Democracy, Regional Autonomy and Peace in Aceh

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

November, 2015
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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the people whose contributions have made the completion of this thesis possible. Firstly, I owe heartfelt thanks to Damien Kingsbury, who has been kindly and patiently supportive of this research since the earliest period of my study. I also owe thanks to Baogang He, who spent his time to discuss some chapters – the most crucial part – which made the comparative studies of Aceh, Timor-Leste and Southern Philippines more interesting. Thanks also to Sue Kenny, who suggested an early version of the draft.

Furthermore, I want to convey my sincere thanks to the many people I have met during my research in Aceh, Dili and Mindanao: Bang Fahmi and Bang Fuad Mardhatillah of Aceh Institute; Bang Nur Djuli and Bang Irwandi Yusuf; Teungku Djamaeka; and all former combatants. Thanks to Rufa of Mindanao State University, and to Pak Arif Abdullah Sagran of Dili, who assisted during my research in Mindanao and Dili, respectively.

Special thanks to my parents, brothers and sisters. Very special and sincere thanks to Tia Mariatul Kibtiah, who inspired me and was supportive at all times. Also thanks to Dean Bahtiar Effendy and all my colleagues in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University.

Finally, I want to convey my deepest sincere thanks to Ruth Fluhr, who tirelessly edited this document and suggested very valuable improvements to the text.

Melbourne/Jakarta, February 2015
Abstract

The thesis examines the dynamics of democratisation and regional autonomy in Aceh, and the way in which these have contributed to peacebuilding since the Helsinki peace accord in 2005. The analysis undertaken in this thesis attempts to answer three questions. Firstly, to what extent can the implemented elections in 2012 and in 2014 in Aceh explain peaceful democracy with free and fair elections involving former combatants, local and national parties? The rise of violence before the elections worried analysts, who argued that killings, violent attacks and intimidation threatened the initiatives of peacebuilding. Security forces responded slowly and late to the rise of violence, due to a strong political interest in the attacks giving advantages to the Party Aceh. Even though most of the criminals – the killers and attackers – received penalties before the courts, the police failed to search for political motives behind the crimes. The violence caused friction among political and grassroots elites, especially between the members of the Party Aceh (PA) and the Aceh National Party (PNA).

The second question is how regional autonomy based on the Law on Governing Aceh (LoGA), Law No. 11/ 2006 as an implementation of the Helsinki peace accord, works effectively to strengthen peacebuilding and prosperity in Aceh. Good communication between the local and central governments is crucial to ensure that the regional autonomy policy is positive towards economic development and peace in Aceh. This thesis argues that the increase in the disbursement of funds derived from local government revenues resulting from fossil fuel resources is a great contribution to prosperity and development in Aceh. However, mismanagement and corruption in local government have challenged a comprehensive effort aimed at peace and economic development.

Lastly, the thesis aims to investigate how the pivotal lessons learned in Aceh with regard to post-conflict transition can translate to other Southeast Asian conflict zones – in particular Timor-Leste, the southern Phillippines and southern Thailand. The thesis argues that the achievement of democracy and peace in Aceh has an important inspirational role to play in strengthening the process of conflict resolution and
the transition to democracy in post-war and post-conflict regions, in Southeast Asia particularly and in
the wider world.

This thesis is based on fieldwork in Aceh, Timor-Leste and Mindanao in the southern Philippines, from
2010 to 2014, comprising interviews with local leaders, parliamentary members and human rights
activists from government and civil society. The theoretical underpinning of the research methodology
rests on international relations theory; in particular, the theories of realism, liberalism and multilateralism
are consulted. In addition, democratic peace theory is examined to understand the proper structuring of
institutions relevant and necessary to conflict transition and the preservation of peace through
liberalisation and democratisation.

The thesis concludes that, in general, democratic peace has been implemented reasonably well in Aceh
and the province shows positive signs of continuing peace and democracy. However, a crucial and
urgent factor in realising Aceh’s complete transition from a former conflict zone will be the provision of
meaningful work for the Acehnese people, many of whom have never known a life other than that of a
combatant. Such provision will depend on the continuing support of the central government and the
international community, particularly foreign investors.
Contents

Declaration i
Acknowledgements ii
Abstract iii
Figures and Tables x
Glossary xi
Map of Aceh xiv

Chapter 1 Introduction: Aceh History, Conflict and Development 1
  Introduction 1
  Population, Conflict and Poverty 14
  Research Method 19
  Filling the Gaps 25
  The Structure of the Thesis 28
  Conclusion 29

Chapter 2 Literature Review: Multidimensional Perspectives on Aceh Post-Conflict 31
  Introduction 31
  History and Development in Aceh 33
  Regional Autonomy 36
  Democracy and Peace 39
  International States, CSOs and Regional Peace 43
  Aceh, Timor-Leste and the Southern Philippines: Comparative Studies 46
  Conclusion 47

Chapter 3 Theoretical Considerations 49
  Introduction 49
  Realism 53
  Liberalism 56
  Liberal Peace 57
  Multilateralism and the International Regime 61
  Paradigm of Peace 63

Chapter 4 Regional Autonomy, Development and Peace in Aceh 69
  Introduction 69
  Separatism and Regional Autonomy 73
  After the New Order 78
Chapter 5 The Contribution of the EU and ASEAN to the Transition to Peace in Aceh
  Introduction
  Non-Interference and Peacebuilding
  EU and ASEAN for Peace
  Reintegration of GAM
  Democracy, Reconciliation and Development
  The Future of Democracy and Peace
  Conclusion

Chapter 6 Democracy and Peace in Aceh: The 2012 Election
  Introduction
  Foundation of Democracy
  International Support
  Dynamics of Politics
  Political Violence
  Local Parties
  Peaceful Elections
  The Prospect for Democracy
  The Results of the 2012 Elections
  Conclusion

Chapter 7 Democracy and Peace in Aceh: The 2014 Election
  Introduction
  Violence and Friction
  Women in Aceh Politics
  Surprising Results
  Presidential Election
  Future of Democracy
  Conclusion

Chapter 8 Democracy and Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia: How MILF Learned from Aceh
  Introduction
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 8 Democratic Transition and the Transformation of Combatants in Southeast Asia: Lessons from Aceh and Timor-Leste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Friendship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 9 Democracy and Regional Peace: Lessons from Aceh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Coalition for Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Conflict Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy, Peace and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy and International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society and Peacebuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian Muslims in the Global Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 10 Conclusion: Lessons from Aceh Democracy and Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy and Peacebuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures and Tables

Figures

1.1. Percentages of Urban and Rural Poor People in Aceh from 2000 to 2014 17
1.2. Numbers and Percentages of Rural Poor People in Post-Conflict and Conflict Indonesia in March 2012 18
7.1. The Result of the 2014 Presidential Elections in Post-Conflict Regions in Indonesia 176

Tables

1.1 Percentages and Numbers of Poor People in Urban and Rural Areas in Aceh and Indonesia from 2000 to 2014 21
1.2 Units of Variation, Observation and Measurement 21
2.1. Summary of Explanatory Perspectives on the Iraq Invasion 54
7.1. Seats in the Provincial Legislature (DPRA) after the 2009 and 2014 Elections 172
7.2. Seats in the National Parliament after the 2009 and 2014 Elections 173
Glossary

ABAS  West Aceh and South Aceh (*Aceh Barat Aceh Selatan*)
Adat  customs and traditions
AGAM  Free Aceh Movement Armed Forces (*Angkatan Gerakan Atjeh Merdeka*)
ALA   Aceh Leuser Antara
AMM   Aceh Monitoring Mission
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASNLF Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front
Bangsa nation
BPS   Indonesian Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*)
BRA   Aceh Reintegration Board (*Badan Reintegrasi Aceh*)
BRR   Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (*Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi*)
Bupati head of a district
Camat sub-district head
CMI   Crisis Management Initiative
CoHA  Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CSO   Civil Society Organisation
Darul Islam abode of Islam, the first separatist movement
DAU   General Allocation Grant (*Dana Alokasi Umum*)
Dayah traditional Islamic boarding school
DOM   Military Operation Zone (*Daerah Operasi Militer*)
DPRA  Aceh Provincial Legislative Council/Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh*)
DPRK  District Legislative Council/Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Kabupaten/Kota*)
EU    European Union
FDI   Foreign Direct Investment
GAM   Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*)
Gampong Acehnese term for village
GoA   Government of Aceh
GoI   Government of Indonesia
Golkar Functional Groups (*Golongan Karya*), also called Party Golkar
GDP   Gross Domestic Product
HDC   Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue; formerly the Henry Dunant Centre
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUDA</td>
<td>Aceh Association of Dayah Ulama (Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imuem</td>
<td>head of mukim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JKA</td>
<td>Aceh Health Insurance (Jaminan Kesehatan Aceh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabupaten</td>
<td>rural district</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kecamatan</td>
<td>sub-district</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keuchik</td>
<td>village head</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIP</td>
<td>Independent Election Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopassus</td>
<td>Special Force Command (Komando Pasukan Khusus); army special troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kota</td>
<td>urban district/city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPA</td>
<td>Aceh Transitional Council (Komite Peralihan Aceh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LoGA</td>
<td>Law on Governing Aceh</td>
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<td>Madrasah</td>
<td>Islamic school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meunasah</td>
<td>community prayer hall/mosque</td>
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<td>PA</td>
<td>Party Aceh, Party Aceh (Partai Aceh), local political party established in 2007</td>
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<td>PAN</td>
<td>National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional)</td>
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<td>PNA</td>
<td>Aceh National Party (Partai Nasional Aceh), local party established in 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pangdam</td>
<td>provincial military commander (panglima daerah militer)</td>
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<td>Panglima</td>
<td>military commanders</td>
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<td>Peusijuk</td>
<td>traditional welcoming ceremony in Aceh</td>
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<td>PUSA</td>
<td>All-Aceh Association of Ulama (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan)</td>
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<td>Qanun</td>
<td>local by-law in Aceh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shari’ah</td>
<td>Islamic law, also called Islamic Shari’ah or Syari’ah</td>
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<td>SIRA</td>
<td>Aceh Referendum Information Center (Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNI</td>
<td>Tentara Nasional Indonesia, or Indonesian armed forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuha lapan</td>
<td>village planning board in Aceh</td>
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<td>Tuha peut</td>
<td>village council in Aceh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulama</td>
<td>Islamic religious leaders</td>
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<td>Uleebalang</td>
<td>local nobles in Aceh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wali nanggro</td>
<td>guardian or head of state, traditional leadership position in Aceh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction: Aceh History, Conflict and Development

Introduction

This thesis will focus on the study of post-conflict Aceh, especially with regard to four main issues: firstly, the way in which the practice of democracy strengthens peace efforts in Aceh; secondly, the way in which the implementation of the law in regional autonomy, as reflected in the Law on Governing Aceh Number 11/2006, supports development and peace; thirdly, the role of international states and civil society organisations in both the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh after the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, and the reintegration of combatants after the peace accord in Helsinki; and lastly, the effects of peace and development in Aceh on peacebuilding initiatives in Southeast Asia.

It argues that cooperation between the Acehnese people, local government, central government and international community has greatly contributed to peacebuilding and economic development since the Helsinki peace accord. Furthermore, the inclusiveness of democratic institutions, including political parties, parliament and government, is strategic to creating a permanent peace in Aceh. However, the existence of poverty and violence is challenging to the preservation of peace, which still requires stronger coordination between the regional and central governments. According to statistics for 2014, the percentage of poor people living in rural Aceh is about 20 per cent, almost double the national average of 11 percent (Statistics of Indonesia, 2014; see Figure 1.1). At present, a decade after the Helsinki peace accord, Aceh province is still the poorest province in Sumatra. Buchelard (2014) criticised this state of affairs: “after US$7.7 billion in foreign reconstruction funds has been spent, Aceh is still one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia”. Aceh is challenged by corruption and the mismanagement of local government policy. Buchelard (2014) argued that
“millions of dollars in foreign donations which flowed into Aceh after the Boxing Day tsunami a decade ago disappeared into the pockets of the province’s new political elite... Some money also went to build projects that are now empty, unused and decaying”. Leonard McCarthy, the World Bank Vice-President, stated that “fraud and corruption represent a major threat to development work particularly when implementing projects in post-disaster and/or post-conflict situations” (World Bank 2014). To understand the current political and developmental dynamics of Aceh, this chapter will consider the history of politics, separatist movements and conflicts in Aceh and assess the importance of the Aceh region vis-à-vis present-day Indonesia.

Prior to the entry of European colonialism to the Southeast Asian region in the 15th century, Indonesia had a long and intricate history. As a diverse archipelago of over 17,000 islands, central features of this history included strong kingdoms and sultanates, some of which, by conducting regional diplomacy often linked to their security, reached the zenith of power and authority within the region, while some engaged with international super powers. Moreover, rich natural resources and attractive spices enabled them to establish trade agreements lasting for long periods. Additionally, the inter-island migration of the people, who displayed a rich diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicities, laid the foundation for the diversity that is a central feature of Indonesia today.

Religion has always played a central role in the Indonesian archipelago. Buddhism and Hinduism were peacefully replaced by Islam in the 14th century through Arab traders (Ricklefs 2001; Reid 2006). Muslim kingdoms were well established before the arrival of European colonialism in the region several centuries later. Based on the most reliable evidence for the spread of Islam in the Malay world, which consists of Islamic inscriptions (mostly tombstones) and traveller’s accounts (Ricklefs 2001: 4), the first Muslim kingdom was established in a region in Lamreh, Aceh Besar. The gravestone of Sultan Sulaiman bin
Abdullah bin al-Basir, who it has been estimated died in 1211, was found in the graveyard of Lamreh, Aceh Tengah. The Venetian traveller Marco Polo recounted on his way home from China in 1292 that Perlak was a Muslim town near Pasai and Samudra (Ricklefs 2001: 4). By the 17th century, the development of Islam was well-documented and the majority of the population of the archipelago had accepted the culture and identity of Islam (Lee 2004: 88).

The form of Islam that was adopted in the region – Islamic Sufism – was different to that established in the Arab world and heavily influenced by the local culture. It was embraced peacefully by the society of the archipelago, a culture influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism, where animism was still practised in some areas. An intercultural dialogue between local values and Middle Eastern Islam emerged in Aceh. In the 16th century, Aceh was a centre of Islamic intellectualism in the Malay world, an environment in which Islamic Sufism developed very well. This development can be traced in Hikayat Aceh, which often mentions the practice of Islamic Sufism and religious mysticism.

Two great Acehnese scholars of the Malay world – Hamzah Fansūri (d. 1607) and Shams al-Dīn bin ‘Abd Allāh al-Sumatrānī (d. 1630) – fostered the development of Islamic Sufism. They developed a very popular tradition of Sufism, the wahdah al-wujud (the unity of being). Fansūri produced a book on Sufism, Asrār al-‘Arifīn (the secrecy of wise people), and al-Sumatrānī published Jawhar al-Haqāiq (the essential nature of realities). Sufists or tarekat were influential propagandists of Islam in the early period of Muslim kingdoms in this region. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this tradition was communicated via Islamic boarding schools, known locally as Pesantren and Dayah (Howell 2001). There now are hundreds of Dayah established in Aceh which strongly influence the social and political fabric of Aceh. In the 2014 elections, the Dayah community founded the Aceh Peace Party, which only won one seat in the DPRA (Aceh Provincial Legislative Council). However, the presence of Dayahin almost all parts of Aceh has produced informal leaders who are influential in shaping the
Acehnese character. In addition, the intellectualism of the Acehnese is growing now through the publication of books on a variety of issues relating to history, science, Islamic law, economics and politics.

The assimilation of the Islamic Arab culture into the local culture later transformed moderate Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. Due to various levels of Islamisation, one region is different to another. The Sultanates in north-east Sumatra, especially in the coastal areas, displayed an Islamised Acehnese culture. In the 16th century, they were the stronghold of Muslims in this area who, during the clash of civilisations that occurred in that period, defended Aceh against European colonial forces. Alfian (2006) described the spirit of *Jihad* (holy war)\(^1\) of the Acehnese against the European forces. The significance of this spirit cannot be underplayed, as it later formed the narrative foundations of the Acehnese rebel movements in opposition to the central government after Indonesian independence. They claimed the Indonesian central government was oppressing the Acehnese, just as European colonial forces had oppressed Indonesia for the past three centuries.

It is important to reflect on the religious and cultural history of the past to understand current socio-politics; in interpreting the current political dynamics of Aceh, He and Reid (2004:1) state: “the boundaries of the past must determine present choices of national boundaries and identities”. The religiosity of the Acehnese in the past has contributed to the development of the current democratisation, a general trend that has been echoed throughout Indonesia; this process is strongly influenced by the character of Indonesian Islam, which is moderate and tolerant and, as previously stated, quite different from the form of Islam developed in the Arab world.

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\(^1\) *Ulama* (Islamic leaders) consider fighting against the oppressor and the colonial government as part of *Jihad* (holy war). When the Dutch attempted to return to Indonesia in 1946, Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy’ari delivered a decree, *Resolusi Jihad* (Resolution of Holy War), which greatly benefited the spirit of Indonesian Muslims in the defence of newly independent Indonesia.
In spite of each region of Indonesia displaying distinctive characteristics, Indonesian Muslims have entered into international political diplomacy in the interests of Muslims worldwide. After World War II, on 17 August 1945, Indonesia established its independence. As a newly independent state, the Indonesian government was challenged by the diversity of its citizens and especially by the political expressions of some regions, which wanted special autonomy to develop their particular cultures, identities, religious expressions and political structures. The weak structure and capacity of the new Indonesian military allowed the continuation of self-protection for villages and districts in Indonesia. It is clear that when the Dutch attempted to return to colonise Indonesia in 1948, local paramilitary forces took control to save their own regions from the return of colonialism; in West Java and Aceh, local paramilitaries successfully protected people from the infiltration of the Dutch forces.

Aceh is the westernmost province of Indonesia and is distinct and unique compared to the rest of the country—“the historical and cultural distinctiveness of the Acehnese made the region a peculiar political problem for the Central Government to face, especially in the year immediately after independence” (Sjamsuddin 1985: 1). Aceh played a significant part in the national revolution, providing financial support and fighters against the Dutch. Furthermore, historians consider that Aceh has been the gate of Islam in the region since the 9th century (Hadi 2010). Its traditional name, Verandah of Mecca, also signifies that the region used to be an important venue for Muslim pilgrims before their departure to Mecca to make the Haj (or pilgrimage – the fifth of the adult Muslim duties). It was also, in its early history, a meeting point for international traders from the Middle East, Europe and Asia. After independence, President Sukarno worked to gain significant Acehnese support in the early period of his government. Acehnese businesspeople bought two presidential planes for Sukarno’s government and also donated gold for building a national monument in Jakarta, popularly called Monas. Aceh is rich in mineral, oil and gas resources which have been continually
exploited since the period of the New Order. The Acehnese felt disrespected and exploited by the central government. Sjamsuddin stated:

The fact that the Central Government had been acquiescent towards them in its most difficult time during the national revolution and that they were forgotten after independence had been attained was resented by the Acehnese. They felt disdained, since their provincial status was dissolved and their religious values were disregarded by incoming government officials. This aroused a strong sense of regionalism which eventually stirred the people into a bloody rebellion (Sjamsuddin 1985: 3).

Due to disappointment at the unfair policies adopted in Jakarta in terms of politics and the exploitation of natural resources in Aceh, separatist movements were established. The first of these was Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia, headed by Daud Berueuh. It was carried on by Tengku Hasan Mohammad di Tiro, popularly called Tengku Hasan Tiro, who established the Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) and Free Aceh Movement (GAM); both organisations had the aim of the separation of Aceh from the Republic of Indonesia.

Tiro considered the central power in Indonesia “colonialist” and “Javanese”. These labels contain the anger he expressed with regard to the exploitation of Acehnese natural resources, which he claimed did not result in direct advantages and prosperity for the Acehnese people.

