

**SERVING THE POLITICAL PARTIES:  
ISSUES OF FRAGMENTED PUBLIC POLICY  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN DECENTRALIZED INDONESIA \***

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**1. Introduction**

Having been ruled by an authoritarian regime for three decades and then experienced tremendous change during a turbulent reform since 1998, Indonesia's political transition was viewed as ended in 2004. This was the year when, for the first time in the country's history, the president was directly elected by the people. The most remarkable achievement was that the election could be conducted in a relatively free, fair, and peaceful mode. However, under the new political constellation characterized by a multi-party system, decentralized governance, new form of checks and balances, and more opened public demands, the transition towards democratic governance is actually far from settled.

To follow up the amended constitution and Law No.32/2004, the government and the DPR (National Assembly) agreed to carry out the so-called *Pilkada* (a direct election for heads of regional governments). Starting from mid-2005, the direct elections were conducted for the position of governors, *bupati* (regents) and *walikota* (mayors). Therefore, similar to what has been conducted for the presidential elections at the national level, political parties are now contesting to form a government at the sub-national levels. The political parties nominate a pair of candidates for governor and vice governor, bupati and vice bupati, mayor and vice mayor, those of whom would be directly elected by eligible voters in their respective areas. This new system was introduced along the big step of decentralization policy in 2001, in which many of functions previously held by the central government were delegated to the local governments.

For many observers, the new multi-party system, substantial decentralization policy, direct presidential elections and *Pilkada*, and all variables that indicate more opened political system, were considered as big steps towards a more democratic government in Indonesia. Nevertheless, from the perspective of policy makers, the wave for democratization has created unprecedented challenge that was not applied in the past. It is becoming more difficult to settle disputes in the government. Unlike in the past authoritarian and centralistic system under the New Order where convergence could easily be attained, the public policy process is now more fragmented and sometimes proven to be ineffective. This applies at the national as well as the sub-national levels.

Democracy ensures participatory decision-making and hence promises greater legitimacy for any policies that are being made. Yet, democracy calls for decision makers to be ready for long-dwindling process, to utilize negotiations skills, and to accept a

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compromise with other stake-holders. It is because democratic policy process tends to entail divergence rather than convergence systems. Evidence from current comparative studies suggest such divergence proposition (Hill, 2005:105).

Today, political setting in Indonesia is equipped with almost all of the basic characteristics of democracy. Free and fair elections, freedom of expression and associational autonomy, right to vote, alternative sources of information, eligibility for public office, and institutions for making government policies depend on votes, all the underlying criteria for democracy as presented by Dahl (1971:3) are met in Indonesia. As a young democracy, however, many of the strategic policy makers in the country have not ready for “substantive democracy” given the past experience of authoritarian system. The most pressing challenge in Indonesia is to convince public policy makers not to get frustrated with democratic setting and to have nostalgic wish of the past when everything was certain and predictable. Democratic ways of policy-making need extra works on attaining consensus but that does not mean that undemocratic alternative is the solution.

Another alarming issue is the fact that most of decision makers do not understand the ultimate goals of having a democratic system. Instead of serving the elites and vested-interest, the ideals of democracy ought to serve the common people. This is something that is not really understood by most of decision-makers at the national as well as the local level, which again prove that Indonesia democracy is still in a transition. This paper would argue that while Indonesia has all the basic elements of formal democracy, there is a lack of appropriate orientation for public policy process to ensure that it supports the ultimate or substantive goals of democracy, namely participatory development and betterment of all. This argument shall be explained by decision-making process at the local level. This paper begins with current development of democratization in Indonesia, i.e. decentralization, the formation of local parliaments, and the local direct elections (*Pilkada*). Then, issues of fragmentation and accountability in the public policy process shall be described by comparing cases in three localities with different contextual setting.

## **2. Democratization, Decentralization, and Local Parliaments**

Economic crisis that hit the country in 1997 had a severe impact on the quality of life of the ordinary people with a long ramification that even after democratic system is put in place many problems remained unresolved. Under a more opened political setting, people at the grass-root level noticed that political elites gained too much from their positions while people's economic conditions do not change or even getting worse. Rampant corruptions among the politicians and leaders at all levels of governments began to bring about skeptic attitudes towards civilian presidents after the *reformasi* (reform), Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Megawati. This was one of an important factors why 62% of people voted for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), an ex military general, to become the president in 2004.

Most people in Indonesia seemed to be satisfied with the democratization process in the country after the success of direct presidential elections in 2004. However, many began to be disenchanted with ideals of democracy when they realized that it does not solve everything. After president SBY was inaugurated, optimism raised that he would be more serious in dealing with problem of corruptions. SBY himself vowed that combating corruption was one of the priorities in his first 100 days in power. As time passed,

however, Indonesians began to ponder whether he was really serious on the matter. Media and experts criticized that SBY was too slow to make decisions although he gained a popular support as has evidenced in the presidential election.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth to note policies under president SBY in order to understand the current progress of democratization. Against the rampant corruptions, there were cases of involuntary counter actions that started to attract public attention. In 2004, as many as 43 members of provincial parliament, including the chairman, of West Sumatra were convicted for corruption. For the first time, a verdict against politicians was decided with the president's endorsement and the corrupt members of local parliament were put in jail. Though there were many other cases to be investigated in Aceh, West Java, Lampung, and other provinces, the West Sumatra case was a good start.

Although during SBY's presidency there is no new anti-corruption law, he proved his commitment with the Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 5/2004 on The Acceleration of Anti-Corruption Measures. He also encouraged the previously established KPK (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, Anti-Corruption Commission) to work better and act professionally against corruptors with the issuance of Presidential Decree (Keppres) No.11/2005 on Special Team Against Corruption. Together with the DPR, the president also ratified Law No.1/2006 on *Pembuktian Timbal-Balik* (Reciprocal Process of Conviction), which would help prosecutors to find hard evidence against corruption. In order to support legal process on corruption cases, the lawmakers also ratified Law No.13/2006 on *Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban* (Protection for Witnesses and Victims), which then supported by Government Regulation (Perpres) No.13/2007 on the Eligibility for Members of LPSK (*Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban*, Board of Protection for Witnesses and Victims).

