerous because the original inhabitants of the island of Borneo, in general, are the Dayak ethnic group. So, when war broke out in Sampit between the Madurese and Dayak ethnic groups, Dayak people came from both inside and outside the city to help in the fighting as a form of solidarity with the Dayaks of the town. Because of these numbers, the war that the Madurese ethnic group had initially seemed to be winning in the first week then reversed in the second week, and the Dayak people eventually won the fight. They erected a Dayak-specific carved ironwood monument as a symbol of victory in the center of General Sudirman Street.

The victory monument was later renamed as the Peace Monument after the peace process began. The vice president of the country, Hamzah Haz, came to the memorial’s inauguration on 5 June 2002. When the inauguration was taking place, local people already called the monument a “peace monument” or “a devastated monument.” Furthermore, people associated the monument with the Tumbang Anoi Agreement of 1894,<sup>306</sup> where the people of Dayak

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<sup>305</sup> Norjani, ‘Taman Miniatur Budaya Kotawaringin Timur Kurang Difungsikan’ (Sampit, 13 October 2016) <<https://kalteng.antaranews.com/berita/258137/taman-miniatur-budaya-kotawaringin-timur-kurang-difungsikan>>.

<sup>306</sup> Aji, ‘Wakil Presiden Hamzah Haz Akan Menghadiri Acara Peresmian Tugu Adat’, *Kompas* (Sampit, 5 June 2002), p. 20.

made peace among ethnic subgroups within the Dayak ethnic group. They found similarities between these two events: stopping the retaliation and starting to make peace.

The shift from victory to peace in the naming of the monument shows a significant transformation in symbolism. Although the Dayak community won the battle and compelled the Madurese to flee during the conflict, the sadness, sorrow, and difficulties experienced by these groups were shared. Both Dayak and Madurese lost their loved ones during the war. The Madurese had to live in refugee camps for months to save their lives, while the Dayak people faced severe economic difficulties that made it clear to many that winning the conflict was a pyrrhic victory which did not favor their interests: as most of the sellers were Madurese, the markets were paralyzed; the Dayak could not find anyone to help them on the farms; and the construction sector was heavily affected as most of the staff were Madurese.

In 2015 the local government constructed and inaugurated a city landmark embedded with the Peace Monument. When I visited the city, the original site of the monument – the carved ironwood – was hardly visible as it was already blanketed with the new construction. I think the structure has at least three meanings: first, to support the decision of renaming from ‘victory’ to ‘peace’ monument; second, to better-preserve the memorial with improved construction; and third, to create an icon or city landmark. People I interviewed usually knew it as ‘the Peace Monument,’ and when I type the word ‘Sampit’ into Google images, a picture of the Peace Monument comes up as one of the results.

## Conclusion

As the original inhabitants of this island, Kalimantan is the home of the Dayak tribe, but other tribes have come to this island over time. In Sampit, Kotawaringin Timur, Central Kalimantan, the Madurese are the largest group of immigrants. According to historical records, the migration of Madurese descendants in large numbers occurred due to orders from the authorities or the government, for example, during the Kotawaringin kingdom (1830), the Netherlands colonial period (1901), and during the New Order government (1969–94). Apart from the great migrations, people of Madurese descent naturally came to join the families that had already settled in Kalimantan.

These waves of Madurese migrants have gradually assimilated into the local culture because they have been coming for hundreds of years, and some have intermarried with Dayak ethnic individuals. These early arrivers do not differ dramatically from the general local population, are fluent in the Dayak and Banjar languages, and participate in the local culture.

However, as newcomers from Madura started to arrive, this peaceful coexistence began to be disrupted. Simultaneously, the New Order prohibited the expression of differences concerning nationality, faith, race, and between classes. Hence, due to cultural differences, misunderstandings between these two groups easily occurred. Meanwhile, there was little motivation for the economically successful Madurese to adapt to and understand the native inhabitants. Misunderstandings happened toward people of Madurese descent, who had arrived recently, and had not succeeded in assimilation. To add to this situation, using a military strategy, the government had always minimized these tribal conflicts. Therefore, rivalries between them were never entirely resolved but instead ended by them simply not attacking one another. However, the quarrel between them was only buried and had not been completely resolved.

Therefore, everything that had happened between these two tribes had never been fully settled. The New Order approach always suppressed it. As a result, it would instead explode at any time, like a time bomb. Finally, the culmination arrived in February 2001 through the accumulation of past conflicts. And, sadly, because of the New Order strategy, which still followed the military and centralistic approach, the civil society system was not ready to confront all of this because it had not been active in conflict management and resolution for a long time. Moreover, elite groups that took advantage of the situation for their own ends exacerbated the situation.

However, the human desire for peace is still more robust than the propensity for conflict, no matter the conflict's scale. So, these two groups are trying to return, with their local wisdom, to knitting together a harmonious coexistence. This conflict altered the Dayak and Madurese culture in several positive ways. I have analyzed them following the theory explored in the writing of this study, namely 'conflict transformation,' as conceived of by John Paul Lederach. In the transformation of this conflict, I noticed two essential features: first is the revitalization of local wisdom in which both Madurese and Dayak individuals again promote the noble ideals that once existed in their respective community groups concerning peace; second, both Dayak and Madurese inhabitants manifested the values of peace into organizations, activities, and monuments in the pursuit of peacebuilding.

## CHAPTER IV: THE PORCH OF MECCA

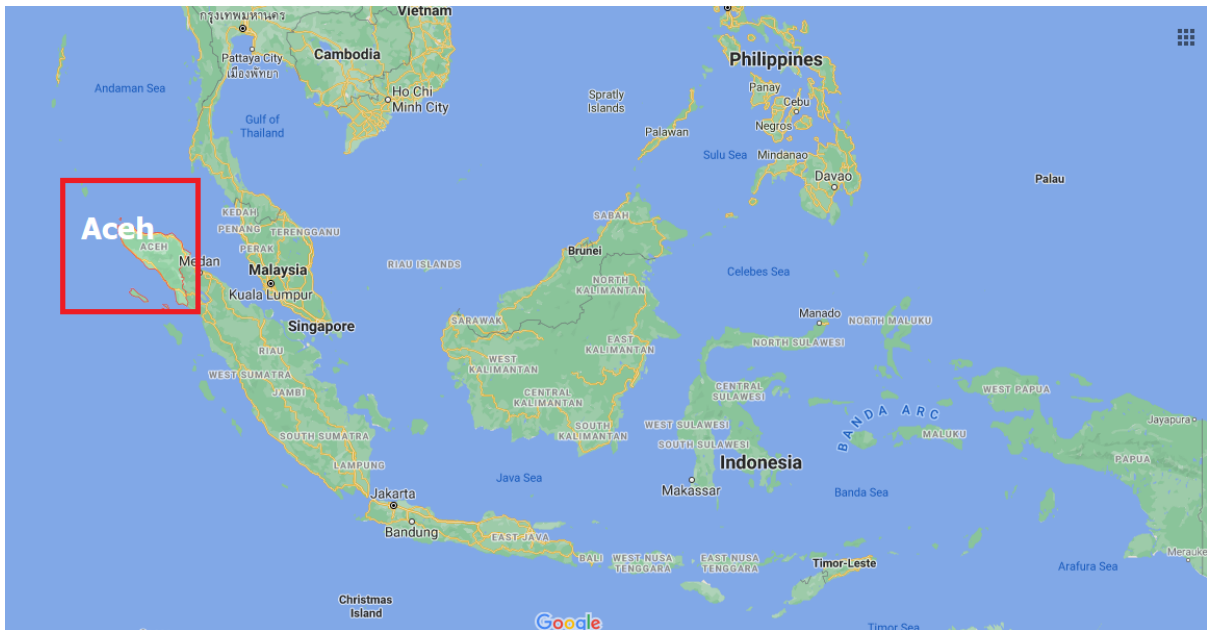


Figure 12 Map of Aceh

### Aceh at a glance

Aceh is situated in the furthest west point of Indonesia, and its city is featured in a national hymn ‘From Sabang to Merauke.’ It seems that the composer, R. Suharjo, intended to remind his fellow countrymen that Indonesia stretches gloriously from one end of the archipelago to the other: Sabang in Aceh is in the furthest west, and Merauke in Papua is in the furthest east. As a child from Java island, which is located 2,300 kilometers away from Aceh, the only information I knew about Aceh was learned from this song:

From Sabang (in Aceh) to Merauke (in Papua)<sup>307</sup>

Song by R. Suharjo:

*From Sabang to Merauke*

*Lining the islands*

*Connects one to another*

*That’s Indonesia*

*My homeland Indonesia*

*I promise to you*

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<sup>307</sup> Felisitas Dhvani Wihangga and Biru Cahya Imanda, ‘Lirik Dan Chord Lagu Wajib, Dari Sabang Sampai Merauke - R. Suharjo Artikel Ini Telah Tayang Di Kompas.Com Dengan Judul “Lirik Dan Chord Lagu Wajib, Dari Sabang Sampai Merauke - R. Suharjo”’, *Kompas* (Jakarta, 25 September 2020) <[www.kompas.com/hype/read/2020/09/25/110000866/lirik-dan-chord-lagu-wajib-dari-sabang-sampai-merauke-r.-suharjo](http://www.kompas.com/hype/read/2020/09/25/110000866/lirik-dan-chord-lagu-wajib-dari-sabang-sampai-merauke-r.-suharjo)>.

*Upholding my homeland*

*My homeland Indonesia*

When I was born, in 1986, Aceh was still engulfed in the violent conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Republic of Indonesia, which started in 1976. Four years after I was born, Aceh had become an intense war zone under the status of Military Operation Area (DOM). During those years, the area was isolated from the outside, both nationally and internationally. I never had a chance to learn about why Aceh wanted to be independent, as far as I can remember. Other than the song above, I only knew about national heroes from Aceh, such as Cut Nyak Dhien and Cut Nyak Meutia. I only came to know about the collective narratives of Aceh's people and their wish to be independent after I set foot in Aceh and conducted interviews with several figures who were related to the Aceh conflict, and with scholars who had carried out research on the Aceh conflict.

Aceh province has a nickname, 'the porch of Mecca.' There is undoubtedly a reason for this: most probably, it has something to do with the importance of Islam in this province. Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch scholar who was also an Islamic studies expert, believed that Islam was first brought to Aceh by Muslim traders from Gujarat, India, centuries before modern Indonesia even came into existence. Historians discovered Sultan Malik Al Saleh's tomb, and it is believed that he died in Pasai, Aceh, in 1297. Therefore, there is evidence that Aceh was an influential Islamic sultanate in Southeast Asia and the center of Islamic learning in the region. Furthermore, Acehese Islamic scholars were predominant in assisting the spread of Islam in Indonesia. Of nine prominent scholars – *Wali Songo* (the Nine Guardians) – four were from Aceh (Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Sunan Ampel, Siti Jenar, and Syarif Hidayatullah). Hence, Aceh customary law, as a result, is infused with Islamic law.<sup>308</sup>

Considered to be the first region in Indonesia that received Islam, Aceh developed an Islamic culture and insisted on applying Islamic law. Although the application of Islamic law is relatively different from one interpretation to another, Aceh wanted to codify one arrangement as law among the Aceh people. For example, some Islamic scholars argue that wearing a hijab is obligatory for all women, while other scholars believe that wearing proper clothes is sufficient for Muslim women. Outside Aceh this difference in opinion among experts in Islamic law would be just a difference. The government does not codify it as an official law that is binding for the (Muslim) population. In Aceh, however, the demand was to codify a single

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<sup>308</sup> 'Q&A: What You Need to Know about Sharia in Aceh', *The Jakarta Post*, 4 March 2018  
<<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/03/04/qa-what-you-need-to-know-about-acehs-sharia-law.html>>.

interpretation (the stricter one) as local law, which would apply only to Muslims, and not to non-Muslims.

In the Aceh people's collective memory, President Soekarno promised to honor this demand as the return of a favor: that favor being Aceh's support in defending the country from the military aggression of the Dutch after 1945. Under Daud Bereueh, Aceh gave their all to support Indonesia's independence from the reoccupation attempt by the Dutch. With physical support given to defend Indonesia's sovereignty, and financial aid, Aceh helped to purchase Indonesia's first aircraft to enable Soekarno's diplomacy abroad. However, the people of Aceh believed that Soekarno betrayed them, as such codification of Islamic law did not take place after independence was achieved, nor was Aceh given enough importance within the overall power distribution in the new country. Even though Aceh is the 'capital region' (in Soekarno's words), Soekarno downgraded Aceh's status to become a regency under the province of North Sumatra in 1950, according to decree No.5.<sup>309</sup>

Aceh once became the capital city of Indonesia during an emergency when the Dutch captured Jakarta and Yogyakarta in 1948. Previously also, the capital city of Indonesia moved to Yogyakarta on 4 January 1946 as the Dutch military occupied Jakarta. Subsequently, Syafrudin Prawiranegara, the head of the emergency government of the Republic of Indonesia, moved the capital again to Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra, and finally moved it to Kutaraja (now Banda Aceh, the capital) in Aceh.<sup>310</sup> Jusuf Kalla, the vice president of Indonesia (2004–09 and 2014–19), once issued a testimonial on this subject:

*The independence of the Republic of Indonesia is the result of the struggle of the entire Indonesian nation. Aceh has an important role in the history of the Indonesian struggle. For a week, Bireun was the place to control the Republic of Indonesia, which at that time was in a state of emergency.*<sup>311</sup>

Therefore, in the collective memory of the people of Aceh, the government kept breaking the promise made to them. Later, the narrative simplified to become the notion that Aceh is seeking justice: the justice of receiving proportional treatment as the capital region, which was openly demanded in 1953. In 1976, they declared the righteousness of having proportional profit-sharing as a region rich with natural resources. From that time, the struggle continued for more

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<sup>309</sup> 'Sejarah Provinsi Aceh', *Aceh Official Website* <<https://acehprov.go.id/halaman/sejarah-provinsi-aceh>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

<sup>310</sup> 'Dosa Aceh', *Tempo*, July 1990 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/kolom/16860/dosa-aceh>>.

<sup>311</sup> Rizky Kusumo, 'Aceh Pernah Menjadi Ibu Kota Indonesia', *Goodnews From Indonesia*, 8 August 2020 <<https://www.goodnewsfromindonesia.id/2020/08/08/aceh-pernah-menjadi-ibu-kota-indonesia>>.



than three decades, the founder and several supporters of this initiative even fleeing to live in exile in Stockholm, Sweden.

Listening to their collective memories for the first time in my life, even though I have lived in Indonesia for 34 years (as of this year, 2021), I began to understand why the people of Aceh have kept fighting against the Republic of Indonesia. I understand why many of the people of Aceh joined groups to raise weapons against Indonesia; I understand the narratives I had never heard while living in Java. I can now comprehend why one of the prominent figures in Aceh, Tengku Idi, once made the following statement: “*If the Republic of Indonesia and GAM (Free Aceh Movement) fails to meet and negotiate, then the only way to destroy GAM is to kill all Aceh people.*”<sup>312</sup>

I can also understand why Nisah, an Aceh woman born in the same year as me, 1986, joined GAM at the age of fifteen, and her parents supported her decision. Her father, Rusli, had helped his father to fight in the first chapter of the conflict, in 1953. I think his experience in the field influenced and convinced him in his decision to support his daughter.<sup>313</sup> Her father fought against the Republic of Indonesia under Daud Beureueh’s command over the struggle for autonomy and the application of Islamic law in the region. Nisah herself fought against the Republic of Indonesia in the second chapter of the conflict, under the command of Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro, along with other GAM members, over the struggle for fair economic distribution. In order to give further detail about each violent conflict, the following sub-chapters will elaborate more.

### Three chapters of conflict

The conflict between Aceh and Indonesia’s central government arguably consists of three chapters. The first chapter was in 1953, when Tengku Muhammad Daud Beureueh, a religious and local leader, proclaimed his support for establishing the Islamic State of Indonesia along with West Java, South Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi, a movement coordinated by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo. Daud Beureueh was disappointed with President Soekarno’s decision not to grant Aceh autonomy in the implementation of sharia law. The

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<sup>312</sup> Farid Husain, *To See the Unseen : Kisah Di Balik Damai Di Aceh*, ed. by Salim Shahab journalist and E E (Eben Ezer) Siadari (Jakarta: Health & Hospital, 2007), p. 86.

<sup>313</sup> Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, ‘Inong Balee Mencari Keadilan: Khairunisak Rusli Di Antara Perjuangan Politik Dan Perjuangan Perempuan’, in *Keluar Dari Ekstremisme: Delapan Kisah ‘Hijrah’ Dari Kekerasan Menuju Binadamai*, ed. by Ihsan Ali-Fauzi; Dyah Ayu Kartika (Jakarta: PUSAD Universitas Paramadina, 2018), pp. 103–28 (p. 114) <<https://www.paramadina-pusad.or.id/buku/keluar-dari-ekstremisme/>>.

Acehnese people fully supported Beureueh's decision because they thought that Soekarno had broken his promises.

The story began when the Netherlands attempted to reoccupy Indonesia with its military power after Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945. Soekarno needed to travel overseas in order to garner support from other countries. Soekarno came to Aceh and asked for financial support to purchase an aircraft in which to be able to travel overseas. The Acehnese believe that Soekarno even called Daud Beureueh brother, when he sought help. In return, Soekarno promised him that he would grant the Acehnese their wishes, implementing Islamic law for Aceh. Daud Beureueh agreed to help with the issue of the aircraft. Soekarno thanked him and named Aceh a 'Capital Region.'

*Daud Beureueh agreed to Soekarno's request to fight to defend Indonesia by fighting against the Dutch as long as the war was declared a jihad war. "So if any of us are killed in the war, then we are martyrs," said Daud Beureueh.*

*Sukarno agreed.*

*Then Daud Beureueh also made a second request. (He asked) when the war was over, the people of Aceh were given the freedom to practice Islamic law. This request was also granted by Sukarno. "You don't have to worry about that, Brother (Sukarno's nickname to Daud Beureueh), because 90 percent of the Indonesian people are Muslim," Soekarno said.*

*"But I'm sorry, Brother president if I have to say that it is not a guarantee for us. We want the word of provision from the president," said Daud Beureueh.*

*"Well then, I agree to Big Brother's request."*

*"Alhamdulillah (Praise to God). On behalf of the people of Aceh, I thank you very much for the kindness of the president. We beg you, may the president write a little on this paper," said Daud Beureueh as he handed Soekarno a piece of paper.*

*Instead of welcoming the paper, Sukarno sobbed and then said quietly: "Brother, then there's no point in me being president if you don't trust me."*

*"It's not that we don't believe in the president. But it's just a sign that we will show the Acehnese people we will fight with," said Daud Beureueh.*

*While wiping his tears, Soekarno said: "Wallah, Billah, the people of Aceh will later be given the right to arrange their own household according to Islamic law. And Wallah, I will use my influence so that the Acehnese people can actually implement Islamic law in their area. Well, is Big Brother still hesitating too?"*

*“I have no doubts, Brother president. Once again, on behalf of the people of Aceh, I thank you very much for the kindness of the president,” said Daud Beureuh.<sup>314</sup>*

The prevailing mood among the Acehnese people at that time was in favor of the struggle, and they took pride in contributing to it. The aircraft’s registration plate was akin to a presidential state car – RI 001 – and this plane was the embryo of what would later become the national airline, Garuda Indonesia. Soekarno built the people’s expectations even higher when he named the aircraft *Seulawah*, a word is the name of the mountain in Aceh He named it so because the greatest part of the donation from Aceh had come from personal jewelry and gold dentures, and it made like a mountain. Furthermore, Fajran Zain argued that the aircraft was a small contribution compared to the total support of the Acehnese people in defending the country against the Dutch on the battlefield after the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945.

*The aircraft is very small. The aircraft donation, when we talk about the capital area, what (we) contribute is spirit capital, not an aircraft capital. So far, people’s interpretations, when talking about the capital area, are because Aceh has donated planes. No, it’s very small. Two planes, three planes were donated at that time, and the money to buy the aircraft was used up for the operational costs of the state. Imagine this, (the Indonesian government) was paid, the employees were paid with the money of the Acehnese when the country collapsed.<sup>315</sup>*

Tensions arising from this event were high among the Acehnese people and culminated in separating from Indonesia. The people of Aceh knew that during the kingdom era Aceh had been one of the stronger kingdoms in the archipelago and a member of the Ottoman Empire alliance. Therefore, they could have established their own country when the Dutch tried to recapture Indonesia after its independence declaration in 1945.<sup>316</sup> The Dutch offered this opportunity, but Aceh turned down the proposal.<sup>317</sup> Instead, they chose to fight along with other local political units, defending the independence and establishment of the Republic of Indonesia. The conflict between Daud Beureueh and Soekarno subsided and ended in 1963, when the law on autonomy for Aceh was issued.

Deputy prime minister Hardi opened the dialogue and managed to get an agreement. In 1959, the government issued the prime minister’s decree No. 1/MISSI/1959 to grant a new status to

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<sup>314</sup> Ibrahimy.

<sup>315</sup> Personal Communication with Fajran Zain on 13 August 2018. He is director of Aceh Institute, the commissioner of Komisi Kebenaran dan Rekonsiliasi Aceh (KKR Aceh or Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Aceh), and a lecturer in the Social and Political Faculty of Islamic State University Ar-Raniry, Aceh.

<sup>316</sup> ‘Dosa Aceh’.

<sup>317</sup> Personal Communication with Fajran Zain on 13 August 2018.

