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Application of the Public Space Model as a Medium of Conflict Reconciliation

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has carried out to examine the use of public space as a medium of conflict reconciliation, on conflict cases in Ambon and Poso. Both places utilize existing public space to become a medium of reconciliation and a trigger for peace. Public spaces used include schools, markets, and coffee shops. The difference between the two models lies only in the public space used, wherein Ambon's model used the coffee shop while in Poso it is not. This is because there are cultural differences between Ambon and Poso, where Ambon has a culture to gather together in a coffee shop. This research itself is a development or continuation of the initial research, researchers conducted a trial implementation of public space model as a medium of reconciliation in other location. The purpose of this research is to obtain data validation on the model of applying public space as a medium of conflict reconciliation, so that the models can be used as a basis for drafting policies related to conflict resolution in Indonesia. The research was conducted using qualitative approaches and phenomenological methods, and data were obtained through focus group discussions with informants who were community leaders from the government, religious leaders, and academics. The results showed the use of public space precisely as a medium of reconciliation, but it must be supported by the role of government and community leaders. Another finding, a public space that can be used not only that is real or physical but also a virtual public space.

Keywords: Conflicts, conflict communications, public spaces

1. INTRODUCTION

An earlier study has conducted by researchers related to the utilization of public space as a medium of reconciliation. The research resulted in two models as a result of the use of public space as a medium of reconciliation in Ambon and Poso. The first Model was the result of an assessment of the utilization of public space in Ambon during the 1999 Conflict. The public space used in the Ambon's conflict are market, school, and coffee shop. The coffee shop used as a public space in conflict reconciliation due to the presence of coffee culture owned by the people of Ambon. The coffee shop as one of the main public spaces used during the conflict as a place of information exchange and post-conflict as a medium of spreading peace [1]–[3].



Figure 1 First Model from Conflict of Ambon

The second model is the result of study on the utilization of public space in Poso's conflict as the medium of conflict reconciliation. The public space used in the reconciliation process in Poso are market and school. The difference between the first model and the second model lies in the sense of culture gathered in the coffee shop in the Poso community.



Figure 2 Second Model from Conflict of Poso

Based on the two models, researchers intend to continue the research to implement both models as a solution in case of conflict in Indonesia. To get to that stage, both models need to be tested for validation first. This is the main reason for advanced research to get validation on this already discovered model. A formulation of problems in this study, (1) How is the application of public space model as a means of conflict reconciliation can be done?; (2) How is validation test of public space implementation model as a means of reconciliation?

1.1. Related Work

This section will explain some of the previous studies that the authors have gathered to serve as the basis that public spaces and reconciliation conflict have a relation and there is a role of communication in it. The first research under the title "Dialogue and the discourse of peacebuilding in Maluku, Indonesia", is done using the experiment method. This study involved participants of Christian and Islamic leaders, participants conducted five days of discussion to create a vision of reconciliation and community restoration with basic religious values, strengths through differences, and dialogue [4]. The research uses dialogue and discourse to build peace. While this research examines how to build its achievements by utilizing public spaces. This study used the concept of public space owned by Jurgen Habermas to examine its role as a medium of reconciliation and also associated with cultural approaches and local wisdom owned by Indonesian people.

Subsequent research examines peace efforts and conflict resolution through public spaces such as markets, schools, and coffee stalls. Public space utilized as a medium of integration, bridges for people segregated by the conflict [5]. Based on previous research, it can be seen that public spaces can be utilized as a means of conflict reconciliation. The next previous research examines the utilization of public space for the political interests in Makassar, the public space such as coffee shop becomes a public space politicized for the benefit of each party. The Realities formed in the coffee shop in Makassar also gained the influence of the mass media [6]. Other previous research related to conflict also conducted through a historical

approach in Poso conflict. This study examines the historical roots of the Poso conflict, reviewing that the potential conflict was already in Poso before the outbreak in 1999. This research is a historical study explaining the Poso conflict chronologically and looking for the root of the problem far before the conflict occurred in 1999 yesterday. [7]

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the study of the conflict and it's solving are an interesting topic and can be examined from various perspectives. The study itself examines the resolution of conflicts by utilizing public spaces and looking for data validation to test whether this model can be implemented elsewhere and is the basis of a policy script submission for the government.