SBY support for anti-corruption legal process was tested when the KPK declared that his daughter-in-law's father, Aulia Pohan, was a suspect for a graft case involving Bank of Indonesia top managers. Some say that SBY stand on this case reflected a genuine support against any corrupt officials. However, others think that it is only a façade support for the KPK and that SBY might not let Aulia Pohan to be sentenced for corruption.<sup>2</sup> Although cases against corrupt DPR members have been legally tried, other big cases such as the fraudulent BLBI (Bank Indonesia Liquidity Subsidy) and deforestation case involving ministers in SBY cabinet have not put under investigation. Many believe that the president's policy on corruption case is "*tebang pilih*" (selective cutting), which means that he would not go for cases that are against his interests.

The ongoing process for democratization is also related with debates on a bill on *kebebasan memperoleh informasi* (freedom for acquiring information). This is the bill that would warrant public access to any information about the government policy. There are two versions of the bill circulated in the public that might steer controversies. One is proposed by the DPR that gives emphasis on the importance of security aspects to keep the *rahasia negara* (state's confidential), and the other is proposed by NGOs alliance that

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<sup>1</sup> SBY is generally described as indecisive and too much of a micro-manager. This was indicated when SBY had to announce his cabinet; he let himself to be pushed around by political bargaining rather than flexed his power and claimed his strong mandate. *Republika*, 22 October 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Investigation by KPK is still underway and it is not yet clear whether Aulia Pohan would be sentenced to jail.

gives emphasis on freedom of information and the rights of public to know everything that is done and would be done by the government.

The relatively established system to support democracy pertains to five-yearly elections for legislatives and executives under an opened multi-party system. There are still scholarly debates on whether legislative elections should continue the currently used apportionment system or change it into pluralistic or district system. Many would argue that Indonesia should apply district system given the fact that, under current apportionment system, many constituents do not familiar with candidates for legislative and that there is a wide gap between public policy outputs and people's demands. However, most political elites in the country consider that apportionment system is the best for legislative election as it would not disregard minor votes for all parties so as to ensure democracy. Law No.10/2008 on Legislative Elections, which regulates general election for legislative members in April 2009, retains apportionment system. The only change for accommodating concerns on representativeness is, unlike in the past when the seats were determined by the ranks of candidates favoured by the political party chairman, the seats are to be determined by majority of votes at the national, provincial and local parliaments.<sup>3</sup>

As a country with sheer size, multi-ethnic and diverse social and cultural background, the consequence for democratization in Indonesia would always relates to decentralization policy. Under the political pressures from the region after the demise of the New Order government, new laws on regional administration were enacted. Law No.32/2004 on Regional Administration, law No.33/2004 on Fiscal Balance between Central and Regional Governments, and two laws for special autonomy provinces (Law No.18/2001 on Aceh and Law No.21/2001 on Papua) are the basic regulatory frameworks for decentralization policy. Most of these laws have also equipped with ancillary regulations to ensure that decentralization policy would be implemented accordingly.

However, many observers found that the performance of decentralization policy is still fall short. Although international experts hailed the initial success of “the big bang” decentralization policy in Indonesia as it did not cause chaotic consequences, the objective of decentralization to create more responsible local governments and better public services have ended up with disappointment. On the part of central government, many sectoral ministries are reluctant to cede their power to local government authorities. It is not easy to convince those who had enjoyed privileges and powers in the past to give more power to the local officials. Meanwhile, contrary to theoretical postulates that decentralization would create “good local government” (Smith, 1985; Manor, 1999), it turned out that most local government authorities do not use their assumed power to improve the quality of public services.

In line with democratization measures, there have been political reforms to revive the DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, Provincial/Local People Representative Council). While in the past DPRD constituted only as minor elements of the state institutions and the New Order was mostly used the councils as the “rubber stamp” of the

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<sup>3</sup> The general elections for legislative members have been conducted on 9 April 2009. It has been relatively fair, free, and peaceful. The initial results show that SBY's Democrat Party casted the best number of votes while Golkar party and PDIP did not do well. The most surprising, however, is the fact that 28% of the eligible voters did not turn out.

government policies, there was a strong swing toward reviving DPRD as the people representatives with all its power for electing and controlling heads of regions (governors, bupati and mayors). In effect, before Law No.22/1999 on regional administration was revised, it was the DPRD members who would select a pair of candidates for the heads of regions. Critics had asserted that the new DPRD composition and the arrangement for local executive-legislative relations put a high risk for “money politics”.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere, even some legislators at the national level criticized the exaggeration of the oversight function of Indonesian parliaments, which prone to “money politics” and put obstacles on public policy process (Ziegenhain, 2008:145).

During the selection of heads of regions, a pair of candidates only needed to “approach” half of the DPRD members to win a majority. It would be no more than 50 politicians at the provincial level and no more than 23 politicians at the district level. With a money power, a pair of candidates could easily buy the vote of these DPRD members. It was true that there was a requirement for a pair of bupati and vice bupati candidates to explain their vision and mission in the public. Yet at the end it was only these 45 politicians who would vote for heads or regions, and money talks very loudly when a few people have their absolute rights to choose the candidates.

It was generally believed that one of the missing elements in the regulations was control on sub-national governments. When central tight supervision was lifted, there were no institutions at the local level capable enough to control local governments and represent public interests. Many experts had warned about the absence of checks and balances mechanism in the local governments,<sup>5</sup> but it seemed that nobody have expected the magnitude of the consequence.

The apportionment systems in legislative elections since 1999 created a big gap between political appointees and their mandate from constituencies. The new political appointees in the DPRD generally had a deep grudge on the old bureaucrats, who were seen as have been “over pampered” by the New Order government. However, in terms of technical matters in law-making, these new politicians did not have adequate capability.<sup>6</sup> As the new legislative members assumed more power under decentralization, including the power to select and to supervise heads of regions, the combination of these qualities has made the DPRD members prone to power abuses and corruptions.

Law No.32/2004 revised Law No.22/1999 and removed the DPRD rights to select heads of the regions. Under the new law, the LPJ (*Laporan Pertanggungjawaban*, accountability reports), which previously often misused by DPRD to sack heads of regions, was now considered only as a progress report to the legislatives. As heads of regions are directly elected by the people, the position of executives and legislatives has

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<sup>4</sup> “Mencermati Politik Uang di Tingkat DPRD”, *Kompas*, 15 March 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Sulardi, “Pengaruh Otonomi Daerah”, *Kompas*, 28 April 1999; Tri Ratnawati, “Pseudo Otonomi”, *Kompas*, 1 March 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Cornelis Lay, *Tantangan Domestik dan Internasional DPRD*, Orientasi Anggota DPRD se-Banyumas, Baturaden, 19-22 January 2000, mimeo, p. 2. The notion that Indonesian parliaments do not have enough capability was also reiterated in more recent commentaries. Eep Syaifullah Fatah, “Postur DPR, Transaksi dan Pertukaran”, *Tempo*, 30 March 2009.

become more balanced. Nevertheless, the gap between DPRD member as political appointees and their constituencies remain unresolved.