Aceh, naming it the ‘Special Region of Aceh.’ In 1961, the local government issued the first Islamic law, Law No.1, to limit alcoholic beverage sales during the Muslim fasting month (Ramadhan). Two years later, the local government issued another regulation on Islamic law, concerning Islamic missionaries in Aceh, Law No. 1, of the year 1963.<sup>318</sup> The latest law could not function until the central government issued a new law on Aceh’s autonomy, specified over three sectors: religion, education, and local government, in Law No.18 of the year 1965.

In 1976, the second chapter of the conflict began. Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro, who was the ‘self-appointed’ foreign minister of the Islamic State of Indonesia under Daud Beureueh’s leadership, declared war against the Republic of Indonesia with the formation of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The action was centered around the argument that the government was very centralized, resulting in injustice for the people of Aceh. Triggered by a narrative that Aceh was very rich in natural resources, yet the people did not profit from them, tensions started to build from this point. Another description that was popularly spread among the Acehnese was that the government had established a wealthy oil company in Aceh, yet the central government decided to employ people from the center instead of recruiting local people. Indonesia generated 40 percent of the world’s liquefied natural gas (LNG), making Indonesia the largest LNG exporter in the 1990s.<sup>319</sup> However, Hamid Awaludin stated that Aceh obtained only 1 percent from the central government, out of 31 trillion rupiah per year, as Aceh received only 150 billion rupiah per year in its local government budget plan (APBD).<sup>320</sup> According to the data in 1997, the national allocation for Aceh was 102 billion rupiah, or only about 0.05 percent compared to the natural resources Aceh had at that time. In total, Aceh’s contribution was equal to 11 percent of the national income at that time.<sup>321</sup>

After Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro – alias Hasan Tiro – declared the formation of GAM, on 4 December 1976, this group began leading armed attacks that temporarily halted oil-mill operations. The news spread quickly to the capital Jakarta as a result of the death of an engineer from the US, with another person being seriously injured. After this incident, GAM continued

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<sup>318</sup> Taufik Adnan Amal and Samsu Rizal Panggabean, *Politik Syariat Islam : Dari Indonesia Hingga Nigeria*, ed. by Syamsu Rizal Panggabean (Jakarta: Pustaka Alvabet, 2004), p. 23.

<sup>319</sup> Budy P Resosudarmo, *The Politics and Economics of Indonesia’s Natural Resources* (Resources for the Future Washington, D.C, 2006), p. 33.

<sup>320</sup> Hamid Awaludin, *Damai Di Aceh : Catatan Perdamaian RI-GAM Di Helsinki* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), p. 20.

<sup>321</sup> Zainal Setiyardi; Ismail, Mustafa; Bakri, ‘Tragedi Lhokseumawe, Dan Referendum’, *Tempo*, 1999 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/93250/tragedi-lhokseumawe-dan-referendum>>.

to fight against Indonesia using guerrilla actions under the command of Hasan Tiro.<sup>322</sup> The number of troops deployed by GAM at the start of its existence was relatively small. Despite widespread dissatisfaction in Aceh and apparent sympathy for GAM's goals, active mass participation was not encouraged. According to his admission, only 70 persons joined Hasan Tiro. They were mainly from the Pidie district, particularly from Tiro's home village, whose residents lashed out, driven by personal devotion to the Tiro family or dissatisfaction with the central authority. Hasan Tiro became a first-class target for government security personnel as a result, and was labeled as a rebel who threatened Indonesia's security. Hasan Tiro was a guerilla for three years, leading his soldiers through the jungles of Aceh. He left Aceh on 28 March 1979, via a small harbor on the coast of Jeunieb, Bireuen. Eventually, Hasan Tiro settled in Alby, Norsborg, Sweden, after returning to the US. From that time, and for the following decades, he led the rebellion from his base in Sweden.<sup>323</sup>

During this chapter of the struggle, the Acehnese were battling not against Soekarno, but against Suharto, as he took power in 1966. As Suharto had a military background, he responded to the conflict with a heavily militarized approach. In 1989, Suharto declared the status of *Daerah Operasi Militer* (DOM or Military Operation Area) was to be imposed on Aceh. One year later, he even increased the number of military personnel from 6,000 to 12,000 Indonesian soldiers in the field. Suharto did not hesitate to depose the head of the Aceh regional police, who had suggested security and public order operations instead of the DOM.<sup>324</sup> As a result, violence occurred daily in Aceh due to military operation activities. In Bireuen, 218 kilometers away from Banda Aceh – the capital city of Aceh – even the children knew how to distinguish the sound of weapons from the other sounds around them.<sup>325</sup> Later, the next president, B.J. Habibie, terminated the DOM after the Suharto regime fell on 21 May 1998. Thus, there was a total duration of nine years of heavy daily violence in the Aceh region.

Case	Number of victims
Killing without trial	1,321 people
Enforced disappearance	1,958 people

<sup>322</sup> Akhmad Muawal Hasan, 'GAM Lahir Demi Kedaulatan Atas Kekayaan Alam Aceh', *Tirto*, 4 December 2017 <<https://tirto.id/gam-lahir-demi-kedaulatan-atas-kekayaan-alam-aceh-cAMC>>.

<sup>323</sup> Adi Warsidi, '43 Tahun Lalu, Kisah Tgk Hasan Tiro Deklarasikan Aceh Merdeka', *Kumparan*, December 2019 <<https://kumparan.com/acehkini/43-tahun-lalu-kisah-tgk-hasan-tiro-deklarasikan-aceh-merdeka-1sNREgmLpfO/full>>.

<sup>324</sup> Adi Warsidi and Nadila Eldia R, 'Nasib Aceh Di Tangan Tujuh Presiden: Perang Dan Damai, Lalu Apa?', *Kumparan*, 19 October 2019 <<https://kumparan.com/acehkini/nasib-aceh-di-tangan-tujuh-presiden-perang-dan-damai-lalu-apa-1s5JNFdkFQO>>.

<sup>325</sup> Awaludin, p. 19.

Rape	128 women
Burned house	597 houses

Figure 13 Human rights violations during the Military Operation Area (DOM), 1989–98<sup>326</sup>

The longstanding communal violence became more intense during the transition to democracy in 1999,<sup>327</sup> and it became the third chapter of the conflict. The calls for independence in Aceh peaked when Timor Leste carried out a referendum in 1999. Timor Leste became independent from Indonesia as a result of the referendum (an ‘opinion poll,’ in President Habibie’s words) and crucial international support. In this post-Suharto era and the beginning of liberal democracy, GAM strengthened its movement, resulting in numerous clashes, with the violence intensifying on several occasions. Although the military operation was over in 1998, the area remained plagued with military activities such as the *Sadar Wibawa* or ‘Dignity Awareness’ operation (1999), *Cinta Meunasah* or ‘Loving Islamic Centre’ operation (2001–02), and the Security Recovery Operation (2002).<sup>328</sup> All the above military activities were scarcely different in character from the DOM. The intention was clear: the government would maintain their military approach toward the conflict in Aceh.

Several human tragedies occurred during the above-mentioned military operation. One of the tragedies was the *Idi Cut* tragedy (in East Aceh) on 3 February 1999. People also referred to it as the Arakundo tragedy, because it happened on the Arakundo Bridge. The event resulted in seven civilian deaths, and hundreds were wounded. The military launched fire indiscriminately toward the civilians on the bridge in retaliation for a member of the military having been murdered by unknown persons.<sup>329</sup> On 23 July 1999, another human tragedy happened in Aceh, in Beutong Ateuh district. In this incident, Tengku Bantaqiah and his students at the Islamic boarding school died because of indiscriminate shots from the military. There were 57 dead bodies found on the site and 37 corpses found on the cliff outside the venue. Babul Mukarramah, the name of the Islamic boarding school, witnessed the brutal tragedy in Blang

<sup>326</sup> Daniel Hutagalung, ‘Memahami Aceh Dalam Konteks: Kajian Atas Situasi Darurat Militer Di Aceh 2003-2004’, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>327</sup> Maria Ressa, ‘Voice of Independence in Indonesia’s Aceh Grows Louder’, *CNN* (Jakarta, 15 November 1999) <<http://edition.cnn.com/ASIANOW/southeast/9911/14/indonesia.aceh/>>.

<sup>328</sup> Presidential Instruction No. 4 and 7 of 2001 and Presidential Instruction No. 1 Year 2002. Yuswardi A. Suud, ‘Mahasiswa Aceh Tolak Operasi Militer’, *Tempo* (Banda Aceh, 18 September 2003) <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/17215/mahasiswa-aceh-tolak-operasi-militer>>.

<sup>329</sup> Adi Warsidi, ‘Kisah Tragedi Idi Cut, Aceh: Mereka Yang Mengingat Pembantaian’, *Kumparan*, February 2020 <<https://kumparan.com/acehkini/kisah-tragedi-idi-cut-aceh-mereka-yang-mengingat-pembantaian-3-1soMipjGyo7>>.

Meurandeh village.<sup>330</sup> The ‘Simpang KKA tragedy’ adds to the long list of human disasters in Aceh post-Suharto. It happened at the intersection next to the Kertas Kraft Aceh (KKA) company; the name of the event derives from the name of the location (*simpang* means ‘crossing’). A local newspaper called *Harian Serambi* published a story the next day – Tuesday, 4 May 1999 – entitled *Lhokseumawe Banjir Darah, Puluhan Tewas Ditembakor* which translates as ‘Lhokseumawe Floods with Blood, Dozens Shot and Killed.’<sup>331</sup> The event resulted in the deaths of 23 people, and 30 others being wounded.<sup>332</sup> One final tragedy that comes to the surface when talking about the violence in post-Suharto Aceh is the ‘KNPI building tragedy.’ The KNPI (which stands for *Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia* or Indonesian Youth National Committee), had a building in Lhokseumawe that became the location for the torture of 39 prisoners, who were suspected to be members of GAM, by the military. KNPI was located next to the Lilawangsa military resort command headquarters, so it was convenient for the military to keep the prisoners in the KNPI building. Two prisoners died on the site during the incident, two others died the next day, and 21 prisoners were found seriously injured, mostly in a coma.<sup>333</sup>

Case	Number of victims
Killing without trial	2,508 people
Enforced disappearance	533 people
Torture	2,946 people
Arbitrary arrest	1,600

Figure 14 Human rights violations from January 1999 to September 1999<sup>334</sup>

### During the transition to liberal democracy

After Suharto stepped down from power in May 1998, many aspects of the way government was implemented changed, including in Aceh and East Timor (now Timor Leste). Enaction of the Military Operation Area (DOM) in Aceh was stopped as a result of intensive protests by

<sup>330</sup> Siti Aisyah, ‘21 Tahun Seusai Tragedi HAM Di Beutong Ateuh, Trauma Belum Lekang Di Benak Warga’, *Kumparan*, January 2021 <<https://kumparan.com/acehkini/21-tahun-seusai-tragedi-ham-di-beutong-ateuh-trauma-belum-lekang-di-benak-warga-1v2Vb4Ygtke/full>>.

<sup>331</sup> Mursal Ismail, ‘Mengenang 21 Tahun Tragedi Simpang KKA, Begini Kronologis Versi Catatan Serambi Hingga Rekaman Video’, *Serambi News* (Banda Aceh, 3 May 2020) <<https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2020/05/03/mengenang-21-tahun-tragedi-simpang-kka-begini-kronologis-versi-catatan-serambi-hingga-rekaman-video>>.

<sup>332</sup> Yati Andriyani, ‘2 Dekade Tragedi Simpang KKA: Kapan Negara Hadir Untuk Korban?’, *KontraS*, 2019 <<https://kontras.org/2019/05/04/2-dekade-tragedi-simpang-kka-kapan-negara-hadir-untuk-korban/>> [accessed 15 July 2021].

<sup>333</sup> Setiyardi; Ismail, Mustafa; Bakri.

<sup>334</sup> Hutagalung, p. 9.

human rights activists. However, several military operations replaced the DOM in the field during this time. As a result, the number of victims on both sides remained relatively high.

Habibie, as Suharto's successor, felt international pressure regarding East Timor's demand for self-determination:

*Three national problems or issues can disrupt political and economic stability and hinder the implementation of reforms. These problems are: 1) The status of East Timor (Timtim) as a province is still being questioned by the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC); 2) The struggle for the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to release the Special Region of Aceh from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia did not receive UN support, because it violated the constitution and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, except for the East Timor area, which the United Nations recognized; 3) The struggle of the Irian Jaya separatist group to release Irian Jaya Province from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, did not receive UN support because it violated the constitution.*<sup>335</sup>

When finally East Timor managed to separate from Indonesia through the referendum, Aceh became the center of attention. GAM and many people of Aceh became optimistic that they could follow East Timor's path. On the contrary, however, the Indonesian government tightened its grip on Aceh even more, determined not to lose another part of Indonesia.

Students in Aceh gathered and established the *Sentral Informasi Rakyat Aceh* (SIRA, Information Center of Aceh People) to organize the struggle for a referendum, inspired by a similar case that happened in Timor Leste. SIRA mobilized the public to hold a huge demonstration in Baiturrahman Mosque, Banda Aceh on 8 November 1999 to demand a referendum. Muhammad Nazar, who became the deputy governor with Irwandi Yusuf in 2007, was the SIRA head. He then conducted the *Sidang Umum Masyarakat Perjuangan Referendum* (SU MPR, General Assembly of the People's Struggle for a Referendum). SU MPR was also the abbreviation for *Sidang Umum Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or General Assembly of the People's Consultative Assembly. On the next day, 9 November 1999, the local newspaper published an article entitled, '*Dua Juta Umat Gelorakan Referendum*,' or 'Two Million People Celebrate Referendum.'<sup>336</sup>

Originally, the referendum idea came not from GAM, but from SIRA. Muhammad Nazar, a faculty member of the Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Banda Aceh, stated that SIRA had

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<sup>335</sup> Habibie, p. 134.

<sup>336</sup> Taufik Al Mubarak, '8 November 1999, Referendum Dan Hikayat Prang Sabi', *Kumparan*, 8 November 2020 <<https://kumparan.com/acehkini/8-november-1999-referendum-dan-hikayat-prang-sabi-1uY3RQoSd7L/full>>.



no affiliation with GAM. He added that the people of Aceh should not use weapons to fight for themselves but instead use civilized mechanisms, such as a referendum. However, elite groups in Aceh, including GAM top leaders such as Hasan Tiro (the founder) and Abdullah Syafi'i (the highest commander), supported the idea of a referendum.

Besides the demonstration demanding a referendum that took place in Baiturrahman Mosque in Banda Aceh, which was the largest, other demonstrations demanding a referendum took place in several cities in Aceh, such as East Aceh, North Aceh, Aceh, Aceh Jeumpa, Aceh Besar, South Aceh, Aceh Barat, and Pidie. Other than these, demonstrations also took place outside Aceh. Many people, predominantly Aceh people who lived outside Aceh, gathered in front of the parliament building in Jakarta on 25 November 1999. If we count the total number of demonstrators, both in Aceh and Jakarta, it totaled around 3,000.<sup>337</sup>

In response to the action, President Abdurrahman Wahid, known as Gus Dur, agreed to conduct a referendum (during his term of office), but the parliament did not support this decision. Gus Dur was trying to be accommodative by agreeing to have a dialogue with SIRA. However, more recently, we have learned from his biography that his use of the term referendum was to introduce the element of 'special autonomy,' rather than independence, and meant staying united within the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>338</sup> Later, it became the Law (UUNAD) on Special Autonomy for the Province of the Special Region of Aceh as the Province of *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*.

Gus Dur wanted to calm the situation down because tensions were very high after Suharto stepped down in 1998. However, on the one hand, the Indonesian parliament could not interpret Gus Dur's gesture correctly. On the other hand, they kept using the example of Timor Leste as a lesson; the parliament did not want to risk such a situation again. Unlike in the case of Timor Leste, Aceh's demands had not yet been much internationalized. In the end, the idea of a referendum was just fading away. Muhammad Nazar and some others involved in the organization of SIRA were imprisoned on the accusation of attempted treason.

In 2001, President Megawati Soekarno Putri signed the law on Special Autonomy for the Province of the Special Region of Aceh. However, the government's move did not make GAM cease their struggle for independence. The government did not involve GAM in the discussion,

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<sup>337</sup> Fadrik Aziz Firdausi, 'Aceh Menuntut Referendum, Dua Dekade Lalu', *Tirto*, June 2019 <<https://tirto.id/d9pZ>>.

<sup>338</sup> Greg Barton, *Biografi Gus Dur: The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid*, ed. by Hua Lie and Ahmad Suhaedy (Banguntapan, Yogyakarta: Saufa bekerjasama dengan IRCiSoD dan LKiS, 2016), p. 385.

as they did not want to acknowledge GAM as an equal party. Rizal Sukma, an Acehese researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, argued the following statement:

*The Aceh problem must be seen as a problem of injustice resulting from exploitation, centralization, oppression, and impunity...The application of Islamic law, the enactment of the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Law (UUNAD / Law on Special Autonomy for Aceh Special Region), and more wealth sharing Aceh got the more significant portion, only touching some of the roots of the problem. A comprehensive solution must address all four root problems simultaneously. For this reason, priority must still be given to efforts to find a negotiated political settlement through dialogue with all Acehese people, including GAM.*<sup>339</sup>

The situation was quite different when, from 2003 to 2005, the government made an effort to deal with them. The government decided to treat GAM as an equal party and tried to solve the problem with dignity for all parties. As a result, both parties reached an agreement with the material of the law on the Special Autonomy of Aceh and a few additional elements such as an amnesty and a monitoring mission. The amnesty allowed around 1,400 GAM prisoners, consisting of Indonesian citizens, foreign citizens, and stateless citizens, to be released from jail, based on the Helsinki peace agreement between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>340</sup> Hamid Awaludin, minister of Law and Human Rights and the lead negotiator and representative of the Indonesian government, added that the former prisoners of GAM returned home with dignity, as they embarked with a commercial aircraft, dressed in decent suits, and equipped with stipend money.<sup>341</sup> Furthermore, the Helsinki MoU mandate also assigned an Aceh Monitoring Mission consisting of European Union and ASEAN members to ensure the transition went smoothly.

## Peacebuilding initiatives

Hamid Awaludin, the head of mission representing the Indonesian government to negotiate with GAM in Helsinki, closed his speech with a phrase in the Aceh language (one out of ten local languages in Aceh). He delivered an emotional speech after the MoU between GAM and the Indonesian government was signed on 15 August 2005. He said, “*Pat ujuen nan han*

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<sup>339</sup> Rizal Sukma, ‘Aceh Di Tangan Megawati’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, September 2001) <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/kolom/83347/aceh-di-tangan-megawati>>.

<sup>340</sup> ‘Para Tahanan GAM Mulai Dibebaskan’, *BBC News Indonesia*, 31 August 2005 <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesian/news/story/2005/08/printable/050831\\_gamrelease.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesian/news/story/2005/08/printable/050831_gamrelease.shtml)>.

<sup>341</sup> Awaludin.

*pirang, pat prang nan tan reda?*” – in English: ‘Where can you find rain without stopping? Where can you find a war without an end?’<sup>342</sup>

Several initiatives to make peace were attempted during this time. In 2000, a Geneva-based conflict resolution organization, the Henri Dunant Center (HDC), brokered a deal between Aceh and the government of Indonesia, who agreed on several matters.<sup>343</sup> The agreement consisted of a humanitarian pause in May 2000, a moratorium on violence, peace through dialogue in January 2001, and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in December 2002.<sup>344</sup> The government also conducted a so-called ‘Integrated Operation’ that included humanitarian operations, the restoration of security, law enforcement, and the strengthening of governance in Aceh. However, none of the attempted initiatives was successful.

The disagreement was on the fundamental issue: whether Aceh would become independent or remain autonomous. GAM could not surrender its initial demand for independence, while the Indonesian government was determined to maintain Indonesia’s territorial integrity.<sup>345</sup> Simultaneously, the government did not offer an alternative for GAM to get involved in Aceh politics other than through fighting.<sup>346</sup>

Finally, with the newly formed government in 2004, the initiative striving for peace was about to reach its conclusion. On 15 August 2005, the historic moment took place in Helsinki, Smolna, Finland. GAM and the Republic of Indonesia, represented by Malik Mahmoud and Hamid Awaludin, respectively, signed an MoU. The Helsinki MoU ended the civil war that had been continuing for several decades in Aceh.<sup>347</sup>

Several factors contributed to the success of the 2005 peace agreement in Helsinki between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia. First, the initial initiative was based on local values, where Farid, as instructed by Jusuf Kalla (coordinating minister for people’s welfare in Indonesia from 2001 to 2003; vice president of Indonesia from 2004 to 2009 and 2014 to 2019), collected information about the Aceh people’s aspirations in an Aceh restaurant in Jakarta.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Awaludin, p. 253.

<sup>343</sup> ‘Dari Senjata Ke Meja Diplomasi’, *Tempo*, May 2000 <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/opini/113350/dari-senjata-ke-meja-diplomasi>>.

<sup>344</sup> Kelik M. Nugroho and others, ‘Menunggu Keajaiban Di Tanah Rencong’, *Tempo* (Banda Aceh, 4 May 2003) <<https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/87310/menunggu-keajaiban-di-tanah-rencong>>.

<sup>345</sup> Edward Aspinall and Harold Crouch, *The Aceh Peace Process*: (East-West Center, 20 April 2003), p. x <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06534>>.

