

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Decentralization, Identity Construction, and Conflict: Education under Aceh's Special Autonomy

A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies

Massey University

Palmerston North

New Zealand

Amaliah Fitriah

2017

Abstract

This study contributes to the existing literature on decentralization by exploring the relationship between decentralization, identity construction and conflict in the context of decentralization reform in Indonesia. Using the concept of bottom-up autonomy as its theoretical lens, this study explores the impact of political decentralization on the autonomy of Aceh and examines the notion that autonomy can contribute to peaceful management of intra-state conflict. The study involves research into education stakeholders in the two districts of Aceh and uses the qualitative methods of pairwise ranking, semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis.

More specifically, the impact of decentralization on the autonomy of Aceh is investigated through perceived changes in three areas of education: the curriculum, the structure, and the financing of education. The results demonstrate that the autonomy agreed between Aceh and the Indonesian government has contributed to extensive bottom-up autonomy for Aceh by accommodating the distinct identity of the Acehnese and by providing a political framework for local empowerment. Through providing frameworks for the accommodation of local identity and for local empowerment, the form of bottom-up autonomy resulting from political decentralization has offered negotiated avenues for managing intra-state conflict peacefully. These frameworks have hopefully created common ground for both parties to sustain peace.

However, this study also revealed that there is potential for internal discontent within Aceh society as a result of perceived unequal access to resources. This study does not, therefore, emphatically conclude that political decentralization necessarily reduces conflict. Instead, this research suggests that political decentralization which results in extensive bottom-up autonomy may be a tool for promoting a more peaceful management of conflict between regions and the central state than would otherwise be possible.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have taken the time to participate in and to support this study. Firstly, I am extremely grateful to both my PhD supervisors, Dr Gerard Prinsen and Associate Professor Bethan Greener, who consistently challenged my limitations and extended the boundaries of my knowledge. Their expertise, guidance, and patience have continuously inspired and motivated me throughout my PhD journey. Thanks would never be enough to show how grateful I am to them.

Equally great thanks go to the participants of this study in Aceh, Indonesia, who have offered me their time, wisdom, insight and hospitality. Without their cooperation and trust, this thesis would never have been realised. My deep gratitude goes to the Head of the Education Office of the Province of Aceh, the Head of Education Office of Banda Aceh, the Head of Education Office of Bireuen, the Head of Bireuen BPPD, the Head of Bireuen Education Council, and the Director of ICAIOS (The International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies), for their assistance and their warm welcome towards me and the idea of this research. I am also indebted to my research assistant, Fendra, who showed me many aspects of Acehese life that enriched my understanding of the cultural and sociological background of Aceh and the Acehese.

Special thanks also goes to NZAID and the Massey University Graduate Research Fund who made this research possible through their financial contribution. I am also grateful to participants at the 2015 Asia and Education Conference (University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 11-13 December), for adding their valuable comments to the findings of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my love and gratitude to my family who have always had faith in me and supported me in many ways. My parents who always encourage me to reach beyond my boundaries, and send their best prayers to me. My beloved husband Rudi whose affection and encouragement has kept me positive and determined, and my wonderful children Naja and Zahra, who are

always there for me and provide me with ongoing love and support. They have been a long-lasting source of energy during this intellectual endeavour.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
List of Acronyms.....	xi
List of Acehnese/Indonesian Terms	xiii
 CHAPTER 1	 1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Indonesian Decentralization Reform, Regional Grievances and the Resurgence of Local Identities.....	1
1.2. Thesis Aims and Research Questions	2
1.3. Significance of the Research and Contribution to Knowledge	3
1.4. The Case: Aceh	6
1.5. Research Approach.....	9
1.6. Structure of the Thesis	10
 CHAPTER 2	 14
DECENTRALIZATION, AUTONOMY, IDENTITY AND CONFLICT: PUTTING THE STUDY IN CONTEXT	14
2.1. Introduction.....	14
2.2. Decentralization: Theory and Practice.....	15
2.2.1. <i>The Evolution of Decentralization</i>	15
2.2.2. <i>The Definition and Types of Decentralization</i>	17
2.2.3. <i>Political Decentralization</i>	19
2.2.4. <i>Motives to Decentralize: Identity Discourse and Economic Discourse</i>	21
2.3. Decentralization: Managing or Stimulating Conflict?	27
2.4. The Concept of Local Autonomy	35
2.5. Conclusion.....	42