### **3. The Role of Political Parties: Pilkada and Local Governance**

As political parties are now free to undertake any activities and they are very powerful in determining candidates of governors and mayors, there is a tendency that local authorities give attention to political parties rather than public interests. The relationships between political parties, the *Pilkada* and the nature of local governance under decentralized system merit further analysis because such relationships would likely determine the future of public policy process in Indonesia.

Regarding whether democratization and decentralization in Indonesia has put a clear break from the past authoritarian system, recent academic works are actually giving mixed conclusions. On the one hand, there are experts who contended that despite the introduction of free and fair elections and the devolutions of political authority, old political elites are able to maintain their political and administrative positions at all levels (Hadiz and Robison, 2004). There is also a descriptive study that concludes with the notion that democratization in Indonesia is being “captured” or “hijacked” by political elites (Priyono, et al, 2007). On the other hand, a study indicates the important progress in reforming Indonesia’s framework of government since 1998 and that “while there are concerns about the slow pace in progress, public commitment to democracy remains solid” (McLeod and MacIntyre, 2007). In addition, another study argues that “while old elites indeed remain in power, the new institutional environment has reshuffled the cards for political elites” (Michael Buehler, in Erb and Sulistiyanto, 2009:101).

In any case, there is no question that whatever the nature of political changes it would certainly impact on the process of public policy. Among the local policy makers, it is almost impossible to exclude political factors when they make strategic decisions. In fact, the capacity of local government authorities to materialize their reform initiatives would be dependent upon their ability to secure both a solid political coalition and a wider network of public support. And when it comes to political coalition, it is critical for the local authorities to consider political party constellation at the local level. Together with the *reformasi*, Indonesian politics is opened for everybody to form a political party. The national politics are colored by multi-party systems since the fall of the New Order authoritarian regime.<sup>7</sup>

As the new political system guarantees an unreserved freedom of expression in a multi-party system, ideological contrasts among political parties similar to that applied in 1950s reemerged. In general, political parties in 1950s followed three groupings, the leftists (represented by PKI, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*), the centrists (represented by PNI, *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia*), and the rightists (represented by NU, *Nahdlatul Ulama*). It actually followed the concept of *aliran* (streams) that firstly introduced by the seminal works of Geertz (1960), in which ideological differentiation in Indonesia

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<sup>7</sup> While elections during the New Order were mostly contested by three parties, the elections in 1999, 2004 and 2009 were contested by 48 parties, 24 parties and 38 parties respectively.

(notably in Java), was categorized into three, namely: *santri* (devout Muslims), *abangan* (syncretic Muslims), and *priyayi* (traditional Javanese aristocrats).

After *reformasi*, the leftist parties are represented by PIB (Partai Indonesia Bersatu), PDS (Partai Damai Sejahtera) and PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan). The centrist parties are represented by Golkar and Partai Demokrat. The rightist parties are represented by PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa), PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional), PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) and PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang). Aside from these prominent parties, there are also small and new parties that are registered ups and downs in the elections. All the parties are those that also have important roles in regional politics. For example, in the 2004 elections, it turned out that Jakarta was for the PKS, Banten and West Java for Golkar, Jogja and Central Java for PDIP, and East Java for PKB (Ananta et al, 2005:65).

Regarding the Pilkada, although categories according to *aliran* are meaningful for analytical purpose, it appears that coalition among parties do not always follow the *aliran* pattern. Since Pilkada was initiated in 2005, elites of the political parties appeared to be willing to make coalitions without considering ideological platforms. Every single party has the possibility of developing coalitions with any other party in the process of proposing Pilkada candidates. An expert even suggested that Pilkada proves the end of political *aliran* (Pratikno, in Erb and Sulistiyanto, 2009:65). Yet the more interesting analysis is how the political elites influence the process of Pilkada and how it would, in turn, influence policy-making mechanism at the local level.

Law No.32/2004 stipulates that there should be “joint tickets” of candidates for the *kepala daerah* (heads of regions) and the *wakil kepala daerah* (vice heads of regions) positions, and that the local people will directly votes for them. Many academics, NGOs and political activists were disappointed with the fact that the law did not accommodate independent candidates to compete.<sup>8</sup> Although the stipulation was revoked by the Indonesian *Mahkamah Konstitusi* (Constitutional Court), in practice the role of political parties remains crucial because independent candidates would in effect need some kind of endorsement from the parties.<sup>9</sup>

The disturbing fact is that most of the political parties are engaged in “money politics” during the event of elections. As a young democracy, issues on political finance are yet to be regulated appropriately. Unlike in most developed democracies, in Indonesia nearly all of political parties are depended on government budget. This is to say that formally and informally the state gives subsidy to political parties. For the 2004 elections, the Ministry of Home Affairs provided that all registered parties is entitled to a subsidy of Rp 1 billion from the government. For the 2009 elections, Government Regulation

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<sup>8</sup> According to the law, candidates must be nominated by political parties or coalitions of political parties, which have at least 15 percent of the seats in the DPRD or 15 percent popular votes in the general elections.

<sup>9</sup> With the assistance of experts, the Ministry of Home Affairs is currently drafting a law to revise Law No.32/2004. The draft would apparently give emphasis on clarifying inter-governmental functional assignments. However, issues on independent candidates for heads of regions are still unclear.

No.5/2009 on Financial Subsidy for Political Parties stipulates that political parties that gain seats in the parliament shall be subsidized from the government budget. In addition, there are many ways for the incumbent party to make use of government budget for various purposes that indirectly give benefit for the party.

Data from the Indonesian Corruption Watch revealed that there are various forms of money politics since the direct Pilkada was held in all cities and municipalities in 2005. The direct money politics could take the form of cash payment by the “success team” of candidates to certain constituents, cash donation from the candidates to supporting political parties, and “obligatory donation” required by political parties to their functional members and candidates who would run for bupati and mayors. The indirect money politics could take the form of distribution of gifts and door-prizes, distribution of *sembako* (*sembilan bahan pokok*, nine basic needs) to potential constituents, distribution of cements by the candidates in certain electoral areas, etc.