<sup>346</sup> Katri. Merikallio, *Making Peace : Ahtisaari and Aceh* (Helsinki, Finland: WS Bookwell Oy, 2006), p. 59.

<sup>347</sup> Malik Mahmoud was the prime minister of GAM from 2002 to 2005; while Hamid Awaludin was the minister of Law and Human Rights.

<sup>348</sup> Farid Husain.

For several days he mingled with Acehnese regular customers in the restaurant to listen to what they thought about GAM, Aceh, and the Republic of Indonesia. Second, the government treated GAM as an equal party in the dialogue for the peace of Aceh. Jusuf Kalla, as a person in charge at the top level of the Republic of Indonesia, often emphasized the importance of this aspect which, in his own words, he termed “dignity for all.”<sup>349</sup> Finally, the tsunami in Aceh on 26 December 2004 – whose waves are estimated to have reached a height of 30 meters, with speeds reaching 100 meters per second, or 360 kilometers per hour, killed 170,000 people and flattened Banda Aceh to the ground – encouraged all parties to speed up the efforts to establish peace in Aceh.<sup>350</sup>

### Local engagement in the international peace agreement in 2005

The conflict between the Indonesian government and GAM finally ended in Helsinki, Finland, with local engagement. Dr Farid Husain, the vice president’s agent, was behind the historical moment of this peace agreement on 15 December 2005. He originally received the task of informally contacting GAM from the vice president, Jusuf Kalla, in June 2003. In Farid’s words, he explains the mission below:

*I believe everyone understands that the peace process in Aceh is a struggle of many people, not only by those inside but also outside the negotiating table. It is as clear as saying that the peace process was a long journey, much longer than the negotiation period in Helsinki, which lasted only five rounds in six months.*

*Long before the negotiations in Helsinki, namely since June 2003, I had been involved in the embryo of the peace process. It (the mission) was Mr Jusuf Kalla’s order (to Farid Husain), as the Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare, who later became the Vice President of Indonesia.<sup>351</sup>*

Farid Husain was one of the prominent persons behind the success of the peace agreement between the Indonesian government and GAM. Farid connected the people of GAM with the government; he made great efforts to meet the people of GAM, although it was made difficult by their insistence on a collective decision for every move, including the decision concerning whether or not Farid could meet any of them to talk. As Farid was very determined, he did not give up easily. Instead, he met some of the GAM leaders’ families and relatives, getting to know more about them through their families.

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<sup>349</sup> Awaludin.

<sup>350</sup> Personal Communication with Nurdin Abdul Rahman, one of the GAM negotiators in Helsinki, Finland on 14 August 2018.

<sup>351</sup> Farid Husain, pp. 2–3. (Personal translation.)

While many people think that the tsunami was the only factor in finally bringing the peace agreement between the Indonesian government and GAM into existence, Farid was one of the people who thought differently. He has claimed that he started the initiation based on Jusuf Kalla's order right after the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) failed in May 2003.

*When Juha came back to Finland, he convinced Martti Ahtisaari [former president of Finland and the founder of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)] to be the dialogue's formal mediator. GAM agreed to it. Even before the tsunami happened in December 2004, they decided secretly to have a discussion. Martti Ahtisaari had prepared the invitation to both parties.<sup>352</sup>*

During his mission as an informal representative of the government, Farid was able to engage local values in the process. In his words, his main aim on this mission was: to find the seed of peace, plant it, and grow it. What he meant was to seek as much information as he could about the conflict. In this case, he needed to listen directly to the people of Aceh. Farid had sat in an Aceh restaurant in Jakarta several times in order to collect information regarding the Aceh people's aspirations and opinions. Later, he analyzed the data to discover what would be the seed of peace he had been looking for so far. Farid was very passionate about his job. As a physician, he often used to listen to his patients; he actually stressed the similarities between being a doctor and being a peace negotiator: both professions have to attend frequently to listening.

Having personal contact with the locals is a very significant part of the process of reaching a peace agreement. Being an official representative of a party in a high-level negotiation can entail a person being put in a position that generally pushes them toward very formalized behavior and practices, and establishes and perpetuates a distance between both parties involved. Both the Indonesian government and GAM, as institutions, had allowed unnecessary space to grow between them, which hampered them from speaking freely at the formal negotiating table. Therefore, during the negotiations, representatives often took a short walk, talked matters out like colleagues, and finally agreed. Furthermore, Aceh has a saying: "*fatalistik nibak jule'ng got buta, nibak meutungge'ng got meuleungkop, nibak gente'eng got putoh.*"<sup>353</sup> The saying loosely translates as: 'Rather than squint, Aceh people prefer to be blind; instead of slant, Acehnese people prefer to spill it; people of Aceh choose to break it rather than have a crisis.' This expression conveys that the people of Aceh would always go for the maximum. Aceh people are very

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<sup>352</sup> Farid Husain, p. 88. (Personal translation.)

<sup>353</sup> Sukma.

determined to do whatever it takes for something they have believed. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, the writer of the book, *Acehnologi*, has said the same thing about the expression:

*So if you want to do something, don't mess around, just get to the point. Once in contact with water, it's better to get wet as well. That made the soldiers (who were on duty in Aceh) confused. Why the resistance (of Aceh people) never ended, and many soldiers were stressed here during the conflict. Because they didn't know where this philosophy is coming from. So for example like this. I sat down. There were soldiers there, and I could grab a knife and immediately attack without hesitation. Sometimes, you can only hold a weapon and directly attack the KODIM (Military District Command). So instead of just playing around like this (playing around), (we rather go for all-out). The Dutch used to say, 'Atjeh Moorden' right.<sup>354</sup>*

The next step of Farid's mission was to plant the seed of peace. As part of his concrete action, Farid then strove to meet the leaders of GAM and talked informally with them while synchronizing with the government's decisions through Jusuf Kalla, the top-level leader in the Republic of Indonesia who was in charge of this affair. He conveyed what the government wanted and let them know what the government would like to offer in order to reach a peace deal. Farid made the process evolve informally and personally, such that they were able to create bonding indirectly, as human to human relations are unavoidable during intense communication. Farid tried hard to emphasize the similarities between them, showed empathy in order to include himself within their circle, and, finally, showed them the sincerity of his goodwill in this mission.

In line with what Johan Galtung stated about peacebuilding, that dialogue should involve all the conflicting parties, Farid did the same in this mission. To ensure the dialogue between representatives ran smoothly, Farid engaged with all parties, whether related directly or indirectly. He had to deal with collective decision-making, which required him to convince all leaders of GAM until, finally, they agreed to meet, engage in dialogue, and eventually sign an MoU. Furthermore, Farid was fully aware of the role of international adviser Damien Kingsbury, a lecturer at Deakin University (in Australia), who happened to be influential with GAM. Many GAM proposals came originally from Damien, such as the right to form a local political party and the right for Aceh to govern itself. Therefore, Farid managed to arrange a meeting between Damien and Jusuf Kalla,

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<sup>354</sup> Personal Communication on 17 August 2018. 'Atjeh' is the old spelling. 'Atjeh Moorden' is an expression used by the Dutch when they were in Aceh during the colonization period. The expression means 'Aceh's Assassination' as Aceh's resistance was never stopped during the colonization period.

as the vice president of Indonesia, and the head of the negotiations, Hamid Awaludin, in the Hilton Hotel, Jakarta in March 2005, which was controversial among the people in Jakarta. The national newspaper – *Tempo* – published an article entitled ‘*Pertemuan Rahasia Wapres-Penasehat GAM Disesalkan*,’ which translates as ‘Secret Meeting of Vice President–GAM Adviser Regrettably.’<sup>355</sup> It explained how the Indonesian parliament disagreed and protested about the meeting. However, this meeting was crucial in earning GAM’s trust and demonstrated that GAM was an equal party in the process of peacebuilding.

After five rounds of dialogue within six months, both the Indonesian government and GAM finally reached a historical moment to sign the Helsinki MoU peace agreement. The mediation was led by Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland and founder of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). However, the formal agreement was not the only one that mattered. The casual and personal engagement was even more significant in paving the way to this legal agreement and implementing it.

Signing the MoU was a crucial development, but ensuring the functioning of the MoU was another matter. Hence, to ensure the peace agreement’s implementation worked accordingly, Farid managed to talk with the senior adviser and founder of GAM, Hasan Tiro, in Stockholm, in December 2005, which was four months after the MoU took place. Hasan Tiro did not personally attend the dialogue in Helsinki, but the GAM leaders always expected his blessing. Furthermore, Farid needed to personally check the situation in the jungle, where the stronghold of the GAM military wing was based. The appointment he had with one of the military commanders, Sofyan Dawood, resembled a scene from an action movie, where they had to meet in a secret location. The mission was aimed at ensuring that GAM in the field was equally on board with the agreement as was the leadership in Stockholm.<sup>356</sup>

## Transformation

Conflict in Aceh has led to the transformation of the region and its society such that conditions there are much improved. First of all, Aceh was an example of successful peacebuilding in the

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<sup>355</sup> Agus Supriyanto and Abdul Manan, ‘Pertemuan Rahasia Wapres-Penasehat GAM Disesalkan’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, 27 March 2005) <<https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/36641/pertemuan-rahasia-wapres-penasihat-gam-disesalkan>>.

<sup>356</sup> Farid Husain.

context of separatism. Each party compromised with regards to its initial stance and agreed on a new deal between them. GAM surrendered its ambition to make Aceh an independent country, while Indonesia surrendered most of the authority to the locals to govern themselves. Both parties consented to find the middle ground between them in order to reach the ultimate goal, peace.

Second, the conflict shifted the model of GAM's struggle from the war zone to the political arena. The head of Aceh – a position the locals refer to as “*wali nanggroe*” – was the founder of GAM, Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro. After he passed away, the former prime minister of GAM inherited the position, Tengku Malik Mahmud Al Haytar. Since the Helsinki MoU, the position of governor-elect of Aceh has always been held by former members of GAM, for example: Irwandi Yusuf (2007–12 and 2017–18) and Zaini Abdullah (2012–17). In 2018, the Corruption Eradication Commission arrested Irwandi Yusuf in an alleged corruption case, so the deputy governor replaced his position. At the time of writing (2021), the governor of Aceh is not a former GAM member.

On 11 December 2006 the first direct election for the mayor and regent took place in Aceh. From the 23 regencies in Aceh, there were nine regents elected from GAM. Their bases were generally in areas where GAM had bases during the struggle, especially in the northern part of Aceh: they are Sabang, Aceh Jaya, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireun, Lhokseumawe, North Aceh, and East Aceh.<sup>357</sup> This election happened before the people of Aceh had established local political parties. Hence, most of them entered via an independent route facilitated by Law No. 11, of 2006, article 256, concerning an independent candidate in the general election of vice governor, governor, deputy mayor, mayor, deputy regent, and regent.<sup>358</sup>

Third, Aceh formalized institutions relating to the local customs of Aceh, from the very bottom, *keucik* (village head), right up to the position of *wali nanggroe* as the head of the state based on the local regulation No. 10 of 2008 concerning customary institutions. A structure chart is shown below (Figure 16) under the subsection concerning the *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Aceh Custom Assembly). This structure organized the sector of local traditions, which was one of the three main sectors that the central government had put Aceh in charge of, other than

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<sup>357</sup> Moch Nurhasim, ‘Dominasi Partai Aceh Pasca-Mou Helsinki’, *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, 09.02 (2012), 35–49 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v9i2.229>>; Republic of Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 11 Tahun 2006 Tentang Pemerintahan Aceh* (Jakarta: President, 2006) <<https://jdih.kemenkeu.go.id/fulltext/2006/11TAHUN2006UU.HTM>>.

<sup>358</sup> Awaludin, p. 260; Republic of Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 11 Tahun 2006 Tentang Pemerintahan Aceh*.



education and religion. The MAA is a formal institution that preserves and develops the traditions of Aceh under the *wali nanggroe*, according to local regulation No. 8 of 2019 concerning *Majelis Adat Aceh*.

I will elaborate further about some of these points below.

### Local political parties

The right to form local political parties was on the negotiating table between GAM and the Indonesian government in Helsinki, mediated by the former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari. GAM brought it up for the first time in the fourth round of negotiations (May 2005). However, the Indonesian government could not initially accommodate the demand because it contradicted the regulation on the establishment of political parties, requiring any party to have 50 branches across Indonesia. Furthermore, the government had to face the legislators to amend the political party's constitution.<sup>359</sup>

However, GAM insisted on including the point about local parties in the MoU between them, so they brought it up again in the fifth round of the negotiations (July 2005). Martti Ahtisaari favored the idea as he suggested that the head of the Indonesian negotiators, Hamid Awaludin, should empathize with GAM's position. Ahtisaari was always trying to be fair as a mediator. He criticized the GAM negotiators if they introduced topics that were not within those planned. He added that GAM did not have any interest in the national political arena: all they wanted was the right to create local vehicles with which to build Aceh through the local political arena. Ahtisaari justified the idea of GAM's proposal as a plan of political participation. "*Second (negotiation's main topic), provisions for political participation, provincial and local elections, had to be agreed upon.*"<sup>360</sup>

The Indonesian government offered the use of existing political parties for the general election of governor, regent, and mayor in Aceh. However, GAM refused the offer, and one of the negotiators, Nur Djuly, stated, "*we want our own vehicle, not others.*"<sup>361</sup>

The issue of local political parties was the most difficult and prolonged issue at the negotiation table. Damien Kingsbury, a professor at Deakin University in Australia, who was the

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<sup>359</sup> Awaludin, p. 193.

<sup>360</sup> Martti Ahtisaari, 'Lessons of Aceh Peace Talks', *Asia Europe Journal*, 6.1 (2008), 9–14 (p. 11)

<<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-007-0163-x>>.

<sup>361</sup> Awaludin, p. 318.

international adviser for GAM, suggested the idea of having local political parties, and was present in the Helsinki negotiations.

Finally, the government agreed to amend the political party regulation within a maximum time period of eighteen months after both parties signed the MoU. The MoU states this point as follows:

*As soon as possible and not later than one year from the signing of this MoU, GoI (Government of Indonesia) agrees to and will facilitate the establishment of Aceh-based political parties that meet national criteria. Understanding the aspirations of Acehnese people for local political parties, GoI will create, within one year or at the latest 18 months from the signing of this MoU, the political and legal conditions for the establishment of local political parties in Aceh in consultation with parliament. The timely implementation of this MoU will contribute positively to this end.*<sup>362</sup>

A year later, the Indonesian government established a new constitution for Aceh that covered all aspects of Aceh governance, including Aceh local political parties, in Republic of Indonesia Law No. 11 of 2006 on the Aceh government:

*Local political parties are political organizations voluntarily formed by a group of Indonesian citizens domiciled in Aceh based on a common desire and aspirations to fight for the interests of members, society, nation, and state through the election of members of DPRA / DPRK, Governor / Deputy Governor, regent/deputy regent, and mayor/deputy mayor.*<sup>363</sup>

In 2007, there were six local political parties established in Aceh to participate in the general election of 2009. *Partai Aceh Aman Sejahtera* (PAAS, Aceh Safe and Prosperous Party), *Partai Daulat Aceh* (PDA, Sovereign Aceh Party), *Partai Suara Independen Rakyat Aceh* (SIRA, Independent Voice of Acehnese Party), *Partai Rakyat Aceh* (PRA, Acehnese People Party), *Partai Aceh* (PA, Aceh Party), and *Partai Bersatu Aceh* (PBA, United Aceh Party). Some of the parties have changed over time due to some changes in regulations concerning the Aceh government's law.

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<sup>362</sup> Helsinki Peace Agreement, available at [http://www.acehpeaceprocess.net/pdf/mou\\_final.pdf](http://www.acehpeaceprocess.net/pdf/mou_final.pdf) .

<sup>363</sup> Republic of Indonesia, *Aceh Government* (Indonesia, 2006), p. 4 <[https://pih.kemlu.go.id/files/UU\\_11-2006.pdf](https://pih.kemlu.go.id/files/UU_11-2006.pdf)>.

No.	Political Party's name	Logo
1	<b>PARTAI ACEH AMAN SEJAHTERA (PAAS)</b>	
2	<b>PARTAI DAULAT ACEH (PDA)</b>	
3	<b>PARTAI SUARA INDEPENDEN RAKYAT ACEH (SIRA)</b>	
4	<b>PARTAI RAKYAT ACEH (PRA)</b>	
5	<b>PARTAI ACEH</b>	
6	<b>PARTAI BERSATU ACEH (PBA)</b>	

Figure 15 Local political parties of Aceh in 2009<sup>364</sup>

### From bullet box to ballot box

“When we had no guns in our hands, we felt like motherless chicks without experience.” (Joni Suryawan, former combatant).<sup>365</sup>

The *Sekolah Perdamaian Demokrasi Aceh* (SPDA, Democratic Peace School of Aceh) was established in early 2007 by former combatants of GAM. Nur Djuli, a former GAM Malaysia coordinator, launched *Sekolah Demokrasi* (Democratic School), which trains ex-combatants to become active members of political parties and parliament. Djuli expects that the institution will aid former combatants in their social and political transformation. Some warriors have a difficult time transitioning from military to civilian life; according to Djuli, they still behave like military personnel in terms of discipline, punishment, and command of leadership. Furthermore, this school also helped former combatants to learn about politics, and many of them plan to join a local political party for the first general election (post-Helsinki peace agreement) in 2009. Later, the school cooperated with the Olof Palme International Center, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung foundation of Germany, Demos, and the *Komite Peralihan Aceh*

<sup>364</sup> ‘Nama Partai Politik Lokal Peserta Pemilu 2009 Di Aceh’, *Aceh Government*, 2009 <[https://www1-media.acehprov.go.id/uploads/ALAMAT\\_NAMA\\_PARPOL\\_LOKAL\\_PESERTA\\_PEMILU\\_2009.pdf](https://www1-media.acehprov.go.id/uploads/ALAMAT_NAMA_PARPOL_LOKAL_PESERTA_PEMILU_2009.pdf)> [accessed 31 March 2021].

<sup>365</sup> Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata, *Transformasi Gerakan Aceh Merdeka : Dari Kotak Peluru Ke Kotak Suara : Sebuah Kisah Sukses Program Transformasi Kombatan Di Aceh*, ed. by Bob S (Bob Sugeng) Hadiwinata ([Jakarta]: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010).

(KPA, Aceh Transition Commission) in conducting several pieces of training, including the training of trainers. One of the activists made a testimonial about how important the knowledge and skills of politics, democracy, and peace was for the former combatants after a meeting with the above-mentioned collaboration partners:

*From that meeting, the GAM elite finally realized the need for a school of democracy and peace. Our tools now are markers and flipcharts, no longer weapons like when they were combatants. In that context, the struggle remains in the old spirit, but there is a process of rationalization in seeing the political situation that they began to redefine the meaning of independence, not merely as an attempt to escape, but there are other meanings of being free from backwardness, poverty, and so on.*<sup>366</sup>

The transition was not easy for former combatants to make; for the leaders this was even more the case. Damien Kingsbury has argued about this phenomenon:

*Guerrilla leaders who are good at war often have difficulty accepting democratic methods in times of peace. Used to giving orders and using force and violence for a collective cause, they have a hard time respecting people who challenge them when times have changed; when the common cause is the democratic process itself.*<sup>367</sup>

The school was aimed at helping the former combatants to integrate themselves into society. In the future, Sadiah, one of the former negotiators at the Helsinki agreement, wishes to have this school as a conflict resolution institute.

*Well, peace in this five-year process is only the first phase. The second phase is after 10 years, which later we can see if what we paste is sticky. Because right now we are being lulled by money, projects, and so on, so we can't see any gaps to build a stronger democracy. How can there be a healthy opposition in Aceh?*<sup>368</sup>

In the political aspect, former GAM members have transformed their struggle from the bullet to the ballot. Irwandi Yusuf and Muhammad Nazar, who are both former GAM members, became the governor of Aceh and deputy governor, respectively, followed by nine regents among 23 regions.<sup>369</sup> Some others were taking positions as members of the Bener Regional Legislative Council (DPRK) in Aceh, such as Joni Suryawan in the 2009 general election.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Nurhasim, p. 42.

<sup>367</sup> Damien Kingsbury, 'Aceh Elections Must Not Be Violent', *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, 23 May 2016) <<https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/05/23/aceh-elections-must-not-be-violent.html>>.

<sup>368</sup> Hadiwinata, p. 38, 148.

<sup>369</sup> Awaludin, pp. 259–60.

<sup>370</sup> Hadiwinata, p. 18; 'Daftar Anggota Parlemen Anggota DPRD Kab. Bener Meriah Periode 2009-2014', *Jari Ungu*

<[https://www.jariungu.com/parlemen\\_profil.php?pageNum\\_rsAnggotaParlemen1=0&totalRows\\_rsAnggotaParlemen1=26&maxRows\\_rsAnggotaParlemen1=25&idJenisParlemen=4&idParlemen=82&idKabKota=47&cariAnggotaParlemenDaerah=y](https://www.jariungu.com/parlemen_profil.php?pageNum_rsAnggotaParlemen1=0&totalRows_rsAnggotaParlemen1=26&maxRows_rsAnggotaParlemen1=25&idJenisParlemen=4&idParlemen=82&idKabKota=47&cariAnggotaParlemenDaerah=y)> [accessed 20 July 2021].