Some scholars have argued that Tiro’s shift to leading rebels was mainly due to his failure to win a tender for an oil project in north Aceh. However, Acehnese scholars have opposed this argument, claiming that Tiro’s leadership of rebellious movements was purely his personal commitment to fully supporting the dignity of Aceh (Hamzah 2014). His position displayed a purely ethno-nationalist interest in opposition to the dominance of the central government.
over Acehnese interests. During the inauguration of the ASNLF in Aceh on 4 December 1976, Tiro, Chairman of ASNLF and Head of the State of Aceh, declared:

The Javanese, nevertheless, are attempting to perpetuate colonialism, which all the Western colonial powers had abandoned and the entire world had condemned. During these last thirty years, the people of Aceh, Sumatra, have witnessed how our fatherland has been exploited and driven into ruinous conditions by the Javanese neo-colonialists: they have stolen our properties; they have robbed us of our livelihood; they have abused the education of our children; they have exiled our leaders; they have put our people in chains of tyranny, poverty and neglect: the life expectancy of our people is 34 years and is decreasing—compare this to the world standard of 70 years, which is increasing! The whole of Aceh, Sumatra, has been producing revenue of over 15 billion US dollars yearly for the Javanese neo-colonialists, which they have used totally for the benefit of Java and the Javanese (Damanik 2010: 131).

As an official statement of his declaration of Acehnese independence, Tiro’s powerful and direct claim was readily accepted by the Acehnese; they responded eagerly to his call to arms against the central government of Indonesia, especially the veterans and Daud Bereueh’s Darul Islamsympathisers.

To overcome the separatist movements, the Indonesian government attempted to implement various policies with varying degrees of severity. However, diplomatic overtures towards a peaceful settlement were also initiated, from the time of President Sukarno to President Yudhoyono’s governments. Jokowi and Kalla’s government policies since the 2014 elections continue to preserve peace in Aceh by preventing violence and prioritising stability and peace
in the same way that Yudhoyono’s government managed violence approaching the 2012 and 2014 elections in Aceh.

Significantly, it was only after the tsunami and earthquake in December 2004 that a peaceful diplomatic agreement was able to be successfully managed. GAM and the Republic of Indonesia signed a peace agreement mediated by former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari and supported by the European Union. Ahtisaari stated that it was one of the most successful peace accords he had been involved in. Many other peace agreements in Africa, the Middle East and Asian countries have failed to reach this level of success. Aceh is now a growing province in Indonesia, obtaining about seventy percent of its revenue from natural resources, as signed by both parties in Helsinki.

Former separatist GAM members and commanders have participated actively in local politics by establishing civil society organisations for peace and development, as well as founding political parties. Their representatives have successfully become governors, deputy governors, mayors, deputy mayors, heads of districts and chairpersons of local government strategic departments. Many of them are involved in farming and trading at the local and national levels. Nur Djuli, who used to be a coordinator of GAM in Malaysia, founded Sekolah Demokrasi (Democratic School), which trains former combatants as active members of political parties and parliament. Djuli hopes the school will contribute to improving the social and political transition of former combatants. It is hard for some combatants to transform from military to civilian life; Djuli stated that they still function like military personnel in terms of discipline, punishment and command of leadership (Nur Djuli, interviews in Banda Aceh, January 2011). The violence of the conflicts in 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2014 was a product of the challenge for them to transform to civilian life. Nevada (2012), an Acehnese scholar, argues that poverty is uppermost among the problems faced by former combatants, who find it difficult to work after reintegration. The small funds they were
granted after reintegration were not enough for productive work and they still find it difficult to fulfill their basic needs. Aceh is one of the five poorest provinces in Indonesia. The current poverty rate in the province is around 19 percent, much higher than the average poverty rate of 12 percent in the rest of Indonesia.

Violence in Aceh is part of the adjustment involved in post-conflict transition. Law and order are important for the transition. Galtung (1995) argues that the rule of law is a crucial factor in managing violence after the conflict. The absence of the rule of law will lead to more violent conflicts. Furthermore, the political and socio-economic transition of post-conflict regions needs not only support from the central government, but also the continuing involvement of the international community. International organisations and governments granted billions of dollars for the transition of Aceh after the peace agreement. They then withdrew from Aceh once their reconstruction and rehabilitation projects had finished. Currently, the central government of Indonesia continues to fund the transition to peace; it considers Aceh’s peacebuilding and security strategic for Indonesian international diplomacy.

Aceh has connections with international organisations for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the Aceh peace accord was mediated in Helsinki, facilitated by the European Union. EU members were supported by ASEAN, the USA and other countries in continuing to monitor the transition of Aceh and the way in which the central government of Indonesia treats Aceh politically and developmentally. Every election at the local and national levels is monitored officially by such international representatives; this is different to election monitoring in other provinces in Indonesia. Some of these countries also continue to fund education, peacebuilding and development projects. The Australian government, through AusAID, and the US government, through USAID, currently fund education projects in Aceh.
Secondly, the Acehnese diaspora is spreading all over the world. Antje Missbach (2012) argued that people from Aceh tightly maintain their unity, solidarity, ethnicity and networking overseas. They are “diplomats” for Aceh who are influential in the international image and diplomacy of Indonesia. Many Acehnese migrated overseas during the conflicts and married with local people in Europe, the USA, Australia and Asian countries. They continue to monitor peace, security and development in Aceh. Many of them have invested in Aceh and recruited fellow Acehnese to study and work overseas. The spirit of internationalisation is embedded in the blood of the Acehnese people. Avoinus (2007) argued that this is the reason the Acehnese have cosmopolitan spirits: they belong to the world.

The central government has to understand this in order to manage an effective policy for Aceh’s development and peacebuilding. Stability and security are pivotal aspects for Aceh. The central government has changed its approach and polices for Aceh for the sake of stability and peace. Stability to some extent challenges the rule of law. During the violent attacks by former combatants leading up to the April 2012 gubernatorial elections, the central government failed to manage the violence through the rule of law. The Aceh police force was not capable of arresting the criminals due to pressure connected with local politics. The central government changed the voting date four times after pressure from Acehnese political parties. The central government will manage what Aceh wants as long as stability and security are preserved. From a long-term point of view, this is dangerous for Acehnese politics and development.

Anderson (2006) described the diversity of Indonesia as containing great potential tension due to the broad sense of national identities based on differing ethnicities. Any community with balanced proportions divided by religion and ethnicity has the potential for social unrest. The central government’s policy may appear unfair and discriminatory towards local communities and this may create the desire for protest and separatism.
Some have argued that the current conflicts and political violence in Indonesia and Southeast Asia are part of the colonial legacy and have been fostered by post-independence governments, like the Indonesian New Order or the government of the former Philippino president, Ferdinand Marcos. During the colonial period, the colonial governments created political policy by dividing local powers based on ethnic and religious rivalries. In the Moluccas, the Dutch government provided privileges to Christians and discriminated against Muslims. Many Christians were recruited into the Dutch military forces to pressure Muslim rulers who attempted to fight against the Dutch colonial government. Christian troops were also sent to other regions of Java and Sumatra as fighters against rebellious groups. The current antagonism towards Christians is rooted deeply in the colonial period.

The character of violent paramilitary organisations, which contributed to the current formation of post-conflict and post-war governments, is also rooted in the colonial and post-colonial legacy. They utilised violence and intimidation as political strategies to gain maximum power. The former Free Aceh Movement (GAM) members involved in current violent attacks argue that their behaviour is a result of their experience during the New Order period, when individuals and groups suspected of being affiliated with GAM suffered torture and murder at the hands of the New Order military. This trauma has contributed to the violent nature of GAM in politics. They fight against the individuals and groups who oppose their political (and economic) agenda. They have even attacked and killed former GAM district commanders and field leaders who were critical of the leadership of former GAM members represented in Aceh political parties. The establishment of the Aceh National Party by the former GAM spokesperson and former governor of Aceh, Irwandi Yusuf, is not regarded as representing GAM. The paramilitary movement’s support for current political parties in Aceh and Indonesia is a colonial legacy from when the paramilitary was the backbone of politics and also the business sector.
After the colonial period, Southeast Asian regions experienced many conflicts and wars. Minority ethnic or religious groups in some countries fought for self-determination and proposed separate states. Some regions where a Muslim sultanate had been in place for centuries before the arrival of the colonising forces proposed special rights based on a strong Islamic identity. The southern Philippines and Aceh are among these regions.

Aceh has had several periods of conflict since the 1950s. This thesis focuses on democratic transition and the transformation of combatants in Aceh, in comparison with democratic transition in post-conflict regions in other parts of Southeast Asia, in particular in Timor-Leste (East Timor), the southern Philippines and southern Thailand. The comparison is intended to establish understanding of how former combatants and insurgents in Southeast Asia have kept contact with each other since the period of war and conflict into the period of democratisation and peacebuilding. Analysis of their contact and shared experiences of democratisation and peacebuilding is interesting and instructive. As they are from the same regions of Southeast Asia, their perspectives can inform initiatives for stability and security across the region.

Surin Pitsuwan (2013), former foreign minister of Thailand and former secretary-general of ASEAN, stated that the longstanding experience of peace and conflict resolution of Southeast Asian countries strengthens the initiatives of the peacekeeping bodies inside ASEAN. Pitsuwan argued that ASEAN has learned from its failure to assist with security and political transition in East Timor after the result of the referendum, which was regarded by the Indonesian government as negative and its suspected the role of international bodies in supporting the East Timorese in their bid to separate from Indonesia. The Indonesian government believed from its intelligence analysis that most East Timorese preferred to stay integrated with Indonesia. According to Pitsuwan (2013), Indonesia was reluctant to have Australia chairing the process of security and political transition in East Timor. In this period,
the Indonesian–Australian political relationship was at a low level. Indonesia doubted that Australia would support regional and international stability and peace initiatives supported by experienced peace actors like Jusuf Kalla, Jose Ramos Horta and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The experiences of these leaders for peacebuilding and peacemaking were significant for the establishment of a strong foundation for peace in Southeast Asia and for the maintenance of stability and peace in Southeast Asian and international regions. They were able to take an active role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Kalla had an important role in the peace agreements between Muslims and Christians resulting from the Eastern Indonesian conflicts, which left more than ten thousand people dead in the Moluccas and Poso from 1999 to 2002. Kalla also took a central role in the Helsinki peace accord between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia in August 2005. The agreements initiated by Kalla helped to stop the severe conflicts in the Moluccas, Poso and Aceh. He continued to take an active role in peace initiatives in the Middle East by visiting Palestine and Israel, and also visited Myanmar to help stop violent clashes between Buddhists and Muslims in Karen.

Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia from 2004 to 2014, also contributed to peace agreements and peace negotiations in Southeast Asia and other international regions. The experience of Aceh peacebuilding and democratisation not only affected that particular region, but enabled individuals experienced in dealing with this peace negotiation to attempt to initiate peace in other Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern regions. Yudhoyono highlighted the significant effects that the achievement of peace in “a small town” in Indonesia can have on peacebuilding in other regions (Yudhoyono 2014).
Population, Conflict and Poverty

The population in Aceh province in 2013 stood at 4,791,924. Most Acehnese (about 46.53%) work in the primary sectors of agriculture, plantations, fishery, forestry and labouring—areas of the workforce which can accommodate a lot of workers. Education is a strategic issue needing attention. The Acehnese people found it hard to devote themselves to study due to the violent conflicts they experienced for more than thirty years, from 1970 to 2005. By 2013, the proportion of people graduating from elementary school and junior high school and also dropping out of elementary school had risen to unprecedented levels. About 47.83% of the Acehnese had graduated from elementary and junior high school, while 19.55% had failed to graduate or were still studying at elementary school (Statistics Aceh 2014: 54 and 66). A further challenge is the high percentage of people living in poverty. Although it has been almost ten years since the peace accord, the percentage of those experiencing poverty in Aceh in 2014 was almost double the national average—18.5% compared to 11.47%.

The number of poor people in Aceh fluctuated between 2000 and 2014. Historically, on average, the number of poor people in Aceh has been much lower than the national level. However, the number of poor people in rural Aceh doubled from 595,100 (16.78%) in 2000 to 1,156,200 (32.57%) in 2004, but decreased significantly to 881,260 (20.52%) in 2014. The conflicts after the New Order depleted the Acehnese economy and the peak of conflict between 2002 and 2004 contributed significantly to the higher poverty rate. The Acehnese economy recovered after the Helsinki peace accord in 2005, with the active involvement of international donors after the deadly earthquake and tsunami and the subsequent reintegration programs.
Table 1.1: Percentages and Numbers of Poor People in Urban and Rural Areas in Aceh and Indonesia from 2000 to 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban (%)</th>
<th>Rural (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
<th>Provincial Total in Thousands</th>
<th>National Total in Millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>16.78</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>19.14</td>
<td>595.10</td>
<td>38.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>20.09</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>29.83</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>1,199.90</td>
<td>38.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>17.49</td>
<td>32.57</td>
<td>28.37</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>1,156.20</td>
<td>36.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>19.22</td>
<td>31.98</td>
<td>28.28</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>1,149.70</td>
<td>39.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>26.30</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>15.42</td>
<td>892.87</td>
<td>34.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>20.52</td>
<td>18.05</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>881.26</td>
<td>28.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Statistics Indonesia 2014)

The percentage of those living in poverty in Aceh was only lower than the national average just after the collapse of the New Order. The central government attempted to restructure the economy, which impacted on the poverty level of many people. Sang-Hwa studied the social aspects of the economic crisis in Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea, stating that “a considerable proportion of the middle classes disappeared” during the financial crisis (Sang-Hwa 2007: 197). In 2000, the number of Acehnese living under the poverty line was 595,100 or 15.20%, compared to the national level of 19.14% (Figure 1.1; Table 1.1). Given the instability of the government of President Abdurrahman Wahid, economic recovery worked very slowly. The growth of the economy increased steadily after the more stable government of President Megawati Sukarnoputri was instituted.
In contrast, the Acehnese were struck by increasingly severe economic problems due to the continuation of violent conflict, even during the peace negotiations from 2000 to May 2003, which did not have support from the military. These negotiations were deadlocked on 17 May 2003, when Zaini Abdullah, the head of the GAM delegation, refused to accept the three conditions of agreement, namely that: “Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) would remain a part of Indonesia; that Aceh would be given special autonomy; and that GAM had to lay down its arms” (Priyono 2003: 537).

Soon after, President Megawati signed Presidential Decree No. 28/2003 and military emergency status was implemented as of 19 May 2003. The military emergency status created more victims among the Acehnese and the economic sector became frozen. During this period, the percentage of poverty was very high – more than thirty percent – especially in rural villages, where clashes between the Indonesian military and GAM commonly occurred. Figure 1.1. shows that, at this time, the percentage of poor people in rural areas reached its peak, rising to 33.06% in 2002 and still 31.98% in 2006. Two years after the 2006 gubernatorial election, the poverty rate decreased slightly to 26.30% in 2008.

This high level of poverty was due to the instability of the security situation and the political climate, which affected the economic activity of the people of Aceh, who had lost their chance to work, especially in rural villages where people potentially became victims of the conflicts. Human Rights Watch reported that “the sharp rise in human rights violations since martial law started may in part be attributed to this increase in daily contact between soldiers and villagers. The increased village presence apparently aims to limit the material and moral support of the local population for GAM” (Human Rights Watch 2003: 15). In addition, it was stated that “since the start of martial law, Indonesian security forces have carried out an unknown number of extra-judicial executions of unarmed civilians in Aceh” (Human Rights
The declaration of martial law contradicted the message of peace of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). Kingsbury said:

The CoHA was seen by many observers as holding some hope of movement towards peace for Aceh, but it had been clear all along, as with the previous cease-fire, which it engineered at the final meeting in Tokyo on 19 May 2003. The legitimacy of Indonesian incorporation of Aceh was not assisted by the declaration of martial law from May 2003 until May 2004 (a state of emergency being declared thereafter), and most observers agreed that it would have the opposite effect of further alienating the Acehnese, particularly young Acehnese, from Indonesia (Kingsbury 2006: 13).

Figure 1.1. Percentages of Urban and Rural Poor People in Aceh from 2000 to 2014

Source: (Statistics Indonesia 2014)

Democratisation and peacebuilding are still challenged by a high rate of poverty in post-conflict Aceh. By 2012, there were 21.97% or 737,240 Acehnese living under the poverty line. Even though the level of poverty is still currently the highest in Sumatra and the fourth
highest in Indonesia, the Acehnese people participated enthusiastically in the 2012 gubernatorial elections. Compared to other post-conflict and conflict regions, Aceh performed the best when compared to Maluku, Papua and West Papua, which had 291,760 (28.88%), 932,20 (40.56%) and 216,000 (37.73%) of poor people respectively in 2012 (Figure 1.2). Like Aceh, Maluku experienced bloody conflicts. For the Acehnese and Malukans, their experience of violence in the past still impacts on current economic development. On the other hand, Papua and West Papua still have problems associated with separatist conflict. Investigation of the relationship between economic development and conflict reveals that violent conflicts decrease economic growth. It was stated that “violent conflicts affect the economic status of individuals and households through the intensity and types of violence they set in motion. Processes of violence impact on the economic status of households through the direct and indirect transformations they entail” (Justino 2011: 9).

Figure 1.2. Numbers and Percentages of Rural Poor People in Post-Conflict and Conflict Indonesia in March 2012
The most vulnerable groups in relation to violent conflicts in Indonesia, as everywhere, are women and children. Military operations after the deadlock of the peace agreement between the government and GAM in May 2003 left more severely affected victims, especially women and children, in rural villages and IDP camps, where facilities were limited (Kamaruzzaman 2006).

Research Method
To examine the post-conflict dynamics in Aceh, the thesis has combined methodologies from a range of social science research, particularly international relations, political science and development studies. In international relations, Long has argued that:

the study of international relations (IR) is interdisciplinary … Identifying the ways in which IR is interdisciplinary highlights the broad and diverse character of our subject, helps to identify and specify the oft-neglected contrast between international relations and international politics, and relocates the academic study of international relations within a wider milieu of international studies (IS) (Long 2011: 31).

International relations discusses issues of foreign policy, international conflict, regional security, peacekeeping, international organisations, climate change, disaster management, and war and peace. This thesis examines international organisations like the EU and ASEAN in monitoring peace implementation in Aceh, the initiatives of regional peace efforts in Mindanao, the southern Philippines, and southern Thailand, and Indonesian foreign policy strategy in overcoming war and conflict in the Middle East and Asia.

In addition, as an interdisciplinary research area, international relations also discusses peace research. According to Harle, “peace research (PR) was born in the 1950s in North America and Western/Northern Europe … PR emerged as criticism of the traditional study of foreign
policy where realist scholars advocated the use of military force in guarding the national interests of states” (Harle 2011: 108). Drulâk (2011) agreed, stating that peace research is an important subject in international relations: “the study of war and peace used to be seen as a disciplinary core providing a clear identity for the study of international relations (IR) in the twentieth century, making IR a discipline separate from political science and other areas of social inquiry” (Drulâk 2011: 228). However, war is not only found within the study of international relations. Drulâk (2011) added that war has also been broadly discussed by political philosophy and a number of specialised social sciences such as sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, demography and political economy.

Political science methodology provides an approach to examine various issues such as political parties, elections, democracy, political behaviour of voters and political violence. In understanding the elections held in Aceh and Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order, political science methodology guides us in analysing the dynamics of these politics. Understanding current political trends requires reflection on the history that led to the construction of political entities. For example, both the Party Aceh and the Aceh National Party claim to continue the ideals of Hasan di Tiro in establishing a strong identity for the Acehnese people in terms of religious, cultural and economic aspects.