CHAPTER 3.....	44
INDONESIAN DECENTRALIZATION MOVEMENT AND ACEH SPECIAL AUTONOMY	44
3.1. Introduction	44
3.2. Indonesian Decentralization Reform	44
3.2.1. <i>Decentralization, Regional Grievances and Identity Politics</i>	49
3.3. Aceh's Struggle for Autonomy and Recognition of Identity	52
3.3.1. <i>The Recent Special Autonomy and the Implementation of Islamic Sharia</i>	58
3.3.2. <i>The New Local Political Landscape and GAM's Political Influence</i>	63
3.4. Conclusion	65
CHAPTER 4.....	68
EDUCATION IN ACEH AND THE ROLE OF <i>ULAMA</i>	68
4.1. Introduction	68
4.2. The History of Education in Aceh	68
4.2.1. <i>The Pre-colonial and Colonial Period</i>	70
4.2.2. <i>The Period of Religious Reformism (1920s-1940s)</i>	75
4.2.3. <i>The Period of Revolution and Independence (1945-1990s)</i>	79
4.3. Aceh's Contemporary Education System.....	81
4.3.1. <i>Sekolah (Public School)</i>	82
4.3.2. <i>Dayah</i>	82
4.3.3. <i>Madrasa</i>	84
4.4. The Role of <i>Ulama</i> in Aceh's education	85
4.4.1. <i>Relations with the state</i>	87
4.4.2. <i>Fragmented authority of Ulama</i>	89
4.5. Conclusion	90
CHAPTER 5.....	93
RESEARCH STRATEGY AND FIELDWORK	93
5.1. Introduction	93
5.2. Epistemological Foundation.....	93
5.2.1. <i>Positionality and Reflexivity</i>	94

5.3. Qualitative Approach	106
5.3.1. <i>Evaluating Qualitative Research</i>	107
5.4. Doing Fieldwork.....	109
5.4.1. <i>Establishing Relationships</i>	109
5.4.2. <i>Research Ethics</i>	111
5.4.3. <i>Research Sites and Settings, and Participants</i>	115
5.4.4. <i>Data Collection Methods and Procedures</i>	119
5.5. Data Analysis.....	130
5.6. Research Limitations	132
5.7. Conclusion.....	134
 CHAPTER 6	 137
SPECIAL AUTONOMY AND ISLAMIC <i>SHARIA</i> : CONVERGING ISLAMIC AND SECULAR-STATE CURRICULUM.....	137
6.1. Introduction.....	137
6.2. The Development of Education under the Special Autonomy	138
6.3. The Policy	140
6.4. Islamic <i>Sharia</i> and the Promotion of the Islamic Education Curriculum	142
6.4.1. <i>Islamic Education Curriculum in Public Schools</i>	147
6.4.2. <i>Secular Knowledge in the Curriculum of <i>Dayah</i></i>	154
6.5. The Curricula of History and Acehese Language.....	161
6.6. Changes in Curriculum: From Dichotomy to Convergent Education System	167
6.7. Curriculum as Representation of Local Identity	169
6.8. Conclusion.....	170
 CHAPTER 7	 173
SPECIAL AUTONOMY: INTEGRATING INDIGENEOUS ISLAMIC EDUCATION (<i>DAYAH</i>) INTO THE STATE SYSTEM.....	173
7.1. Introduction.....	173
7.2. The Structure of Education Governance under Decentralization	174
7.3. The BPPD: The New Structure of Education in Aceh.....	176
7.4. Government Funding to <i>Dayah</i> and Perceived Inequality.....	178