Irwansyah, who is better known as Muksalmina among the members of GAM, became the public relations officer of *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (KPA, Aceh Transition Committee), who ensures the former combatants' wellbeing. His participation in the guerilla movement started after he finished high school. He continued his study at the university while serving as a member of GAM. Consequently, he was on the Indonesian military's most-wanted-person list even before completing his semester at the university. However, when peace finally came to Aceh, he was then interested in dedicating himself to the former combatants' welfare, along with Muzakir Manaf, who was one of the GAM commanders and vice governor of Aceh (2012–17) but is currently the head of KPA (2005–present) and Aceh local political party, Aceh Party (2007–present).<sup>371</sup>

One of the people I managed to interview had been a negotiator involved in the talks that led to the Helsinki peace agreement in 2005, Nurdin Abdul Rahman. I met him in a restaurant in Banda Aceh called Canai Mamak KL. I could see that he was very passionate about rebuilding Aceh and loved this particular province very much. During the negotiations in Helsinki, he was adamant because he was one of the victims of the war between GAM and the Indonesian government. He experienced torture intended to make him confess to being a member of GAM, which he was not at that time. He became a member of GAM after being released from prison. However, when the peace agreement came into force on 15 August 2005, he shifted the form of his struggle from being outside the government to being within the government. He became a regent of Biruen from 2007 to 2012. When I interviewed him in 2018, he remained critical of the Indonesian government. To me, however, his criticism just showed how much he cares about Aceh:

*Once again, I remind you that they did not include Helsinki MoU as one of the preambles on Aceh Government Law No. 11 (UUPA). It is fundamental for the young generation to avoid being triggered and back in conflict. That's the bottom line. Why did it happen? Even though there are Acehnese in the parliament in Jakarta. The Acehnese cannot understand why those Acehnese who sit in Jakarta's parliament did not do it. Is it some mistake or what? Seduction? Money politics? Bribery of all kinds, we don't know. However, public suspicion remains, so how in the future, in the preamble, the Helsinki MoU must exist.*<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Hadiwinata, pp. 21–22; 'Referendum Di Aceh: Tetap Atau Pisah Dari Indonesia Setelah Prabowo Kalah, "tak Ada Dasar Hukum" Untuk Digelar', *BBC News Indonesia* (Aceh, 31 May 2019).

<sup>372</sup> Personal Communication on 14 August 2018.

Although Nurdin was critical, his criticism had a limit, and he tried his best to be loyal to the framework of the Helsinki peace agreement. He frequently met people in the region of Bireuen who had complaints toward the central government regarding Aceh Government Law No.11, but he tried to reassure them. When I asked him about the commemoration of the Helsinki peace agreement, he replied the following:

*We need to maintain this peace, in terms of benefits, from various aspects. Peoples' life is so great. They already feel the results of peace that result from this agreement. I will proclaim it in society, something that we should keep on saying in the community. The feeling of hatred and sense of betrayal by the Jakarta government will gradually disappear.*<sup>373</sup>

Nurdin Abdul Rahman was not the only one who set aside the bullet and took up the ballot; among many others, Tengku Usman Abdullah became the mayor of his hometown, Langsa, from 2012 to 2017 and won the election for the second period from 2017 to 2022. His background in GAM was quite significant as he became a commander of Area Three of Langsa from 2003 to 2005.

Abdullah responded to my WhatsApp message positively when I asked him for an interview on the same day. He was sincere upon receiving me in his residence and had no other motive for seeing me than for the sake of the research. I knew that Abdullah could have just rejected my proposal because he did not have any political interests: he wouldn't run for mayor for the third time due to the change in the constitution. Moreover, I was not a citizen of Langsa either, so I did not have the right either to vote or not to vote for him. Instead, he let me visit his residence with a warm welcome and a cup of coffee.

When I interviewed him in his official residence as mayor, he told me that his initial job as a member of GAM had been smuggling weapons from Malaysia to Aceh. He added that, as Aceh people, he felt as though they had no option other than to join GAM.

*I want to change my fate (by going to) in Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. So in 1990, after I left Langsa, I heard that there was gunfire, terror, all kinds of things in Aceh. It even reached Langsa already. It was horrifying what we have heard from many people. My mother called and said, "don't come home; whoever comes back from Malaysia will be taken by The Military Regional Command (KODIM). And the worst thing was that my mother said that it had never been this cruel in Aceh. The Japanese war, the Dutch war, and Daerah Islam Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI TII, Islamic State and Islamic Soldier of Indonesia). If the father was involved in those wars, the father was the only one who got taken.*

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<sup>373</sup> Personal Communication on 14 August 2018.

*However, during the war between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia, the whole family got taken if the father was involved. Even his son would not be free. If they suspected the boy, then the father is subject to get grabbed. In the end, everyone became a member of GAM eventually. The option we had at that time, either we became GAM or flee abroad.*<sup>374</sup>

However, when he chose to struggle within the politics of the Republic of Indonesia's unity, he served for the best. He applied great effort in his attempt to activate the seaport of Langsa. In previous eras, this seaport had been glorious. Therefore, he was committed to working within the framework of democracy and was persistent toward his goal, the Aceh people's welfare.

In general, both Rahman and Abdullah showed how much they care for the people of Aceh. For example, Abdullah reviewed several projects originating from the *Dana Otonomi Khusus Aceh* (DOKA, Special Autonomy Fund of Aceh) on 19 November 2018. He expressed his anger because a project from the Aceh province was in danger of not being completed on time, and two items had even suddenly disappeared from the project list. Two projects that are lacking in Langsa city tourism development are Acehnese houses and Acehnese kitchens.<sup>375</sup> Another example of his integrity toward the people of Langsa was on 18 April 2018. His video complaining to some medical professionals at the local Regional General Hospital stunned social media (RSUD) and was widely spread. In the 2.36 minute video, he looks annoyed because it is suspected that the hospital repatriated poor patients.<sup>376</sup>

However, I could see that they and their people are struggling with the development of Aceh as they have shifted from the command system of GAM during the war to a democratic mechanism. Rahman expressed that he did not understand why Acehnese representatives, sitting in the Indonesian parliament in Jakarta, could not do much for the improvement of Aceh. Meanwhile, Abdullah could not find a reason why Langsa seaport is not allowed to engage in international shipping.

### Islamic law (sharia)

There are three intersecting legal systems in Aceh, namely Islamic law, Acehnese customary law, and Indonesian national law (positive law) in general. The coverage of Islamic law is divided into two categories: *sharia* and *ahlak* (morality). Sharia includes worship, *ahwal al-*

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<sup>374</sup> Personal Communication on 21 August 2018.

<sup>375</sup> Bakri, 'Wali Kota Langsa Marah', *Serambi News* (Langsa, November 2018) <<https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2018/11/21/wali-kota-langsa-marah>>.

<sup>376</sup> Arief, 'Heboh! Video Walikota Langsa Marahi Perawat', *Pikiran Merdeka* (Banda Aceh, 19 April 2018) <<https://www.pikiranmerdeka.co/news/heboh-video-walikota-langsa-marahi-perawat/>>.

*syakhshiyah* (family law), *muamalah* (civil law), *jinayah* (criminal law), *qadha'* (judicial), *tarbiyah* (education), and defending Islam. Meanwhile, morality includes *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) and *syiar* (Islamic campaign). As mentioned above, Islamic law is not only about *jinayat* (Islamic criminal jurisprudence), but also many other aspects, which provide justice for all. For example, Islamic law prohibits the charging or issuance of interest in loan and saving services, because interest can be a burden to those in trouble. Another example of Islamic sharia of non-criminal law is that Muslims have to pay *zakat* annually (a type of tax, but only applied to those who can financially afford it) and give it to eight groups as follows:

1. The poor, meaning low-income or indigent.
2. The needy, meaning someone who is in difficulty.
3. *Zakat* administrators.
4. Those whose hearts are to be reconciled, meaning new Muslims and friends of the Muslim community.
5. Those in bondage (slaves and captives).
6. The debt-ridden.
7. In the cause of God.
8. The wayfarer, meaning those who are stranded or traveling with few resources.<sup>377</sup>

The legal basis and government recognition for the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh is based on Law No. 44 of 1999 concerning the Implementation of the Privileges of the Province of the Special Region of Aceh, and Law No. 18 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for the Province of the Special Region of Aceh as the Province of *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*. The implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh has been regulated in Law No. 18 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for the Province of the Special Region of Aceh as *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*.<sup>378</sup> The government body that authorizes the implementation of sharia law according to local regulation No. 33, enacted in 2001, is *Dinas Syariat Islam* (DSI, Islamic Law Service).<sup>379</sup> Finally, the most vital legal basis of the local law is the one passed in 2006, No. 11, respecting Aceh (self-) government, one year after GAM and the government of Indonesia signed the peace agreement in Helsinki, Finland.

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<sup>377</sup> Talal Itani, *Quran in English: Clear and Easy to Understand*. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

<sup>378</sup> Iskandar, 'Pelaksanaan Syariat Islam Di Aceh', *Serambi Akademika*, VI.01 (2018)

<<https://ojs.serambimekkah.ac.id/index.php/serambi-akademika/>>.

<sup>379</sup> 'Sejarah DSI', *Aceh Official Website* <<https://dsi.acehprov.go.id/sejarah-dsi/>> [accessed 26 July 2021].



Islamic law in Aceh is the desire of most Acehnese people and is not binding on non-Muslims living in Aceh. For more than 50 years, since the first war was declared in 1953 by the people of Aceh against the Indonesian republic, there has been a demand for two things: Islamic law and fair distribution. The prolonged conflict, which passed on through generations in Aceh, showed how determinedly they had been in favor of implementing Islamic law and demanding a proportional share with the central government of Indonesia. The Helsinki MoU point 1.1.6. states: “*Kanun Aceh will be re-established for Aceh, respecting the historical traditions and customs of the people of Aceh and reflecting contemporary legal requirements of Aceh.*”<sup>380</sup> In the sector of the economy, the government of Indonesia agreed on several points, among them that “*Aceh is entitled to retain seventy (70) percent of the revenues from all current and future hydrocarbon deposits and other natural resources in the territory of Aceh as well as in the territorial sea surrounding Aceh.*”<sup>381</sup> In addition to that, the Indonesian government agreed to make transparent the collecting and allocating of revenue between the central government and Aceh as explicitly stated in the MoU:

*GoI commits to the transparency of the collection and allocation of revenues between the Central Government and Aceh by agreeing to outside auditors to verify this activity and to communicate the results to the head of the Aceh administration.*<sup>382</sup>

However, Islamic law does not conflict with Indonesian law in general. In the Helsinki MoU, it is also stated that religious freedom is still upheld in Aceh, as written in the following extract from the MoU:

*Aceh will exercise authority within all sectors of public affairs, which will be administered in conjunction with its civil and judicial administration, except in the fields of foreign affairs, external defense, national security, monetary and fiscal matters, justice and freedom of religion, the policies of which belong to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in conformity with the Constitution.*<sup>383</sup>

Jusuf Kalla, vice president of Indonesia (2004–09 and 2014–19), explained that Islamic law in Aceh is not against the law applied in Indonesia in general: “*Aceh can take it (Islamic law)*

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<sup>380</sup> Government of Indonesia and Freedom Aceh Movement (GAM), ‘MoU Helsinki’, 2004.

<sup>381</sup> Indonesia and (GAM).

<sup>382</sup> Indonesia and (GAM).

<sup>383</sup> Indonesia and (GAM).

as long as it does not conflict with public national law.” He added that “(Islamic Law) is only for (people in Aceh) who are Muslim.”<sup>384</sup>

In addition, the Helsinki MoU also states that Islamic law in Aceh must not conflict with universal human rights principles, as stated in point 1.4.2.: “*The Aceh Legislature will reformulate the legal provisions for Aceh based on the universal principles of human rights as stated in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.*”<sup>385</sup>

A lecturer in the Law Faculty at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University shared his insight as follows:

*People worry that if he commits a violation of Islam, he will be publicly flogged. People are worried that even though in Article 5 (No. 6 of 2014), choices are made. The Qanun applies to: one, a Muslim who does his finger in Aceh. Two, for Muslims together with non-Muslims to do their finger in Aceh, but Muslims use the qanun law while non-Muslims can choose whether they want to use the qanun or national law. In reality, there are non-Muslims who commit acts of gambling (with Muslims) they choose to whip (qanun/Islamic law) in Aceh. He himself chooses, so that it is finished, so that it is finished quickly, once he is whipped, the law is over. Meanwhile, if (he/ she chose) the prison, (the sentence) is five years (or) six years. If you choose a whip, your family doesn't need to look here, right? (That's already) some cases of gambling (and voting) being flogged. So actually non-Muslims here are safe, even now if there are, what celebrations are there, right here, the village, the Chinese are in the Penyung (village), that is big. Even now, there is a lion dance collaboration between the Acehnese and the Chinese. It doesn't matter. What's more, people's worries, because Islam is strong in Aceh, almost 90 percent are Muslim, so non-Muslims are ignored. Not. Even in religious activities, if I used to live on that island, that island was close to China, so it was normal for Chinese people to come (to their house), we were (also) invited (to their house). The same is possible with (what happened) in (island) Java. Not a big problem. It only becomes a problem when it is exposed to the media. This seems extraordinary. They don't respect. I don't think so. We are also studying this matter. My students and I together see (research) whether it is true that non-Muslims are not being ignored in Aceh. Is it true that non-Muslims are whipped or are subject to Aceh law even though there is a choice of law, whether they want to choose (Islamic law) or not. (This law applies if) the male perpetrator happens to be in Aceh. If you are already in the city of Medan, it is different again. As soon as he entered Medan, it was no longer Aceh's business. Acehnese Muslims commit Islamic crimes in Medan, which is a national law, not Acehnese law. So the emphasis is on criminal acts or crimes committed by Muslims in Aceh, non-Muslims with Muslims in Aceh*

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<sup>384</sup> ‘Wapres: Syariat Islam Di Aceh Tidak Boleh Bertentangan Dengan Hukum Nasional’, *BBC News Indonesia* (Jakarta, 2015)

<[https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita\\_indonesia/2015/08/150821\\_indonesia\\_wapres\\_syariatislam\\_aceh](https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2015/08/150821_indonesia_wapres_syariatislam_aceh)>.

<sup>385</sup> Zainal Abidin and others, *Analisis Qanun-Qanun Aceh Berbasis Hak Asasi Manusia*, ed. by Zainal Abidin and Aa Sudirman (Jakarta: Demos, 2011).

*(will be) punished, but he can choose, want to submit to Aceh law, or he wants to go to national law. Well, that's not really a problem.*<sup>386</sup>

In the end, if the implementation of Islamic law has contributed to the maintenance of a peaceful state in Aceh as part of the local values that were demanded by the public, the government has made the right decision. Aceh now has its equilibrium while implementing the only sharia law in Indonesia. The resulting balance has made Aceh stable, able to advance, free, peaceful, and able to reveal its identity as Aceh. The situation has also enabled me to enjoy sweet milk coffee, which is available in hundreds of stalls everywhere you go in Aceh. I even carried out several interviews in the coffee shops, such as with Dr Teuku Muttaqien (lecturer in the Law Faculty at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University), Nurdin Abdul Rahman (one of the GAM negotiators in Helsinki), Anwar Idris (member of the Indonesian People's Representative Council from Aceh), Muhammad Nasir (TV journalist), Insyafuddin (vice regent of Aceh Tamiang), Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad (sociology lecturer at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University), and many others.

### Majelis Adat Aceh (MAA, Aceh Custom Assembly)

Under the law on special autonomy No. 44, enacted in 1999, and later complemented by the law on Aceh government No. 11, passed in 2006, Aceh now has autonomy in three sectors: religion, education, and local customs. In addition to Islamic law, the province of Aceh also has customary law, which the custom assembly and other institutions foster under the *wali nangroe*. As stated in *qanun* (local regulation) No. 10, enacted in 2008, *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Aceh Custom Assembly) “*is an assembly for organizing traditional life in Aceh whose institutional structure reaches the village level.*”<sup>387</sup>

Normatively, the MAA's primary responsibilities are, first, to investigate and enhance the development and preservation of traditional institutions, customary law, and community practices. Second, to encourage and develop everyday customs and customary law in the districts/cities, subdistricts, *mukims*, and *gampongs*; to become a treasure trove of Acehese customs and traditions, contributing to the development of the nation's culture. Third, to provide traditional professional cadres (potential traditional leaders) with education following the community's development and needs. Fourth, through print and other electronic media, to distribute the introduction and development of knowledge regarding customary law and

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<sup>386</sup> Personal Communication on 15 August 2018.

<sup>387</sup> Government of Aceh, *Lembaga Adat* (Banda Aceh: Local Government Secretariat, 2008) <<http://dsi.acehprov.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Qanun-Aceh-Nomor-10-Tahun-2008-Tentang-Lembaga-Adat.pdf>>.

traditions. Fifth, to develop the nation's cultural riches, and to encourage and support the growth and performance of Acehese traditional forms in diverse versions. Sixth, to promote and monitor the development of various creative arts promoting traditional values in dance, saga art, recollection art, and other forms of clothing, food, and other creative components of the promotion of religious values. Seventh, to develop customary norms and conventional institutions, and to have a role in resolving community issues. Eighth, to work with various groups, both private and public, to adopt customs in the development of national culture, both at home and abroad, as long as they do not conflict with traditional and religious values.<sup>388</sup>

Although Aceh obtained the status of Special Region in 1965, which gives Aceh authority in these three sectors (religion, education, and local customs), detailed implementation includes the establishment of MAA only after the Helsinki MoU of 2005. The legal bases of this institution are: the law on Aceh government No. 11 of 2006 Article 6, 7, and 98; the law on the structure and work order of MAA No. 3, of 2004; the law concerning the custom institution, No. 10, of 2008, article 7; the law on MAA No. 8 of 2019. To understand better how the MAA works, we can examine the chart below detailing the organizational structure:

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<sup>388</sup> Syaibatul Hamdi, 'Eksistensi Peran Majelis Adat Aceh Dalam Mensosialisasikan Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Di Wilayah Barat-Selatan Aceh', *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 05.01 (2018), 115–37 <<https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/jar/article/view/7578>>.

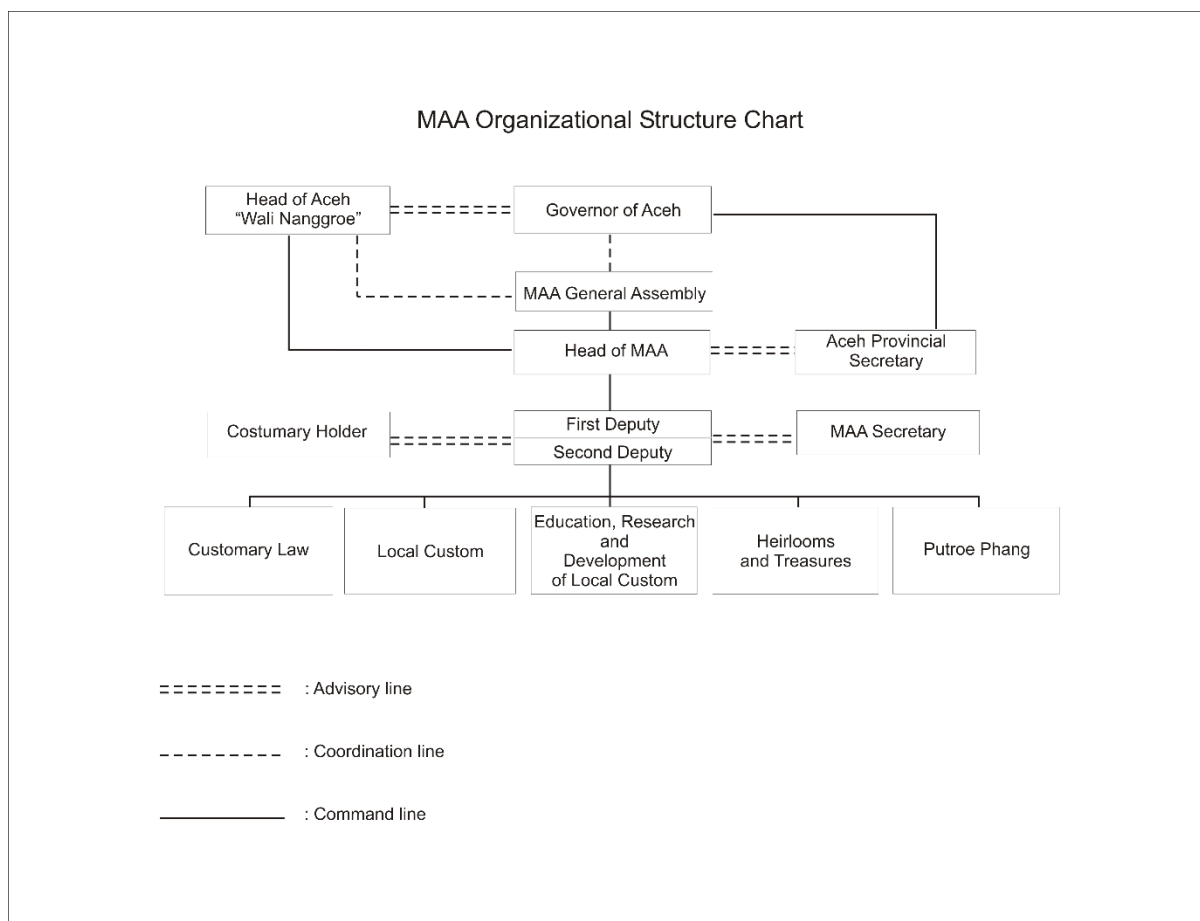


Figure 16 MAA organizational structure<sup>389</sup>

Conflict resolution is handled by the lowest level of structural organization in society (*gampong* and *muqim*), where they do not need to take disputing parties to the police. Teuku Muttaqien, a lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, explained how the village could play a role in resolving conflict effectively:

*In Aceh, eighteen types of mild cases can be resolved by local custom apparatus at the village and mukim levels. Among them are minor theft, division of family inheritance, and lighting forest fires. People don't need to take him to the police. The police will refuse. They will say, "Sir/Madam, this will only be resolved in the village. Please go home. Even if it doesn't end there, for example, you can come to us."*

*For example, there is a conflict in the village. Let's say that I fight with Rivaldi. (Conflict) can be significant because of that small case. But in Aceh, it was resolved in the gampong by the keuchik and his village apparatus. So there is a language said to 'Menyetahu Panjang.' If we drag it again, it will be long, and it will not finish. But if we make a circle, it's short. That's the philosophy, knowing long, circling the pane, that's the language here. If we pull it to be long, it becomes wide. Your rival, it's long, the parents come, it's not over, it's a conflict. Minor*

<sup>389</sup> 'Struktur Lembaga MAA', *Sekretariat Majelis Adat Aceh*, 2019  
 <<https://maa.acehprov.go.id/halaman/struktur-lembaga-maa>> [accessed 24 July 2021].