Aceh’spast provides crucial lessons with regard to stepping towards a prosperous and peaceful Aceh. In the 2012 election campaigns, parliamentary and gubernatorial candidates, especially former separatist combatants, reminded the Acehnese people of the struggle to establish their dignity in the past in the face of security pressures from the Indonesian army. Now they live in a peaceful environment, which needs a different approach – to struggle for economic development and the continuation of peacebuilding. This is how international relations and political science contribute different aspects to understanding the dynamics of Aceh after the conflict.
In addition, this thesis examines case studies of Aceh post-conflict and comparative studies of Aceh and Southeast Asian post-conflict and conflict regions. Hague and Harrop (2013: 361) argued that case studies “combine a qualitative investigation of a specific topic, using all the techniques appropriate for that subject, with a link to wider themes in the study of politics”. Hague and Harrop (2013: 364) add that “case studies are the building blocks from which we construct our understanding of the political world”. In addition, a comparative methodology “broadens our understanding of the political world, leads to improved classifications, and gives potential for explanation and prediction” (Hague and Harrop 2013: 364). Comparative studies of Aceh, Timor-Leste, Mindanao and southern Thailand include aspects of comparative politics and international relations.

Galtung argues that conflict and peace studies should not adopt anyone specific approach; several approaches should be combined in the social sciences in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject of conflict (Galtung 2009: 511). In its analysis, this thesis adopts a comparative approach which draws on some “relevant cases across time and space” in Aceh Province and its districts, as well as elsewhere in Indonesia; it also draws on some cases in Southeast Asia. A comparative approach is important in this analysis in gaining the benefit of contextual variation. In addition, achieving understanding of the processes and impact of decentralisation and democratisation in Aceh as a means to secure and maintain peace needs a comprehensive combination of studies in disciplines such as the political sciences, sociology and history, as the following table suggests:
Table 1.2: Units of Variation, Observation and Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Variation</th>
<th>Unit of Observation</th>
<th>Unit of Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratisation</td>
<td>States</td>
<td>Available civil and political rights (Through elections and other democratic measurements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral volatility</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>Aggregate change of voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Contents of electoral programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social movement</td>
<td>Organised groups</td>
<td>Collective behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralisation</td>
<td>Provinces and Districts</td>
<td>Constitutional rights for regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (Pennings et al. 2006: 28).

Units of variation, observation and measurement, as shown in Table 1.2, are “linked together in actual research in comparative politics” (Pennings et al. 2006: 27). In the process of democratisation, the state (including both executive and legislature) is observed by measuring the availability of civil and political rights. The elections in Aceh from 2006 to 2011 are observed to discover the voting trends. To understand the ideology of the political parties, the electoral programs of the parties are observed and analysed. Organised groups, especially civil society organisations (CSOs), which grew significantly in Aceh after the peace agreement in 2005, are observed to register their collective behaviour. The province of Aceh and its districts are closely examined to analyse the process of decentralisation. Comparative methods are employed in all the analyses.

Furthermore, the research methods assimilate some approaches of qualitative research – case studies, grounded theory, ethnography and action science – which form “the four methods most often followed in political science and management” (McNabb 2004: 348). Typical data-gathering methods for case studies are: observation, personal interviews and organisational
Grounded theory uses the methods of personal interviews, diaries and participant analysis (McNabb 2004: 349). Interviews and observations are significant “to learn and understand the underlying values of individuals and groups” (Pierce 2008: 45). The interviews are focused on the leaders of the political parties, government and CSOs. This includes focus group discussions with members of CSOs and the political community. Among the targeted respondents are: former GAM members; former leaders (commanders) of GAM; members of the Party Aceh; parliamentary members from provincial to district levels (Kabupaten); and local government officials of Aceh from provincial to district levels, like the governor, deputy governor, bupati and related government heads. In addition, central government figures are interviewed, among them leaders of various ministries, TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia or Indonesian armed forces) and Polri.

Furthermore, local, national and international NGOs are important respondents as well. Among them are: the Aceh Institute; Kontras; AusAID; USAID; UNDP; and other NGOs that have contributed to supporting development and peace in Aceh. Interviewing the elites is a significant method used in this research. According to Johnson and Reynolds, “elite interviewing is the process of interviewing respondents in a non-standardised, individualised manner” (2005: 271). Among the respondents are the leaders of both local and national political parties, civil society organisations (NGOs), paramilitary groups and representatives of regional (Aceh province and its districts) and central governments.

For comparison with the peace initiatives adopted in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand, similar approaches are implemented by interviewing the leaders of government as well as members of the community. The process underlying the achievement of peaceful democracy in Aceh is analysed in light of these groups of separatists – the Morro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) of the southern Philippines and groups from southern Thailand. Comparisons of political development after conflict are also made with Cambodia and Timor-
Leste. The independence movements of both Cambodia and Timor-Leste were supported by the international community; similarly in the case of Aceh, the EU, ASEAN and other countries were significant players in reintegrating GAM into the Republic of Indonesia (Schulze 2007). The actions of the elites in relation to Indonesian decentralisation have been investigated by some scholars. Among those investigations is the work of Hidayat and Firdausy (2003), who focused on the local state elites in West Kalimantan and East Nusa Tenggara.

For understanding the dynamics of Acehnese history, this thesis analyses written documents covering the process of peacebuilding in Aceh. Primary sources come from documents of the Indonesian government and GAM. Interviews with officials of the government and GAM, and a variety of Acehnese politicians, are also primary sources for this study. A survey of key persons and certain issues for Acehnese and Indonesian government authorities and CSOs in Aceh is conducted to strengthen the analysis of the study.

The study can be divided into five parts: the first part is the history of the peace initiatives after the collapse of the New Order, where it is seen how the spirit of democracy at the national level influenced the peace process from 1999 until the agreement in Helsinki in 2005. The second part concerns the dynamics of GAM during the period of its initial return, how the Acehnese and Indonesian authorities and people responded to them, and how, very importantly, the accommodations and interactions between the parties in this period influenced the further peace process. The third part is a study of the dynamics of the processes occurring between the 2006 and 2009 elections, how the Acehnese participated in the elections, and how the strong commitment of the Acehnese and Indonesian government to the peace process can be seen from the conduct of electoral democracy. The fourth part, in which the policies of the Acehnese and Indonesian governments in the arenas of the economy and politics are examined, analyses
the role of local government policy in relation to both the peace process and economic development. The final part examines the role of the international community in the process of securing peace, democracy and economic development in Aceh, and how valuable such support might be from the perspective of establishing a model for resolving other conflicted regions in the world.

This thesis is based on interviews with more than thirty individuals. Most of the respondents are former GAM members who worked for Party Aceh and Aceh Transitional Council (KPA) and local commanders in Banda Aceh, Pidie, Bireuen, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Tengah, Bener Meriah, Takengon, Aceh Barat Daya and Meulaboh, from December 2010 to August 2014. Among the respondents are: Bupati; vice Bupati; members of parliament; heads of the KPA, Party Aceh leaders, and former local commanders and members of GAM. Additional respondents are local intellectuals and NGO activists. The interviews are supported by an analysis of the local media in Aceh; further research, conducted in Jakarta, consists of interviews with members of parliament from Aceh and some related ministries involved in the management of the political and economic development of Aceh.

**Filling the Gaps**

This study contributes to filling the gaps in the discourse on political development in Aceh since the peace agreement. Particularly, it addresses how GAM has been able to transform from a violent political movement into a peaceful one. GAM’s involvement in practical politics could have two potential impacts: firstly, it could utilise the ‘military’ power and the strategic advantages it possesses, such as its unity and organisation, to form a strong political party; secondly, in the event that GAM dominates local politics in Aceh and tends towards authoritarianism, then its involvement in the political process would be counterproductive to the development of democratic politics in Aceh. A clash among various ethnic and political
groups would endanger peaceful democracy in Aceh, which would be very significant for the ongoing development of reconciliation.

This study also contributes to understanding the transformation of an organisation such as GAM from violent to peaceful, democratic politics through its involvement in the direct elections in districts, provinces and the country. The transformation of the GAM elites has seen them become local political leaders who are significantly challenged to show how they can lead local politics democratically.

The Aceh peace agreement has been one of the most successful solutions for overcoming separatist conflicts in recent decades. Martii Ahtisaari said that the Aceh peace agreement has influenced many peace initiatives in conflict regions around the world. For example, attempts have been made by the Government of Thailand to reproduce the Aceh peace agreement in its dealings with Muslim separatist movements in the southern parts of the country. The delegation members of the Indonesian–Acehnese peace agreement have been invited by the Thai government to share their experience in overcoming conflict. This thesis discusses an analysis of the peace process in Aceh and compares this with attempts at reconciliation in other conflicted regions like Thailand. The success of the Aceh mediation process facilitated by the EU has “supported the idea of exploring different ways of peacefully resolving intra- and interstate conflicts in ASEAN”, where southern Thailand and the southern Philippines are still trying to overcome separatist conflicts (Wandi 2010: 8). Lingga argued that there are lessons to be learned from the Aceh peace process that can be used for peace negotiations with MILF in the southern Philippines; such lessons can be useful in “conceptualizing creative approaches [in the context of the Philippines], which can be made possible by learning from past experiences” (Lingga 2007: 13).
The transformation of Aceh after the conflict has been very successful compared to the trends in politics that came after conflicts in Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Africa. Aceh’s democratic transition exhibits peaceful participation as political leaders from former GAM combatants and other local and national parties. Concerns about the rise of threats of violence in relation to the December 2011 elections were that this would endanger the long process of peacebuilding in Aceh. An example of this was in Cambodia, where the peace agreement was followed by “recurring patterns of authoritarianism and rebellion” (Paris 2004: 88).

The political dynamics operating in Aceh have provided a good model for other Indonesian regions as well. For example, the practice, following the 2006 elections, of nominating independent candidates for gubernatorial and district elections has been adopted in all Indonesian provinces, districts and cities. The spirit of local democracy and freedom of political expression are accommodated in the legal framework for regional autonomy. Pieter Feith, the chief of the Aceh Monitoring Mission, which brings together the EU and ASEAN to monitor the peace process, stated that “the new law on the Governing of Aceh could be a model for autonomy legislation for other parts of Indonesia. Local political parties, independent candidates, and a share in the management of Aceh’s vast natural resources are all part of the package” (Feith 2007: 5).

The underlying justification for this study rests on the belief that the process of political transition in Aceh needs to be continuously evaluated to ensure the continuity of peace. Reconciliation among political party leaders and all Acehnese leaders, as well as the relationship between the Aceh region and the central government, must ensure long-term peace. Democratisation and peacebuilding in Aceh are a test case for Indonesia and for the Acehnese people. Preservation of the dynamics of local democracy is vital to the future of a prosperous and peaceful Aceh, and political institutions need to be strengthened in order to support the peacebuilding process.
The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis examines a range of strategic topics related to democratisation, decentralisation and peacebuilding in Aceh. The first chapter has covered the historical aspects that form the basis on which to understand current socio-politics in Aceh. As He and Reid state: “the boundaries of the past must determine present choices of national boundaries and identities” (He & Reid 20014: 1). Acehnese democratic participation after the Helsinki peace agreement has been strongly influenced by the religiosity operating in this region; in this context, Hefter (2000) considered that the current democratic participation of Indonesian Muslims is influenced by adaptation between an international religion and their local world.

The second chapter is the theoretical framework, which rests on a discussion of international relations and development theory. In international relations theory, the realist concept of non-interference and the liberalist notion of democratic peace are examined. In development theory, theories of peacebuilding and collective development are discussed in the context of the political dynamics operating in Aceh.

The third chapter covers the dynamics of the 2012 gubernatorial elections. The way in which the democratic process worked in the 2012 elections – the second gubernatorial elections after the Helsinki peace agreement – is examined. The fourth chapter analyses the legislative and presidential elections conducted in 2014, which marked a strategic moment in keeping intact the peacebuilding process in Aceh. The frictions among former combatants seemed clearer in these elections, compared to the 2009 elections when combatants were united.

The fifth chapter covers the role of the international community in peacebuilding in Aceh, especially the way in which the EU and ASEAN have been involved in rehabilitation, reintegration and democratisation. International factors are significant for Acehnese who fought during the New Order period under control from overseas due to tight security in
Aceh. In this chapter, realist theoretical notions are contested via an examination of the non-interference approach of ASEAN in post-conflict and post-war transition. Realist theory continues to inform a comparison between Aceh and Timor-Leste which is discussed in the sixth chapter.

The last chapter, the conclusion, argues that the processes of democratisation, decentralisation and peacebuilding require some critical factors to ensure the future continuation of peace in Aceh: firstly, the democratic participation of the Acehnese in political and civic engagement is the most significant aspect in achieving a good standard of post-conflict democracy; secondly, in the decentralised system legally adopted in Aceh, some elements of the LoGA, in particular oil and gas revenue sharing, international investment and other rules of law relating to the approach to security, are urgently and strategically important and, in this context, it is vitally important that good, productive relations between Aceh and Jakarta are maintained; thirdly, international support in the areas of post-conflict democracy and development is still needed.

**Conclusion**

War, conflict and violence in Aceh’s history have traumatised the Acehnese people and this is reflected in the current dynamics of politics, democratisation and economic development. In the 2012 and 2014 elections, discussed in further chapters, it is suggested that people prefer peace and security to democracy. Intimidation and violent attacks during the post-conflict transition traumatised the Acehnese and they continued to vote for the Party Aceh, a combatant party, to ensure the continuation of peace. However, to develop permanent peace, freedom of expression should be guaranteed under the constitution for the future of democracy, development and prosperity in Aceh.
In addition, the history of Aceh has contributed to the construction of the identity of the Acehnese, which in turn has influenced current politics. There are at least two signs of how Aceh’s political identity reflects its history. Firstly, the strength of the arguments that allowed the establishment of a local party in Aceh resulted in the full expression of local identity in opposition to the centralisation of politics in Indonesia. Acehnese currently prefer to vote for their local party in order to communicate more closely with constituents and political parties. Secondly, symbolism dominates current politics in Aceh. Symbolism is expressed in the establishment of Islamic Shari’ah law (qanun syari’ah) as it relates to the Acehnese language and flag. However, the politics of symbolism present a new challenge to the restructuring of relations between Aceh and Jakarta. The political dynamics are discussed in the further chapters on regional autonomy and the 2012 and 2014 elections.

The following chapter contains a review of the literature relating to the various strands of the topic under investigation. Thus it discusses documents, books, book chapters and journal articles in a bid to understand Aceh post-conflict, especially within the context of democracy, peacebuilding, regional autonomy and international engagement in conflict resolution and post-conflict development.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: Multidimensional Perspectives on Aceh Post-Conflict

Introduction

Analysts have concerned themselves greatly with the study of Aceh during and after the conflicts, adopting points of views originating from various disciplines such as history, anthropology, political science and international relations; for example, while Reid (2010) looks at Aceh from a historical perspective, Aspinall (2009) analyses Aceh from within the discipline of political science. Galtung (1995, 1996) argued that conflicts need a comprehensive analysis achieved by combining a number of methods and approaches. Galtung’s *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (1996) provides a comprehensive analysis of non-violent resolution of conflict. Galtung has said that a multidimensional and holistic approach is required to analyse conflict (Galtung, 1996); he suggests that “the peace researcher must look for causes, conditions, and contexts in various spaces – Nature, Human, Social, World, Time, Culture. This transdisciplinary spectrum makes peace studies both challenging, difficult intellectually, and problematic in praxis” (Galtung, 1996, p. 1). In addition, Miall (2004) argues that understanding conflict transformation requires multi-dimensional tasks, such as in Galtung’s multidimensional approach. Thus, this thesis combines a number of different approaches found in the research literature of international relations, political science and development studies. Discussion of the role of the EU and ASEAN in mediation and peace accord implementation employs international relations analysis, and the chapters on the 2012 and 2014 elections in Aceh are based on an analytical approach adopted in the area of political science.

The literature relevant to this thesis yields five topics of investigation: (1) the history of conflict in Aceh, encompassing more than four decades of struggle against the central
government of Indonesia—that is, the early period of Indonesian independence up to the contemporary development of Aceh after the Helsinki accord—provides a strategic foundation on which to understand the political dynamics of Aceh; (2) the regional autonomy policy as an instrument used to overcome separatist conflicts is an interesting development of conflict resolution in Aceh, where special autonomy laws have been granted, particularly after the collapse of the New Order—these laws inspired the drafting of the current Law on Governing Aceh Number 11/2006 which regulates the current political, economic and cultural environment in Aceh; (3) the contributions of international states, multilateral organisations and civil society organisations to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh after the tsunami and earthquake in 2004 and during the process of the reintegration of GAM combatants are central to the discussion—post-conflict Aceh continues to be a centre of interest for the great powers, especially the EU and ASEAN countries, whose active involvement in the Aceh Monitoring Mission aims to closely monitor the process of reintegration of combatants and the implementation of the Helsinki peace agreement; (4) democratisation and local politics in Aceh are interesting issues provoking ongoing discussion among scholars and the analysis here focuses on the political dynamic in Aceh after the Helsinki accord, which allowed the establishment of local parties in order to provide, for former combatants, freedom of local political participation not directly related to the politics controlled by national parties—the domination of the local parties in both the 2009 and 2014 elections, in particular the Party Aceh, is interesting to analyse; (5) scholarly comparative studies have been made of Aceh and other conflict and post-conflict regions, such as Timor-Leste, the southern Philippines, southern Thailand and Sri Lanka, among others (Tan 2007; Miller 2012)—however, this thesis focuses solely on a comparison of Aceh and Timor-Leste during their political transitions, and Aceh and the southern Philippines during their processes of peace mediation and peace accord implementation (which to some extent adopted the Helsinki
MoU and LoGA). Thus, this literature review addresses questions of how democracy and peacebuilding in Aceh have been seen in the literature and specifies the way in which this thesis contributes to the literature documenting the study of democracy, regional autonomy and peacebuilding in Aceh.

**History and Development in Aceh**

The dynamics of the current political situation in Aceh need to be understood through reflecting on the history of identity and politics of Aceh five centuries ago, before the colonial period. The Acehnese people had always been successful in making strong partnerships with international powers. This pride in the history of Aceh was referred to by the founders of *Darul Islam* and GAM to legitimise their rebellions against the Indonesian government (Kell 1995).

The identity of the Acehnese has been well constructed since ‘the age of commerce’, which flowered in the 16th and 17th centuries. Aceh in the 17th century was “strong enough to develop some state nationalism based on military mobilization, dynastic pride and Islam” (Reid 2010: 115). The Acehnese languages and ethnic identities of today are descended from that legacy of the age of commerce. Aceh was much stronger than other regions such as Makassar (conquered by the Dutch in 1669) and Banten (transformed into a client state by the Dutch in 1684), as well as Burma and Siam (old Thailand). The strength of the Aceh Sultanate at the beginning of the 17th century remained a focal point for pride and identity until 1874 (Reid 2010: 116).

In his diary, Hasan Tiro, the founder of GAM, urged the Acehnese to fight against Indonesian military forces in order to defend the heritage of their Acehnese ancestors, who had successfully fought against the Dutch. Tiro’s diary inspired young combatants and other Acehnese to support the rebel movement, which he called *Syaheed*, the “holy war” (Tiro
Tiro reminded his followers to be proud of their Acehnese identity, underlining the fact that they had never been colonised by any forces. They were encouraged by him to continue the legacy of their Acehnese ancestors for the pride of an independent Aceh (Tiro 1984). The state of Aceh proclaimed by Tiro is termed by Thaib (2002: 268) “a successor state to the old state of Aceh, occupying the same national territory, regulating itself under the same law, under the same constitution, and under the same one thousand-year-old flag”. The literature on the separatist movements of Darul Islam and GAM, as well as their background of war against the central government, dominates further analysis.

Studies of the rebel movements of Darul Islam and GAM have been discussed by several scholars including, most prominently: van Dijk (1981); Sjamsuddin (1985); Kell (1995); Thaib (2002); Miller (2009); and Aspinall (2009). These analyses take as their central themes the reasons for the rebellions and how the Acehnese managed their revolution against the central government. Van Dijk, Sjamsuddin, Kell and Thaib examined the movements during the authoritarian regime of the New Order. Their analyses were completed by Miller and Aspinall, who had the opportunity to observe and interview the leaders of the movements until their reintegration, soon after the 2005 Helsinki peace agreement. This thesis fills the gap that exists in relation to how former GAM members who are now involved in the structure of KPA (Aceh Transition Committee) and Party Aceh (PA) transformed from their military roles to achieve political participation. The interaction of former members of the rebellion and non-GAM members in the political camp post-reintegration is analysed in later chapters of this thesis.