It is difficult to get reliable data on the amount of money being circulated during the Pilkada. Yet, everybody knows that cases of money politics are common in the Pilkada after *reformasi*. Although all the candidates would always be ready to declare that they would not engage in money politics, the constituents would immediately be able to point out how these candidates use money for “buying votes” in their electoral areas. The candidates themselves might not be able to calculate precisely how much they have spent for various forms of donation, gifts, and banners aside from official fees for registration to party memberships, payments for witnesses, and other administrative requirements. However, some field notes from an observer stated that the amount of money to be spent for bupati and mayor candidates is ranged from Rp 1.8 billion to Rp 16 billion and for governor candidates is about Rp 100 billion. From this amount, about 20% goes to political parties that give support to their candidature.<sup>10</sup>

Among local businessmen, it is also important to give donation to the political parties because through these “political investments” they would be able to take returns from the local government in the form of business opportunities, contractual favors, or at least access to information on public projects. Therefore, it is not overstatement to say that the influence of particular businessman to the performance of local government might be part of the return cost of his “political investment” planted during the Pilkada.<sup>11</sup> This certainly relates to the general impression that the performance of local governments could not be improved or in fact getting worse after the implementation of decentralization policy.

The similar can be said on the performance of political parties. Although democratization has made possible for any political activists to organize a political party that would presumably serve their constituents based on certain platform and ideology, at the end it is mostly the interests of the politicians rather than the constituents that are

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<sup>10</sup> Sukardi Rinakit, “Indonesian Regional Elections in Praxis”, *IDSS Commentaries*, No.65, mimeo.

<sup>11</sup> It is a common practice that businessmen’ interests are “invested” to many political parties to ensure that whichever the winner they would get the returns. ”Pengusaha Penopang Pilar Dana Politik”, *Gatra*, 19 February 2009.



being accommodated. A survey on the progress of democratization in Indonesia revealed that 81 percent of informants consider the performance of political parties are poor with regard to their task to “reflect vital issues and interests of the people”. Majority of the informants also perceive that political parties are vulnerable to money politics and having a tendency to abuse ethnic and religious loyalty to earn public support (Priyono et al, 2007:68).

Under such circumstances, therefore, it is not surprising that public policy process at the local level does not response to the demands of the people at large. When a pair of candidates are elected and run the government, they would always carry the burden at the back because they have to serve political party elites who have helped them to get on their positions. At the same time, businessmen and the political elites who have “invested” their donation to the elected bupati or mayor would always ask for returns during his or her incumbency. The interests of the public are inevitably neglected. Therefore, there are many studies in Indonesian local governance that are titled with the appalling reality that “the people are betrayed” (Collins, 2007). The issue at point is not only concerning with corrupt elites, but also with poor political representation. It should be noted, however, that poor political representation is not exclusively a characteristic of Indonesian politics and democracy. The so-called new democracies around the world seem to be experiencing serious common problem of political representation. This is partly because democracy has been understood only by its ceremonial process instead of the public policy process that reflects day-to-day performance of politics. In order to understand the nature of public policy-making in Indonesia, cases in different local areas shall be presented.

#### **4. Ambon City: Crafting Policy in a Conflict-Riddled Area**

The city of Ambon is the capital of Maluku province. In the eastern part of Indonesia, Ambon is a strategic hub for trade among the islands in this province. The island of Ambon covers an area of 377 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 263,146 in 2006. When Indonesia was severely hit by economic crisis and the waves of political freedom swept the nation, social conflict sparked in the island that caused ethnic tension and hardship among the ordinary people for years. A social incident occurred on January 19<sup>th</sup> 1999 has triggered inter-religious and massive conflicts among Muslims and Christians that left parts of the city with severe infrastructure destruction and life casualties.<sup>12</sup> Social-economic and cultural inter-relations were disrupted and security concerns immediately segregated residential areas based on religious and ethnic identities.

The Malino communiqué that was resulted from an agreement among high-profile figures in 2002 could finally lessen the conflict magnitude but sporadic incidents of conflict still occurred in the following years.<sup>13</sup> Religious and ethnic tensions could only cease when political situation in the country have become relatively more stable and the

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<sup>12</sup> There is no reliable source on the total number of life casualties, but the media quoted that during the first two years of conflict, 5.000 could have died. *Media Indonesia*, 21 September 2007.

<sup>13</sup> The meeting was held on 11-12 February 2002 in the town of Malino, South Sulawesi. The communiqué consists of 11 points and was signed by leaders of the opposing sides.

economy started to improve in 2006. The impact of the conflict to the economy in Ambon was devastating as distribution of goods and services was blocked. Almost 5.4% of the population has fled from Ambon city and public facilities could only be used based on social segregation. More than a half of the remaining population (129.068) turned their status into refugees. Statistics in 2001 showed a negative growth of 7.18% while unemployment rose to 31% and the poverty level went up to 29%.

While most of the people were still gripped by social conflict, the DPRD of Ambon was able to select the Mayor and Vice Mayor of the city. The election venue was guarded not only by the police and the army but also unofficial “escort” of grass-root groups from both opposing parties. Mr. M.J. Papilaya (a Christian) who was supported by the PDIP party and Mr. Syarif Hadler (a Muslim, who was supported by the PPP gained majority of votes from the DPRD and elected for the positions of mayor and vice mayor.<sup>14</sup> The composition of the mayor and vice mayor, which was taken from two opposing religions, reflected the importance of accommodating the interests of conflicting groups in the city.

In a city where even a small incident of conflict could instigate a massive clash, security and restoration of order became the main policy to be taken by the government officials. The two-year development plan in 2004-2006 explicitly stated security concerns. The main strategic policy were: 1) to maintain social stability and security to ensure conducive livelihood of the people, 2) to reconstruct and rehabilitate public facilities that were destroyed during the conflict (market place, public transportation, terminals), 3) to create an attractive and secured environment in order to lure investors back to Ambon, and 4) to settle problems of internal refugees in the city. In restoring security and stability, the Ambon city government needed help not only from the security personnel of city but also from the police and army that were deployed by the central government.

The local government has to be extra cautious on every issue that might be religiously sensitive. In recruiting new personnel, for instance, the public was critical of the process during the previous government as it was deemed to be spoiled with nepotism. Therefore, starting from 2002 the government has to carry out a series of “fit and proper test” with the help of a university in Bandung and the local Pattimura University. Interviews with the applicants for strategic positions in the local government were conducted intensively under the scrutiny of the media.