*conflicts can become village, family, or (even) state conflicts. But in Aceh, it was resolved with the 'hadis maja' (local values) that I mentioned earlier. Yes, this is over. It stopped in the village. Why do we fight? We're ashamed of our neighbors. So our parents used to say, menyetahu panjang.*<sup>390</sup>

## Aceh Peace Memorial Hall

When I was interviewing Mohd Daud Yoesoef, a lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Syiah Kuala, in Banda Aceh, he suggested that I should visit the Aceh Peace Memorial Hall, which I did not previously know about. As a lecturer, he is a regular visitor to the memorial hall and takes his students there. He even called the officers at the memorial hall to let them know that I intended to visit on that day; I was lucky to be able to visit the memorial hall in the last minutes before the opening hours ended.

The local government launched the Aceh Peace Memorial Hall on 23 December 2014. The head of the National *Kesatuan Bangsa, Politik dan Perlindungan Masyarakat* (*Kesbangpolinmas*, National Unity, Politics and Community Protection) in Aceh, Nasir Zalba, stated the objective of the establishment of the memorial hall as follows: “*To ensure that the new generation of Acehnese obtain sufficient information and knowledge of past experiences that were full of glory and bitterness.*”<sup>391</sup> The memorial hall joined similar peace monuments worldwide, such as Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Rwanda, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan, Nanjing Memorial Hall in China, and the Basque Peace Museum in Spain. One significant thing in common among all the above-mentioned peace monuments is that although the monuments are all known as peace monuments, their content is always about war or human tragedy. However, the spirit of all these monuments is to prevent similar events from happening again in the future. In other words, the monuments strive for peace, which is why they call themselves ‘peace monuments.’

The local government built the Tsunami Museum of Aceh on 26 December 2009, and, lately, they have questioned the separate existence of the peace memorial hall as both events are not easily separable. The tsunami was one of the factors that accelerated the peace process between GAM and the government of Indonesia. The approach made by the Indonesian government to GAM during the negotiations was to end the conflict because of the devastation of Aceh after the tsunami, with aid (both national and international) being unable to enter Aceh as long as the war continued in the region. The Indonesian delegation showed images of how terribly the

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<sup>390</sup> Personal Communication on 15 August 2018.

<sup>391</sup> Adi Warsidi, ‘Museum Perdamaian Aceh Diluncurkan’, *Tempo* (Banda Aceh, 24 December 2014) <<https://nasional.tempco.co/read/630530/museum-perdamaian-aceh-diluncurkan/full&view=ok>>.

natural disaster had impacted Aceh to the delegates of GAM in Helsinki when they met for the first time in January 2005. Most of the informants agreed that the tsunami contributed to the speedy process of the peace agreement between GAM and the government of Indonesia. For example, Nurdin stated: “A tsunami, that’s what it’s called, strengthens the belief in peace. Why? First, to facilitate the recovery and reconstruction of Aceh at that time.”<sup>392</sup> Fajran Zain, the head of Aceh Institute and commissioner of the *Komite Kebenaran dan Rekonsiliasi* (KKR, Truth and Reconciliation Commission), mentioned the same: “After the tsunami, dialogue also took place. There were five rounds held in Helsinki until it was agreed in an agreement as of 15 August 2005.”<sup>393</sup>

The memorial hall contains conflict timelines, GAM’s guns and grenades (they handed the weapons to the Aceh Monitoring Mission several years ago), and some pictures from journalists. Among the collection, the image of GAM female combatants (*Inong Bale*) standing in a row with AK-47s in their hands attracts considerable attention from the visitors. See images below:<sup>394</sup>



Figure 17 Shows the timeline of the conflict

<sup>392</sup> Personal Communication on 14 August 2018.

<sup>393</sup> Personal Communication on 13 August 2018.

<sup>394</sup> ‘Mendirikan Museum, Merawat Perdamaian Di Aceh’, *BBC News Indonesia* (Banda Aceh, 14 August 2015) <[https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/multimedia/2015/08/150814\\_galeri\\_aceh\\_perdamaian](https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/multimedia/2015/08/150814_galeri_aceh_perdamaian)>.





Figure 18 Samples of weapons returned from GAM



Figure 19 The images show the women soldiers, known as *Inong Bale*

The memorial hall can answer to the need of educating the young generation and, in general, contribute to a collective memory of the prolonged conflict, which lasted for more than 30 years. The existence of such a memorial hall is beneficial to promoting peace, and it also functions as a research center. Haekal Afifa, the head of the Aceh Civilization Institute, believes that a peace memorial hall is necessary to ensure that future generations do not forget



the history of the conflict. In addition, he believes that the peace memorial hall may serve as a research center for conflict resolution experts from around the world. “*Aceh should serve as an Asian peace experiment. Many Asian countries, including Aceh, are embroiled in violence. They require a paradigm for resolving conflicts.*”<sup>395</sup>

In the future, it can be anticipated that the memorial hall will help to resolve historical disputes about the war between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia. In 1965–66, when mass killings allegedly occurred in various regions in Indonesia against those accused of being communists or ‘left-wing,’ the massacre was triggered by the ‘G30S incident,’ namely the bloody tragedy on 30 September 1965, in which seven high-ranking Indonesian military officers and several other people were killed. The facts of the actual event have not been revealed in over 50 years, the history remains a contested gray area, and people have kept arguing with each other about what happened in those years. Aceh’s Peace Memorial Hall will hopefully help Aceh to avoid making the same mistakes of covering up the truth behind conflicts, such as the events of *Gerakan 30 September Partai Komunis Indonesia* (G30S PKI, the Movement of 30 September Communist Party of Indonesia) and the events that followed (1965–66).

## Commemoration

The people of Aceh commemorate the establishment of GAM on 4 December every year with such positive activities as prayer and charity. Some people use the occasion to educate the younger generation about Aceh’s history and their struggle from the bullet to the ballot.

*4 December is a history that happened in Aceh and is mandatory, cannot be forgotten. It must be remembered and this 4 December, we commemorate, as usual, prayers, meditation, and visiting the cemetery.* (Former Commander of GAM, Muzakir Manaf.)<sup>396</sup>

After the Helsinki MoU the GAM flag was flown several times to commemorate its founding day on 4 December 1976. Even in the same year as the Helsinki peace agreement in 2005, the GAM flag was flown in East Aceh.<sup>397</sup> During this phase, GAM sympathizers were not

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<sup>395</sup> AIN, ‘Aceh Perlu Museum Perdamaian’, *Kompas* (Banda Aceh, 30 January 2017) <[https://www.kompas.id/baca/dikbud/2017/01/30/aceh-perlu-museum-perdamaian?status=sukses\\_login&status\\_login=login](https://www.kompas.id/baca/dikbud/2017/01/30/aceh-perlu-museum-perdamaian?status=sukses_login&status_login=login)>.

<sup>396</sup> Antara; Syailendra Persada, ‘Peringati Ulang Tahun GAM, Eks Kombatant Diminta Ziarah Makam Dan Santuni Yatim’, *Tempo* (Jakarta, 4 December 2020) <<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1411409/peringati-ulang-tahun-gam-eks-kombatant-diminta-ziarah-makam-dan-santuni-yatim>>.

<sup>397</sup> ‘Pengibaran Bendera GAM Di Aceh Timur Sangat Disesalkan’, *Detik News* (Jakarta, 17 August 2005) <<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-423879/pengibaran-bendera-gam-di-aceh-timur-sangat-disesalkan>>.

necessarily reached by commands given by the center (GAM leadership) to sympathizers, since they were outside the command line. Farid Husain himself traveled to the jungle to ensure the commands given by the GAM leadership in Sweden arrived at the ground level in Aceh.<sup>398</sup> Furthermore, incidents of raising the GAM flag occurred again in 2015 (Banda Aceh),<sup>399</sup> 2016 (Aceh Jaya),<sup>400</sup> 2017 (Aceh Jaya), 2019 (Lhokseumawe),<sup>401</sup> and 2020 (Banda Aceh).<sup>402</sup> In this phase, the people's motivation tended to arise from their disappointment with those GAM members who were in power but were not considered to have been striving sufficiently for prosperity in Aceh. For example, Hamdan Cukhop, one of the perpetrators of raising the GAM flag, assessed that his colleagues within the legislature were not showing enough concern about the widows and orphans who were victims of the conflict. He said that the Aceh Party (PA) politicians in parliament had forgotten the suffering during the conflict. Another perpetrator, Teuku Dedi, demanded the Aceh government (at least those GAM members who sit in the government) to implement all the points in the Helsinki agreement. Nonetheless, although the issue was becoming politically 'hotter,' he conveyed his reasoning in a very diplomatic way. He stated that the motivations behind the raising of the GAM flag were nothing but nostalgic reasons. Teuku Dedi, who is a former GAM Regional One Youth Commander, *Meureuhom Daya*, stated: "*We did not report this activity because we only want to commemorate the events that have happened and remember our brothers who died during the conflict. We currently only want Aceh to be prosperous and peaceful.*"<sup>403</sup>

The people of Aceh also celebrate the Helsinki peace agreement every year on 15 August. A year after the MoU signing ceremony in Finland, the local government of Aceh held a massive ceremony for seven days. The event involved 21 regencies in Aceh in various activities such as social charity, a bazaar, a video-screening of Aceh's history, an exhibition, and a performing arts festival. In the closing ceremony, the committee invited four key figures who had

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<sup>398</sup> Farid Husain.

<sup>399</sup> Windy Phagta, 'Mantan GAM Di Banda Aceh Kibarkan Bendera Bulan Bintang', *Liputan 6* (Banda Aceh, 3 August 2015) <<https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/2381301/mantan-gam-di-banda-aceh-kibarkan-bendera-bulan-bintang>>.

<sup>400</sup> 'Pengibaran Bendera GAM Di Aceh "Sekadar Nostalgia"', *BBC News Indonesia*, 6 December 2016 <<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-38205743>>.

<sup>401</sup> Masriadi and Robertus Belarminus(ed), 'Ulang Tahun GAM, Bendera Bulan Bintang Sempat Berkibar Di Lhokseumawe', *Kompas* (Lhokseumawe, 4 December 2019) <<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2019/12/04/19160381/ulang-tahun-gam-bendera-bulan-bintang-semat-berkibar-di-lhokseumawe>>.

<sup>402</sup> Agus Setyadi, 'Milad GAM, Massa Sempat Kibarkan Bendera Bulan Bintang Di Masjid Baiturrahman', *Detik News* (Banda Aceh, 4 December 2020) <<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5281179/milad-gam-massa-semat-kibarkan-bendera-bulan-bintang-di-masjid-baiturrahman>>.

<sup>403</sup> 'Pengibaran Bendera GAM Di Aceh "Sekadar Nostalgia"'.

contributed significantly to the Aceh peace process: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Vice President Jusuf Kalla, former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, and former prime minister of GAM, Malik Mahmud.<sup>404</sup>

Eight years after the peace deal between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia in 2005, the people of Aceh continue to conduct such a celebration every 15 August, like the previous years. As the newspaper reported events, the commemoration consisted of communal prayers at the Grand Mosque of Baiturrahman in Banda Aceh. The event's participants comprised top leaders, local government public servants, and the general people of Aceh.<sup>405</sup>

Anwar Idris, a member of the Indonesian parliament council from Aceh, said that the commemoration of 15 August is usually celebrated with a feast of eating beef together.<sup>406</sup> Nurdin Abdul Rahman, one of the GAM negotiators in Helsinki and regent of Bireuen 2007–12, said that the event is usually about large-scale prayer and remembering the late heroes, who struggled and passed away in the war.<sup>407</sup>

Other than the two celebrations mentioned above, people in several parts of Aceh also hold local commemorations. In Lhokseumawe, people built a monument to remember the tragedy when the military opened fire on the protesters and caused 46 civilians to be killed, ten people to go missing, and 156 other civilians to be injured. People gather annually at this monument and conduct several agendas related to the event. For example, The El Mansyur institution cares for the local community, holds a prayer together for the spirits of the victims, and gives financial support to the orphans every year.<sup>408</sup> Even during the pandemic, the commemoration has been consistently maintained. *Forum Komunikasi Korban dan Keluarga Korban Tragedi Simpang KKA* (FK3T-SP.KKA, the Communication Forum for Victims and Families of the Victims of the KKA Intersection Tragedy) together with *Komunitas Korban Pelanggaran HAM Aceh Utara* (K2HAU, the North Aceh Human Rights Violation Victims Community), and *Forum Aneuk Syuhada Daerah I* (FAS, Martyrs' Children's Forum for Region One)

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<sup>404</sup> Dwi Murti, 'Peringatan Setahun Damai', *Koran Tempo*, 5 August 2006 <<https://koran.tempo.co/read/opini/78659/peringatan-setahun-damai-di-aceh>>.

<sup>405</sup> Adi Warsidi; Imran MA, 'Peringatan Perdamaian Aceh Tanpa "Bulan Bintang"' (Banda Aceh, 16 August 2013) <<https://koran.tempo.co/read/nusa/318669/peringatan-perdamaian-aceh-tanpa-bulan-bintang>>.

<sup>406</sup> Personal Communication on 14 August 2018.

<sup>407</sup> Personal Communication on 14 August 2018.

<sup>408</sup> Saifullah Nurdin and Deni Yusman (Ed), 'Do'a Bersama Dan Santunan Yatim Peringatan Tragedi Simpang KKA', *Kumparan* (Aceh Utara, 3 May 2020) <<https://rri.co.id/lhokseumawe/info-publik/ruang-publik/831537/do-a-bersama-dan-santunan-yatim-peringatan-tragedi-simpang-kka>>.

collectively invite the public to remember 3 May 2021, as an incident of gross human rights violations at the KKA intersection, North Aceh.<sup>409</sup>



Figure 20 The committee led the prayers<sup>410</sup>

## Conclusion

Aceh was, in the first president's words, the 'capital region' in the struggle for the independence of Indonesia. Aceh provided full support in the defense of Indonesia from the Dutch when they tried to reoccupy the country after its independence in 1945. The people of Aceh went to war against the Dutch forces. The people of Aceh sponsored the first airplane of Indonesia for Soekarno to enable his negotiations overseas. Finally, Aceh was the temporary capital city of Indonesia during an emergency when the Dutch captured Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

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<sup>409</sup> '22 Tahun Tragedi Simpang KKA Pemerintah Masih Abaikan Nasib Korban', *Harian Rakyat Aceh* (Aceh Utara, 4 May 2021) <<https://harianrakyataceh.com/2021/05/04/22-tahun-tragedi-simpang-kka-pemerintah-masih-abaikan-nasib-korban/>>.

<sup>410</sup> '22 Tahun Tragedi Simpang KKA Pemerintah Masih Abaikan Nasib Korban'.

Ironically, people outside Aceh could not visit the area for almost 30 years due to the security situation. Aceh had been isolated from the outside world, and had been a designated war zone with what was termed the *Daerah Operasi Militer* (DOM, Military Operation Area). As a Javanese, I heard very little about Aceh and was unaware of the situation. The only thing I knew about Aceh was a national song that contained the word ‘Sabang,’ which was the furthest west city of Indonesia and a part of Aceh province. Only after the authoritarian regime stepped down did the area become more accessible.

In the transition to democracy, the government and GAM began to find new ways of resolving the conflict. However, making peace was not easy as the battle had been prolonged over decades. Habibie had many issues on his hands already when he succeeded power from Suharto, including democratizing Indonesia. However, he made a significant move in Aceh’s favor, lifting the DOM status on 7 August 1998; this marked a significant shift in relations. Ending DOM was just the beginning; it required some follow-up actions. Unfortunately, even by the end of his presidency, Habibie was unable to complete the process. Two presidents after Habibie did not progress the peacebuilding efforts between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia. Instead, the violence in the area intensified and became even more serious.

As an international mediator, the Henri Dunant Center (HDC) from Switzerland managed to bring both parties to agreement on a Humanitarian Pause in 2000. Even though both parties could not reach a full agreement, at least the HDC were able to restrain the parties from fighting through other temporary cease-fires such as the Moratorium on Violence and Peace through Dialogue in 2001. The parties signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in December 2002, a huge step forward. CoHA called for a cease-fire to be followed by demilitarization and discourse on autonomy provisions and provincial elections in Aceh. However, the accord fell apart within a few months, and Indonesian security forces launched their largest-ever military operations in the unstable province.

Aspinal argues that neither GAM nor the government of Indonesia were able to compromise on their fundamental differences. GAM did not want to give up its initial demand for independence, while the government could not tolerate the challenge to Indonesia’s territorial integrity. Katri added that the government did not give GAM any other method of struggle as an alternative to fighting. I argue that the engagement of the locals in the peacebuilding effort was not sufficient. In contrast, the effort led by the vice president of Indonesia, Jusuf Kalla, in 2004–05 explored the involvement of the locals comprehensively. The framework they set up

initially was to make peace with dignity for all, for both GAM and the Indonesian government. The message was quite clear, and the government treated GAM as an equal party in the negotiations.

In talking about the Aceh conflict, we are not only talking about the bloody war, the sadness, the violence, and the sorrow. We can also talk about what the conflict has shaped, both for Aceh and for the Republic of Indonesia. The violence did not take either Indonesia or GAM anywhere, but dialogue and peace have brought Aceh to where it is right now. The struggle of the Aceh people for justice and the right to govern themselves shifted from the bullet to the ballot, where many former combatants are joining the political arena. The Islamic law that the people of Aceh have wanted for years can continue to be implemented and its application improved by taking into account the universal principles of human rights and being open to criticism, according to democratic principles, for the betterment and benefit of the Acehnese as it is written in the MoU between the government of Indonesia and GAM in 2005 chapter one article four. Finally, the *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Aceh Custom Assembly) helps to preserve the traditions of Aceh. At the same time, the MAA helps resolve the daily problems of residents in their neighborhood (*mukim* and *gampong*) with the principle of kinship.

## CONCLUSION

The title of this doctoral thesis starts with the word ‘local.’ This term implies both the values and the actors. In the case of Ambon, local values are firmly in place and local actors use all their creative potential to craft peace. Beginning with *pela* and *gandong*, the relationship between villages which is ancestor-and-agreement-based, the people of Ambon have strived to regain their previous condition: one in which people did not see religion as a barrier to interacting extensively with each other. Eventually, *pela* and *gandong* inspired the people of Ambon to develop such practices further. Family-related expressions which are often mentioned among the people of Ambon to spread peace in the region include: *katong samua basudara* – ‘we are all brothers’; *sagu salempeng dibagi dua* – ‘brothers divide sago into two, so that each gets half’; *potong di kuku rasa di daging* – ‘when you cut the nails it will be felt in the body,’ meaning ‘as siblings we feel pain when our siblings are hurt’; and *ain ni ain* – ‘we belong to each other as brothers to help and love each other.’ In the case of Sampit, the Dayak local people conducted an assembly which was responded to with a Madurese local people’s assembly in the refugee camp. Intense efforts and points of contact have been made between the Dayak and Madurese to find ways to live together again peacefully. Finally, the government of Indonesia was able to make peace in Aceh by involving the local people and valuing Aceh local traditions. The mission that was carried out by the Indonesian government was described by Jusuf Kalla as ‘conflict resolution with dignity for all’ (both for the Indonesian government and *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or Free Aceh Movement – GAM).