Based on his fieldwork in Indonesia in 1973 and 1975, originally carried out for his dissertation at Monash University, Sjamsuddin’s book analyses the background of the Acehnese rebellion. He concluded that there were two main reasons for the rebellion – “religious and regional dissatisfactions”, which were of “equal significance in constituting the
main motivations of the Acehnese leaders in their opposition against the Central Government” (Sjamsuddin 1985: 319). In addition, Kell (1995) has written on the Acehnese rebellion in the years 1989 to 1992, arguing that the overcentralisation of Acehnese economics and politics by the New Order regime contributed to the rise of rebel groups. Kell said that “the natural riches of Aceh have been exploited for the benefit of the central government...while the province itself has gained relatively little” (Kell 1995: 53).

Reid in *An Indonesian Frontier the Acehnese & Other Histories of Sumatra* (2005) discussed how the Acehnese connected with the international community and resisted Dutch colonialism. In the updated edition, Reid reflected briefly on the prospect of conflict and peace in Aceh after the collapse of the New Order (Reid 2005: 350). As one of the scholars who for decades has dedicated his research to Sumatra and Aceh, Reid is at the forefront of scholarly investigation of the region and welcomes the rehabilitation of Aceh after the tsunami. He has visited Aceh many times and initiated an annual conference in Banda Aceh which is very important for the development of peace and democracy. The introduction in one of his most important books reflecting on the future of Aceh after reintegration – *Verandah of Violence: the Background of the Aceh Problem* (Reid 2006) – states that the Aceh problem needs to be understood from a multi-dimensional perspective: cultural, economic and political. This book originated from a conference held in Singapore in May 2004 concerning the process of peace and negotiations in Aceh. As a compilation of scholarly views on Acehnese history, conflict and security, this book discusses the problems of Aceh very comprehensively.

After discussing conflicts and development in Aceh from a historical perspective, it is timely to look at regional autonomy, a policy which, in the context of peace studies, is strategic to overcoming conflicts and wars. Regional autonomy was introduced into the national political agenda in Aceh in 1999, after the rise of social violence.
Regional Autonomy

Regional autonomy is a key instrument of peace efforts in Aceh, even though GAM refused to accept the term ‘regional autonomy’ in the Helsinki peace negotiations and proposed the term ‘self-governance’ (Kingsbury 2006; Awaludin 2009). Abdullah stated that GAM was overly concerned with the various policies enacted in Aceh by the central government in Jakarta, including special autonomy status granted in 2001, due to the continuation of military repression (Abdullah 2013). Djumala (2013) argued that the politics of decentralisation is the necessary first step towards conflict resolution in Aceh.

Decentralisation, based on Law No. 22/1999, which regulates the creation of regional autonomy, and Law No. 25/1999, regulating the fiscal balance of the autonomy, has authorised local government to develop all fields except defence and security, foreign policy, the legal system, monetary policy and religious affairs (Rasyid 2003). Rasyid stated that Law No. 22/1999 gives the “central government responsibility for national planning, the allocation of financial subsidies to the regions, the strengthening of national economic institutions and public administration, the promotion of human resource development, the control of natural resource exploitation” (Rasyid 2003:69).

The difference between regional autonomy and the government policy of the New Order is that “regional governance and modernization are no longer a matter of presidential command, as was the case before 1999, but of cooperation between government regions and the people, and self regulating “ (Holtzappel 2009:2). Rasyid argued that regional autonomy has benefited local development greatly; as an example, he described the policy of the oil-rich district of Kutai Kartanegara in East Kalimantan. Kutai Kartanegara allocated Rp 2 billion to upgrade all villages and waived fees for all students from both private and state schools. It also built its own power plant to support industrialisation programs (Rasyid 2003). Rasyid said that
“none of these programs would have been possible under the earlier centralised system” (Rasyid 2003: 69).

The decentralisation laws aroused debates as to whether the laws could lead to a decline in the quality of governance and threaten national unity (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 4). Sulistiyanto and Erb (2005: 1) maintained that “the regional autonomy laws of 1999 (Undang-Undang Otonomi Daerah), that were implemented in January 2001, brought a great deal of hope to those people in Indonesia who had been crying out for reformation of the government”. After three years of implementation, the regulation was revised by Laws 32 of 2004 (regional government) and 33 of 2004 (fiscal balance between central and regional government). These delegated stronger authority to kabupaten (districts) and cities. The debates on decentralisation have continued until today after the economic imbalance between the regions drew the national attention of politicians and intellectuals. Many cities and municipalities still have limited resources to develop their regions. They lack administrative structures and there is confusion over the delegation of authority from central to regional governments (Abidin 2009: 73). Furthermore, the fast growth of new kabupaten and cities after the decentralisation laws were implemented could lead to difficulty in the management of national unity across the country (Damanik 2010).

The euphoria in democratic spirit after the collapse of the New Order influenced the Acehnese to end the conflicts, which had killed an estimated thirteen thousand people. Aceh Province, which was labelled a ‘Special Region’ (Daerah Istimewa) during the New Order, gained higher status, being upgraded to ‘Special Autonomy’. On 22 September 1999, the Indonesian parliament officially passed Law No. 44/1999 on the “Special Status of the Province of Aceh Special Region”, which granted the Acehnese “additional powers in the fields of Islamic law, education and adat (customary law)” (Miller 2009: 41).
The politics of decentralisation implemented in Aceh were not intended to overcome poverty and promote economic development in the same manner as Tiro’s struggle towards the economic prosperity of Aceh (Djumala 2014: 75). After receiving some critiques and evaluations from the people of Aceh, the central government produced Law No. 18/2001, which allowed Aceh an economic share of 70 percent of the oil and gas exploited. President Megawati politicised the laws granting access to further negotiations with GAM by creating a permanent requirement that the “Indonesian government would continue the peace negotiation with GAM, if they will accept the status of regional autonomy” (Djumala 2014: 76). No significant political development occurred in Aceh after the implementation of these laws.

The Indonesian Research Institute (LIPI) evaluated the regional autonomy laws 22/1999 and 18/2001 by stating that the rise of conflicts around separatism and ethno-religions should become a critical consideration in managing these new laws. Syamsuddin et al. (2004), in *Desentralisasi dan Otonomi Daerah Naskah Akademik dan RUU Usulan LIPI* (Decentralisation and Regional Autonomy: Academic Draft and the Laws Proposal of LIPI), stated that regional autonomy should involve a fair policy in terms of the regional economy. This work was extended in further analysis of regional autonomy (Haris et al. 2006), resulting in a proposal entitled *Membangun Format Baru Otonomi Daerah* (Developing a New Format for Regional Autonomy).

Aceh Province had greater autonomy after the 2005 Helsinki peace agreement and the passing of Law No. 11/2006, which authorised the Aceh government to manage regional politics and economic development. This thesis, in its examination of the dynamics of the decentralisation of Aceh after the collapse of the New Order, argues that the decentralisation process has had a strong impact on the prospect of reconciliation and peace in Aceh.
A further strategic issue is how the working of democracy in post-conflict Aceh positively affects peacebuilding. It is also important to understand the actors in the area of local politics who are involved in the democratic process through elections, the engagement of political parties and governance. The continuing challenge for this process is the upsurge in violence approaching elections, which threatens the initiatives of peace and economic development.

**Democracy and Peace**

Democracy is one of the crucial means of achieving lasting peace through allowing individuals and parties which had fought during conflicts and wars to participate in restructuring of post-conflict and post-war governments through democratic mechanisms such as elections. Mansfield and Snyder (2007), however, argued that democracy in a post-conflict society may transform that society towards autocracy if democratic institutions are not well prepared. They stated that “an incompletely democratizing state may revert to autocracy” (Mansfield & Snyder 2007: 267). Aceh and Indonesia have experienced a democratisation process which, this thesis argues, has significantly supported peacebuilding and development under national and regional constitutions. For example, anticipating a rise in violent attacks during the 2012 election in Aceh, the central government postponed the schedule of the election, which was expected to involve all political parties and independent candidates in Aceh. The new regulations prevented an increase in violence and guaranteed a peaceful election involving all political actors.

Diamond (2010) has formulated two arguments which help in the analysis of the depth and durability of democracy in Indonesia:

First, democracy is about popular sovereignty, and one cannot gain an adequate purchase on the quality of democracy without knowing how a country’s people evaluate the extent and performance of its democracy. And second, democratic
stability depends heavily on robust public support for democracy. To measure progress towards the consolidation of democracy, we must know the extent to which its citizens regard it as legitimate – as a better form of government than any other they can imagine (p. 37).

Diamond’s analysis of the crucial factors underlying the evaluation of Indonesians’ knowledge and understanding of their participation in electoral democracy is instructive for this thesis, which examines the arguments of local leaders in relation to the value of democracy for peaceful coexistence in Indonesia. In the Acehnese context, most respondents were optimistic about ongoing democratisation after almost thirty years of conflict. For example, Irwandi Yusuf (2012), the first governor of Aceh after the Helsinki peace accord, believed that Aceh has turned out to be a democratic region with a great participation rate of the people, not only during the vote, but also in the campaign period. They also support local government projects, for instance, in building infrastructure and agriculture (Yusuf 2012).

Like Yusuf, Mardatillah (2012), an academic and human rights activist based in Banda Aceh, argued that the Acehnese demonstrate their respect for the efforts made towards peace by their active participation in local politics, including the involvement of NGOs in monitoring the public service and the behaviour of political parties and independent candidates during the elections in 2012 and 2014. Yusuf and Mardatillah have confirmed that democratisation is a strategic factor for peacebuilding in Aceh. Yusuf (2012) argued that GAM exercised a democratic culture during the conflict period when it had to govern the Acehnese, especially in rural villages, based on the local constitution. Therefore, Yusuf’s views are in line with those of Kingsbury (2010), former political adviser of GAM negotiating members in Helsinki, who reported the democratisation taking place inside GAM soon after the peace accord.
Kingsbury (2010) argued that the internal democratisation of GAM has transformed its members, after reintegration, into powerful political actors. He stated that “this democratization eventually allowed agreement for the implementation of democratic processes in Aceh, including local elections and the creation of local political parties” (Kingsbury 2010: 66). In addition, the Acehnese have the freedom to participate in establishing local parties and to be involved with national parties, and independent candidates are allowed to compete in gubernatorial and head-of-district elections. Haq’s article, ‘Starting from Local’ (Haq 2009: iii), states that “an open political space in Aceh gives an opportunity for all people to get access to power. At the same time, political leaders will gain tight control of the people, who feel closer to political authority”. Like Haq, Kingsbury (2010) stated that a closer control of the people of Aceh, including local elites, would prevent them from corruption of power. In addition, he argued that “it would be pointless if GAM took power in as corrupt and authoritarian a manner as its predecessors”; he said that “short of independence, substantive democratisation holds the best hope for Aceh’s future” (Kingsbury 2010: 66). However, the corruption that Kingsbury was concerned about did occur in Aceh after the process of reintegration.

This process of the reintegration of former rebel GAM members has been discussed by numerous analysts (Hadiwinata 2007, 2010; Bhakti 2008; Stange & Patock 2010). Nurhasim (2008) said that the reintegration process was like a charity that provided abundant cash for combatants and that the trend towards corruption continued more actively after combatants dominated local government. An influx of funds attracted corruption in the local government, NGOs, and reconstruction and rehabilitation bodies. The political transformation of GAM from a rebel to a political movement has been seen as an important aspect of reintegration which allowed former combatants to participate in democratisation and peacebuilding. However, their participation in the KPA and PA was characterised by a lack of experience.
The victory of PA in the 2009 election was not followed by enough capacity-building from their parliamentary members, from provincial to district level, which showed them to be ineffective in managing local politics (Stange & Patock 2010).

Furthermore, the book edited by Bhakti (2008) describing the peace process, the integration of GAM into Indonesia and the election of the new governor in the 2006 election is very useful. This is a collection of scholarly writings on Aceh containing reflections on subjects ranging from the Helsinki peace process to the bureaucracy of the Aceh government after 2006. This book is not wholly comprehensive in that it omits to describe the contemporary history of peace in Aceh. However, Bhakti argued that the reintegration process of GAM into the political arena is a transition towards better democracy and peace in Aceh, as is the continuation of capacity-building, especially in the leadership ranks and among political representatives at provincial and district levels.

A more detailed analysis is provided by Hadiwinata (2007, 2010), who analysed the dynamics operating in Aceh from the onset of conflict to the period of elections. He argued that the election in 2006 was a significant factor in peace implementation, as some of the leaders of the groups participated in constitutional political competition. The 2009 elections can be seen as an example of the stronger participation of GAM elites in local politics, which provided them with broader political authority in developing Aceh from district to provincial levels (Hadiwinata et al. 2010). Their political participation was challenged by the December 2011 gubernatorial elections, which still ignited flaring tensions among Acehnese leaders — especially former GAM elites. A number of former GAM combatants were killed in the period approaching the 2011 elections (Sholeh 2011).

The current investigation examines the dynamics of the transition of GAM members from military operatives into political representatives. This democratic participation is seen to have
contributed to the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding in Aceh. The cooperation of KPA and PA, as representatives of GAM, is envisaged as a peaceful partnership among political and ethnic groups in Aceh which can support the future of Acehnese democracy, prosperity and peace.

Democracy, peace and development in Aceh cannot work well without support from national and international agencies, both states and civil society organisations. This includes the continuation of the development of peace and infrastructure. Djuli (2013) argued that the absence of international agencies impacted on the progress of both the reintegration of combatants and economic development. This was due to the limited concern shown by national interests involved in managing Acehnese politics and security with regard to the challenges faced by former combatants at the grassroots level; the latter were disappointed with local government policy which focused on small circles of elites in the Party Aceh and its coalition.

**International States, CSOs and Regional Peace**

International states and CSOs have contributed to the stages of rehabilitation and peacebuilding of Aceh after the earthquake and tsunami and, in the longer term, the reintegration of combatants, democratisation and peacebuilding involving governments and local NGOs. The crucial transformation in Aceh, contributed to significantly by the international community, resulted from the two periods of peace mediation conducted firstly in 2000–2003 by the Henry Dunand Centre (HDC) and then in August 2005 by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). This is an example of the argument put by realists such as Greig and Diehl (2012) that international states and multilateral organisations have become effective parties which have ‘sticks’ and ‘carrots’ to ensure the process of peace negotiation continues successfully. DeRouen Jr (2015), editor of the recently published work, *An
Introduction to Civil Wars, said that “external partners can provide resources, assurance, expertise, and experience supporting peace agreement implementation” (DeRouen Jr 2015: 164).

The HDC and CMI are third parties which have mediated and facilitated peace negotiation and implementation in Aceh with external partners from the international community representing state and civil society organisations. Paffenholz’s article, ‘What Civil Society Can Contribute to Peacebuilding’, in a collection of scholarly essays entitled Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment, argues that “the main supporting factors for successful protection [of mediation and peace] are sufficient space for civil society to act and the combination of protection, monitoring, and advocacy that can attract media attention and gain the support of international networks” (Paffenholz 2010a: 383–384). With regard to Paffenholz’s argument on the role of international organisations in mediation, the EU and ASEAN can be seen as significant strategic partners in peacebuilding in the Acehnese context.

The EU and ASEAN were involved in the Aceh Monitoring Mission after the Helsinki peace accord in August 2005. Multilateral organisations such as the United Nations have been shown to be effective bodies in peace operations supported by international states. Askandar (2005), in his article entitled ‘A Regional Perspective of UN Peace Operations in Southeast Asia’, argued that “regional mechanisms, such as those within ASEAN, have proved ineffective especially for intra-state conflicts, and new formulas, which could involve the UN, must be found” (Askandar 2005: 28). This is due to the principle of non-interference adopted by the members of ASEAN to overcome disputes and conflicts. However, the involvement of ASEAN, which is a regional mechanism that legitimises the prevention of conflict and war, has contributed to overcoming conflicts within the states of ASEAN.
Furthermore, Askandar argued that “in both Aceh and Mindanao the respective governments would be apprehensive about receiving international peacekeepers. However, they would welcome peace operations under the guise of development programmes as this would welcome peace operations” (Askandar 2005: 37). In line with Askandar’s argument that international peacekeepers were strategic factors in conflict resolutions in Aceh and Mindanao, the current thesis analyses, in a later chapter, the current stage of peacebuilding in Mindanao and the transformation of MILF combatants. It argues that democratisation and peacebuilding in Aceh provide important lessons for Mindanao’s peace initiatives. NGO activists and the local government of Mindanao have visited Aceh to learn from the experiences of local NGOs and political parties in Aceh. Furthermore, some GAM elites and NGO activists from Aceh have also visited the southern Philippines to strengthen the capacity-building of government and civil society in Mindanao.

To understand the post-tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh in a wider context, *Post-Disaster Reconstruction: Lessons from Aceh* (Clarke, Fanany & Kenny 2010) is a crucial book to consider; it is a compilation of articles including ‘Political Reconstruction in Aceh’ (Kingsbury 2010), ‘The Voices of International NGO Staff’ (Clarke & Murray 2010), ‘Reconstruction through Participatory Practice?’ (Kenny 2010) and ‘The Role and Experiences of Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi [BRR]’ (Mardhatillah 2010). Kingsbury (2010) argued that examining the reconstruction of Aceh after the tsunami should include critically investigating the democratisation of GAM whereby former combatants were allowed to be involved in local politics; this process critically changed local politics in Aceh. The confidence of GAM leaders to transform politics in Aceh was reflected in the Helsinki peace negotiations. Kingsbury (2006) stated that Indonesian negotiators offered political leadership to GAM elites as a reward granted by the central government, allowing GAM representatives to be integrated into the Republic of Indonesia; this leadership took the form of governor,
**bupati** (head of districts) or mayor. GAM negotiators opposed the offer and proposed freedom for the Acehnese to create local parties – a special policy at odds with the national political structure.

Furthermore, comparative analysis of democratisation and peacebuilding in Aceh, Timor-Leste and Mindanao is urgently needed to discover how post-conflict and post-war regions can share common experiences and learn from each other in order to gain lasting peace, democracy and prosperity.

**Aceh, Timor-Leste and the Southern Philippines: Comparative Studies**

Literature on Southeast Asian conflicts is generally lacking in comparative analysis, especially as to how the actors in conflicts and peacebuilding in the regions have shared their experiences in the process of democratisation and initiatives for peace. One welcome analysis, *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia* (Tan 2007), provides a comprehensive investigation of conflicts and peacebuilding in the southern Philippines, Aceh, southern Thailand, Papua, Laos, Timor-Leste and Burma. It includes the communist insurgency in the Philippines and religious conflicts in Maluku and Poso. Rodell (2007: 225), in his ‘Separatist Insurgency in the Southern Philippines’, argues that the Islamic insurgency there is “a domestic phenomenon with deep historical roots, (which) results from the unsuccessful integration of the Muslim population into the Christian-dominated nation-state and society”. The complexity of the conflict in the southern Philippines challenges the decades-long peace initiatives.

The process of peace in Aceh has been shorter. Askandar argued that, in the Acehnese peacebuilding context, “for the best results, the peace-building process should be initiated from within. This means the peace structure created should involve all parties who are in the conflict and are feeling the impacts of the conflict” (Askandar 2007: 259). Peacebuilding
from within, as Askandar argued, involves the wider participation of combatants and civil society in peace initiatives. In addition, Askandar stated that “the most urgent task now is to make sure that the ceasefire is not violated and the provisions of the MoU are fully implemented according to the letter and spirit of the agreement. The role of civil society in this peacebuilding process will be crucial, [and will] rely on the goodwill and acceptance of the main parties to the peace agreement” (Askandar 2007: 263).