Aside from the necessity to consult the public, the policy on recruitment has to consider the composition of religious and ethnic representation to ensure that the process would not create dissatisfaction. In 2008, for example, the BKD (*Badan Kepegawaian Daerah*, Local Government Personnel Board) asked an institute of research of Gadjah Mada University to conduct a systematic test to select applicants for public official of Ambon. After the result was revealed, the BKD seemed to be worry about the results as the number of selected applicants were lopsided to certain religious group. Only after a

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<sup>14</sup> After the 1999 elections, the conflict had caused many members of the DPRD were inactive or moved out from the city. Of the 19 remaining members of DPRD, majority (16 seats) was from the PDIP and the other 3 seats were from two smaller political parties.

long debate about how the best way to announce the test result to the public, including intensive consultations with high-rank officials responsible for security, the BKD announced the result without modification. The institute was able to convince that the most important factor to deal with possible dissatisfaction was to announce the result with all of its components openly and objectively.<sup>15</sup> The case was also a test whether the public in Ambon could accept professional criteria for selecting public officials.

In 2005, mayor Papilaya initiated to develop Leihitu peninsula as an integral part of the development of Ambon city and terminal of Passo as a new center of economic activities. Leihitu, a Muslim majority area, is administratively out of the Ambon city jurisdiction. Passo, a Christian majority area, is a neglected area in the city that has a strategic connection with other islands. Many politicians at the provincial DPRD objected to the mayor's idea on Leihitu because it is beyond his jurisdiction. However, the idea was generally supported by residents of Leihitu and majority of people in Central Maluku District because it would not only appease Muslim community but also prevent inter-religious resentment caused by economic sentiment given the fact that Ambon city has been progressing too rapidly compared to other parts of Maluku province.

Meanwhile, the plan to develop Passo was strongly supported by most of the Christian residents. Although the idea was covertly opposed by Muslims because it would require them to pass the Passo terminal before entering Ambon city, mayor Papilaya repeatedly persuade about the importance of splitting traffic to the city so that releasing congestion in several points. Controversies over development plan at Leihitu and Passo showed that the government of Ambon city has to consider various inter-linking factors; not only economic but also political, ethnic and religious factors.<sup>16</sup>

The other sensitive issue pertains to the policy to repatriate refugees in post-conflict areas. Thousands of Christian refugees of the Poka Village and Rumahtiga have to be repatriated by ensuring that they can reclaim their former residents and properties. The same applies to thousands of Muslim refugees, mostly migrants from Buton ethnic of Sulawesi island, who are to be repatriated and live together with Christian community of Latta village. Repatriation was not an easy task. The local government of Ambon has to work together with national and international civil society organizations in promoting the public awareness and appreciation on mutual respect, religious tolerance and other elements of social capital.

As a mayor with many development agendas in a conflict-riddled city, Mr.Papilaya also has to be able to strike a balance with political interests in the DPRD and the provincial government. After finishing his first term as a mayor with a good reputation, he run for the second term in 2006 with PDIP support. However, this time he

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<sup>15</sup> The chairman of BKD noted that religious composition for public officials in Ambon is still critical. After anxiously recheck the results and consult with officials for many times, he admitted that he finally felt released when the test result was announced without much protest. Interview with Romeo Soplanit, 11 November 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Tonny D. Pariela, *Political Process, Public Policy, and Peace-Building Process: Case of Ambon City, Maluku*, mimeo. 2007.

did not pick Syarif Hadler as his vice mayor candidate. Aside from the indication that Syarif Hadler had been picked by Richard Louhenapessy of the Golkar to run for the Pilkada, Papilaya was not happy to have Syarif as his partner. Papilaya is a kind of “one man show” leader who would rather have vice mayor as an assistant rather than a partner. Therefore, Papilaya picked Mrs. Olivia Latuconsina (a Muslim and a Golkar functionary) to run for the Pilkada. It turned out that Papilaya and Olivia Latuconsina were elected as mayor and vice mayor with a landslide victory.

Political elites in PDIP party were disappointed with Papilaya. They considered that Papilaya did not contribute to the party with political funds, concessions, and access to projects. The media frequently covered political debates between Papilaya and Lucky Wattimuri (the DPRD chairman, PDIP party functionary) on certain projects in Ambon. When the Passo terminal project was approved, it appeared that it was not because the DPRD members fully supported the project. Instead, it was because Papilaya could mobilize public support from the media and the public, notably Christian communities, on the importance of the terminal to solve problems of traffic congestion in the city. He also managed to convince Muslim communities because he let a company owned by Amir Agus Latuconsina, a notable Muslim businessman, to win the contract. For some bureaucratic observers, however, Papilaya’s move might be implicated to his personal agenda. Having been conflicting with PDIP political elites and recently the elected governor, Papilaya seemed to be aware that his political career in PDIP did not have a good prospect. In late 2008 he said a possibility to abandon his relationship with PDIP. That is part of the reasons why he is getting closer with Gerindra party functionaries including Amir Agus Latuconsina.<sup>17</sup>

The mayor of Ambon also has a fierce political discord with the governor over which of the infrastructure projects should be prioritized. The debates do not only reflect rational arguments about the benefit of the projects to the local people but also the competition for political power and personal economic returns from the projects. When Mr. Karel Ralalahu was re-elected as the new governor with Mr. Said Assegaff as the vice governor for the period of 2008-2013 with a 62.1 percent of votes, mayor Papilaya was not amused. It was because a long political rivalry between Karel and Papilaya over their positions within the PDIP party and over the priorities of project in Ambon city and Maluku province in general. Soon after being inaugurated, governor Karel made a strong statement that there would be a big project to construct a bridge that would link Galala and Poka villages in Baguala bay. The plan to construct the so-called *Merah Putih* bridge was aimed at making an efficient distribution of goods at the bay and to expand economic development in Central Maluku district. However, Papilaya argued that *Merah Putih* bridge constitutes a grandiose project that would not directly related to economic benefit for ordinary people. That is why he insisted Passo terminal project instead.

Controversies over the projects in Ambon city can also be explained from the perspective of elites’ interests. Governor Karel has an interest at stake in the Rp 450 billion *Merah Putih* project because it would be funded by the central government budget and he has his own *rekanan* (contractor, private partner) to carry out the project. Many

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Zahrudin Latuconsina, 12 February 2008.

believe that his political connection with PDIP party and central government authorities was important factors for his victory during the gubernatorial elections. On the other hand, as explained earlier, mayor Papilaya also has an interest given his own connection with local contractors after uneasy relations with the PDIP party.