7.4.1. <i>Funding Mechanism</i>	182
7.4.2. <i>Accessibility of the Fund: Who Gets the Benefit?</i>	187
7.5. Changing Relations between <i>Dayah</i> and the Government of Aceh.....	191
7.5.1. <i>Perceptions of the BPPD and Government Funding: Cooperation versus Legitimacy</i>	193
7.5.2. <i>Funding and Dayah Self Reliance: from Community Support to Government Support?</i>	198
7.5.3. <i>Towards Greater Involvement of the Ulama in Education</i>	204
7.6. Conclusion	211
CHAPTER 8.....	214
AUTONOMY AND THE POLITICS OF FINANCING EDUCATION	214
8.1. Introduction	214
8.2. Funding System for Education under Special Autonomy	215
8.3. The Special Autonomy Fund and its Allocation to Educational Resources	221
8.4. Changes in Local Political Structure and Access to Educational Resources	223
8.4.1. <i>District Autonomy in Policy for Financing Education</i>	225
8.4.2. <i>Local Political Contestation in the Annual Budgeting Process</i>	229
8.4.3. <i>The Informal Decision-making Process and the Emergence of Neo-Patrimonialism</i>	237
8.5. Perceived Unequal Access to Resources and its Potential for Social Discontent within Aceh Society	243
8.6. Conclusion.....	246
CHAPTER 9.....	250
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	250
POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION, AUTONOMY, IDENTITY, AND CONFLICT	250
9.1. Introduction	250
9.2. Political Decentralization and the Extent of Autonomy.....	251
9.2.1. <i>Earlier Years' Top-down Versus Recent Bottom-up Autonomy</i>	253
9.2.2. <i>Political Decentralization, District Autonomy and Local Empowerment</i>	256
9.3. Identity Discourse in the Implementation of Decentralization	262
9.3.1. <i>Education as the Arena of Identity Contestation</i>	263

9.3.2. <i>Can Decentralization Mitigate Problems Stemming from Multiple Identities within a Country?</i>	265
9.4. Can Political Decentralization Provide Positive Options for Mitigating Intra-State Conflict?	269
9.5. New Challenges: Local Political Contestation, Neo-patrimonialism, and Internal Discontent	277
9.6. Summary	282
9.7. Final Thoughts	284
9.7.1. <i>Contribution to Knowledge</i>	284
9.7.2. <i>Recommendation for Future Research</i>	286
9.7.3. <i>Possible Implications for Policy</i>	286
References.....	289
Appendices	299
Appendix 1: Information Sheet	299
Appendix 2: Consent Form.....	302
Appendix 3: Interview Guides	303
Appendix 4: Observation Guide	308
Endnote: Interview Quotes in Bahasa.....	309

List of Tables

Table 1: Bottom-up Approach to Autonomy	41
Table 2: The History of Aceh-Jakarta Relations (Aceh's Autonomy)	60
Table 3: Contemporary Education Institutions in Aceh	85
Table 4: Group blueprints of the PWRs.....	118
Table 5: Sites, Participants, and Sample Size	119
Table 6: Result of PWRs: Top-three ranking of the most important issues in education in the context of autonomy	139
Table 7: Analysis of five ranking issues on education in the context of autonomy	140
Table 8: Three categories of <i>dayah</i> in terms of curriculum	144
Table 9: Changes in the curricula of public education and <i>dayah</i> education after the implementation of special autonomy and Islamic <i>sharia</i>	146
Table 10: Changes in the public education curriculum showing the variation in two districts	154
Table 11: The number of <i>dayah</i> and schools, and percentage of students attending each type of institution, in the Province of Aceh.....	181
Table 12: Type, accreditation criteria and block grant of <i>dayah</i>	183
Table 13: Additional revenue sharing for Aceh after the implementation of special autonomy	217
Table 14: The Allocation of School Operational Fund in two districts	227
Table 15: The variation of educational policies in the two districts.....	228
Table 16: The composition of district House of Representatives seats in Banda Aceh and Bireuen in the 2009 and 2014 elections.....	232
Table 17: The extent of the recent autonomy in Aceh's education	255