The post-conflict periods in Timor-Leste and the southern Philippines provide pivotal comparisons with that in Aceh on issues of democratisation, economic development, peacebuilding and the role of women in peace efforts. Dibley (2014) argued that, in the political transition in Timor-Leste and Aceh, CSOs have played a crucial role in peacebuilding, democratisation and socio-economic development. NGOs and CSOs have completed the policy of government and strengthened the democratic transition towards permanent peace and prosperity for the people of Timor-Leste and Aceh.

**Conclusion**

The literature on Aceh post-conflict has discussed diverse issues in history, politics, international relations and economic development. With regard to the situation in Aceh, a multidimensional perspective on conflict studies needs to learn from both history and contemporary politics; in particular, it requires understanding of the current issues of the multilateral coalition involved in the recovery of Aceh after the tsunami and conflict. The large volume of literature concerning Aceh reflects its importance, both during conflict and postconflict, as a lesson in overcoming conflict for other regions. Aceh’s experience of democratisation and peacebuilding has inspired government and civil society in the southern Philippines to ensure the transition of Bangsamoro province after the peace accord in 2012.
The subsequent discussion of the theoretical considerations relating to this thesis comprises diverse theories from the fields of realism, liberalism and multilateralism, international relations, and peace and development studies. However, this thesis focuses on multilateralism and the democratic approach to peace in order to understand the way in which democratic transition and international cooperation have been able to aid the development of Aceh after the conflict.
Chapter 3

Theoretical Considerations

Introduction

Interpretations of the issues of decentralisation, democracy and peace have resorted to a number of theories across a range of disciplines – in particular, international relations, political science and peace studies. In the field of international relations, the debates between realism and liberalism, as well as the options provided by theories of institutionalism, guide the path of analysis of this thesis – the transition of Aceh from conflict to peaceful democracy. This theoretical base facilitates the interpretation of the role of international cooperation and the international community in supporting peace negotiations, peace accord implementation, and post-tsunami and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction; it also underpins analysis of the way in which the Indonesian government sought and gained advantage in dealing with conflicts and disputes in regional and international forums working on Aceh peacebuilding and democratisation.

Even though realism theory maintains that international organisations and INGOs “perform important roles, but are always ultimately subordinate to states, or, at least, to the most powerful among them” (Chiaruzzi 2014: 43; italics added), it is certain that international states and INGOs have played a pivotal role in post-conflict Aceh. Immediately after the tsunami, between 160 and 400 international and national NGOs were operating in Aceh at any one time and “brought with them financial resources, materials and technical capacity” (Clarke & Murray 2010: 155). Some of them worked on peacebuilding and democratisation in Aceh rather than post-tsunami rehabilitation. However, CSOs and non-state actors have been marginalised in the conflict resolution.
States override the preferred approach of conflict management “to end wars through diplomatic initiatives” (Paffenholz 2010: 51). A prime example can be found in the 1995 US-mediated peace pact for Bosnia, when the USA threatened to bomb Bosnian-Serb artillery if no peace agreement was reached. This conflict management strategy used, in the words of Paffenholz (2010: 51) “financial ‘carrots’ and/or military ‘sticks’.

On the other hand, some conflicts are more effectively ended by the mediation of non-state actors. Ahtisaari, former president of Finland, acted as head of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), an NGO based in Finland, when he mediated between the Government of Indonesia and GAM in 2005 (Awaludin 2009; Bose 2012). Ahtisaari, however, maximised his conflict management strategy by organising significant support from states and non-state organisations towards the management of peace in Aceh. Bose argued that “Ahtisaari’s success in mediating a settlement to the Aceh dispute was aided by the dexterity with which he deployed his elder statesman-like persona to maximum effect, in a way that won acceptance and respect from both the Indonesian government and GAM” (Bose 2012: 247).

In addition, international states and organisations approached and pressured GAM in Sweden, Malaysia and other parts of the world, which encouraged them to return to the table to seriously set up a peace negotiation and make a peace accord to the greater advantage of the Acehnese people (Kingsbury 2010, 2014). Awaludin (2009) confirmed the latter’s view that the Indonesian government was pressured by international states after the earthquake and tsunami. In this context, the realist and liberal approaches are very relevant to understanding the dynamics of mediation, conflict resolution and post-conflict transition in Aceh.

Furthermore, in the context of Aceh, the alternative strategies of reconciliation, peacebuilding and democratisation through the implementation of local wisdom and best practice are also formulated, in this thesis, as possible and preferable pathways to peace. The intended result is
that the assimilation of values, theories and concepts from the West with the local wisdom, culture and politics of Aceh will produce modelling and lessons for other separatist conflicts all over the world. An NGO base in Aceh, the Aceh Institute, has attempted to research how *Adat* (custom), a concept long established at the heart of Acehnese culture, can be an effective tool for reconciliation and development. Nurdin (2013) argued that *Adat*, involving traditional leaders in villages such as *geuchik gampong* and *imum mukim*, has been an effective instrument already employed for decades in conflict resolution and the overcoming of disputes among the Acehnese. People have trusted these figureheads due to their capacity in local leadership and religion. In LoGA Chapter 1, article 19, it is stated that “*Mukim* is a legal community unit consisting of the union of several *gampong* having certain territorial borders and private assets, led by *imum mukim* or by any other names, directly positioned under a district”.

However, in higher level disputes, especially among combatants or between the Aceh local government and central government, they had a limited capacity and access. Badruzzaman Ismail, head of *Majelis Adat Aceh* (Aceh Adat Council), said that “the council only encourages combatants to join reintegration by preventing violence” (Basyar 2008:102). In other parts of Indonesia, disputes of land, local politics and domestic violence have been effectively overcome by non-state actors. They have been managed by various local cultural foundations such as the *Lembaga Adat Nagari* (Village Custom Foundation) in West Sumatra and the Islamic traditional school and *Kyai* (religious leaders) in East Java (Sholeh et al. 2007). Local politics in Aceh and other Indonesian regions still depends on the power of cultural leaders who are able to maintain the continuity of peace and development.

Yet they also have limitations, being able to be easily ‘politicised’ by the state apparatus that aims to control state interest in domestic politics. The implementation of Islamic *Shari’ah* in Aceh was an effective strategy used by the Indonesian central government to prevent
conservative Acehnese Muslim leaders from supporting the politics of GAM. Yusuf, then
governor of Aceh, was concerned that “Shari’a came to Aceh, but it only created more anger
about religion being used for unpopular political purposes” (Yusuf 2008). This exemplifies
the tension that exists between the realist and liberal approaches to the issue, and poses the
question as to how these theories can best be implemented to understand the context of
democracy and peace in a post-conflict region like Aceh.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the realist stance was challenged to provide a way forward
for the post–Cold War world. Former Soviet Union states needed to modernise their
economies and democratise their politics. Their system was “all the more sensitive to liberal
ideas where cooperation with the West was concerned … Economic and political liberalism,
liberal internationalism, and the lifestyles of the democracies brought about the fall of the
Soviet empire” (Colonomos 2008: 43). Realism is regarded as less sensitive to modernisation
and the transformation of states from authoritarianism to democracy.

Realist theories argue that states need to have a stronger role in securing peace and stability in
the global world. Liberal theories, on the other hand, emphasise the need for a balance
between states and civil society. Therefore, this thesis focuses on liberal theories to interpret
the issues of decentralisation, democracy and peace. Democratic peace is compared to neo-
liberal institutionalism in order to see their relevance to the dynamics of local democracy,
participatory decentralisation and peacebuilding in developing countries.

This chapter examines international relations (IR) theory, focusing on realist and liberal
theories. In realist theory, the focus is on how states play important roles in managing
mediation, post-conflict transition, security and stability. The principle of non-interference of
ASEAN, for example, in the case of Timor-Leste’s political transition, is part of how realist
approaches view stability in the region. In addition, liberal theorists view peacebuilding
mechanisms through the lens of multilateral cooperation and international NGOs. Liberal peace theory is examined in this context. As an alternative approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, international regime and development theories interpret the current dynamics of democratisation and peacebuilding in Aceh. This thesis argues that Aceh, following the Helsinki accord, needs an ongoing, long-term effort towards peace through the strong commitment of multilateral partnerships and the strong capacity of local leaders, especially those on the Aceh Adat Council.

Realism

The approach offered by the realist school, which focuses on how the state is the central actor in dealing with conflict and peace, is important in understanding conflict and conflict resolution. Realism emerged victorious over idealism after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939; this momentous event confirmed for the realists the limits of the idealist approach for the study of international politics (Dunne & Schmidt 2014). According to them, “realism taught foreign policy officials to focus on interests rather than on ideology, to seek peace through strength, and to recognize that great powers can coexist even if they have antithetical values and beliefs” (Dunne & Schmidt 2014: 100). In addition, realism “aspires to be suprahistorical, explaining in all epochs the fundamental features of international politics: first and foremost, conflict and war” (Chiaruzzi 2014: 36). Realists claimed that “conflict is inevitable, even necessary in international politics. When disputes cannot be resolved peacefully or diplomatically, force, and ultimately war, is a decisive means of settling matters” (Chiaruzzi 2014: 36). Realists tend to focus on four central topics: (1) groupism; (2) egoism; (3) anarchy; and (4) power politics (Wohlforth 2014). With regard to groupism, realists argue that:
group solidarity is essential to domestic politics and conflict and cooperation between polities is the essence of international politics. To survive at anything above a subsistence level, people need the cohesion provided by group solidarity, yet that very same in-group cohesion generates the potential for conflict with other groups (Wohlforth 2014: 133).

Groups will act politically with other groups and individuals, but are moved mainly by self-interest. The expression of egoism may be “exacerbated, moderated, or even temporarily overcome by national and international political structures, institutions, and values” (Wohlforth 2014: 133). This is closely related to Thucydides’ theory on human nature that all humans are power-hungry, self-interested and egoistic. In this context, states “seek protection for themselves and exclude all others from this protection, unless in some circumstances they are to gain from this inclusion” (Marsalis 2012: ii). In addition, it has been argued that “realists don’t tend to give a solution to a problem, rather, an explanation for it. That war happens because states are power hungry and because states fear for their own survival and so by abolishing other competition, they guarantee their own existence” (Marsalis 2012: iii–iv). This is one, in terms of the current investigation, of the weaknesses of realism. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 is a perfect example. At first, the USA aimed to disarm Saddam Hussein of his Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). After the finding that Iraq had no WMDs, Saddam Hussein was termed a dictator and the spread of democracy was the goal of the invasion (Marsalis 2012: iv).
Table 2.1: Summary of Explanatory Perspectives on the Iraq Invasion (Lieberfeld 2005: 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Causal/explanatory focus</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>Unipolarity, maintain hegemony and avoid post-9/11 decline by demonstrating US willingness to use force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid nuclear proliferation, eliminate Iraqi WMD threat against Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure US oil supplies, reduce energy vulnerabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UN inspections are unreliable; sanctions policy causes resentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>Democracies fear that dictatorships will attack them first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security derives from spreading democracy and human rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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According to Lieberfeld (2005), in realist terms, the invasion in Iraq was a rational means for the USA to achieve its pivotal goal of “demonstrating its power to allies and competitors alike ... As well, it was intended to prevent Iraq’s actual or potential use of WMD and oil resources to threaten the U.S. or its allies, and to prevent Iraq’s potential collaboration with anti-U.S. terrorist groups” (Lieberfeld 2005: 4).

Mearsheimer and Walt (Chiaruzzi 2014), two prominent US realists, criticised the US plan to launch a war against Iraq in March 2003 by publishing a powerful critique entitled ‘Keeping Saddam Hussein in a Box’ (New York Times 2 February 2003). They rejected claims made by the Bush administration that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq could not be overcome through a containment policy. They argued that “war is not necessary. Containment has worked in the past and can work in the future, even when dealing with Saddam Hussein” (Mearsheimer & Walt 2003). These scholars considered the cost of unnecessary war against Saddam Hussein; they said that “preventive war entails other costs as well. In addition to the lives lost, toppling Saddam Hussein would cost at least $50 billion to $100 billion, at a time when our economy is sluggish and huge budget deficits are predicted for years” (Mearsheimer & Walt 2003). They concluded their critique by stating that “although the Bush administration maintains that
war is necessary, there is a better option ... We should perpetuate this state of affairs by maintaining vigilant containment, a policy the rest of the world regards as preferable and effective” (Mearsheimer & Walt 2003).

Mearsheimer continued to present arealist critique of the US in relation to its Iraq war policy. It has been claimed that:

This critique of the Iraq War was consistent with Hans Morgenthau’s critique of the Vietnam War. The neo-conservative case for war, built around Wilsonian idealism ‘with teeth,’ failed to appreciate the historical tendency of states to balance against power (rather than bandwagon), and failed to recognise nationalism as a more powerful ideological force than democracy (Chiaruzzi 2014: 46).

If realism emphasises the crucial position of state interest in international politics and regards the international realm as anarchic, liberalism’s main principles are freedom, progress, reason, (human) rights, tolerance and the norms of constitutionalism and democracy (Richardson 2014). The present study aligns itself with the latter set of liberalist values and ideals. Realism understands international states’ approach towards security and stability and ending conflicts and wars, including how international organisations involve themselves in ending wars.

**Liberalism**

Richardson (2014) stated that liberalism is commonly seen as “the characteristic political philosophy of the modern West” (Richardson 2014: 69). The historical–political context of liberalism dates back to England in the 17th century and the political struggle waged there against monarchical absolutism. The English philosopher John Locke published *Two Treatises of Government*, which is regarded as the first great liberal text (Richardson 2014).
Dunne (2014: 117) argued that “the First World War shifted liberal thinking towards a recognition that peace is not a natural condition but is one that must be constructed”. The English School established this approach as ‘liberalism’, as an alternative to the demonstrated inadequacy of the realist approach to understanding international affairs after the Cold War.

Liberalism has influenced international and domestic government structures that recognise individual and civil society by stressing international and regional cooperation to maintain peace and stability. It includes the way in which post-war and post-conflict reconstruction and transformation are able to be managed.

The three most prominent liberal empirical theories are focused on democracy, international institutions and interdependence. Liberal thinkers claim that “democracies do not go to war against one another ... Democracies are committed to the principle of resolving political differences non-violently ... The public, who would bear the cost, is unwilling to support war against another democracy” (Richardson 2014: 54). Liberalist theory evaluates the dominance of realism in earlier scholarly analysis of international relations. It argues that, because realism rests on the basis that anarchy and war are abiding features of international affairs, it therefore sees the necessity of a balance of power to stabilise the world. However, the critique maintains that realism has failed to understand the approach of diplomacy as a means of prevention of war and conflict. Liberalism provides alternative mechanisms for the purposes of overcoming war and conflict by establishing dialogue and diplomacy as important means of conflict resolution. In addition, liberalism examines international relations by recognising actors who have a commitment to resolving conflicts. After the Cold War, more diplomats have tended to prioritise peace mediation and conflict resolution, and have actively worked to prevent war and conflict.
However, Dunne has stated the limits of liberalism. He said that “the challenges that lie ahead for liberalism are immense. Whether the challenge is the environment, or poverty reduction, or nuclear non-proliferation, or humanitarian atrocities, liberal institutions and policies have not mitigated or eradicated these issues” (Dunne 2014: 124).

**Liberal Peace**

Democratic peace theory emphasises the existence of peaceful cooperation among democratic states, a contention which is challenged by the fact that a strong democratic country like the USA can undertake political intervention in a democratic state for certain reasons. Democratisation is argued by some scholars to be ‘dangerous’, as opposed to the argument in favour of democratic peace – that is, that most democratic states have successfully maintained peaceful global partnerships (Goldsmith & He 2008). In addition, Rasler and Thomson have argued that there is a strong relationship between democratic states and a low level of conflict and incidence of war (Rasler & Thomson 2005: 3).

However, there is no single theory that fits all interpretations in the quest to understand the dynamics of politics and society. Some states might have different schools of thought underlying their foreign policy. This depends on the context and the interest of the state. Institutionalism, a theory originally developed in economics, has now been adopted by multidisciplinary studies in sociology, politics and security.

The concept of the balance of power, for example, is interpreted differently by different schools of thought. It was originally stated by Morgenthau, the father of realist theory, according to whom a balance of power is “indeed a perennial element of all pluralistic societies … yet it is capable of operating … under the conditions of relative stability and peaceful conflict” (Morgenthau in Hughes & Meng 2011: 121). As a complex concept, power “embrac(es) both material factors, such as the number of troops and weapons available to the
state, as well as intangible factors, such as troop morale, national character, and the quality of a government and its diplomacy” (Little 2007: 139). However, this thesis focuses not on the balance of power, but on the notion of power-sharing, as formulated by Galtung (1995), to support the process of reconciliation and preserving peace. Power-sharing is “vital for containing and managing intercommunal tensions in multiethnic societies emerging from civil conflict, thereby helping to sustain fragile democracies” (Norris 2008: 3).

Power-sharing has been implemented well in the Middle East, where Shi’I and Sunni leaders take leading political positions in government. The leadership represents its own community. In Palestine, Hamas and Fatah share political leadership in central government. In Indonesia, since the establishment of the New Order, Muslim and Christian leaders in Maluku and Poso have shared local power to continue the efforts of peacebuilding after bloody conflicts between Muslims and Christians. Even though violence and clashes between Muslim and Christian communities have sometimes occurred at the grassroots level, the unity of interfaith leadership has prevented further conflicts; moreover, the elite-centric political leadership in Indonesia also influences the foundation of peace. If leaders take advantage, for their political interests, of weak communities or individuals at the grassroots, the resulting political violence is a dangerous operation that threatens peace.

The killings and attacks of the Ayah Banta group were apparently orchestrated by the PA elite in order to attract serious interest from the central government; its aim was to achieve the suspension of elections and to weaken the political support base of Irwandi Yusuf, as among the victims were local GAM commanders who had supported him. In contrast, in Timor-Leste, leader Xanana Gusmao offered to his rival, Mari Alkatiri, the chance to lead the development of Okuse. This is a way of sharing political power to maximise development and to stabilise post-conflict politics. In Bangsamoro, the MNLF threatened to fight against any peaceful agreement with the Government of the Philippines, as it was not included in the
peace accord implementation. In the southern Philippines, political leadership is diverse and therefore needs a more comprehensive approach by the central government to end the conflict through the participation of all communities.

The theory of neo-liberal institutionalism is challenged to interpret and understand the dynamics of decentralisation, democratisation and peacebuilding in post-conflict regions. The idea of institutionalism has been debated among scholars since the 1970s. In addition, the UN has adopted the theoretical approach of ‘new institutionalism’ in order to overcome conflict and preserve peace in the global world. US President Barack Obama, for example, stated in his speech in Accra, Ghana, on 11 July 2009 that “Africa doesn’t need strongmen, it needs strong institutions” (The White House 2009). Institution building is the focus of the Obama administration as “the fulcrum of its international law and development policy, and that it will continue to measure the health of Third World institutions with reference to the Millennium Challenge goals’ (Kelley 2010: 549).

The theory of new institutionalism has more advantages for overcoming the problems of post-conflict regions. It has more advantages for supporting rehabilitation and development. Finnemore argues that institutionalism “provides a system-level theoretical framework with which to analyse international politics, and generates testable hypotheses about international behaviour that compete with those of realism and liberalism” (Finnemore 1996: 326). Furthermore, institutionalisation is argued as a better way than liberalisation to reach productive post-conflict peacebuilding. The establishment of domestic institutions can manage “the transition from war while avoiding the destabilising effects of democratisation and marketisation” (Tschirgi 2004: 15).
On the other hand, some scholars who oppose the institutionalist approach have argued that institutionalism is not a practical approach in dealing with post-conflict society. Roberts, for example, states that:

Liberal institutionalism may seem like a good idea in theory, but it may not be very useful for or applicable to many people’s everyday lives in places just emerging from war, or to elites whose internalized and legitimated privileges risk being rescinded or curtailed dramatically (Roberts 2011: 36).