Historically, Indonesia has experienced several kinds of violence, predominantly initiated by whoever was in authority – from the kingdom era, through the period of colonization until the dictatorship era. Max Weber’s theory concerning the state’s striving to establish a monopoly on violence is often confirmed by the analysis of conflicts in the different periods, and sometimes the state seems to have been behind what appeared to be inter-communitarian violence at first sight. Ariel Heryanto, an Indonesian scholar, further elaborated on the state violence in Indonesia with the term ‘state terrorism.’ However, the local traditions that supported the peacebuilding efforts should not be neglected or their impact minimized. Based on the collective memory of the people of Ambon, some of the traditions represent inter-community links in terms of symbolic kinship, referring to the members of different groups as brothers and sisters. Ambon has a unique social system where villages have a special relationship with other towns known as *pela* and *gandong*. *Pela* means agreement, and *gandong* has the meaning of ‘womb.’ Hence, having the relationship of *pela* implies that people are

brothers, based on the oath, while having the relationship of *gandong* means that people are brothers due to having the same ancestors. In the case of Sampit, people believe that the king of Sampit visited Madura island and connected the two kingdoms in a relationship in the past, because of which Madurese were not considered to be outsiders in the land of Sampit. The Dayak and Madurese peoples used to coexist in the kingdom era, and they can continue living together in the future. Finally, from a historical perspective, Aceh was an influential kingdom, and was the last region in the archipelago that fell to the Dutch in the 1900s. Furthermore, Aceh contributed significantly to the defense of Indonesia's independence when the Dutch attempted to reclaim authority over Indonesia. Aceh had then an opportunity to be an independent country, but chose to be part of Indonesia instead. Indonesia failed to recognize this history, particularly the significance of Aceh to the Republic of Indonesia in its early establishment. Much later, the government came to value the local contribution more and involved local people in the peace resolution process, until they finally reached an agreement in 2005.

The next two words in the title of this dissertation are 'conflict transformation.' This term implies that conflict has an ability to transform. In this context, it has transformed society in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh. During the transition to democracy between 1998 and 2005, bloody and violent outbreaks of conflict were experienced in many parts of Indonesia. Other than the resulting pain, loss of many lives, and sadness, we can also see a significant transformation that changed several aspects of society. This thesis argues for a tangible difference between conflict and violence. Violence does not transform into anything positive, but conflict may do so. Therefore, when the dissertation elaborates on the positive aspects and outcomes, it always refers to conflict, not violence.

I chose to dwell mainly on the positive sides of the conflict in order to focus more on the peacebuilding initiatives and to foster optimism. This spirit is in line with the approach of John Paul Lederach concerning a perspective on conflict, according to which it is a daily phenomenon that opens new opportunities. In this dissertation, the three case studies I have examined confirm the main approaches I used: positive and negative peace by Johan Galtung; conflict transformation by John Paul Lederach; and reconciliation by Diah Kusumaningrum. I have observed that conflict in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh transformed society in many ways. Ambon has revitalized the old traditions (local values) through revival and innovation in order to encourage peacebuilding. Sampit has invented a new method of conflict resolution through Dayak customary law. Finally, Aceh transformed combatants into politicians who struggle using the ballot instead of the bullet.



The term ‘reconciliation’ in the title of this dissertation accommodates the ideas of negative and positive peace by Johan Galtung, conflict transformation by John Paul Lederach, and local forms of reconciliation by Diah Kusumaningrum. When the war stopped, the problems were not yet over. The declaration of peace may have ended the massive incidence of violence, but it was only the beginning of a long reconciliation process. The shift was from negative peace to positive peace. This idea strengthens the argument of the vital role of the locals; they are the ones who stay in the area to normalize the conditions which had led to the outbreak of the war. We can even say that the most prolonged process in the peacebuilding effort is the reconciliation period. This process was more informal, slower, and took much longer. The locals in Ambon started the process of reconciliation after the government facilitated the Malino II peace agreement between the parties. Madurese began to set foot again in Sampit and interact with Dayak people after several deals were made between them. GAM ex-combatants and the people of Aceh (both those in favor of GAM and those not) returned to living together peacefully as one society. They struggled – using a ballot instead of a bullet – in the political arena, within the framework of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.

Finally, when I decided to use the words ‘in Indonesia’ in the title of this dissertation to show the setting in general, I argued the following reasons. First, the three case studies represent two types of communal violence in Indonesia based on Zulfan Tadjoeddin’s previous study: ethnic violence, which includes religious violence, in Ambon and Sampit; and center–periphery conflict as experienced in Aceh. Second, as I focus on violent clashes that happened during the transition to democracy (1998–2005), these three areas represent the geographical aspect of the representation: Ambon represents the eastern part of Indonesia; Sampit the middle; and Aceh represents the western point of Indonesia. Therefore, the three case studies give us a comprehensive overview of the issue of community violence all over the country.

To sum up, the research found that local values and local actors played a significant role in transforming the conflict in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh. Local women initiated a movement called *Gerakan Peduli Perempuan (GPP, the Concerned Women Movement)*. Local journalists teamed up between Christians and Muslims to work on peace journalism during the violent conflict; this was the first example of such journalism in Indonesia. Locals worked underground to maintain communication between them and gradually promoted peacebuilding between the two groups, Christian and Muslim. The traditions of *pela* and *gandong* inspired the locals to be creative and innovative in making peace in new ways, such as the renewal of

*pela* and *gandong* annually and the establishment of *pela* between schools in the Christian community and schools in Muslim residential areas.

In the case of Sampit, local leaders established a Dayak traditional assembly to address problems. Local leaders of the Madurese community in the refugee camps responded with a similar assembly. Madurese and Dayak youth kept communicating and conducted missions returning Madurese refugees to Sampit in several phases. The Dayak community revisited the peace agreement of 1894 named Tumbang Anoi, and promoted peace using local values: *dimana bumi dipijak disitu langit dijunjung* – ‘where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld,’ meaning ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ The Madurese revisited the philosophical expression *rampak naong* – ‘shady and peaceful like a tree,’ where the Madurese make space for everybody regardless of their differences. A similar term is also found in the Dayak tradition: *huma betang* – ‘a traditional Dayak “big house” that can host many people with their differences.’

In the context of Aceh, the Indonesian government, through Farid Husain as an informal negotiator, made the right decision by involving the locals to gain the trust of the GAM leadership abroad. Husain connected one contact to another, forming a chain of local people, which led him to the GAM leadership in Sweden. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government valued the locals (both the Aceh people in general and GAM) in the process, which was described as ‘a peace mission with dignity for all.’ During the negotiations, the Indonesian government used expressions from the Aceh local language several times in order to show respect and value to the local people.

Although this doctoral thesis does not deny the role of external factors and influences in resolving the conflict – as I believe that multiple factors contributed to the attainment of peace in these three case studies – this research, however, found the role of the locals (both values and actors) to be prominent in bringing to an end the conflict in the region.

Conflict transformed society in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh. The conflict turned Ambon into a music city, where young Ambonese could gather despite their differences (including religious differences), to be creative and productive in the arts and culture. Ambon now hosts peace activists under more than 200 official institutions. Ambon is the birthplace of peace journalism in Indonesia under the supervision of *Asosiasi Jurnalis Indonesia* (AJI, Journalists’ Association of Indonesia). Finally, the local government restored the kingdom system in Ambon, sharing leadership with the village head in managing the town together.

We can now see the new face of Sampit, where Madurese people are back in the region, but they are no longer exclusive as they were before. *Dewan Adat Dayak* (DAD, Dayak Customary Council) has been established formally from the village to the provincial level, and it is called *Majelis Adat Dayak Nasional* or the National Dayak Traditional Council at the national level. Sampit and all cities in Kalimantan established a customary law that is legally binding for people who live in the region. At the same, DAD facilitates dialogue between conflicting parties, resolves conflict immediately using the customary law, and prevents conflict from becoming violent and more serious.

The conflict in Aceh transformed the GAM members from using bullets in the war zone to using ballots in the political arena. Aceh established *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Aceh Traditional Assembly), from the lowest level in the village right up to the provincial level, which preserves and develops Acehnese traditions and resolves conflict between individuals in the village and one structure above it, *muqim*. Islamic law in Aceh is implemented under Indonesian democratic principles, where it must not conflict either with positive law in Indonesia, or with democratically approved human rights, and can be criticized, evaluated, and refined.

Furthermore, local people must undergo a period of post-conflict reconciliation, which usually takes much time, using the local values. After the Malino II peace agreement, the local Ambonese community attempted to normalize relations between themselves. Community leaders from both sides (Muslims and Christians) joined together in an organization called *Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku* (LAIM, Maluku Interfaith Institute). From this organization, a network of Peace Provocateurs was born whose job is to dispel provocations and negative narratives. Not only that, other organizations have also been born with the same spirit, namely post-conflict reconciliation. In addition, the revitalization and innovation of local values that started from *pela* and *gandong* also participated in overseeing the post-conflict reconciliation process in Ambon.

In Sampit, the reconciliation process was carried out with intensive communication being carried out between community leaders from both sides. Youths from both sides (Madurese and Dayak) also cooperated in maintaining the reconciliation process by continuing to communicate, and resolving problems or misunderstandings through dialogue. Further, various cultural events were held to bring the different groups together to interact with each other, including annual events such as *Mapas Lewu*. In addition, the locals promoted local values and

peace narratives such as Tumbang Anoi (an old Dayak peace agreement from 1894); *dimana bumi dipijak disitu langit dijunjung* – ‘where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld,’ meaning ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’; *rampak naong* – ‘shady and peaceful like a tree’; and *huma betang* – ‘a traditional Dayak “big house” that can host many people with their differences.’

In Aceh, the *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (KPA, Aceh Transition Committee) consists of locals in order to ensure the transition runs accordingly. However, both the KPA and the government of Indonesia worked cooperatively with the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), which consisted of ASEAN and European Union representatives, in monitoring the implementation of the Helsinki MoU for a period of fifteen months. KPA itself has a tough task in the form of mentoring ex-combatants so that they can live normal lives again in the community. In addition, KPA provides political lessons to assist the Acehnese people, especially former GAM members, in their new struggle, competing in the political arena.

The violent conflicts in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh have already ended, but local communities continue to make efforts in peacebuilding and reconciliation as they are a never-ending process. Negative peace may have ended, but efforts to create positive peace continue to shape many aspects of life. The formal peace agreement might stop the war, but the reconciliation process continues naturally, daily, and culturally. Finally, the government may have been behind the clashes between communities, and the cause of tremendous human tragedy, but the resilience of the people in their striving for peace is always a greater force.

### Contributions and strengths of this research

Some people may still consider that the task of conflict resolution corresponds to the state and authorities using a military, or otherwise violent, approach. However, this notion has been questioned internationally, as it has become increasingly obvious that states are no longer the only relevant actors in international relations, if they ever were. The phenomenon of ‘the local turn’ gave international organizations such as the United Nations a chance to reconsider and to engage locals in conflict resolution and development. This research predominantly explores the critical role of local actors and values in peacebuilding initiatives.

Most scholars now agree that locals play an essential role in resolving conflict. This research shows in detail what roles local people play in this zone. In these three case studies we have observed how local communities struggled to put aside their differences, and connected with each other through the common ground that they could find in their local traditions. People in

Ambon renewed their sacred and traditional brotherhood through the bonds known as *pela* and *gandong*. The local people of Sampit revisited the history where they connected with the Madurese through their kingdom's historical links to the Madurese kingdom. Finally, GAM members in Aceh could talk heart-to-heart with an informal delegation of the Indonesian government involving the local values shared between them, which led to the historic Memorandum of Understanding between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia in 2005. Farid Husain, the informal delegate of Indonesia, acted in concert with the locals in forging connections between the Indonesian government and GAM. One of the local values in Aceh, *pemulia jamek* – 'welcoming the guest' – enabled an environment which encouraged Husain's goodwill and helped to clear the way to meet local people, who led him closer and closer to the leadership of GAM. Instead of formal communication, he chose to approach each individual of GAM leadership personally, some even through their families. Other than the local Aceh values that the Indonesian government used in the dialogue, the dialogue itself would never have happened if Husain had not involved the local people in making a path for him to reach the leadership of GAM.

This research contributes to raising people's awareness about the vital role of local people in peacebuilding. Three case studies confirm that locals played an essential role in making peace in their region, along with the contribution of non-locals, in accordance with the Lederach pyramid, where every level of society has a potential role in resolving conflict. In Ambon, the government sent their informal envoys to the field to identify not only the problems but also the local values that might help to unite the communities on common ground. The social capital that locals in this region have access to helped them to regain their mutual relationship. *Pela* and *gandong*, the traditional concept of relationship among the people of Ambon, reminded them of their old tradition of being brothers and sisters under this sacred tradition.

This research will encourage the local communities to sustain peacebuilding initiatives in the long term through the culture sector. Local cultures, for example in the form of cultural events held regularly, provide opportunities for the nurturing of a diverse society through frequent meetings. Art and culture speak a universal language, regardless of differences such as race, religion, and perspectives. Logically speaking, the more people are able to meet in person, the more they can prevent the growth of prejudice and stereotypes. In the context of Ambon, Christians and Muslims need to meet more often as they need to gain the trust of one another after the deadly conflict (1999–2002), which isolated their residences from each other for years. *Panas pela*, or 'renewal of the relationship between villages,' is held annually in Ambon. In

Sampit, a stereotype of Madurese people has formed that they are rude, criminal, and exclusive. *Mapas Lewu*, a traditional ceremony celebrating nature, followed by a cultural festival, is conducted every year in Sampit. Gatherings where both Dayak and Madurese can meet one another are necessary in the context of building trust. Finally, in Aceh, a majority of GAM members had been guerillas for decades and lived in the jungle, while the rest of Aceh had been isolated both nationally and internationally for the same amount of years. The development of art and culture are essential to uniting GAM members, the Acehnese in general, and non-Acehnese (especially Javanese) to live in harmony in the land of Aceh. *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Aceh Traditional Assembly) preserves and develops the cultural traditions from the lowest structure in the society (village level), called the *Majelis Adat Gampong* (MAG, Village Traditional Assembly).

### Directions for future research

Many people advised me that my choice of dissertation topic would remain with me for the rest of my life as an academic. Previously I did not take this seriously, because I considered my PhD to be not significantly different from my Master's thesis, but I now consider that I was wrong. This dissertation is not the same as the Master's thesis. After an intense exposure to the theories within the dissertation, I feel as though I can apply them to the phenomena that surround me.

For example, when the Military Junta of Myanmar seized power through a military coup on 1 February 2021, while I was writing this thesis, I could directly relate the event to Weber's theory of the state's monopoly on violence. Furthermore, when many people criticized the ASEAN special summit's invitation to Military General Min Aung Hlaing, it seemed like a confirmation of the legitimacy of the general as the head of the state. However, the phenomenon reminded me of Galtung's theory, where he suggests involving all conflicting parties in the negotiations.

Finally, from what I have learned from this thesis, I think ASEAN should involve the local, both values and actors, in making efforts toward peacebuilding. In this case, ASEAN should maintain the involvement of institutions, but yield to a more personal approach. ASEAN as an institution is no different than a state in that it constructs and perpetuates a distance from the public; peacebuilding efforts, however, should put aside institutional distance, and conflicting parties should focus on human relations, as this speaks universally.

In the future, similar studies can expand further to include more conflicts in Indonesia during the same period, between 1998 and 2005, such as Ketapang, Poso, Sambas, Ternate, and several cases of violence toward ethnic Chinese in Java. I realized that I knew nothing about Indonesia before this research as I had lived most of my life in Java only. I have only recently felt the richness of Indonesian cultures outside Java island, through conducting this research. Hence, the knowledge and experience I have derived from these three case studies has made me even more curious to learn about other cultures and potential case studies in different parts of Indonesia.

Peacebuilding efforts are not only needed when there is a conflict; the local communities need to keep working on them continuously as anticipatory or preventive initiatives. It would, therefore, be interesting to further analyze peacebuilding efforts established during the conflict that continue to create a culture of peace after the war. It may be found that there will be variations, such as method and style, during and after a violent confrontation. For example, in Ambon, some joint teams worked quietly on peacebuilding during the conflict because the atmosphere was too dangerous even to say the words 'making peace.' However, after the crisis, the teams could work openly to solve misunderstandings. The director of the Interfaith Body of Maluku cited as an example the image of a Muslim girl (surrounded by many Christians in a village where the majority of the population is Christian) having gone viral, with a negative narrative and captions accompanying it. A team quickly searched for the girl and were able to establish the facts of the matter. The team found the girl thriving and healthy, and made a video with the girl and told the real story about the picture. Furthermore, the team ensured the factual image went viral again in order to counter the previous misleading image.

## Recommendations

I think I know what would happen if all stakeholders, including local governments, understood the vital role of local values in peacebuilding initiatives. I think people in the region could reduce the risk of conflict violence, themselves. Government, a legitimate institution that holds authority, can promote these initiatives even further.

Instead of confining themselves to resolving a violent conflict once it happens, people should work more toward peacekeeping efforts or prevention activities. Learning from what the colonizers, Soekarno, and Suharto did to the locals, any further misrecognizing or even dismantling of the local traditions would make society fragile and prone to clashes. Soekarno failed to respect the Islamic values embedded in the society of Aceh, and he mistreated Aceh

as the modal capital of the country. Instead of allowing the coexistence of a village head alongside a king, Suharto abolished the system of small kings in Ambon, changing the term ‘kingdom’ into ‘village’ and dispensing with kings in favor of village heads, as he preferred to promote a uniformity of all customs across Indonesia. Suharto misrecognized the diversity of Indonesia, and failed to see that the function of kings in small kingdoms was different from that of a village head. Finally, in the case of Sampit, both the Dutch and Suharto encouraged massive migration of the Madurese to Central Kalimantan to work on plantations and farms, while ignoring the special relationship between the Dayak people and nature, expecting them to adapt without resistance.

Some areas in Indonesia, including Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh, are prone to recurring conflict in the future. Therefore, all stakeholders should undertake extra work to prevent similar outbursts of violence from happening again in the future. People tend to forget what they have experienced before, and small provocations can result in recurring violence in the region. In May 2019, Muzakir Manaf, ex-commander of GAM, made a controversial statement about a referendum. As an ex-commander of GAM and the head of the Aceh Political Party, the news was influential and had the potential to create public chaos.<sup>411</sup> In February 2021, a Madurese man killed a Dayak woman causing public anger.<sup>412</sup> Suddenly, people remembered what had happened in 2001, a bloody and tragic, violent ethnic conflict between the Dayak people and Madurese. On 23 January and 11 September 2011, clashes between two groups – Christian and Muslim – recurred, which were similar to those that had previously happened at the end of 1999 in Ambon.<sup>413</sup> Fortunately, various parties worked quickly to calm the situation down and settled the problem immediately. However, such cases could be avoided if all the stakeholders focused even more effectively on the system of prevention.

Working on preventive actions is not without challenges. In a segregated (between Muslim and Christian) residential area of Ambon, the meetings between the two groups are relatively limited, occurring only at formal occasions such as offices and markets. The stereotype of a violent culture being linked to the Dayaks and the label of being ‘the loser in the battle’ being

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<sup>411</sup> ‘Serukan Minta Aceh Referendum, Muzakir Manaf Minta Maaf Dan Cabut Pernyataannya, Simak Videonya’, *Tribun News* (Medan, 12 June 2019) <<https://medan.tribunnews.com/2019/06/12/serukan-minta-aceh-referendum-muzakir-manaf-minta-maaf-dan-cabut-pernyataannya-simak-videonya?page=3>>.

<sup>412</sup> Abul Muamar, ‘Tampang MM, Pemuda Mesum Yang Membunuh Gadis Dayak Medelin Sumual Dengan Tikaman Di Leher’, *Indozone*, 10 February 2021 <<https://www.indozone.id/news/N4snb9Z/tampang-mm-pemuda-mesum-yang-membunuh-gadis-dayak-medelin-sumual-dengan-tikaman-di-leher/read-all>>.

<sup>413</sup> Poltak Partogi Nainggolan, ‘Mengapa Konflik Berulang Terjadi Di Kota Ambon? Tinjauan Demografi Dan Keamanan Atas Konflik Horizontal Perkotaan’, *Politica*, 3.2 (2012), 163–93.



attached to the Madurese will not help relations between the groups. GAM's prolonged struggle and the domination by ex-members of GAM of local government positions in Aceh can trigger tensions anytime when dissatisfaction is felt toward the central government. Therefore, all stakeholders must work together to strengthen peacebuilding efforts, especially those in the category of prevention.

One of the things we should consider as a prevention initiative is the improvement of the monuments in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh. The government and locals should renovate the peace gong in Ambon, the peace monument in Sampit, and the peace memorial hall in Aceh to serve their purposes better. These monuments should join the global memorial trend seen at places such as the Gernika Peace Museum in Spain and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Japan, which actively engage with society through exciting projects and programs. Like these memorials, the ones in Ambon, Sampit, and Aceh should serve as the primary reminder for all people about what happened there. They should not, in the future, return to the same situation again, ever.

When I was a high school student, the library was a place for borrowing books and for study. Conditions there did not encourage any enthusiasm in the students or general public to come and study at the library. Nowadays, the library has evolved into an interesting place for multiple purposes. I can come to the library to watch a film, engage in discussion in a small room, use computers and the Internet, and there is even a place to transit between classes. With this new revolution, people find the library a supportive and comfortable place to learn.

The same recommendation goes to the places of commemoration in each case study. In this respect, I would like to suggest Gernika's example of conducting an annual commemoration of the bombing, which is the event illustrated by Pablo Picasso's legendary painting. Gernika refreshes everyone's memory about the bombing annually through a program which they change dynamically every year. Gernika includes the Gernika Peace Museum within this annual event, where everyone is free to visit the museum during this commemoration. I was amazed and touched when visiting the museum as I could vividly imagine the period of the bombing through the recreated house within the museum, with recorded audio amplifying the illustration. Finally, when the show was over, they displayed a case of transparent glass full of original wreckage from the bombing.