List of Figures

Figure 1: Interview with a teungku (religious teacher), and an ulama (a leader of dayah).....	101
Figure 2: Local research assistant as an intermediary	105
Figure 3: Map of Aceh, Indonesia.....	116
Figure 4: Procedure in PWRs.....	122
Figure 5: Observation scheme as a strategy to collect data.....	128
Figure 6: A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry	131
Figure 7: Process of data analysis.....	132
Figure 8: Different types of dayah	144
Figure 9: The recent development of Aceh's education within the context of special autonomy	167
Figure 10: Curriculum as a representation of local identity	169
Figure 11: Decentralized Education Sector Governance and Management	175
Figure 12: Provincial budget expenditure, education sector (APBA) 2013	179
Figure 13: Budget allocation to dayah 2013.....	182
Figure 14: The trend of BPPD budget allocation	185
Figure 15: Results on the effect of autonomy on the education structure of Aceh.....	210
Figure 16: The flows of funds from central government to regional government	216
Figure 17: Education Budget Allocations from the Special Autonomy Fund and the Oil and Gas Fund.....	219
Figure 18: Composition of Aceh's revenues 2007-2013.....	220
Figure 19: Changes in Local Political Structure and Access to Educational Resources	224
Figure 20: Political decentralization, the extent of autonomy achieved, and the potential of managing conflict in the case of Aceh's special autonomy	252

List of Acronyms

- BOS – *Biaya Operasional Sekolah* (School Operational Fund)
- BPPD – *Badan Pembinaan Pendidikan Dayah* (Dayah Education Board)
- DBO – *Dana Bantuan Operasional* (Operational Fund)
- DEO – District Education Office
- DI/TII – *Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia* (Abode of Islam)
- DoRA – Department of Religious Affairs
- DoEC – Department of Education and Culture
- DPRA – *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh* (Aceh's People Representative Council)
- EC – Education Council (*Majelis Pendidikan Daerah*/MPD)
- EO – Education Office
- EU – European Union
- GAF – General Allocation Fund
- GAM – *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh Movement)
- HUDA – *Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh* (the Association of Dayah Ulama of Aceh)
- IAIN – *Institut Agama Islam Negeri* (State Institute of Islamic Studies)
- ICMI – *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (the Association of Indonesian Muslim Scholars)
- KPA – *Komisi Peralihan Aceh* (The Aceh Transition Committee)
- LCC – Local Content Curriculum
- LoGA – the Law on Governing Aceh
- MAA – *Majelis Adat Aceh* (the Council of Aceh Custom)
- MoEC – Ministry of Education and Culture
- MoRA – Ministry of Religious Affairs
- MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
- MUI – *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulama Council)

MPR – *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (People’s Representative Assembly)

MPU – *Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama* (Ulama Representative Council)

MUNA – *Majelis Ulama Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam* (the Ulama Council of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam)

NII – *Negara Islam Indonesia* (Islamic State of Indonesia)

OGF – Oil and Gas Fund

PA – *Partai Aceh* (Aceh Party)

PAD – *Pendapatan Asli Daerah* (Local revenue generated)

PEO – Provincial Education Office

PNA – *Partai Nasional Aceh* (Aceh National Party)

PPP – *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (Development Unity Party)

PUSA – *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (All Aceh Ulama Association)

PWR – Pairwise Ranking

SC – School Committee

SPAF – Specific Allocation Fund

SPF – Special Autonomy Fund

List of Acehnese/Indonesian Terms

Balai Pengajian – preschool where students study to read and recite the Qur'an

Bahasa – Indonesian Official Language

Dayah – Aceh Traditional Islamic Boarding School

Diniyah Programme – The programme initiated by Banda Aceh District Education Office to introduce the addition of Islamic education curriculum in public schools

Ulama – Muslim/religious Scholar

Teungku – Teacher of Islamic religious subjects

Santri – Students of *dayah*

Madrasa – Modern Islamic Schools

Qanun – Arabic term for regional or local regulation (bylaw) intended for the implementation of the Law on Special Autonomy for the Privileged Province of Aceh as the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam

Kitab Kuning – Classical texts of Islamic studies (literally 'Yellow Book')

Tadris – the teaching method of reciting the Qur'an

Adat – Traditional norms and culture

Dinas – Government local offices

Uleebalang – the chieftain who controlled goods in and out of Aceh in nineteenth century Aceh society

Pesantren - The term used for Islamic boarding school in Java

Ustadz - Teacher of Islamic religious subjects