1.2. Our Contribution

The objectives of this research are:

1. To know the overview of implementing a public space model as a means of conflict reconciliation.
2. To find out the description of the validation test of the public space implementation model as a means of reconciliation.

1.3. Paper Structure

This research conducted using qualitative research methods, especially using the phenomenological approach. The phenomenology study was first developed by Edmund Husserl, by laying down basics assumptions in the experience of human life. It is an experience that is conscious or awareness of, and its development in the core description of the experience is not on explanation or analysis [8]. The study of phenomenology describes the meaning of some individuals regarding their life experience on a concept or phenomenon. This study focuses on how to describe the similarities that participants had when they experienced or felt a phenomenon. [9], [10]

In this research, phenomenology was chosen because researchers intend to provide an understanding or a profound description of the meaning of the life experience of the speaker as the parties involved in the conflict reconciliation process. Phenomenology used to provide an in-depth understanding of the unique life experiences that the speakers have, for their involvement and perspective on the conflicts, causes, consequences, and completion processes.

The subject of this research is the informant's experience for its involvement in the conflict reconciliation process and provides validation to the public space model as a means of conflict reconciliation that has been raised by researchers. The research object is a community figure, religious figures, and governments who have the authority and role in the process of reconciliation if there is a conflict.

The selection technique uses the snowball sampling, which researchers get input on the appropriate resource for the study. As for the informant in this study is as follows, the first informant named Nico Gara is Former general secretary of the Minahasa Christian Church, a community and religious figure who is now an academic and involved in the Treaty of Malino I and II. Second informant, Debby Suzana Momongan, activist of The Christian Evangelical Church. Third informant is secretary of Manado FKUB, Sofyan Lapasu. Fourth, Christiany Juditha, head of human Resources Research and Development agency, ministry of communication, Manado.

² Data collection techniques used in this research are focus group discussion (FGD) and also observations during FGD. Data obtained, then processed so that research findings can be described and then analyzed with the help of a library study that has been done by researchers.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

² Indonesia is a country that has a high level of diversity, which can be seen from the conditions of multi-culture, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious. This condition makes Indonesia very vulnerable to conflicts, especially conflicts related to SARA (Ethnic, Religious, Race, and Intergroup issues). Diputra (2016) mentions some of the most horrific examples of conflicts that have occurred in Indonesia, the May 1998 Riot tragedy, the religious conflict in Ambon in 1999, the conflict in Sampit between Dayak and Madura, religious conflict in Poso [11].

The conflict-prone condition of Indonesia makes Indonesia must also be ready with solutions or ways of resolving conflicts that occur. Preventive action is needed to prevent conflicts from occurring, but what should be done in the event of a conflict, what can be used, or used to accelerate the process of reconciliation in conflict. A previous study has been conducted by researchers related to the use of public space as a means of reconciliation. The research produced two models as a result of the study of the use of public space as a means of reconciliation in Ambon and Poso.

This research was conducted as a form of verification of two models' application of public space as a medium of conflict reconciliation. Data from the FGDs can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 FGD results

Key Point	Response
The main thing in conflict resolution	The root of the conflict
the most appropriate solution to accelerate the conflict resolution process in Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The positive values that are contained in each religionMediasi Multicultural Education
The reason Public space can be used to resolve conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places to Interact Medium for peace messages Virtual public space
The most effective public space	Digital public spaces supported by physical / real / analog public spaces (coffee shops, schools, markets)

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Based on the table, it can be seen several important points related to public space and conflict reconciliation. In resolving conflicts before looking for ways or solutions, it must find the cause of the conflict. Informants argued that the right way to resolve the conflict would only be found in the root or cause of the conflict was already known in advance. Identification of the causes of conflict can indicate the reasons behind the conflict, whether due to economic imbalances, cultural differences, or differences in interests between groups. [12]–[14]