As I write this dissertation, there is center-periphery violent conflict still happening in another part of Indonesia, Papua. This country's latest shocking news was the killing of the Papua

branch of the National Intelligence Body in Papua on 24 April 2021. The lessons learned from Aceh are helpful as a reference for policymakers in handling the case of Papua. A heavily militarized approach did not succeed in getting the Indonesian government and GAM to reach peace. Instead, dialogue and the involvement of locals and their local values have transformed Aceh into a peaceful region for more than a decade. Furthermore, ‘dignity for all’ was a successful recipe for Jusuf Kalla and the team in resolving the religious conflicts of Poso and Ambon, and the center–periphery conflict of Aceh.

Thinking about Papua made me realize how little I know about this region. It reminded me of how little I knew about Aceh during the period of violent conflict. At the same time, my mind started to imagine how excited I will be, visiting and exploring the local values of Papua in the future. I hope my dream comes true.

## CONCLUSIÓN (en español)

El título de esta tesis doctoral comienza con la palabra “local”, término que implica tanto a los valores como a los actores. En el caso de Ambon, los valores locales están firmemente arraigados y los actores locales utilizan todo su potencial creativo para construir la paz. Empezando por el *pela* y el *gandong*, la relación entre pueblos basada en los ancestros y en los acuerdos, los habitantes de Ambon se han esforzado por recuperar su condición previa: una en la que la gente no veía la religión como una barrera para interactuar estrechamente con los demás. Con el tiempo, *pela* y *gandong* inspiraron a los habitantes de Ambon a desarrollar aún más estas prácticas. Las expresiones relacionadas con la familia más utilizadas entre los habitantes de Ambon para promover la paz en la región son: *katong samua basudara*, “todos somos hermanos”; *sagu salempeng dibagi dua*, “los hermanos dividen el sagú en dos, para que cada uno reciba la mitad”; *potong di kuku rasa di daging*, “cuando se cortan las uñas se siente en el cuerpo”, lo que significa que “como hermanos sentimos dolor cuando nuestros hermanos están heridos”; y *ain ni ain*, “nos pertenecemos como hermanos para ayudarnos y amarnos”. En el caso de Sampit, la población local dayak celebró una asamblea que fue respondida con otra reunión similar por parte de la población local madurese en el campo de refugiados. Se han realizado intensos esfuerzos y se han establecido puntos de encuentro entre los dayak y los madureses para hallar la manera de volver a convivir pacíficamente. Finalmente, el gobierno de Indonesia ha alcanzado la paz en Aceh implicando a la población local y valorando las tradiciones locales. La misión llevada a cabo por el gobierno indonesio fue descrita por Jusuf Kalla como “resolución del conflicto con dignidad para todos” (tanto para el gobierno indonesio como para el *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* o Movimiento por la Libertad de Aceh – GAM).

Históricamente, Indonesia ha experimentado diversos tipos de violencia, iniciada predominantemente por quien ejercía la autoridad, desde la época de los reinos hasta la de la dictadura, pasando por el periodo de la colonización. La teoría de Max Weber sobre el esfuerzo del Estado por establecer el monopolio de la violencia se confirma con frecuencia con el análisis de los conflictos en los distintos periodos, y en ocasiones el Estado parece haber sido responsable de lo que a primera vista parecía ser violencia intercomunitaria. En esta línea, Ariel Heryanto, un académico indonesio, profundizó en la violencia estatal en Indonesia con el término “terrorismo de Estado”. Sin embargo, no hay que descuidar las tradiciones locales que apoyaron los esfuerzos de construcción de la paz, ni tampoco minimizar su impacto. Basadas en la memoria colectiva de los habitantes de Ambon, algunas tradiciones representan vínculos

intercomunitarios en términos de parentesco simbólico, refiriéndose a los miembros de los diferentes grupos como hermanos y hermanas. Ambon tiene un sistema social único en el que las aldeas mantienen una relación especial con otros pueblos, conocida como *pela* y *gandong*. *Pela* significa acuerdo y *gandong* puede traducirse como “vientre”. Por lo tanto, tener la relación de *pela* implica que las personas son hermanas basándose en un juramento, mientras que tener la relación de *gandong* significa que las personas son hermanas debido a que tienen los mismos antepasados. En el caso de Sampit, la gente cree que el rey visitó la isla de Madura y conectó ambos reinos mediante algún tipo de relación, por lo que los madureses no fueron considerados forasteros en la tierra de Sampit. Los pueblos dayak y madurese coexistían en la época de los reinos y, por lo tanto, pueden seguir viviendo juntos en el futuro. Desde una perspectiva histórica, Aceh fue un reino influyente y la última región del archipiélago que cayó en manos de los holandeses en la década de 1900. Además, contribuyó de forma significativa a la defensa de la independencia de Indonesia cuando los holandeses intentaron reclamar su autoridad sobre el país. Tuvo entonces la oportunidad de ser un país independiente, pero prefirió formar parte de Indonesia. Esta no reconoció su historia, en particular la importancia de Aceh en el nacimiento de la República de Indonesia. Mucho más tarde, el gobierno empezó a valorar más la contribución local e involucró a su población en el proceso de resolución de la paz, llegando finalmente a un acuerdo en el año 2005.

Las siguientes palabras del título de esta disertación son “transformación del conflicto”. Este término implica que el conflicto tiene capacidad de cambio. En este contexto, ha transformado la sociedad en Ambon, Sampit y Aceh. Durante la transición a la democracia, entre 1998 y 2005, se produjeron violentos y sangrientos conflictos en muchas áreas de Indonesia. Además del dolor, la pérdida de muchas vidas y la tristeza, también podemos detectar una transformación que cambió de forma significativa varios aspectos de la sociedad indonesia. Esta tesis defiende una diferenciación tangible entre los conceptos de conflicto y violencia. La violencia no se transforma en nada positivo, mientras que el conflicto sí puede llegar a hacerlo. Por lo tanto, cuando esta tesis desarrolla los aspectos y resultados positivos, siempre se refiere al conflicto, no a la violencia.

He optado por detenerme principalmente en los aspectos positivos del conflicto, centrándome más en las iniciativas de construcción de la paz y participando en el fomento del optimismo. Este espíritu está en consonancia con el enfoque de John Paul Lederach sobre una perspectiva del conflicto a partir de la cual este se entiende como un fenómeno cotidiano que abre nuevas oportunidades. En esta tesis, los tres estudios de caso que he examinado confirman los

principales enfoques que he utilizado: la paz positiva y negativa de Johan Galtung, la transformación del conflicto de John Paul Lederach y la reconciliación de Diah Kusumaningrum. He observado que el conflicto en Ambon, Sampit y Aceh transformó la sociedad de muchas maneras: Ambon ha revitalizado las viejas tradiciones (valores locales) mediante el renacimiento y la innovación para fomentar la construcción de la paz, Sampit ha inventado un nuevo método de resolución de conflictos a través del Derecho Consuetudinario Dayak y, por último, Aceh ha transformado a los combatientes en políticos que luchan utilizando las urnas en lugar de las balas.

El término “reconciliación” en el título de esta tesis da cabida a las ideas de paz negativa y positiva de Johan Galtung, de transformación de conflictos de John Paul Lederach y de formas locales de reconciliación de Diah Kusumaningrum. Cuando cesó la guerra, los problemas aún no habían terminado. La declaración de paz pudo haber puesto fin a la incidencia masiva de la violencia, pero solo fue el comienzo de un largo proceso de reconciliación. Se pasó de una paz negativa a una paz positiva. Esta idea refuerza el argumento del papel fundamental de los lugareños; ellos son los que se quedan en la zona para normalizar las circunstancias que previamente habían llevado al estallido de la guerra. Incluso podemos decir que el proceso más prolongado en el esfuerzo de construcción de la paz es el periodo de reconciliación. Este proceso fue más informal, más lento y llevó mucho más tiempo. Los habitantes de Ambon iniciaron el viaje hacia la reconciliación después de que el gobierno facilitara el acuerdo de paz Malino II entre ambas partes. Los madureses empezaron a pisar de nuevo Sampit y a relacionarse con los dayak después de que se hicieran varios tratos entre ellos. Los ex combatientes del GAM y los habitantes de Aceh (tanto los que estaban a favor del GAM como los que no) volvieron a convivir pacíficamente como una sola sociedad. Lucharon —utilizando las urnas en lugar de las balas— en el ámbito político, en el marco del Estado unitario de la República de Indonesia.

Por último, cuando decidí utilizar las palabras “en Indonesia” en el título de esta tesis para mostrar el escenario general, argumenté las siguientes razones. En primer lugar, los tres estudios de caso representan los dos tipos de violencia comunitaria en Indonesia descritos en el estudio previo de Zulfan Tadjoeddin: la violencia étnica, que incluye la violencia religiosa, en Ambon y Sampit, y el conflicto centro-periferia, tal y como se vivió en Aceh. En segundo lugar, dado que me centro en los enfrentamientos violentos ocurridos durante la transición a la democracia (1998-2005), estas tres zonas suponen una representación geográfica de todo el territorio: Ambon refleja la parte oriental de Indonesia, Sampit el centro y Aceh el extremo

occidental de Indonesia. Por lo tanto, los tres estudios de caso nos dan una visión global del problema de la violencia comunitaria en todo el país.

En resumen, la investigación ha revelado que los valores y los actores locales han desempeñado un papel importante en la transformación del conflicto en Ambon, Sampit y Aceh. Las mujeres locales iniciaron un movimiento llamado *Gerakan Perempuan Peduli* (GPP, Movimiento de Mujeres Preocupadas). Los periodistas cristianos y musulmanes locales se asociaron para trabajar en un periodismo de paz durante el violento conflicto; el primer ejemplo de este tipo de periodismo en Indonesia. Los locales trabajaron en la clandestinidad para mantener la comunicación entre ellos y promovieron gradualmente la construcción de la paz entre los dos grupos, cristianos y musulmanes. Las tradiciones *pela* y *gandong* inspiraron a los lugareños a ser creativos e innovadores para construir nuevas formas de paz, como la renovación anual del *pela* y el *gandong* o el establecimiento del *pela* entre las escuelas de la comunidad cristiana y las escuelas de las zonas residenciales musulmanas.

En el caso de Sampit, los líderes locales celebraron una asamblea tradicional dayak para abordar los problemas existentes. Los líderes de la comunidad maduresa en los campos de refugiados respondieron con una asamblea similar. Los jóvenes madureses y dayak mantuvieron la comunicación y realizaron misiones de retorno de los refugiados madureses a Sampit en varias fases. La comunidad dayak retomó el acuerdo de paz llamado *Tumbang Anoi* en 1894 y promovió la paz utilizando los valores locales, como *dimana bumi dipijak disitu langit dijunjung*, “donde se pisa la tierra, allí se sostiene el cielo”, que puede traducirse como “cuando estés en Roma, haz lo que hacen los romanos”. Los madureses retomaron la expresión filosófica *rampak naong*, “sombreado y pacífico como un árbol”, en la que los madureses dan cabida a todo el mundo con independencia de sus diferencias. Un término similar se encuentra también en la tradición dayak *huma betang*, “una ‘casa grande’ tradicional dayak que puede acoger a muchas personas con sus diferencias”.

En el contexto de Aceh, el gobierno indonesio, a través de Farid Husain como negociador informal, tomó la correcta decisión de involucrar a la población local para ganarse la confianza de los dirigentes del GAM en el extranjero. Husain puso en contacto a diferentes individuos, formando una cadena de gente local que le llevó a la dirección del GAM en Suecia. Mientras tanto, el gobierno indonesio valoró a los locales (tanto al pueblo de Aceh en general como al GAM) en el proceso, que fue descrito como “una misión de paz con dignidad para todos”.

Durante las negociaciones, el gobierno indonesio utilizó varias veces expresiones en la lengua local de Aceh para mostrar respeto y valor hacia la población local.

Aunque esta tesis doctoral no niega el papel de los factores y las influencias externas en la resolución del conflicto —ya que creo que fueron múltiples los elementos que contribuyeron a la consecución de la paz en estos tres estudios de caso—, esta investigación, sin embargo, encontró que el papel de los locales (tanto hablando de valores como de actores) fue fundamental para poner fin al conflicto en la región.

El conflicto transformó la sociedad de Ambon, Sampit y Aceh. Convirtió Ambon en una ciudad musical, donde los jóvenes podían reunirse a pesar de sus diferencias (incluidas las religiosas) para ser creativos y productivos en las artes y la cultura. En la actualidad, Ambon acoge a activistas por la paz en más de 200 instituciones oficiales. Es la cuna del periodismo de paz en Indonesia, bajo la supervisión de la *Asosiasi Jurnalis Indonesia* (AJI, Asociación de Periodistas de Indonesia). Por último, el gobierno local restauró el sistema de reinos en Ambon, compartiendo el liderazgo con el jefe de la aldea para la gestión conjunta de la ciudad.

Ahora podemos ver la nueva cara de Sampit, donde los madureses han vuelto a la región, pero ya no son exclusivos como lo eran antes. El *Dewan Adat Dayak* (DAD, Consejo Tradicional Dayak) se ha establecido formalmente desde la aldea hasta el nivel provincial y, a nivel nacional, recibe el nombre de *Majelis Adat Dayak Nasional* o Consejo Tradicional Dayak Nacional. Sampit y todas las ciudades de Kalimantan han establecido un derecho consuetudinario legalmente vinculante para las personas que viven en la región. Al mismo tiempo, el DAD facilita el diálogo entre las partes en conflicto, resuelve la disputa inmediatamente utilizando el derecho consuetudinario y evita que el conflicto se vuelva violento y más grave.

El conflicto de Aceh hizo que los miembros del GAM pasaran de utilizar las balas en la zona de guerra a utilizar las urnas en el ámbito político. Aceh estableció la *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Asamblea Tradicional de Aceh), desde la aldea hasta el nivel provincial, con el objetivo de preservar y desarrollar las tradiciones de Aceh y resolver los conflictos entre los individuos de la aldea y una estructura superior, *muqim*. La ley islámica en Aceh se aplica bajo los principios democráticos indonesios, por lo que no debe entrar en conflicto ni con el derecho positivo de Indonesia ni con los derechos humanos aprobados democráticamente, y puede ser criticada, evaluada y perfeccionada.

Además, la población local debe pasar por un periodo de reconciliación tras el conflicto, que suele llevar mucho tiempo, utilizando los valores locales. Tras el acuerdo de paz de Malino II, la comunidad local de Ambon intentó normalizar las relaciones entre ellos. Los líderes comunitarios de ambas partes (musulmanes y cristianos) se unieron en una organización llamada *Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku* (LAIM, Instituto Interreligioso de Maluku). De esta organización nació una red de provocadores de la paz cuyo trabajo es disipar las provocaciones y las narrativas negativas. No solo eso, también han nacido otras organizaciones con el mismo espíritu, es decir, la reconciliación tras el conflicto. Además, la revitalización y la innovación de los valores locales que partieron de *pela* y *gandong* también participaron en la supervisión del proceso de reconciliación postconflicto en Ambon.

En Sampit, el proceso de reconciliación se llevó a cabo con un intenso diálogo entre los líderes comunitarios de ambas partes. Los jóvenes de ambos sectores (madureses y dayak) también cooperaron en el proceso de reconciliación, manteniendo la comunicación y resolviendo los problemas o malentendidos mediante el diálogo. Además, se celebraron varios actos culturales para reunir a los distintos grupos para que interactuaran entre sí, incluidos eventos anuales como el *mapas lewu*. Además, los lugareños promovieron los valores locales y las narrativas de paz, como *Tumbang Anoi*, un antiguo acuerdo de paz de los dayak de 1894; *dimana bumi dipijak disitu langit dijunjung*, “donde se pisa la tierra, allí se sostiene el cielo”, que significa “cuando estés en Roma, haz como los romanos”; *rampak naong*, “sombreado y pacífico como un árbol”; y *huma betang*, “una ‘casa grande’ tradicional de los dayak que puede acoger a muchas personas con sus diferencias”.

En Aceh, el *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (KPA, Comité de Transición de Aceh) está formado por personas de la localidad para garantizar que la transición se desarrolle adecuadamente. Sin embargo, tanto la KPA como el gobierno de Indonesia trabajaron junto con la Misión de Observación de Aceh (AMM, *Aceh Monitoring Mission*), formada por representantes de la ASEAN y de la Unión Europea, en la supervisión de la aplicación del Memorando de Entendimiento de Helsinki durante un período de quince meses. La propia KPA tiene la ardua tarea de asesorar a los excombatientes para que puedan volver a llevar una vida normal dentro de la comunidad. Además, la KPA imparte lecciones políticas para ayudar al pueblo de Aceh, especialmente a los antiguos miembros del GAM, en su nueva lucha en el ámbito político.

Los conflictos violentos de Ambon, Sampit y Aceh ya han terminado, pero las comunidades locales siguen esforzándose en la construcción de la paz y la reconciliación, ya que es un



proceso interminable. Puede que la paz negativa haya terminado, pero los esfuerzos por crear una paz positiva siguen influyendo en muchos aspectos de la vida. Es posible que el acuerdo de paz formal ponga fin a la guerra, pero el proceso de reconciliación continúa a diario de forma natural y cultural. Por último, el gobierno puede haber estado detrás de los enfrentamientos entre comunidades y ser la causa de una tremenda tragedia humana, pero la resistencia de la gente en su lucha por la paz es siempre más fuerte.

### Aportaciones y puntos fuertes de esta investigación

Algunas personas pueden seguir considerando que la tarea de la resolución de conflictos corresponde al Estado y a las autoridades, utilizando un enfoque militar, o incluso violento. Sin embargo, esta noción ha sido cuestionada a nivel internacional, pues cada vez es más evidente que los Estados ya no son los únicos actores relevantes en las relaciones internacionales, si es que alguna vez lo fueron. El fenómeno del “giro local” dio a organizaciones internacionales como las Naciones Unidas la oportunidad de reconsiderar y comprometer a la población local en la resolución de conflictos y en el progreso. Esta investigación explora predominantemente el papel crítico de los actores y valores locales en las iniciativas de consolidación de la paz.

La mayoría de los investigadores coinciden ahora en que la población local desempeña un papel esencial en la resolución de conflictos. Esta investigación muestra con detalle el papel que tiene la población local en esta zona. En estos tres estudios de caso, hemos observado cómo las comunidades locales se esforzaron por dejar a un lado sus diferencias y se vincularon entre sí a través del terreno común que podían encontrar en sus tradiciones locales. Los habitantes de Ambon renovaron su hermandad sagrada y tradicional a través de los lazos conocidos como *pela* y *gandong*. Los habitantes de Sampit revisaron la historia por la cual se relacionan con los madureses a través de vínculos históricos entre sus reinos. Por último, los miembros del GAM en Aceh pudieron hablar de forma sincera con una delegación informal del gobierno indonesio sobre los valores locales compartidos, lo que condujo al histórico memorando de entendimiento entre el GAM y la República de Indonesia en 2005. Farid Husain, el delegado informal de Indonesia, actuó de común acuerdo con los locales para forjar conexiones entre el gobierno indonesio y el GAM. Uno de los valores locales de Aceh, el *pemulia jamek* —“dar la bienvenida al invitado”—, propició un ambiente que favoreció la buena voluntad de Husain y le ayudó a despejar el camino para conocer a la población local, lo que le permitió a su vez acercarse cada vez más a los dirigentes del GAM. En lugar de una comunicación formal, optó por acercarse personalmente a cada uno de los dirigentes del GAM, incluso a través de sus

familias. Aparte de los valores locales achinenses que el gobierno indonesio utilizó en el diálogo, este nunca se habría producido si Husain no hubiera involucrado a la población local para que le abriera el camino hacia la dirección del GAM.

Esta investigación contribuye a sensibilizar a la sociedad sobre el rol decisivo de la población local en la consolidación de la paz. Tres estudios de caso confirman que la población local desempeñó un papel esencial en la consecución de la paz en su región, junto con la contribución de los no locales de acuerdo con la pirámide de Lederach, en la que cada nivel de la sociedad tiene un papel potencial en la resolución de conflictos. En Ambon, el gobierno envió a sus delegados informales al terreno para identificar no solo los problemas, sino también los valores locales que podrían ayudar a unir a las comunidades en un terreno común. El capital social al que tienen acceso los habitantes de esta región les ayudó a recuperar su relación. *Pela* y *gandong*, los conceptos tradicionales de relación entre los habitantes de Ambon, les recordaron su antigua costumbre de ser hermanos y hermanas bajo esta tradición sagrada.

Esta investigación animará a las comunidades locales a mantener iniciativas de consolidación de la paz a largo plazo a través del sector cultural. Las culturas locales, por ejemplo en forma de eventos culturales celebrados con regularidad, ofrecen oportunidades para alimentar una sociedad diversa a través de encuentros frecuentes. El arte y la cultura hablan un lenguaje universal, independiente de cuestiones como la raza, la religión y las perspectivas. Indiscutiblemente, cuantas más personas puedan conocerse en persona, menos crecerán los prejuicios y estereotipos. En el contexto de Ambon, los cristianos y los musulmanes deben reunirse más a menudo, ya que necesitan recuperar la confianza mutua tras el mortífero conflicto (1999-2002) que aisló sus residencias durante años. El *Panas pela*, o “renovación de la relación entre pueblos”, se celebra anualmente en Ambón. En Sampit, se ha instalado el estereotipo de que los madureses son rudos, criminales y exclusivos. Aquí se festeja cada año el *Mapas lewu*, una ceremonia tradicional que celebra la naturaleza, seguida de un festival cultural. Son necesarias las reuniones en las que tanto los dayak como los madureses puedan conocerse para que se garantice la confianza. Por último, en Aceh, la mayoría de los miembros del GAM han sido guerrilleros durante décadas y han vivido en la selva, mientras que el resto de Aceh ha estado aislado tanto a nivel nacional como internacional durante el mismo periodo. El desarrollo del arte y la cultura son esenciales para unir a los miembros del GAM, a los achinenses y a los no achinenses (especialmente a los javaneses), y conseguir así vivir en armonía en la tierra de Aceh. La *Majelis Adat Aceh* (MAA, Asamblea Tradicional de Aceh)

preserva y desarrolla las tradiciones culturales desde la estructura más básica de la sociedad (la aldea), llamada *Majelis Adat Gampong* (MAG, Asamblea Tradicional de Aldea).