## 5. Palembang City: Informal Governance

The city of Palembang covers 400,61 km<sup>2</sup> area and is located at South Sumatra province. The population in 2007 is 1,684,710 and majority are Muslims. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century Palembang was a capital of Sriwijaya kingdom and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was the capital of well-known sultanate Palembang. The glory of the past can still be visible with many ancient relics in the city. After the national prolonged economic crisis since 1997, the city has been able to diversify its economic potentials from mainly a trading center for agricultural products to become a center of industrial products and services in the southern part of Sumatra. With a 6.7% economic growth in 2008,<sup>18</sup> it is one of the fastest growing cities in the island.

Many would argue, however, that the economy could have grown even better if the local authorities make the appropriate policy and if the government could ameliorate the practice of so-called “informal governance”. This is to say that public policy in the city of Palembang is controlled not only by the formal local authorities but also by many figures with vested interests surrounding them. To understand policy-making process in the city, one should go beyond formal structures in the government and realize how political cultures affect the strategic policies. For example, a comprehensive study described how the culture of asking a *lokak* (literary means “token” or “compensation”) is deeply ingrained in the culture of politics in Palembang.<sup>19</sup> It means that the logic of “take and give” in politics, that in practice constitutes underground bribery and corruption, would prevail when public authorities make decisions.

During the New Order administration, the practice of informal governance was kept underground to mean that it was not easily visible to the public. Today, as the political interactions are more opened and media coverage is extensive, informal governance is committed more blatantly although hard evidence is not easily found. The intimate relationships between businessmen and local authorities in the city of Palembang sometimes shock the people because a particular policy might simply nonsense and irrational in terms of budget and priorities.

In 2008, the KPK detained Yusuf Emir Faisal, a member of DPR from the PKB fraction, for receiving a bribe of Rp 375 million from Chandra Antonio Tan, a notable businessman of Palembang. The fraud was related to the plan to build Tanjung Api-api harbor on a mangrove forest in South Sumatra. The Tanjung Api-api plan is considered important as it would facilitate inter-regional trade and boost the economy. A harbor is urgently needed because trade has been inefficient and depended on limited infrastructure

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<sup>18</sup> Bagian Pengolahan Data Elektronik, *Profil Kota Palembang*, 2007. [www.palembang.go.id/2007/](http://www.palembang.go.id/2007/).

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Fuller Collins, *Indonesia Dikhianati*. Jakarta, Gramedia Pustaka Utama. 2008, especially chapter 6.

of roads and water transport systems through the big Musi river. The Tanjung Api-api harbor plan worth Rp 50 billion on 600 hectares mangrove forest is good on paper.

Nevertheless, after formal procedure of environmental impact analysis was cleared by the Ministry of Forestry and fund from the national budget was disbursed, public began to ponder as the progress for constructing the harbor was going too slow. The project is supposed to start in 2006 and finish in 2008. Then, there were news of bribery involving local businessmen and politicians at the local and national level.<sup>20</sup> It turned out that many of the local authorities, including Governor Syahril Oesman (now retired), the Provincial Secretary (Sekda) Sofyan Rebuin, and other high-rank officials of the provincial government of South Sumatra and city government of Palembang were implicated in the case.

In the corruption trial, Yusuf Emir Faisal admitted his involvement and confessed that much of the money from the national budget had been distributed among his colleagues in Commission IV (transportation) of the DPR, politicians from PKB and other political parties, high-rank officials at the Department of Forestry, and local government officials. This was the reason why PT Chandratex Indo Artha, the contractor, could not manage the project according to the schedule. While investigation and trials are underway, the case of Tanjung Api-api illustrates the problem of informal governance in Palembang.

Within the city administration, there are also cases of informal governance that create irresponsible public policy and sub-standard quality of public services. Procedure for city government procurement is one of the most notorious cases at point. According to Presidential Decree No.80/2003, procurement for public offices must follow open tender, particularly those that require more than Rp 50 million of public budget. In Palembang, however, most of the procurement for vehicles, furniture, equipments, and stationaries do not follow any of this presidential decree. As a result, most of the equipments are below the minimum standard.

A study revealed that the problem is because the city government has been informally committed to “work together” with local *Kepolisian Daerah* (Regional Police Department) for guarding the procurement process. Initially, it was meant to ensure that there would be no unfair deal and misuse of authority during the process. However, the cooperative agreement turned out to be an informal backing and racketeering that involved policemen and Palembang city government. It is almost impossible for new bidders, no matter how good they are, to win the contract without consulting and cooperating under this informal agreement. Sometimes, the local government officials and the *Kepolisian Daerah* even asked *premans* (hoodlums, tough guys) to prevent outsiders and journalists from trying to uncover the bad practices in procurement.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Sriwijaya Post*, 16 November 2008; *Kompas*, 3 March 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Meili Zulfikri, *Peningkatan Mutu Pengadaan Barang dan Jasa di Pemda Kota Palembang*, master thesis, Gadjah Mada University, 2008.

The current big project that likely draw controversy is the Musi III bridge that would be funded by national government budget. Governor of South Sumatra province Alex Noerdin and mayor of Palembang city Eddy Santana Putra are trying hard to ensure that the construction of the bridge can be started in 2009. A feasibility study explain that Musi III bridge would divert traffic from the main Ampera bridge and stimulate economic growth in the relatively backward areas such as Plaju and Seberang Ulu.<sup>22</sup> At present, the city has two bridges across Musi river. One is Ampera bridge that was built 40 years ago and is frequently packed with traffic jam. The second bridge was built in West Palembang and is accommodating traffic in the area but would not solve the problem of congestion in the eastern area.

The plan to construct Musi III is aimed at releasing traffic congestion and expanding economic development in other parts of Palembang city. A bridge of 20 meter width and 400 meter long and requires about Rp 325 billion, this would be a big project that cannot be supported only by the local government budget. The public really hope that, unlike the case of Tanjung Api-api project, the construction of Musi III bridge would not only become political commodity among local political elites and would not beset with corruptions.