The new institutionalist approach is not only significant for critically evaluating the process of decentralisation, democratisation and peace building in post-conflict regions like Aceh, Indonesia, but it also offers a strategic bridge for mediating between the international community and the conflict regions, in situations where the international community has invested to support institutional building. International donors and NGOs can work more easily in post-conflict regions that have a similar ‘tune’ in their approach to development and peacebuilding.

In the Indonesian context, institution building is a significant factor in supporting post-conflict regions, as well as in looking after all regions where there is potential for conflict to occur. Cooperation among states and civil society is a core element in effectively managing regional peace and stability. The institutionalist approach should be implemented not only by regional governments, but also by CSOs. This has been an effective mechanism in Aceh rehabilitation and reconstruction in the period since the tsunami and the subsequent reintegration (Clarke, Fanany & Kenny 2010). In addition, civic engagement and leader integration should also be institutionalised in order to gain long-term peace (Tadjoeddin 2004). Effective political institutions managed by local Aceh parties, notably the Party of
Aceh, have also attracted people to support them. This is called ‘votes for peace’ where people support the PA in the hope of sustained peace initiated by PA leaders (Palmer 2010: 295).

**Multilateralism and the International Regime**

Haggard and Simmons (1987) asserted that international regimes have developed as a main focus of theoretical discussion and empirical enquiry within international relations. The concern with regimes sprang from discontent with the notions of world order, organisation and authority. Regime specialists suppose that the arrangements of state operations are inclined to follow norms, but that such norm-governed performance is wholly co-dependent on the national interests. Therefore, the workings of regimes can be seen as a way of reconciling the realist and idealist traditions, which have generally opposed each other in international relations theoretical debate.

International regime theory emphasises the importance of cooperation and partnership in building peace. It includes prioritising multilateralism in supporting post-war and post-conflict regions. Martti Ahtisaari, Chairman of the Crisis Management Initiative, while attending an EU forum in Brussels in November 2005 a month after the Helsinki peace accord, stated:

> Let us consider some of the major threats in the beginning of the twenty-first century: failing states, global disease outbreaks, chronic poverty, natural disasters, climate change, terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. How would the world deal with these threats if there were no multilateral systems – no regional organizations, no World Bank, no United Nations? (Ahtisaari 2005).
Multilateralism is a new mechanism by which to achieve global cooperation among states in order to overcome conflict and preserve stability and peace. In post-conflict Timor-Leste, Aceh and Bangsamoro, cooperation among states has successfully played a significant role in reconstruction and rehabilitation in each case, and has helped the political transition towards permanent peace. Having multilateral diplomacy aimed at peacebuilding means the initiatives of peace and post-conflict development are based on international cooperation.

This is the role of the EU and ASEAN in constructing peace in Aceh. The Asian Monitoring Mission is part of the multilateral cooperation among the member states of the EU and ASEAN that has been mediating the transition of security and political structures since the peace accord in Helsinki.

**Paradigm of Peace**

Galtung’s theory on the paradigm of peace is especially relevant to understanding the dynamics of the peace process: the balance of power and the rule of law are the first tools to observe and analyse in relation to peace and democracy in Aceh. The existence of regulations – from elections to investments – and the power-sharing among Acehnese leaders have reinforced Galtung’s argument. The consensus among Acehnese leaders and the Indonesian government as regards peace and its implementation bears out the theory of Dahrendorf (in Schaefer 2003: 220), a British sociologist who argued that the common interests among parties will preserve the peace. Dahrendorf stated that “social classes are groups of people who share common interests resulting from their authority relationships”. Acehnese leaders are challenged by having to unite in their own interest for the priority of peace and prosperity for Aceh after more than thirty years of conflict. Galtung also discussed peacebuilding, peace culture, peace structure and mediation, arguing:
There are many practices to draw upon, and to be developed, in peacebuilding. An elementary practice is the civil disobedience of establishing contact with the appointed enemy, engaging in positive, helping, cooperative relations instead. The mental task would be cognitive/emotional disobedience, refusing to structure the inner world in that polarized way, also identifying the negative in Self and the positive in Other. Avoiding the trap of Self-hatred combined with Other-lover; that is only polarized in reverse, not reversed (Galtung 2007: 29).

The goals of democracy and peace in Aceh have occupied the period of ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’, which was defined by the UN Secretary-General as “collective action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Forman & Patrick 2000: 4). This definition is especially significant in terms of the dynamics of peace and reconciliation in Aceh, from local, national and international perspectives.

The theoretical concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism are also presented in this thesis to evaluate how the experiences of the Acehnese people from a wide range of rural and urban locations, where they took refuge during the period of conflict, might have influenced the sense of cosmopolitanism in the province. The argument of Avoinus (2007), which uses the theory of Immanuel Kant on cosmopolitanism, is here analysed. Avoinus also considered the idea of ‘national romanticism’ of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johan Gottfried von Herder. According to Avoinus, “if nationalists were keen on developing a deep understanding of the nation’s own history and culture, cosmopolitans desired to learn extensively about other cultures. The idea of travelling and establishing international contacts was part of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the Enlightenment” (Avoinus 2007: 155).
However, the culture of cosmopolitanism typifies many ethnic groups in Indonesia. Besides the Acehnese, the Buginese and the Javanese also have cosmopolitan cultures. But the difference lies in the individual experiences of these cultures in exploring a sense of nationalism, which are closely related to the history of the region. Greater freedom to express individual ethnic group identity while participating in a collective process is also a significant instrument of peace. Sen (2006) argued that it is critical to accommodate minority groups within a dominant ethnic, cultural and religious ethos.

Galtung’s argument on peacebuilding is useful in understanding current frictions inside the former combatants of Aceh, some of whom attempted to disengage from the Aceh Transitional Committee, the CSO founded to assist the transition of former militia members to civilians. Horgan (2009) called this group ‘disengaged’ from its community for political and economic purposes. Disengagement is the process whereby individuals or groups leave off from past violent activities and engage in normal, peaceful behaviours; as such, it captures the relative success with which former combatants transformed themselves from paramilitary forces by adopting totally or partially civilian identities and living with others under the constitution of their shared country. Disengagement can be designed as a program or it may work naturally.

According to Bjorgo and Horgan (2009), disengagement is one of the new alternatives among counter-terrorism strategies. This notion is based on concerns that traditional counter-terrorism, which imprisons terrorists, fails to overcome the core element of terrorist activities. Bjorgo and Horgan argued that “countries which have had, in common, growing populations of prisoners held for terrorist offences, have realized that they cannot solve their terrorist problems with force and detention alone” (Bjorgo & Horgan 2009: 1–2). In addition, Horgan defined the meaning of disengagement and how it is relevant to coping with terrorist or separatist groups by saying that “disengaging might suggest critical cognitive and social
changes, in terms of leaving behind the shared social norms, values, attitudes, relationships
and social networks so carefully forged while the individual (or a group) was still a member
of a terrorist (or a separatist) group” (2009: 20).

Canter agrees with Horgan’s argument with regard to the difficulty of disengagement for
people whose whole lives and subcultures have embraced terrorism and separatism (Canter
2009: 15). Djuli (2014) was concerned about the difficulty for combatants of leaving behind
their past, especially those who had experienced many years in the jungle. They received,
during the conflict period, enormous logistical support from villagers. Those are the ones
who have found it hard to adapt to the current transformation. They have failed to disengage
themselves from conflict and war. In north Aceh, some groups of former combatants have
kidnapped foreign workers for their own gain or threatened to attack workers in local industry
due to the difficulties they have experienced in finding jobs. Ayah Banta, who headed a
special force of such ‘retired’ combatants, used explosives to kill more than ten people in the
days approaching the 2012 elections in Aceh.

These killings and attacks are part of a failed process. Djuli (2014) asserts that combatants
who have lower levels of education and belong to a lower socio-economic demographic are
the most vulnerable groups with regard to returning to their conflict experience in order to
gain access to the economy. Disengagement can be influenced by compatriots of the former
combatants, in sympathy with group members who are trying to get justice. In the context of
Aceh, access for combatants to special treatment in the form of financial assistance would
help them to leave their past and step forward into a future of prosperity and peace. This
includes those who are currently working in political parties, parliament or local government
and still using a military approach in managing their work; they too are part of the failed
process of disengagement.
Disengagement can only be said to have succeeded when Aceh achieves economic stability and a unified outlook. Cut Intan, who joined GAM in her teenage years, could be considered one of the people typifying Horgan’s picture of a terrorist; she was involved in separatist activities throughout her life until the end of the conflict. She learned from her father, a close aide of the GAM commander Teungku Abdullah Shafe’I, how to be committed, as a GAM female combatant, to the dignity and freedom of Aceh. She also prayed for her baby to be born in exile so that he could continue the struggle of his father, who was killed by Indonesian military forces. Intan has now attempted to leave her past behind and dedicate her life to the future of her son and to enjoy the peace and stability of the current environment in Aceh. But she has been disappointed in her former combatant commanders who, she argues, have betrayed the original spirit of GAM in relation to the prosperity and unity of Aceh.

Unlike Horgan, Galtung approached violent acts of former combatants with nonviolence, arguing:

> There is a practice: Nonviolence, breaking that vicious cycle, by some called ‘the security dilemma’, refusing to use violence, engaging in constructive action across conflict borders instead. Nonviolence actually has two meanings. One is broader, more or less co-extensive with what here is called ‘peace by peaceful means’, including most steps and most therapies in the model. And one is more narrow, seeing nonviolence as a better way of doing legitimate jobs violence is supposed to do, such as defence against direct violence attacks, and offense against structural violence (Galtung 2007: 29).

Peacebuilding and the nonviolence approach as well as further processes of mediation and reconciliation require comprehensive methods in order to transform people, communities and

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2 Cut Intan, interview in Pidie, February 2012.
the environment into a situation of permanent peace. Galtung further recommended the importance of peace education, which was initiated by former GAM leaders and intellectuals like Nur Djuli by providing training in democracy and peace to former combatants. Some of the training graduates are now local government leaders and parliament members. Galtung (2007: 27) said: “this is deep culture work, calling on cultural anthropology, philosophy, history of ideas, etc. The major instrument is peace education. But people associate that with schooling and think they have graduated from schools”. For Galtung, peace journalism is urgent:“observing and reporting events within a solution-oriented peace discourse, not only within the victory-oriented security discourse” (2007: 27).

Furthermore, we need to examine how special autonomy is a strategic means to overcome secessionist movements. It is interesting to learn how the status of special autonomy, initiated after the collapse of the New Order, failed to end the conflict, especially from 1999 to 2004, and finally, after a few months of serious negotiation in Helsinki, ‘self-governance’ status agreed to in the accord allowed former combatants to integrate with the Indonesian state. Self-governance is interpreted in the LoGA, Law Number 11/2006 and this enabled the participation of former combatants in local politics. They established a local party, Party Aceh, and in the 2012 gubernatorial and head of district elections they won in 11 of the 17 districts and one governor and vice-governor.

The special autonomy status granted in the LoGA allowed local politics and development to be dominated by former combatants, giving them the opportunity to establish the ideals of their long struggle for prosperity, peace and justice for the Acehenese people. Before the Helsinki accord, scholars argued that establishment of autonomous regions was not the solution to secessionist movements. McGibbon (2004) stated that special autonomy laws established from 1999 failed to end the separatist movement:“special autonomy has failed to provide a sustainable framework through which to address separatist conflict in Indonesia”
(McGibbon 2004: 4). Even though federal status was proposed by some activists and requested by Hasan di Tiro in the 1950s and 1960s as the best formula for a diverse and plural nation, Indonesia allowed for special autonomy status and passed regional autonomy laws which sent a powerful message to local leaders to develop good local government. This ensured the dynamics of local politics and democratic transition worked smoothly at provincial and district levels in Indonesia.
Chapter 4

Regional Autonomy, Development and Peace in Aceh

“Wallah (I swear to God), Billah (I swear to God), Aceh region will be granted special rights to self-regulate based on Islamic *syariah*”


Introduction

Regional autonomy has been strategic for diverse and plural states where people live in a broad area with varieties of ethnicities, religions and cultures. Autonomous regions allow people from the local area to manage their own territory based on their local culture. The richness of the culture and the distinctiveness of the economy give freedom and opportunity for local leaders and communities to develop pride in their cultures and economies. A major reason that regions attempt to separate from the state is due to centralised political policy that is discriminatory and abuses power by exploiting the natural resources of the local region without any return of revenue for the development and prosperity of the local community.

Expressions and movements towards separatism in order to develop independently and autonomously may take decades and a number of regime changes. The East Timorese people successfully transformed their country into an independent state after more than two decades of struggle against the central government of Indonesia. Ali Alatas, former minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, said that “today our responsibility and our commitment is to help make possible the fulfilment of the newly expressed will of the majority of East Timorese to seek a new destiny outside the Republic of Indonesia” (Alatas 2001: 606). Guelke stated that Timor-Leste transformed from regional autonomy...
independence: “despite opposition in the military, the new Indonesian government decided that it needed a quick solution to the problem of East Timor to prevent the issue from contributing to a wider process of disintegration” (Guelke 2012:142). Timor-Leste and Indonesia are now forming a good relationship; Timor-Leste depends on commodities from Indonesia and citizens of Timor-Leste living in the border areas maintain strong networks and a feeling of unity with the people in East Nusa Tenggara. Many of them originate from the same families and clan groups.

Timor-Leste and Aceh have had similar experiences of military pressure against separatist movements that has left some problems in relation to human rights violations. This inspired negotiators in Helsinki to manage the issue of human rights violations in order to create a just and permanent peace in Aceh. Acehnese activists and human rights organisations visited Dili in Timor-Leste to learn about the process of the National Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (Guterres 2013; Sholeh 2014b). They were able to share common experiences of conflict and attempted to establish a strong foundation to seek justice from the Indonesian military forces involved in the killing and disappearance of East Timorese and Acehnese during the respective periods of conflict (Guterres 2013). Guterres is an East Timorese lawyer, founder of the HAK (Hak Asasi Kemanusiaan or Human Rights) Foundation and moderator of the National Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, which negotiated with the Government of Indonesia in efforts to deal with human rights abuses. Given the strong political pressure attending such negotiations, the title of the commission changed to the Commission of Truth and Friendship. This theme of collaboration between Timor-Leste and Aceh is discussed in detail in a later chapter in a comparison between Aceh and Timor-Leste, with a focus on how they have shared and learned from each other on issues of conflict and initiatives for peace.
The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) Article 2 on human rights states:


2.2. A Human Rights Court will be established for Aceh.

2.3. A Commission for Truth and Reconciliation will be established for Aceh by the Indonesian Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, with the task of formulating and determining reconciliation measures (Awaludin 2009: 320).

However, human rights violations that occurred during the conflict have never been discussed seriously by the government due to the refusal of the Indonesian Constitutional Court to create a foundation for the Indonesian Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, a refusal which significantly affected the establishment and process of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation in Aceh (Sholeh 2014b).

Equality, freedom and justice remain the key factors for many regions in terms of their affiliation with, or separation from, the state. Aceh has a long history of separatism and of initiatives to overcome the separatist movement through the implementation of special autonomy. The dynamics of history, conflict and initiatives for peace created a strong and confident autonomous region. Pride in Acehnese history has strengthened the foundations of current economic development; however, human rights violations have been made by the Indonesian military forces and unfair development policies on the part of the central government are a strong impetus for Aceh to be an autonomous region that conducts its own affairs. Daud Bereueh struggled against the central government for the creation of a special autonomous region with independent governance in regulating the religion and culture of Aceh. Abdullah confirmed that: “the politician-Ulama just wishes Aceh to be a part of an
alternative NKRI by becoming either an Islamic state or a federal state, but not separated from the state. Nine years later, Daud Bereueh and his followers surrendered and were welcomed with honour” (Abdullah 2003). Bereueh continued to fight against the central government after realising that it had not fulfilled its promise of regional autonomy on the terms he had demanded – that is, Aceh as a special regional autonomous region based on Islamic syari’ah. Bereueh’s demands were continued by Tiro, who supplanted the central concept, switching from religious to ethnic nationalism.

Tiro continued Bereueh’s separatist movement by proposing an independent Aceh where people could develop and take advantage of their natural resources. To overcome these movements, the Indonesian government established special regulations for an autonomous Aceh. In the end, the idea of separatism was changed through the Helsinki peace negotiations and GAM agreed to integrate with the Republic of Indonesia by accepting self-governance status, which is interpreted in LoGA Number 11/2006 as ‘special autonomy.’ McGibbon (2004: 1) said that “Indonesia offered the special autonomy laws as a major concession to Aceh and Papua as part of its overall accommodating approach to resolving separatist conflict that had few parallels in Indonesian history”.

This chapter examines regional autonomy in Aceh from the perspectives of its economic and political character and its history. It is argued that the regional autonomy initiated in Aceh has displayed an inconsistent history, even from the early period of the Indonesian revolution. Betrayals of the people of Aceh by the central government over many years have created a deep feeling of caution about the central government. The expression of betrayal remained for some time after the 2005 Helsinki peace accord, which granted ‘self-government’ status to Aceh through the welcoming and reintegration of GAM to the Republic of Indonesia. Even though the regulation was inconsistent, regional autonomy policy has effectively overcome the secessionist movement in Aceh; this is in line with Brancati’s argument that most
secessionist movements have been overcome by decentralisation, except in the case of Central Europe, where decentralisation created ethnic conflicts (Brancati 2006).

The subsequent discussion is divided into four parts: firstly, the relationship between the regulations surrounding autonomy and central government policy in Aceh, from the period of Daud Bereueh of Darul Islam to that of Hasan Tiro of GAM; secondly, central government policy on regional autonomy in the period after the fall of the New Order until the Helsinki negotiations; thirdly, the implications of the Helsinki peace agreement for the nature of regional autonomy in Aceh, including the way in which the MoU was transformed into LoGA Number 11/2006; and lastly, the implementation of the special autonomy regulations of LoGA and reflections on the current dynamics of local politics and economic development in Aceh.

**Separatism and Regional Autonomy**

Central government policy towards the autonomous region of Aceh has been established since the Sukarno period. It has also provided a way for the central government to accommodate the rise of insurgencies in Aceh against the central government. To accommodate the demand for a separate self-governing state, Sukarno visited Aceh and expressed a promise to be benevolent to Aceh, which had contributed a lot in the early period of Indonesian independence. It was an interesting statement by Sukarno, who responded emotionally to a surprising demand from Daud Bereueh to sign a letter of agreement that Aceh should be given the status of a special autonomous region where Islamic *syari’ah* and the culture of Aceh could be freely implemented, thereby distinguishing Aceh from the rest of Indonesia. On 15 June 1948 in front of Daud Bereueh, Sukarno promised: “*Wallah* (I swear to God), *Billah* (I swear to God), the region of Aceh will be granted special rights to self-
regulation based on Islamic syari’ah” (Tempo, 24 August 2003). Sukarno knew how strong the sense of ethnic identity and religiosity was among the Acehnese.

His statement was responded to positively by Daud Bereueh, who refused to join the State of Sumatra Timur headed by Teungku Mansyur. In Bereueh’s statement of refusal, published in the Kutatadja newspaper Semangat Merdeka on 23 March 1949, he said: “given that there is no sense of local nationalism (kedaerahan), we will not establish Aceh Raya and so on. We are here having a spirit of republiken (republic)” (Tempo, 24 August 2003). However, the commitment of Bereueh to the Republic of Indonesia was betrayed by Sukarno, who stated two years later in Amuntai, South Kalimantan, on 27 January 1953, that: “what we want is a national state that covers all of Indonesia … if we establish an Islamic-based state, a lot of non-Muslims will separate (from the state)” (Tempo, 24 August 2003). Bereueh’s proposal for a special autonomous region of Aceh based on the regional identity of Acehnese culture and Islamic syari’ah was not responded to by the central government. Bereueh claimed that Sukarno broke his promise and betrayed the Acehnese. On 21 September 1953, Bereueh launched the rebel movement Darul Islam, hereafter DI (Tempo, 24 August 2003).