### Líneas de investigación futura

Muchas personas me indicaron que la elección del tema de mi tesis me acompañaría durante el resto de mi vida como académico. Antes no me lo tomaba en serio, porque consideraba que mi doctorado no se diferenciaba mucho de mi tesis del máster, pero ahora creo que me equivocaba. Esta tesis no es la misma que mi trabajo fin de máster. Tras una intensa exposición a las teorías que trato en esta investigación, siento que puedo aplicarlas a muchos fenómenos que me rodean.

Por ejemplo, cuando la Junta Militar de Myanmar tomó el poder mediante un golpe militar el 1 de febrero de 2021, mientras escribía este trabajo, pude relacionar directamente el acontecimiento con la teoría de Weber sobre el monopolio estatal de la violencia. Asimismo, mucha gente criticó la invitación de la cumbre de la ASEAN al general militar Min Aung Hlaing, ya que parecía una confirmación de la legitimidad del general como jefe del Estado. Sin embargo, el fenómeno me recordó la teoría de Galtung, que sugiere que es necesario involucrar en las negociaciones a todas las partes en conflicto.

Por último, a partir de lo que he aprendido en esta tesis, creo que la ASEAN debería implicar a los locales, hablando tanto de valores como de actores, en los esfuerzos de consolidación de la paz. En este caso, la ASEAN debería mantener la implicación de las instituciones, pero cediendo a un enfoque más propio. La ASEAN, como institución, no difiere de un Estado en el sentido de que construye y perpetúa una distancia con el público; sin embargo, los esfuerzos de consolidación de la paz deberían dejar de lado la distancia institucional y las partes en conflicto deberían centrarse en las relaciones humanas, ya que esto es una cuestión universal.

En el futuro, puede ampliarse este estudio incluyendo más conflictos en Indonesia durante el mismo periodo, entre 1998 y 2005, como Ketapang, Poso, Sambas, Ternate y varios casos de violencia hacia la etnia china en Java. Me di cuenta de que, antes de realizar esta investigación, no sabía nada de Indonesia, ya que había vivido la mayor parte de mi vida en Java. Gracias a esta investigación he podido percibir la riqueza de las culturas indonesias fuera de la isla de Java. Por lo tanto, los conocimientos y la experiencia que he obtenido de estos tres estudios de casos me han hecho sentir aún más curiosidad por conocer otras culturas y posibles estudios de casos en diferentes partes de Indonesia.

Los esfuerzos de consolidación de la paz no solo son necesarios cuando hay un conflicto, las comunidades locales deben seguir trabajando en ellos de forma continua mediante iniciativas anticipatorias o preventivas. Por lo tanto, sería interesante analizar los esfuerzos realizados durante el conflicto que siguen creando una cultura de paz después de la guerra. Se comprobará que existen variaciones, en método y estilo, durante y después de un enfrentamiento violento. Por ejemplo, en Ambon, algunos equipos conjuntos trabajaron con discreción en la construcción de la paz durante el conflicto porque el ambiente era demasiado peligroso incluso para mencionar las palabras “hacer la paz”. Sin embargo, después de la crisis, los equipos pudieron trabajar con libertad para resolver los malentendidos. El director del Organismo Interreligioso de Maluku citó como ejemplo la imagen de una niña musulmana (rodeada de muchos cristianos en un pueblo donde la mayoría de la población es cristiana) que se hizo viral, con una narración negativa mediante subtítulos. Un equipo buscó rápidamente a la niña y pudo comprobar los hechos, demostrando que estaba sana y en buen estado mediante un vídeo en el que ella contaba la verdadera historia tras de la foto. Además, el equipo se aseguró de que la imagen real se volviera a hacer viral para contrarrestar la engañosa imagen previa.

## Recomendaciones

Creo poder saber lo que pasaría si todas las partes interesadas, incluidos los gobiernos locales, entendieran el papel vital de los valores locales en las iniciativas de consolidación de la paz. Creo que los habitantes de la región podrían reducir por sí mismos el riesgo de violencia en los conflictos. El gobierno, una institución legítima con autoridad, puede promover aún más estas iniciativas.

En lugar de limitarse a resolver un conflicto violento una vez que se produce, la gente debería trabajar más en los esfuerzos de mantenimiento de la paz o en las actividades de prevención. Aprendiendo de lo que los colonizadores Soekarno y Suharto hicieron a los lugareños, cualquier otro desconocimiento o incluso desmantelamiento de las tradiciones locales se traduciría en una sociedad frágil y propensa a los enfrentamientos. Soekarno no respetó los valores islámicos arraigados en la sociedad achinense y menospreció a Aceh como capital modal del país. En lugar de permitir la coexistencia de un jefe de aldea y un rey, Suharto abolió el sistema de pequeños reyes en Ambon, sustituyendo el término “reino” por el de “aldea” y prescindiendo de los reyes en favor de los jefes de aldea, ya que prefería promover la uniformidad de todas las costumbres en Indonesia. Suharto no reconoció la diversidad de Indonesia y no vio que la función de los reyes en los pequeños reinos era diferente a la de un

jefe de aldea. Por último, en el caso de Sampit, los holandeses y Suharto fomentaron la migración masiva de los madureses a Kalimantan Central para trabajar en plantaciones y granjas, mientras ignoraban la relación especial entre el pueblo dayak y la naturaleza, asumiendo que se adaptarían sin oponer resistencia.

En algunas zonas de Indonesia, como Ambon, Sampit y Aceh, es posible que vuelva a repetirse el conflicto en el futuro. Por lo tanto, todas las partes interesadas deberían realizar un trabajo adicional para evitar que vuelvan a producirse estallidos de violencia similares. La gente tiende a olvidar lo que ha vivido y las pequeñas provocaciones pueden dar lugar a una violencia recurrente en la región. En mayo de 2019, Muzakir Manaf, excomandante del GAM, hizo una polémica declaración sobre un referéndum. Como excomandante del GAM y jefe del Partido Político de Aceh, la noticia tuvo mucho impacto y causó un importante caos público.<sup>414</sup> En febrero de 2021, un madurés mató a una mujer dayak provocando la ira del público.<sup>415</sup> De repente, la gente recordó lo que había ocurrido en 2001, el sangriento y trágico conflicto étnico entre los dayak y los madureses. El 23 de enero y el 11 de septiembre de 2011 volvieron a producirse enfrentamientos entre dos grupos —cristianos y musulmanes— similares a los que se habían producido a finales de 1999 en Ambon.<sup>416</sup> Afortunadamente, las diferentes partes trabajaron con rapidez para calmar la situación y resolvieron el problema de inmediato. Sin embargo, estos casos podrían haberse evitado si todas las partes interesadas se hubiesen centrado aún más en el sistema de prevención.

Desarrollar acciones preventivas no es un trabajo exento de desafíos. En una zona residencial segregada (entre musulmanes y cristianos) de Ambon, los encuentros entre ambos grupos son relativamente limitados y solo se producen en ámbitos formales, como oficinas y mercados. El estereotipo de una cultura violenta vinculada a los dayaks y la etiqueta de “perdedor de la batalla” que se le atribuye a los madureses no favorecerán las relaciones entre los grupos. La prolongada lucha del GAM y el dominio por parte de exmiembros del GAM de los cargos del gobierno local en Aceh pueden desencadenar tensiones en el momento en el que se sienta insatisfacción hacia el gobierno central. Por lo tanto, todas las partes interesadas deben trabajar

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<sup>414</sup> ‘Serukan Minta Aceh Referendum, Muzakir Manaf Minta Maaf Dan Cabut Pernyataannya, Simak Videonya’, *Tribun News* (Medan, 12 de junio de 2019) <<https://medan.tribunnews.com/2019/06/12/serukan-minta-aceh-referendum-muzakir-manaf-minta-maaf-dan-cabut-pernyataannya-simak-videonya?page=3>>.

<sup>415</sup> Abul Muamar, ‘Tampang MM, Pemuda Mesum Yang Membunuh Gadis Dayak Medelin Sumual Dengan Tikaman Di Leher’, *Indozone*, (10 de febrero de 2021) <<https://www.indozone.id/news/N4snb9Z/tampang-mm-pemuda-mesum-yang-membunuh-gadis-dayak-medelin-sumual-dengan-tikaman-di-leher/read-all>>.

<sup>416</sup> Poltak Partogi Nainggolan, ‘Mengapa Konflik Berulang Terjadi Di Kota Ambon? Tinjauan Demografi Dan Keamanan Atas Konflik Horizontal Perkotaan’, *Politica*, 3.2 (2012), 163–93.

juntas para reforzar los esfuerzos de consolidación de la paz, especialmente aquellos de prevención.

Una de las cosas que deberíamos considerar iniciativa de prevención es la mejora de los monumentos de Ambon y Sampit, así como el museo de Aceh. El gobierno y la población local deberían renovar el gong de la paz en Ambon, el monumento a la paz en Sampit y el museo de la paz en Aceh para que sirvan mejor a sus propósitos. Estos monumentos y el museo deberían unirse a la tendencia mundial de monumentos conmemorativos que se puede observar en otros lugares, como el Museo de la Paz de Gernika, en España, o el Museo Conmemorativo de la Paz de Hiroshima, en Japón, comprometidos activamente con la sociedad a través de interesantes proyectos y programas. Al igual que estos monumentos, los de Ambon, Sampit y Aceh deberían servir de testimonio principal sobre lo que allí ocurrió. En el futuro, no se debería volver nunca a la misma situación.

Cuando yo era estudiante de secundaria, la biblioteca era un lugar de préstamo de libros y de estudio. Sus condiciones no fomentaban ningún interés entre estudiantes o el público general para estudiar en ella. Hoy en día, la biblioteca se ha convertido en un lugar relevante para múltiples propósitos. Se puede acudir allí para ver una película, entablar un debate en una pequeña sala, utilizar los ordenadores e Internet, e incluso hay un lugar de tránsito entre clases. Con esta nueva revolución, la gente encuentra en la biblioteca un lugar de apoyo y un espacio cómodo en el que aprender.

La misma idea puede aplicarse a los lugares de conmemoración en cada estudio de caso. En este sentido, me gustaría sugerir el ejemplo de Gernika, en el que se realiza una conmemoración anual del bombardeo, evento ilustrado por el legendario cuadro de Pablo Picasso. Gernika refresca la memoria colectiva sobre el bombardeo a través de un programa que cambia de forma dinámica cada año, dentro del cual se incluye el Museo de la Paz de Gernika, que se encuentra abierto a todo el mundo durante esta conmemoración. Me sorprendió y emocionó la visita al museo, ya que pude imaginarme vívidamente la época del bombardeo a través de la casa recreada, con un audio que enriquecía la ilustración. Finalmente, al terminar la exposición, se muestra una vitrina llena de restos originales del bombardeo.

Mientras escribo esta tesis, sigue habiendo un conflicto violento centro-periferia en otra parte de Indonesia, Papúa. La última noticia impactante que tenemos de este país fue el asesinato de la facción papúa del Cuerpo Nacional de Inteligencia el 24 de abril de 2021. Las lecciones aprendidas en Aceh son útiles como referencia para los responsables políticos en este caso. Un

enfoque fuertemente militarizado no consiguió que el gobierno indonesio y el GAM alcanzaran la paz. En cambio, el diálogo y la participación de la población local y sus valores han conseguido que Aceh mantenga la paz durante más de una década. Además, la “dignidad para todos” fue la receta del éxito de Jusuf Kalla y su equipo para resolver los conflictos religiosos de Poso y Ambon, así como el conflicto centro-periferia de Aceh.

Al pensar en Papúa me di cuenta de lo poco que sé sobre esta región, lo que me recordó lo poco que sabía de Aceh durante el periodo de conflicto violento. Al mismo tiempo, mi mente empezó a imaginar lo emocionante que será para mí visitar y explorar los valores locales de Papúa en el futuro. Espero que este sueño se haga realidad.

## GLOSSARY

AJI	: <i>Asosiasi Jurnalis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Journalists Association)
<i>Ale rasa, beta rasa'</i>	: A local expression in Ambon which means 'I can feel what you feel'
AMM	: Aceh Monitoring Mission
ASNLF	: Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front
APBD	: <i>Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah</i> (Regional Revenues and Expenditures Budget)
<i>Baku bae</i>	: Words in a local language of Ambon which mean 'reconciliation'
<i>Baku Bae Movement</i>	: A movement established during the bloody conflict in Ambon using the local expression, <i>baku bae</i> , which means 'reconciliation'
<i>Baku mara</i>	: Words in a local language of Ambon which mean 'a dispute'
Brimob	: <i>Brigade Mobil</i> (Police Mobile Brigade)
BTI	: <i>Barisan Tani Indonesia</i> (Peasants Front of Indonesia)
<i>Cakelelel</i>	: A word in a local language of Ambon which means 'a war'
<i>Cendana Family</i>	: Suharto's closest relatives and associates
CIA	: Central Intelligence Agency
CSI	: Center for Sociological Investigation
CMI	: Crisis Management Initiative
CoHA	: Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CoHA	: Cessation of Hostilities Framework Agreement (signed on 9 December 2002)
<i>Da'wah</i>	: Activities that invite other people to promote Islamic values and to believe and obey Allah
<i>Dewan Adat Dayak</i>	: Dayak Customary Council
DI–TII	: <i>Darul Islam–Tentara Islam Indonesia</i> (Islamic State–Islamic Soldiers of Indonesia)
DIY	: <i>Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta</i> (Special Region of Yogyakarta)
DKI	: <i>Daerah Khusus Ibukota</i> (Special Capital Region of Jakarta)
DOM	: <i>Daerah Operasi Militer</i> (Military Operation Area)
DOKA	: <i>Dana Otonomi Khusus Aceh</i> (Special Autonomy Fund of Aceh)



DPR	: <i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> (Local Parliament)
DPRA	: <i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh</i> (People’s Representative Council of Aceh)
EWSC	Early Warning System for Conflict
FOIA	: Freedom of Information Act
FK4	: <i>Forum Keluarga Korban Kerusuhan Kalimantan Tengah</i> (Forum for Riot Victims of Central Kalimantan)
GAM	: <i>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</i> (Free Aceh Movement)
<i>Gampong</i>	: <i>Gampong</i> is a legal community unit under the <i>mukim</i> , which has territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage the local community’s interests based on local origins and customs that are recognized and respected in the system of government of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.
<i>Gandong</i>	: <i>Gandong</i> is a traditional relationship based on the blood relations among villages in Ambon regardless of the differences among their people
<i>Gerwani</i>	: <i>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Women’s Movement)
GPM	: <i>Gereja Protestan Maluku</i> (Protestant Church of Maluku)
GPP	: <i>Gerakan Peduli Perempuan</i> (the Concerned Women Movement)
HDC	: Henri Dunant Center (later renamed the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue)
IPI	: <i>Institut Perdamaian Indonesia</i> (Peace Institute of Indonesia)
IP	: <i>Indische Partij</i> (Indies Party)
ITMD	: <i>Institut Tifa Damai Maluku</i> (Maluku Peaceful Tifa Institute)
<i>Inong Bale</i>	: Women’s military wing of GAM
JMP	<i>Jalan Merawat Perdamaian</i> (Road to Peacebuilding)
<i>Kaharingan</i>	: An animistic folk religion professed by many Dayaks in Kalimantan, Indonesia – particularly Central Kalimantan
Kesbangpolinmas	: <i>Kesatuan Bangsa Politik dan Perlindungan Masyarakat</i> (Political National Unity and Community Protection)
<i>Kewel</i> or <i>bacarita</i>	: Words in a local language of Ambon which mean ‘telling stories’

KKR	: <i>Komisi Kebenaran Rekonsiliasi Aceh</i> (Aceh Reconciliation Truth Commission)
KPA	: <i>Komisi Peralihan Aceh</i> (Aceh Transition Commission)
Kodam	: <i>Komando Daerah Militer</i> (Regional Military Command)
Kodim	: <i>Komando Distrik Militer</i> (District Military Command)
<i>Komando Jihad</i>	: Jihad Command
<i>Kongres Masyarakat Dayak</i>	: Dayak Community Society Congress
Kopassus	: <i>Komando Pasukan Khusus</i> (Army Special Forces)
<i>Korong baringin</i>	: Words in a local language of Madurese which mean ‘a shady leafy tree’
KRKT	: <i>Kongres Rakyat Kalimantan Tengah</i> (Central Kalimantan People’s Congress)
LAIM	: <i>Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku</i> (Interfaith Body of Ambon)
LSPP	: <i>Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan</i> (the Institute for Press and Development Studies)
MAA	: <i>Majelis Adat Aceh</i> (Aceh Traditional Council)
MAG	: <i>Majelis Adat Gampong</i> (Gampong traditional Council)
<i>mampakan sahur</i>	: Having meals together on a particular occasion
<i>Mapas Lewu</i>	: Traditional ritual to avoid bad luck
<i>Mengayau</i>	: Headhunting tradition among ethnic Dayak in the past
MMKWT	: <i>Musyawarah Masyarakat Kota Waringin Timur</i> (East Waringin City Assembly)
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
MPR	: <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People’s Consultative Assembly; Indonesia’s supreme legislative body)
MPR	: <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People’s Consultative Assembly)
MPRS	: <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara</i> (the Provisional People’s Consultative Assembly)
<i>Mukim</i>	: A legal community unit in Aceh which consists of several <i>gampongs</i> (villages) with certain territorial boundaries and their

	own assets, domiciled directly under the sub-district head or other name led by <i>Imeum Mukim</i> or another name
NAD	: <i>Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam</i> (the province of Aceh as renamed by the Special Autonomy Law of 2001)
<i>Nasakom</i>	: <i>Nasionalisme, Agama, dan Komunisme</i> (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism)
<i>Negeri</i>	: It means a country in English, but it is a village in Ambon, which has the king as a traditional head of the town
NKRI	: <i>Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia</i> (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia)
<i>Nusantara</i>	: Javanese words for Indonesian archipelago
OPM	: <i>Organisasi Papua Merdeka</i> (Free Papua Movement)
<i>Orang basudara</i>	: Words in a local language of Ambon which mean ‘brothers’
<i>Oreng deddi taretan, taretan deddi oreng</i>	: Words in a local Dayak language which mean that individuals can be like their own family, while their own family can be like other individuals
Partindo	: <i>Partai Indonesia</i> (the Indonesian Party)
<i>Pela</i>	: <i>Pela</i> is a traditional relationship based on the ancestral oath among villages in Ambon, regardless of the differences among their people
PERMESTA	: <i>Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta</i> (Universal People’s Struggle)
PKI	: <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (the Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	: <i>Partai Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Party)
PRRI	: <i>Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia</i> (Republic of Indonesia Revolutionary Government)
<i>Qanun</i>	: Legislation that is a kind of Regional Regulation that regulates government administration and people’s lives in Aceh Province
<i>Rampak naong</i>	: The Madurese philosophy of life, which is to live happily under a shady and leafy tree, contains these terms
REPELITA	: <i>Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> (Five-year national development plans)
RMS	: <i>Republik Maluku Selatan</i> (The Republic of South Maluku)

<i>Rumah betang</i>	: A traditional house of the ethnic Dayak, which becomes the philosophy of the Dayak people, implying being open and accommodative for everyone
SARA	: <i>Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar-golongan</i> (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Inter-group)
SIRA	: <i>Sentral Informasi Rakyat Aceh</i> (Information Center of Aceh People)
SI	: <i>Sarekat Islam</i> (Islamic Union)
SIT	: <i>Surat Izin Terbit</i> (Publication Permit)
<i>Siwa Lima</i>	: <i>Siwa Lima</i> is a combination of two words from <i>Ulisiwa</i> and <i>Patalima</i> . <i>Ulisiwa</i> means a collection of nine, and <i>Patalima</i> implies a group of five. These two words refer to the nine kingdoms that controlled South Maluku and the five kingdoms that controlled the northern part of Maluku
SOBSI	: <i>Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia</i> (the All-Indonesian Federation of Workers Organizations)
Supersemar	: <i>Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret</i> (Order Letter of 11 March)
SU MPR	: <i>Sidang Umum Masyarakat Perjuangan Referendum</i> (General Assembly of the People's Struggle for a Referendum)
<i>Syiar</i>	: Islamic campaign
TNI	: <i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Military)
<i>Tiwah</i>	: A death ceremony which in the past made an offering of an enemy's head, and which in the present time has replaced this offering with that of the head of a buffalo
Tumbang Anoi	: The name of a village in Central Kalimantan, where the Dayak people made a peace agreement among themselves
UU PA	: <i>Undang-undang Pemerintah Aceh</i> (Law on Aceh Government)
VOC	: <i>Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> (Dutch East India Company)
<i>Wali nanggroe</i>	: head of state
<i>Wali Songo</i>	: Nine famous Islamic missionaries in Indonesia
WIDF	: Women's International Democratic Federation
YLBHI	: <i>Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia</i> (the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation)

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