However, conflicts have already started regarding the designated location and land clearance. There are three alternatives for the bridge stands at the river bank; the area of *Kantor Tata-Kota* (Office of Urban Planning) of Palembang city government, the area of PT. Pupuk Sriwijaya (the big government-owned fertilizer factory), and around Kampung Arab (a residential area with many cultural sites). The local government argued that constructing the stand at the Kantor Tata-Kota would increase the cost of land clearance up to Rp 1,3 trilion. The second alternative is strongly rejected by the management of PT Pupuk Sriwijaya and would also cost more. Yet the third alternative is also refused by residents at the Kampung Arab.<sup>23</sup>

In the past, the Palembang city government could have consulted with the Ministry of Public Works in the central government and when they say “go” the plan would be materialized. In the more democratic and decentralized environment, however, the capability of the local government to negotiate the policy is really tested. When the bridge construction plan was announced to public in 2005, protests were directed to the local government. On 14 December 2005, for example, 300 residents of the Kampung Arab staged a demonstration at the DPRD building and the governor office. The next day, thousands of people attended *zikir bersama* (mass prayers) to protest the construction plan of Musi III bridge.<sup>24</sup> Although Mr. Eddy Santana Putra, the newly elected mayor for his second term, repeatedly says that the construction would be started in 2009, it is still unclear whether the policy would be smoothly executed. The public is also skeptical

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Burkian, *Bagian Perekonomian kota Palembang*, 22 February 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Ike Julies Tiati, *Konflik Pembangunan Jembatan Musi III dan Penggusuran Kampung Arab di Palembang*, master thesis, Program Studi Ketahanan Nasional, Gadjah Mada University, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> *Tempo*, 15 December 2005; *Detik News*, 18 December 2005.

about the project as it can be just another collaborative government-businessmen rackets like the case of Tanjung Api-api harbor.

## 6. Sleman Regency: Obscured Money Politics and Corruption

Sleman is a sub-urban regency in the province of Special Region of Jogjakarta. It has a contrast topography of the 2,999 meter Merapi volcano in the north to less than 100 meter above the sea level in the south. With much fertile land and abundant water for irrigation, the district of Sleman is ideal for agricultural activities. But there are also fast growing small-scale sites of industries and services in the urban areas. Sleman covers an area of 574.82 km<sup>2</sup> and the number of population is 859,327. Education is one of the most important service sectors in this regency as there are many schools and four state universities, including Gadjah Mada University, the leading and firstly established university in Indonesia.

During the New Order administration, Sleman was designated as one of the 26 pilot-project regencies for local autonomy. It was in 1995 when president Suharto finally acknowledged the importance of decentralizing functions to local governments. Yet this commitment was a half-hearted reform on the part of the central government and did not change much of the Sleman's human resources in terms of capacity building.<sup>25</sup> Although Sleman is considered as the most developed regency in the province aside from Jogja city, the rate of growth is still moderate among the best performing regencies in Indonesia.

Many are concerned that even though Sleman has many education facilities and many scholars are working in this regency, the conduct of local government officials is not much different from those of other regencies in the country. Integrity, trust and accountability are still problematic among the local government officials in decentralized Indonesia. In the past, corruption and misuse of power were generally committed by central government officials while most local government officials was relatively clean because of the tight control under the authoritarian regime. After decentralization policy is implemented, however, such misconducts are also "decentralized" to the provincial and local government officials. In fact, the call for political openness and *reformasi* do not change much of the corrupt behaviors.

Mr. Ibnu Subiyanto is the current *bupati* (regent, head of district) of Sleman and is servicing for his second term. In 2000, he contested for the position under Law No.22/1999 system of elections. Ibnu Subiyanto garnered a support from the PDIP party and, together with H. Zailani as the vice bupati candidate supported by PPP party, he approached the DPRD members with his vision to change local government policy in Sleman so that it could be a business-friendly regency. As a businessmen and university lecturer on accounting, he could impress many of the DPRD members. The most critical factor, however, was that he gave some amount of donation for "an appreciation to PDIP supports". He might also have given his personal donation to DPRD members from

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<sup>25</sup> For a comprehensive evaluation on the local autonomy pilot project during the New Order, see Departemen Dalam Negeri, *Laporan Evaluasi Penyerahan Urusan kepada 26 Daerah Tingkat II Percontohan*, Jakarta, 1998.



Golkar party and others. In the period of 1999-2004, it was a common practice that in addition to registration fee, a candidate would give his personal donation to political parties and promise to “serve” members of DPRD if he was to be elected. Ibnu and Zailani casted 18 votes while their closest rival casted 16 votes. The result of the local government election was not a good mandate for Ibnu and Zailani but it was enough for them to secure the first term in office.<sup>26</sup>

Under Ibnu’s first term administration, political situation in Sleman was relatively stable compared to other districts in Jogjakarta province. The economic growth rate was quite impressive at 5.25% per annum, surpassing the average overall province of 5.13% per annum. The main contributors for the economic growth were construction, trade, and services. Most people in Sleman started to have a good confidence in Ibnu leadership. Yet many observers were concerned with Ibnu's obsession with big infrastructure projects. Some of the projects resulted in economic multiplying benefits, but many others did not. For example, Ibnu initiative to renovate Mataram canal at the Pogung village and proven to be effective in solving environmental problems and to attract business investors in its vicinity.

However, the regent initiative to build a big soccer stadium at Maguwoharjo has raised strong criticisms from various corners. Although the stadium project was hailed by many soccer fans, it was not supported by economic experts as it absorbed a fund of Rp 88 billion for construction and requires a monthly Rp 15 million for maintenance. The project has left the Sleman government indebted for several years since its construction and yet the benefit of this grandiose stadium is questionable. A government official admitted that he had warned that the government cash-flow was not ready for this ambitious project, but many high-rank officials snubbed his objections.<sup>27</sup>

When his term in office was ended in 2005, Ibnu dismissed Zailani as he considered that his partner was too slow in making public policy. Ibnu teamed up with Sri Purnomo of the PAN party, a schoolteacher that he believed to be a soft and moderate figure towards his stand on “strategic projects”. During his campaigns, many have already questioned about dubious funding from Sleman government. The so-called *gotong-royong* (mutual assistance) fund of the local government budget was used to distribute asphalt drums (each worth Rp 4 million) in the villages. The problem was that the drums of asphalt was labeled “*Ibnu Subiyanto, Calon Nomor 1*” (Ibnu Subiyanto, candidate Number 1).<sup>28</sup> The Indonesian Corruption Watch also noted that political party coalition in Sleman has drawn Rp 10 million from candidates of bupati and vice bupati and requested another Rp 10 million for campaign costs (ICW, 2005).

Ibnu and Sri Purnomo won the direct elections of 2005 Pilkada with 39.6 percent of votes against their closest competitor Hafidh Asrom and Kusbaryanto who casted 33.9

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<sup>26</sup> Dyah Mutiarin, *Pergolakan di Akar-rumput: Dinamika Pembuatan Keputusan di Desa setelah Reformasi*, Yogyakarta, Amara Book, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Soetrisno, the *Sekda* (Regency Secretary) of Sleman, 9 January 2009.