This movement became the first challenge to the central government in terms of how to manage such a strong expression, from a local area, of republican unity. This was a difficult moment, testing whether Indonesia was going to be a federal or a unitary state. Separatist movements also arose in Maluku, South Sulawesi and West Java. From New York, Tiro sent a letter to the Indonesian Prime Minister, Ali Sastroamidjojo, in September 1954. He asked Sastroamidjojo’s government to stop the “genocide” against the rebel movement in Aceh. In response to Tiro’s letter, the Indonesian government demanded that Tiro return to Indonesia as soon as possible, then the government put a stop on Tiro’s passport from 22 September 1958.
In the meantime, in opposition to the central government, Bereueh operated DI in the rural and forest areas of Aceh for three years. In April 1957, Bereueh made a peace agreement, called the Lamteh Pledge (*Ikrar Lamteh*), with the Indonesian government. On 16 May 1959, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Hardi, established the Special Region (*Daerah Istimewa*) of the Province of Aceh by law No. 1/Missi/1959, which allowed the government of Aceh to autonomously regulate the subjects of education, religion and culture (Prang 2010). The regulation officially worked according to Law No. 18/1965 (Djumala 2013). This was the first special autonomous status granted to Aceh to accommodate the separatist rebel movement of Bereueh. However, this special status did not change Aceh very much. Bereueh continued to fight against the central government for true recognition of the special status of Aceh.

The central government has regulated a special autonomy law or special political policy towards the Province of Aceh since the Old Order. The purpose of this special status regulation or policy was to allow more attention to be given to Aceh, recognising, in particular, that the Acehnese contributed significantly to the struggle of Indonesia against the Dutch during the revolutionary period, and in relation to the oil and gas exploration begun in the early 1970s. However, this special status of Aceh was more symbolic than anything else; at the time of the early Acehnese resistance against the central government, it was stated by Bereueh that the central government did not pay serious attention to the prosperity of Aceh, and that political and economic policies implemented towards Aceh were inconsistent.

Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia, headed by Bereueh, responded promptly to these inconsistencies. Suharto attempted to change the policy by providing a stronger role for the heads of villages to secure their territory. Aceh’s oil and gas exploration and exploitation, with its very limited advantages for Aceh, created new rebels under the banner of the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF), which later changed to the Free Aceh
Movement, initiated by Hasan Tiro. Development did not proceed effectively in Aceh, disrupted as it was by the conflicts, and Special Autonomy Law No. 44/1999 and Law No. 18/2001 were granted to Aceh in order to stop the spread of separatism after the New Order.

As soon as Indonesia declared its independence on 17 August 1945, Indonesian political leaders were challenged as to how to distribute political power between districts, provinces and the central government. The debates raised the question of whether the country was to be founded as a federal or a unitary state. Political leaders agreed to establish the unitary state of Indonesia. They introduced Law No. 1/1945, which was replaced by Law No. 22/1948 to make it more effective and applicable. The latter law failed to be implemented due to the Dutch government’s military pressure on Indonesian territory. Indonesia and the Dutch government signed a peace agreement in The Hague to establish a federal state of Indonesia under Law 1950, which delivered wider political powers of autonomy to Indonesian provinces and districts. However, this did not work due to the weakness of the new Indonesian government. Reid (2007) argued that Indonesians generally opposed federalism and favoured the notion of unitary states due to the challenges issuing from this very diverse and pluralistic society. Rebellions, ethnic conflicts and violence that killed thousands of people resulted from that choice. Aceh’s violent history describes the price of the diverse unitary state of Indonesia. Reid (2009: 95) argued that:

Aceh was a model of resistance to all ideas emanating from the Dutch in this contested period, including federalism, though in practice, the Acehnese had no need of federal safeguards, since they were fully in control of Aceh. Daud Beureu’eh’s 1953 rebellion was not to support an overtly independent Aceh, but an Indonesian Islamic State (NII), for which he believed Aceh had fought in the revolution.
Bereueh was appointed by all factions of NII/Darul Islam of Java, Aceh Sumatra and South Sulawesi as an *Imam* of DI in 1973 at the first meeting after the Old Order among all DIs in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta. Bereueh confirmed that the purpose of DI was to guide the morality of the Indonesian government. He warned those present: “do not be in a hurry to evaluate the government negatively. We have to look at the government’s positive efforts. What we have to do is give guidance to the government” (Solahudin 2011: 92).

Bereueh took his leadership of DI in a more radical direction when he gave his approval to violent attacks against the Indonesian government after a rise in the number of prostitutes surrounding the Arun Oil Company in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, was discovered in 1975. From 1973 to 1975, DI of Java had prepared *I’dad asykary* or military training (including bomb-making) and put in place recruitment to launch a violent attack against the central government. These forces supported the concerns of Bereueh on how to uphold Islamic *syari’ah* in order to prevent the rise of immorality in the new and growing town of Lhokseumawe.

To strengthen these operations, DI initiated fundraising from overseas, especially from the Middle East. DI searched for financial support from the government of Libya to launch this action. In September 1975, Bereueh asked his most trusted men, Hasan Tiro and Sanusi Juned, to arrange lobbying of the Libyan government in Kuala Lumpur. They proposed 12.5 billion US dollars for violent operations, which was refused by the Libyan government due to a lack of evidence of the need for such a fund (Solahudin 2011: 97). The moral considerations underlying the motives of Bereueh in the Aceh rebellion movement were later changed by Tiro to reflect concerns relating to the political and economic situation; additionally, the question of Aceh’s ethnic nationalist identity arose after the collapse of the New Order through the rise of ethnic conflicts in some regions of Indonesia (Bertrand 2004).
This change of focus transformed the movement into a more effective and militant operation against the Indonesian government.

Bereueh and Tiro’s rebel movements against the central government of Indonesia were partly the direct result of the ambiguity in policy on regional autonomy from the Sukarno period. When Tiro arrived in Aceh around 1976, he said that “the first order of things is to make the Achehnese opinion leaders understand in what political process our people and our country are involved; we are in the process of being swallowed by Javanese colonialists” (Tiro 1984: 10). Before launching the rebel movement against the central government, Tiro formulated an alternative structure of federal government in order to give enough space for the myriad varieties of ethnic groups in Indonesia. His book *Demokrasi untuk Indonesia* (Democracy to Indonesia) in 1958 explained his position on handling the ethnic diversity of Indonesia by establishing a federal state. Tiro’s proposal was in line with the ideas of Bereueh as to the autonomous region of Aceh with its special character of culture and adherence to the religion of Islam.

About fifty years after Indonesia withdrew his passport in 1958, Tiro returned to Aceh on 11 October 2008 for some two weeks. Then, from 17 October 2009, he stayed permanently in Aceh. He applied for Indonesian citizenship in 2009, but his application was approved only one day before he died on 3 June 2010 in Zainal Abidin Hospital in Banda Aceh. Tiro was buried next to the grave of his grandfather, Teungku Cik di Tiro, an Indonesian hero who fought against the colonial Dutch forces. From 1958 to 2010, Tiro was an American citizen. His wife Dora and his son Karim now live in Ohio (*Tempo*, 2 June 2010; Belford 2010; Kingsbury 2010).
After the New Order

After Suharto stepped down, the demand for decentralised power increased from all Indonesian regions. People expressed their demands in a variety of ways: firstly, some regions threatened to separate from Indonesia, particularly after the result of the referendum in Timor-Leste caused a rise in demand for a referendum in other regions, including Aceh, Papua, Riau, Maluku, South Sulawesi and Kalimantan (Lesperssi Team 2008; Bertrand 2004), all of which are not only rich in natural resources, but importantly have a strong sense of ethnicity. Secondly, in Maluku, Central Sulawesi, West and Central Kalimantan, these demands were expressed through violent riots and conflicts; thirdly, the voices of federalism began to be heard. In order to accommodate these strident expressions of identity and political will, the central government responded by creating laws that granted the decentralisation of power and wealth to regional districts.

Provincial political elites demanded special autonomy laws which accommodated the identity of local culture and higher revenue from natural resources managed in their provinces and districts. McGibbon (2004: 5) argued that the autonomy laws were the consequence of a timely political change: “fearing the disintegration of the state, the government hastily granted key concessions to provincial elites. The granting of these concessions did not follow from a systematic process of bargaining and negotiations with board-based elements in the provinces”. As a result of this fear, the policy was politicised and provincial and district elites took advantage of this. Corruption was almost uncontrolled in Aceh, especially before the 2005 Helsinki peace accord.

Miller’s argument is different from McGibbon’s. She doubted that regional autonomy can overcome separatist movements, saying that:
Jakarta’s inability to resolve Aceh’s conflict through its special autonomy package can be largely explained by three interrelated factors. First, within the Megawati administration, there was a high degree of ambivalence about decentralisation in general, and strong suspicion about the NAD law in particular. Second, this dominant attitude contributed toward the government’s greater reliance on militaristic measures than on political policies, which eroded and delegitimised the conciliatory spirit of the NAD law even as aspects of it were implemented in Aceh. Third, pre-existing systemic factors in Aceh such as the dysfunctional, war-ravaged state infrastructure and the inherent culture of corruption within the bureaucracy undermined the national government’s authority, political legitimacy and special autonomy policy objectives in the province (Miller 2004: 334).

Miller’s argument suggests that the special autonomy law released by President Megawati just continued the domination of the central government through a military approach and a corrupt local government which was managed by the central government in Aceh. The attempts at peace made by individuals and CSOs failed due to the corrupt local government and military pressure on human rights activists and combatant leaders. President Wahid’s peace initiatives are included in this challenge, as the military elite played a crucial role in maintaining conflicts in Aceh as well as Papua (McGibbon 2004).

Brancati argued that decentralisation successfully reduced the conflict and prevented separatism. Her claims were based on research of thirty democracies from 1985 to 2000. Brancati stated that “decentralization is thought to reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism in democracies by bringing the government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups control over their political, social and economic affairs” (Brancati 2006: 651–652). The study is relevant in terms of Indonesia; Haris held the view that local secessionist groups in Indonesia resulted from development policy which was
exploitative and marginalised the local community (Haris 2007: 67). The arguments of Brancati and Haris do not support the fact that decentralisation, as an instrument of conflict resolution, has failed to overcome some separatist conflicts. The key factor in the success or failure of measures to accommodate demands for greater autonomy lies in the fulfilment of the demands of the local community – the local community needs to be respected.

The rise of local nationalism gave rise to violence and increased conflict in some parts of Indonesia soon after Suharto resigned. This was the reason for the establishment of the regional autonomy laws – Law Number 22/1999 on local government and Law Number 25/1999 on the financial balance between central and local governments. Ethno-religious conflicts began in Maluku in January 1999 and at the same time religious conflicts also occurred in Poso, Central Sulawesi. The Maluku and Poso conflicts left more than five thousand people – both Christians and Muslims – dead and millions displaced. The conflicts ended after the Bali bombing in October 2002, with pressure from the international community for the Indonesian government to overcome the conflict.

There was a close relation between jihad in Maluku and Poso and the Bali bombing. Jihadists operating in both regions launched broader attacks against the Indonesian government (police and military) and any symbol of Western culture (Sholeh 2003, 2007). The returnees from the conflicts had become established as radical jihadists based in Java and

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3 The words ‘jihad’ and ‘jihadist’ refer to militia groups and members involved in the Maluku and Poso conflicts. There were at least two main jihadist groups. Firstly Laskar Jihad, also called Salafy-Jihadist, deployed more than 2000 members from Java to Maluku and Poso (Hasan 2006). From 2001 to 2002, it was estimated 3000–4000 Laskar Jihad militia members joined the operation. Secondly, radical jihadism refers to radical groups affiliated with Darul Islam and Jema’ah Islamiyah. They had operated in Maluku since January 1999 in the earlier stage of the conflict (Imron 2007). Their numbers were smaller than Laskar Jihad but they worked in a more deadly and effective manner. Many leaders of the group had gained experience in the Afghan war in the 1980s. This group endangered the harmony of Maluku and Poso due to its teaching on jihadism. They recruited local fighters who became violent and radical. The recruits who joined attack operations in Loki, West Ceram in 2005 killed a few of the Mobile Police Brigade. The commander of the jihad operation argued that the police were unintended targets. They had planned to attack the Christian village of Loki, which was protected by the police (Jaja 2013). Some Acehnese fighters also joined the conflict. Among them was Abu Jihad, alias Tengku Fauzi Hazdi Geudong, who was killed in Maluku. Abu Jihad published books critical of Hasan Tiro. Jones claimed that Abu Jihad was the Al-Qaidah leader in Southeast Asia (Jakarta Post, 3 April 2003).
influenced radicalism all over Indonesia, including an attempt to establish military training in Aceh in 2010 (Andriyanto & Hasan 2010). Ethnic conflict between Madurese and Dayak occurred in West Kalimantan in January 1997, when about 500 people were killed and 20,000 Madurese displaced (Bertrand 2004: 48).

The central government managed to control regional politics by establishing a new regional autonomy policy. Decentralisation laws released to accommodate the demands from provincial and districts for more freedom and opportunity to develop based on their strengths. Butt (2010: 178) stated that: “under decentralisation laws, authority was granted to two levels of regional government – provinces (propinsi) on the one hand, and districts (kabupaten) and cities (kota) on the other – to make their own policies and local laws”. Regional autonomy laws were established first in 1999 and changed in 2004. Furthermore, Butt (2010: 179) explained that:

Regional Autonomy [Law No. 22 of 1999] (Indonesia) gave both districts (kabupaten) and cities (kota), rather than provinces (propinsi), broad and wide-ranging lawmaking autonomy (otonomi yang luas), except over several matters reserved exclusively for the central government (art. 7). Other part of Indonesia were granted ‘Special Autonomy’ (otonomi khusus) status under separate legislation.

The 1999 regional autonomy statute was replaced by Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Governance. This ensured the central government regained power after the high levels of power and authority granted to districts and cities based on the 1999 regional autonomy laws. In Law No. 32/2004, the central government delivered power to provincial levels which represented the central government role in order to coordinate development in districts and cities. Governors were enabled to report directly to the president on the progress of regional economic development. The impact of the regional autonomy with economic and political
privileges for local elites was a rise in new districts and provinces being proposed to the central government. Indonesia had about 292 local governments (provinces, districts and cities) outside Jakarta in 1998. Three years after the 1999 regional autonomy law released, there were approximately 440 cities and districts in 2003. By 2009 there were 33 provinces and 484 districts and cities in Indonesia, almost double the numbers before the collapse of the New Order (Butt 2010). The increase in demand to establish new provinces, districts and cities were part of an effort to grow local politics.

The Acehnese responded differently to the people of Maluku, Poso and Kalimantan. They institutionalised their power by demanding justice and a referendum. Bertrand described it thus:

While in most of Indonesia, clamors for democracy accompanied the mantra of *reformasi* (reform), the Acehnese immediately focused on justice. Demonstrators demanded a withdrawal of soldiers from the region and investigations into human rights abuses committed by the armed forces over the past decade. Shortly after, a civilian movement began to demand a referendum on the future status of Aceh, with increasing evidence that a large proportion of the population supported independence (Bertrand 2004:174).

After the establishment of the New Order, Aceh had two special autonomy laws. Firstly, Law No. 44/1999, on the special status of Aceh was approved by the legislative members of the New Order before they were replaced by legislators appointed after the June 1999 elections. The law acknowledged the special status of the Acehnese in terms of religious life, customs, education and the role of Muslim priests in the determination of regional policy. However, it was not very significant. The Acehnese hoped for a clear development policy that directly improved their prosperity and security. In fact, the number of poor people in rural Aceh
increased in that year, in comparison with the figures for 2003 and 2004, by more than 30 percent. The ‘special status’ of Aceh had to overcome the rise in poverty in Aceh.

Two years later, the government released a new autonomy law, Law No. 18/2001 on Special Autonomy for Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD). In the second law, the funds granted to Aceh were much greater than the amount stipulated by the first law. Not only did it provide stronger authority to the Ulama, but it also paid more attention to economic development. Crouch (2003: 28) stated that “unlike the national laws, special autonomy in Aceh devolves authority to the provincial rather than the district level. The law provides for the return to the province of 80 per cent of petroleum and natural gas revenue under the national autonomy law”. Revenue was the most crucial factor demanded by the Acehnese for their development and prosperity. This is what Tiro wanted – to use the gains resulting from their natural resources for economic development for the people of Aceh. In addition, the law gave special authority for Aceh to self-regulate based on Islamic syari’ah. Crouch stated that “the law also provides for the establishment of a Syari’ah Court under which syari’ah would be implemented. It specifically states that syari’ah will not be applied to non-Muslims” (2003: 28).

These laws were not able to be implemented due to the security situation. Violent conflicts were common for the people, but the hardest impacts were on the people in the rural villages, who had to stay at home for fear of harm. They could not go out to their farming. Until the peace agreement was signed, the security control over Acehnese territory impacted very strongly on local security. Whatever laws are designed to ensure the pride, dignity and development of Aceh, if a lack of security and stability threatens the lives of civilians and the people of Aceh, then the laws are ineffective. The government failed to resume peace negotiations from 2000 to 2002. GAM refused the proposal of the Indonesian government delegation to create special autonomy status for Aceh. According to Nurdin Abdul Rahman,
one of the GAM negotiators: “HDC did not fulfil justice. It only stopped a fire or created a temporary break in the conflict. It did not work effectively because it did not state clearly the economic and social rights of the Acehnese, and how to treat Acehnese justly” (Rahman 2013).

The achievement of a lasting peace in the region needed a more powerful incentive to force both parties towards serious and effective negotiations. This came, unexpectedly, in the form of the earthquake and tsunami that struck Aceh on 26 December 2004. More than two hundred thousand people were killed. This catastrophic natural disaster forced GAM and Indonesia to achieve an effective result from their peace negotiations. The Indonesian government approached GAM in Aceh and Sweden. Finally, it was agreed that the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), headed by former Finnish president Ahtisaari, would moderate the peace process.

**Reintegration**

The Helsinki peace accord changed Aceh dramatically from a place of conflict to one of peace. What Bereueh and Tiro had worked towards – a special autonomy status that strongly featured the dignity and prosperity of Aceh – was a central discussion point at the negotiating table. Former combatants who had fought against the government were now allowed to return to Aceh. Under the agreement, they received amnesty and the right to establish local political parties. To implement the MoU established in Helsinki, the points of the MoU were to be transferred into regional law. The preparation of the law was supported by academics and CSOs in Aceh. It was probably the most pluralistic draft bill ever produced from all members of the Acehnese community, local government and civil society. The draft was sent to Jakarta and discussed by the national legislature. The law that resulted was titled the Law on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA) Number 11/2006.
Human rights NGOs criticised any members of the national legislature who did not accommodate the aspirations of Aceh. According to Fuad Mardhatillah, human rights activist and now head of the Aceh Institute, “there are four versions of the draft from Syiah Kuala University, State Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Malikussaleh and the Free Aceh Movement. The national legislature disregarded the drafts” (Mardhadillah 2013). The participatory process of legislation of the LoGA, involving all stakeholders in Aceh, indicates a sense of belonging in relation to the law. It will impact on further legislation, which will involve public consultancy, a mechanism by which members of the public are allowed to present their opinions and thoughts on legislation and other government policy initiated by the Aceh legislature (Meliala et al. 2007).

The key word of the accord is “self-governance”, which is interpreted in the LoGA as “special autonomy”, even though the phrase ‘special autonomy’ was taboo during the Helsinkidiscussions. GAM considered that accepting ‘special autonomy’ status would bring similar outcomes to those of the previous laws on the special autonomy of Aceh formulated in 1999 and 2001. However, Rahman argued that “‘self-governance’ is synonymous with ‘special autonomy,’ which we adopted from the statutes of Hong Kong, China following by a principle of justice for Acehnese society on politics, economy, law, education and culture” (Rahman 2012).