Second, the most appropriate solution to help speed up the process of conflict resolution can be done through equalizing perceptions about the positive values held by each religion; mediation; and the existence of multicultural education. Religion has an important role in maintaining tolerance among people, each religion teaches the importance of being respectful and avoiding violence [15]–[17]. Mediation itself is undeniably one of the most effective ways of resolving conflicts, mediation has been widely used in various spheres of conflict, not only social conflicts but also legal dispute conflicts and conflicts within organizations. Whereas multicultural education is a new concept offered which can be adopted by Indonesia as a multicultural country and used as a solution for conflict prevention [18].

Third, public space can be used as a medium of conflict reconciliation because basically, public space is a place for interaction and social integration [2]. Public space, such as schools and markets can be used as a medium for spreading peace messages. Besides that, with the development of technology, public space that can be utilized is not only limited to physical or real public spaces but also virtual public spaces. This virtual public space can utilize social media and online communities.

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Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that public space is suitable to be a means of conflict reconciliation. This is in line with the thoughts of Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2006) who explain that conflict communication can be done through a dialogue approach, focusing on community mediation and public participation. The community mediation approach is to promote the development of local democracy by creating a space outside the legal system to manage disputes by strengthening the capacity of the community to manage disputes. Whereas within the scope of conflict management, this approach manages conflict by mediating between conflicting communities. Where the management of this conflict depends on the development of structures for the community to obtain votes through the process of pouring out or telling, and to create mutual choices that satisfy both parties to reach an agreement. The public participation and dialogue approach emphasizes the importance of bringing various stakeholders together to negotiate important issues in society. This process usually leads to new actions and policy initiatives taken by individuals and groups in society.

While in the perspective of conflict management, this approach manages conflict by creating forums that accelerate the learning process among stakeholders. Creating a safe space where stakeholders can explore the position and interests of themselves and others [19]. Through public space, every member of the community can meet and conduct dialogue freely without feeling pressured by the authorities. Public space exists as a safe place, which channels the message of peace out of the public space. Through this public space, peace agents can enter and then conduct conflict management, which in the process requires support and intervention from the government and other community leaders as opinion leaders. Inside this the public space the interaction occurred, involves all members of the community, both those involved in the conflict or not. The interaction shows that there is also communication in it because the conditions for interaction are contact and communication [20].

The public sphere itself can be interpreted as an arena for people working in daily life, which not only includes a place of activity but also involves the articulation of various interests. In the political context published by Habermas (1993) public space is a condition that allows state members to come together to articulate their interests in forming discursive opinions and desires. The conditions agreed by Habermas are, first of all citizens who can be requested, have the same rights in the public sphere. Second, all participants have the same opportunity to reach a fair consensus and treat their communication partners as autonomous and responsible individuals. Third, there are shared rules that protect the communication process from pressure and conversation, so that a better argument forms the basis of the discussion process. In other words, the conditions requested are inclusive, egalitarian, and pressure-free [6]. Durham & Kellner wrote that the concept of public space was originally an overall reality of social life where something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access to the entire community is guaranteed. Intangible public space becomes evident in the form of all conversations where each individual gathers to form a public body [21].

Based on the structural-functionalism paradigm introduced by Talcott Parson, society is in a social system that binds them in equilibrium. This concept is known as social integration theory, which has a basic understanding to unite certain elements in society to create order and control social conflicts and deviations in a particular social system. [2]

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the entire discussion in the previous section, the conclusions in this study can be written in two main points. First, the application of public space as a medium of conflict reconciliation can be done by spreading peace messages, the messages spreading can be done through the development of campaign programs and multicultural education. Secondly, FGD results show that public space is appropriate to be used as a medium of conflict reconciliation because public space is a place for the community to gather and interact so that the mediation process can be more easily carried out

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