<sup>28</sup> “Pembab Sleman Dituding Pakai APBD untuk Kampanye”, *Suara Karya*, 9 July 2005.

percent of votes. Although it is still a narrow margin of victory for Ibnu and Sri Purnomo, the gap was wider compared to that in 2000 and it gave a good mandate because it was a direct election regulated under Law No.32/2004 and Government Regulation No.6/2005. It also showed that Pilkada in Sleman regency is fiercely competitive. Hafidh Asrom and Kusbaryanto tried to file a suit to the *Panitia Pengawas Pemilu* (Election Supervisory Committee) against “money politics” committed by Ibnu and Sri Purnomo. Yet the committee did not take action because their report was considered too late.<sup>29</sup>

The construction of strategic projects continued during Ibnu’s second term in office. This time around, there are not many officials questioning his extravaganza projects. After the national economy was bounced back from the crisis in 2005 and most people in Sleman felt alright with their living conditions, resistance against his policy is rarely heard.

In a more recent case, however, Ibnu seemed to be in a big trouble. The Kejaksaan Negeri (Local Attorney) found that he is possibly involved in a graft scandal of book procurement for the *Dinas Pendidikan* (Local Agency for Education). In 2004, together with then DPRD chairman Jarot Subiyantoro, Ibnu signed a decree to procure books for primary and secondary schools from publisher Balai Pustaka with the government budget amounted Rp 29.9 billion. It was later found that the procurement did not comply with Presidential Decree No.80/2003 on procurement for public facilities and the books’ quality was below standard. Also, as much as Rp 12.1 billion was gone in the scandal involving Ibnu, Jarot, and some officials of the Dinas Pendidikan. In 2006 the court has found Jarot, the ex DPRD chairman, guilty and sentenced him 5 years in prison. Six officials of the Dinas Pendidikan were also found guilty for corruption and sentenced 4.5 years in prison.

Although he has been able to buy time against investigation, Ibnu appeared to be in difficult position after president SBY sent a letter of endorsement for the Kejaksaan Negeri (Local Attorney) to grill Ibnu. On 6 January 2009, the Kejaksaan Negeri has interrogated Ibnu on his possible involvement in the book scandal. Ibnu has not been detained afterwards and he continued his daily activities as the head of local government. But the investigation will continue and it appears that he would not be exonerated in the case. The only thing that is certain for Ibnu is that his political career has finished with this disgraceful case.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

The presented cases in three districts illustrate that the dynamics of public policy-making in Indonesia are marked with many factors commonly applied in developing democracies. The real picture of democratization in the country might not be represented only by these three sample districts because Indonesia is so diverse in terms of geographical conditions and cultures. Nevertheless, there are similar characteristics that

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<sup>29</sup> Hafidh Asrom and Kusbaryanto did not insist, probably because they did the same thing. *Suara Karya*, 18 July 2005; KPUD, *Laporan Pilkada Kabupaten/Kota se Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*, December, 2006.

can be found in all districts under the current enthusiasm for democracy. Table 1 shows the salient characteristics that are applied in the three districts.

Table 1. Characteristics of Public Policy Making in Three Local Governments

No.	Characteristics	District		
		Ambon	Palembang	Sleman
1.	Dominant political parties	PDIP, Golkar	PPP, Golkar	PDIP, PAN
2.	Leadership	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
3.	Participatory planning	Weak	Weak	Moderate
4.	Mechanism of checks and balances	Strong	Weak	Moderate
5.	Compliance with professionalism	Low	Moderate	Relatively strong
6.	Executive power misuse	Moderate Corruption is deterred	High Collusion and nepotism	High Indirect but extensive
7.	Responsiveness to people's need	Moderate	Low	Low
8.	Media coverage	Partisan, somewhat exclusive on certain issues	Extensive coverage but the information is asymmetric	Extensive, relatively impartial

The formal prerequisites for democracy have been put in place in Indonesia, i.e. political openness with a multi-party system, regular elections, decentralized governance, developing forms of checks and balances, and freedom for asserting public demands through the media and other channels. These are the factors that need to be consistently developed in the future.

However, democracy also places a challenge for policy makers. One thing that is theoretically profound, and supported by cases in Indonesia, is that policy makers have to be ready for more diverse interests and positions. Scholars have noted this tendency of divergence under democracy (Dahl, 1971; Hill, 2005). Therefore, any policy makers at the local governments in the future must be equipped with communication and

negotiation skills in addition to the more demanding professional and technical skills that are required in modern governance. Fragmented public policy is not a bad consequence of democracy. Instead, it is a challenge of democracy; that actors must ensure that policy process accommodate majority of the interests at stake. Faced with fierce resistance against Musi III project in Kampung Arab, for example, mayor Eddy Santana Putra should not get frustrated and resort to use power as it might deteriorate the public trust.

The interactions between executives, legislatives and local political parties in the three cases substantiate the notion that democracy remained elitist in Indonesia. As public control on the executives during post-elections remains weak while most politicians do not genuinely represent the public, public policy also tends to be elitist. The phenomena of serving the political parties or, to be more precise, serving the political elites would mean that much has to be done in Indonesia regarding the direct link between parties' platforms and their relevance to daily policies of the local administration.

Lack of understanding about the fundamentals or the substance democracy has led most Indonesian people to perceive democracy from its rituals (elections, voting, freedom to speak, etc.) while its relevance to improve the quality of public policy is disregarded. This is the reason why money politics are still rampant and it looked like nothing is wrong with it. There are two things that can be done to ameliorate this in the future. First, there has to be more stringent control on political recruitment while the curative measures of law enforcement has to be applied more consistently. Second, on the part of the civil society elements, there is an urgent need to improve awareness about the bad impact of money politics. After formal and procedural democratic elements are applied, there is still an enormous task for political education among ordinary people.

Cases in the three districts also illustrate the alarming fact that accountability is one of the missing elements in decentralized Indonesia. When local authorities analyze alternatives and formulate certain policy, it is mostly based on their personal judgement and the interest of their political counterparts rather than on the interest of the commoners or the public at large. Mayor Papilaya of Ambon, mayor Eddy of Palembang and bupati Ibnu of Sleman would certainly deny this notion. But from the cases presentation one would find plenty of examples to substantiate the notion. The characteristic of "responsiveness to the people's need" in Table 1 is filled with disappointing remarks, either "low" or "moderate". This is to argue that accountability is among the most important agenda for improving public policy in Indonesia.

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