Furthermore, some Acehnese responded negatively to the transformation of the MoU into the LoGA, one criticism being that there was a reduction of some of the contents. Rahman conceded that there was some downsizing of the original draft but recommended a conciliatory approach: “there are six points of the MoU not accommodated in the LoGA. However, let the LoGA be implemented. It is part of the process of mutual trust development between central and local government. After the trust, the possibility of the amendment of the law will be easy” (Rahman 2012).
However, it has now been almost ten years since the LoGA was implemented and the promise of amendment stated by the national legislature has never been fulfilled. The Acehnese demanded that the LoGA should genuinely reflect the Helsinki MoU as agreed by both parties during the 2005 negotiation. GAM transformed itself to reintegrate with the state of Indonesia; as a reward, Indonesia had to fulfil its promise to thoroughly implement the agreement for the prosperity, dignity and peace of Aceh (Abdullah 2015). The demands of the Helsinki MoU have become crucial issues that were stated by candidates of the political parties, especially by the Party Aceh and Aceh National parties, in the elections of 2012 and 2014. CSOs are also concerned over this issue, which should be well understood by the central government and the national legislature. To highlight the critical issues stated in the LoGA, the following discussion underlines the need for further recommendations for implementation and amendment.

Among the critical points needing to be kept centre stage for the implementation of regional autonomy are:

1. the matter relating to the raising of funds with external loans—In the section of the LoGA relating to economic matters (Article 186.1), this requires “the agreement of the Minister of Finance and the considerations of the Ministry of Home Affairs to raise funds with external loans”. This is very different to the provisions of the MoU (Article 1.3.1.), which state “Aceh has the right to raise funds with external loans. Aceh has the right to set interest rates beyond that set by the Central Bank of the Republic of Indonesia” (CMI 2012: 17). This proviso includes revenues from all current and future hydrocarbon deposits and other natural resources in Aceh, where the Acehnese are entitled to retain seventy (70) per cent as stated in the MoU (Article 1.3.4). However, the LoGA regulations (Article 165.3) require Aceh to follow national norms, standards and procedures.
2. the matter relating to retention of revenue share—The LoGA (Article …) states that “Aceh does not retain its revenue share of 70%, but all revenues are transferred to the central government, which reallocates funds to Aceh. The Second MoU signatory is concerned about a possible lack of transparency” (CMI 2012: 18).

Further strategic reintegration processes included the distribution of economic facilitation packages to former GAM combatants and amnesty for prisoners. Victims of Aceh’s thirty-year conflict were also eligible for financial support. The Aceh Monitoring Mission reported that “throughout Aceh, local governments have distributed economic facilitation packages to 3,000 former GAM combatants… Each package consisted of one million Rupiah (approximately US$100) for each GAM former combatant. These packages are granted in order to assist former combatants’ safe return to their society” (AMM 2005).

Financial support was very urgent for former combatant returnees, who needed to immediately begin the re-establishment of their lives and their contribution to the wellbeing of their family. However, it was less than sufficient that each combatant received US $100; moreover, the actual number of combatants on the ground was about 100 percent more than the number reported at the negotiations. The number of 3000 was only a strategy of the GAM negotiator in anticipation of an attack by the Indonesian military, like what happened in 2002 after the peace negotiations in Tokyo under the supervision of the HDC. This was one of the hardest challenges for combatants – to return with a limited budget (Djuli 2013; Rahman 2012).

In order to fulfil the demand, the Aceh Reintegration Peace Board (BRDA/BRA) managed to provide limited funds to those combatants who did not receive enough funds on their return. Nur Djuli, former head of the BRDA and one of the official representatives of GAM during
the Helsinki peace agreement, confirmed that the program of the BDRA/BRA was focused on supporting the combatants and other victims (Djuli 2013).

**Patronage and Corruption**

Regional autonomy was also challenged by the high incidence of corruption and patronage. During the conflict, Aceh had a reputation as one of the most corrupt provinces in Indonesia. Extortion from conflicting parties was one of the most popular means of corruption (Multi-Stakeholder 2009). After the conflict, that reputation continued. In 2010, Banda Aceh was listed as one of the ten worst cities in the Corruption Perception Index, having decreased sharply from number 3 in 2008 to number 33 in 2010 (Simanjuntak, Digidowieiso & Saputro 2010: 18).

The Multi-Stakeholder of the Coordinating Ministry for Politics, Legal and Security Affairs, National Development Planning Agency and the Aceh Peace-Reintegration Board reported that:

> Several early attempts to distribute post-conflict reintegration assistance were widely criticised as disproportionately benefiting KPA or PETA allies. However, serious attempts to investigate allegations of such corruption or misdirection of funds have been conspicuously lacking. This situation has improved considerably as BRA has improved its capacity to verify claims and monitor implementation. However, the continued focus on providing direct reintegration benefits or compensation continues to create opportunities for patronage and pay-offs, while also creating expectations and feelings of entitlement that such programs can never completely appease (Multi-Stakeholder 2009: 154).

The Multi-Stakeholder’s report on allegations of corruption or misdirection of funds originally targeted the mismanagement of reintegration, which was intended to share funds
between combatants and militia members. This system created a weakness in the policy due to the understanding that “integration is identical to the programs of providing funds from central government to some groups … [it is called] an integration charity – or economic base integration” (Basyar 2008: 101). Basyar (2008) argued that most funds delivered to the groups were for short-term consumption and it was rare that funds were given to develop the economy or establish local industries to provide more jobs for Acehnese. The high dependence of the Acehnese on funds from the central government continues with the current government.

**Economic Development**

Ten years after the Helsinki peace accord, Aceh is still lagging behind many of the other provinces in terms of economic and social development. By 2012, Aceh had the sixth highest poverty rate among Indonesia’s 33 provinces and ranked number 17 in terms of its Human Development Index (HDI) (CMI 2012). In fact, Aceh had been granted the benefits of special autonomy funds to fill the economic development gaps in its cities and districts. Under the national budget, Aceh is entitled to 2% of the general grant allocation budget (*Dana Alokasi Umum* DAU) for 5 years and 1% for an additional period of 15 years, based on its special share of oil and gas revenues. It was estimated that from 2008 to 2027 more than 10 billion US$ would be contributed to the provincial budget (CMI 2012). This fund would generate economic growth and development across Aceh with the active participation of the Acehnese community. However, what concerns foreign investors who plan to come to invest in Aceh is the threat to security.

In some post-conflict regions, economic growth is hard to establish. Security and stability are among the crucial factors considered before business leaders will invest. It takes serious, willing and strong leadership of the post-conflict government to invite investors and
guarantee their assets in the region. Governor Zaini Abdullah confirmed that national and foreign investors are still reluctant to come to Aceh due to security factors (*Antara, August 2014*). Singaporean Ambassador Anil Kumar Nayar, who visited Aceh in August 2014, said that Singaporean investors wait for stability and security before they invest. For them, investment insurance from the government and political stability are urgent (Joni 2014).

The economic growth of Aceh decreased sharply after the collapse of the New Order, then it increased slowly after the Helsinki peace agreement. The GDP of Aceh in 2004, 2005 and 2006 was −9.6, −10.1 and 1.6 respectively (World Bank 2009). In the last three years from 2012 to 2014, this has decreased significantly. The economic growth of Aceh without oil has been reported as 6.09% (2012), 5.45% (2013) and 4.82% (2014), while the economic growth of Aceh with oil is 5.21% (2012), 4.18% (2013) and 2.71% (2014) (Statistics Aceh 2014).

Professor Raja Masbar, former Dean of Economics of Syiah Kuala University, Aceh, argued that the economy of Aceh is sick. Two crucial factors influence the stagnation in economic growth in Aceh: firstly, the Acehnese economy is mainly dependent on its primary sectors, namely agriculture and mining; secondly, there is a lack of service and production industry sectors in Aceh (*Serambi Indonesia, 1 May 2013*).

Facilitated by the Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicate and the Center of Reform on Economics (CORE), Governor Zaini Abdullah presented at a business forum entitled “Go West, Invest in Aceh” on 15 April 2014 in Jakarta. Abdullah invited potential investors to invest in Aceh, which has abundant natural resources, especially in the sectors of agriculture, mining, rubber and palm oil, including processing and packaging facilities for coffee and cocoa, and a potential rubber and palm oil processing site. Foreign direct investment is growing in Aceh. According to data from the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), foreign direct investment in Aceh reached US$94.2 million in 2013 and $172.3 million in 2012,
versus $22.5 million in 2011 and $4.6 million in 2010. To boost the investment, Abdullah said: “We are prepared to facilitate potential investors, streamline investment licensing process and provide fiscal and non-fiscal incentives” (*Jakarta Post*, 16 April 2014).

**Managing Divided Society**

Regional autonomy in Aceh also faces the threat of disintegration. A feeling of discrimination against non-combatant groups has created frictions. Moreover, various ethnic groups with spoken language differences raise a challenge as to how local government can maintain the unity and integrity of Aceh. Guelke (2012) argued that languages are among the reasons that people of some regions propose to separate or have special autonomy status or self-governance. The people of Gayo Luwes speak the Gayo language and preserve their own distinct ethnic traditions, which are different from mainstream Acehnese culture. Guelke stated that “as in the case of some of the conflicts involving religion, language may be seen simply as a marker of ethnic difference and the situation characterized as an ethnic conflict” (Guelke 2012: 18). A critique of the Wali Nanggrooe requirement to be able to speak the Acehnese language came from the Gayo people, who do not speak Acehnese. Their request to separate from Aceh province has been made repeatedly since 2000.

However, their proposal tends to be political rather than a genuine attempt to separate due to pressure from the grassroots. Many academics, students and elite in Gayo Luwes also speak Acehnese. The language is a medium of communication among people in Aceh. In official meetings among ethnic groups in Aceh, people speak at least two languages – Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesi) and Acehnese. Both these languages present a strategic means for unity in the diversity of ethnicity in Aceh. In addition, the area of Aceh Tengah and Gayo Luwes is a major economic resource in Aceh, especially from commodities such as agriculture and coffee.
To handle the diversity of ethnicities in Aceh, the local government has to treat all parties and groups equitably. It is commonly felt among people in Aceh that the current government gives preferential treatment to development policy especially for former combatants. Reintegration programs were developed as soon as the MoU from Helsinki was implemented from September 2005, monitored by foreign states and international agencies. Billions of dollars were invested to ensure the smooth transition of the reintegration. This sort of treatment created dependence in some of the former combatants, who wish to continue to enjoy these advantages. To them, the funding is a reward for their struggle of more than thirty years against the Indonesian government.

As a response to this, the former militia group *Pembela Tanah Air* (PETA) has retained its movement, predominantly in Central Aceh. PETA was a militia established by pro-nationalists facilitated by the military forces during the conflict to fight against GAM. The friction between the militia and combatants continues. Sofyan, the head of PETA, argued that the group was founded to defend people’s territory against threats from GAM, which frequently attacked the community in Central Aceh (Sofyan 2012). According to Djuli, given the problem of the ethics of political leadership, which tends to favour a small circle or group and does not protect the Acehnese people overall, the reintegration of former militia and combatants creates problems. The ongoing friction between combatants and the militia will challenge further initiatives towards permanent peace, which will need the total participation of all parties and people in Aceh (Djuli 2014a).

This includes the aspiration for two new provinces, Aceh Leuser Antara (ALAS) and Aceh Barat Selatan (ABAS), proposed by the people in Central Aceh. It is true that some new provinces established after the New Order came from the political aspirations of leaders and people who regard themselves as distinct in terms of ethnicity and economic development. They were different from most Acehnese in terms of history, political identity and culture,
and were discriminated against by the regional government in Aceh in terms of economic development (*Serambi Indonesia*, 6 November 2014). The new province of Gorontalo, for example, was established due to its special ethnic and religious character, which is different from that of North Sulawesi. Gorontalo is predominantly Muslim and North Sulawesi is predominantly Christian. Menado, as the capital city of North Sulawesi, is too far away to be reached by the people of Gorontalo, which is closer to the border of Central Sulawesi.

The idea for the new provinces of ALAS and ABAS came from the ethnic distinctiveness in terms of language, culture and economic development. Infrastructure in Central Aceh is lagging behind infrastructure in North and East Aceh. The idea is that ALAS and ABAS provinces will comprise two areas: ABAS is the area of Aceh Jaya, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Barat, Aceh Selatan and Simeulue, while ALAS is the area of Aceh Tengah, Gayo Lues, Bener Meriah, Aceh Tenggara, Kota Subuluassalam and Aceh Singkil. To overcome this idea of separatism, the regional government of Aceh has provided a special autonomous region fund from 2012 to 2014 of about 5 billion rupiah for developing roads and bridges across Central Aceh (*Serambi Indonesia*, 6 November 2014). However, special autonomous funds which have been forthcoming since the fall of the New Order already provided for them quite well despite the rise of expressions of separatism.

The experience of Aceh and other provinces, districts and cities in Indonesia in managing local government has grown, and along with it the problems of budgeting to increase economic development and encourage local people to be more productive and prosperous. However, there is still a lot of corruption and mismanagement by local government. Direct elections have given the opportunity to popular leaders in the local area to lead government. Unfortunately, some of them do not have enough experience in managing politics and bureaucracy.
The mismanagement of government budgets allocated to local economic development was responded by Law No. 23/2014, which regulated new relations between local and central governments. Robert Endi Jaweng (2014), director of Regional Autonomy Watch (KPPOD), claimed that:

For 13 years relations between the central and regional governments have been tumultuous. The central government appeared weak, having only three instruments for controlling the regions: fiscal instruments, determining civil servant formations and general authority such as cancellation of local regulations. Only in fiscal matters do local administrations seem obedient and disciplined enough to meet prerequisites and submit all reports required by the central government. Responding to the abnormal situation to date, Law No. 23/2014 introduces a number of measures aimed at correcting and rearranging decentralization so that governance of the public sector becomes more effective in the future.

In addition, Law No. 23/2014 strengthens the role of the governor in the provinces as a representative of the central government. This law is a response of criticism that Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 32/2004 gave weak authority to governors to evaluate, manage and coordinate districts and cities. The communication between central and local government was a key part of this regulation. Transparency and open communication, as well as a clear national policy direction, according to Jaweng (2014), is “the key to future policy synchronization. Political divisions at the national and local levels have clearly affected the regions. Leadership communication and policy direction are the key to unlocking the political blockage”. The weak communication between Aceh and Jakarta has also become a problem. Aceh political elites demanded the total implementation of the UUPA, but the central government did not approve their demands. Among the pending matters in relation to regional autonomy are the management of natural resources, especially oil and gas, foreign
investment and the status of Sabang island as an international seaport to facilitate international businesspeople.

Governor Abdullah said that the central government should finish drafting the regulations on the joint management of natural resources and natural gas, and the presidential decree on the handing over of the National Land Agency regional office to the Aceh provincial administration. Djohermansyah Djohan, the Home Ministry’s regional autonomy director-general, responded that all drafts of the government regulations and presidential decrees had been compiled in 2010, but they had to be shelved due to the rising political tension surrounding the gubernatorial elections (Jakarta Post, 9 August 2014). Abdullah warned that “central government needed to immediately draft the regulations or disappointment among the Aceh people could lead to further conflict between the central government and the people of Aceh” (Jakarta Post, 9 August 2014).

It seems that miscommunication between central government and Aceh government is part of the legacy of three decades of conflict. The Aceh government believes that the regulations they proposed cover the rights of Aceh to gain maximum advantages to resources, as stated in the Helsinki peace accord. On the other hand, the central government looks at the limited capacity of the Aceh government to implement these regulations. For example, the local government established a public company in order to cooperate with foreign investors to operate strategic projects in Aceh. Daud shared his experience in leading this local government company; he said that the Aceh government-owned company (Perusahaan Daerah Pembangunan Aceh, PDPA) attempted to incorporate a joint venture company as part of a local government partnership with an international company under the 2005 Helsinki MoU. Daud said that the local government did not provide financial support for the early establishment of the company, which is a basic requirement in running a company for staff payment, administration, etc. Daud believed that there are a lot of potential investment
projects in energy resources, agriculture and the food industry (Daud 2014). John Towner, Triangle Executive Chairman based in Perth, Australia, said that “Triangle will be the first foreign company to form a Joint Venture with the Acehnese Government to manage an oil and gas field and we look forward to working closely with PDPA. Triangle has been successfully operating the Pase Field since 2009” (Triangle Energy 2013).

A further challenge for regional autonomy in Aceh is the regulation of Islamic *shariah* law such as *qanun jinayat* (criminal law). Soerono (2014) said that “the application of the law therefore presents risks for business and investment. The law may not have provisions directly to business operations such as the confiscation of assets, but it does have a significant indirect effect on businesspeople”.

**Conclusion**

Brancati (2006) argued that regional autonomy has been a pivotal policy in reducing most separatist conflicts. The policy is also an effective instrument for solving ethnic conflicts (Bertrand 2004). Brancati’s and Bertrand’s arguments are in line with how the Indonesian Government has dealt with regional conflicts from the early period of independence to the post-Suharto period. Aceh has an exceptional history of conflict and regional autonomy. Even so, the Acehnese are not satisfied with the current implementation of the policy of regional autonomy, which, some argue, has been reduced from the conditions set out by the Helsinki peace accord (Abdullah 2015; Djuli 2013).

Regional autonomy is a strategic means to overcome conflicts in Aceh. It has been implemented differently since early independence. During the Old Order and the New Order, regional autonomy was very limited and the government handled the Acehnese using a military approach. After the fall of Suharto, the Acehnese demanded a referendum inspired by the referendum in Timor-Leste. The government responded with the establishment of laws
created in 1999 and 2001. Given the pressure of military operations against the people of Aceh, these laws are clearly not working effectively. The change was very clear after both GAM and the Republic of Indonesia signed the MoU for permanent peace in Aceh.

The reintegration of combatants has faced some challenges. Firstly, the number of combatants was not reported based on actual numbers. This had implications for the funds received. It has taken longer to integrate them due to the limited budget devoted to this operation. The BRDA/BRA helped bridge the gap, but this was only temporary. Secondly, the learning capacity of former combatants needs a broader and more specialised education system. Some leaders established schools and training designed especially for former combatants.

In addition, the transformation of the MoU into the UUPA created a lot of gaps. Some crucial points of the MoU were not accommodated within the UUPA. As stated by Rahman (2012), mutual understanding and trust between central and local governments need to develop in order to monitor the process of implementation of the LoGA; this is seen as necessary in order to do justice to the spirit of the regional autonomy law with, at its centre, the principle of justice for Acehnese society in terms of politics, the economy, law, education and culture.

Regional autonomy is also challenged by the demand from Central Aceh for the establishment of two new provinces, ALAS and ABAS, which has been responded to rather late by the local government in providing a new government policy to support infrastructure development across Central Aceh. Another strategy is the recent importance given to communication and the building of mutual trust and understanding between the local government, which is dominated by former combatant leaders, and the people of Central Aceh. An inclusive approach and policy from both local government and members of the Aceh legislature will open the minds and hearts of the people, not only in Central Aceh, but
also in other parts of Aceh that have been discriminated against in government policy decisions since the period of the New Order.
Chapter 5

The Contribution of the EU and ASEAN to the Transition of Peace in Aceh

“Despite the many challenges, even the most intractable conflicts can be resolved if the parties involved and the international community join forces and work together”

(Martti Ahtisaari 2008).

“You cannot play ball and be the referee at the same time”


Introduction

Indonesia has reached a new phase of nationalism. The expression of local communities in a variety of Indonesian regions is accommodated by the implementation of Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 32/2004 on regional autonomy. The policy of regional autonomy was first launched in 1999 after the collapse of the New Order, and gained both critics and supporters after a period of implementation. The laws that encouraged regional autonomy were implemented by President B.J. Habibie because of regional and national factors like ethnic conflict, religious conflict and political friction. The laws were also designed to overcome the expressions of separatism that had increased in Aceh and Papua. After the New Order, the central government attempted to overcome separatist conflicts in Aceh and Papua by establishing special autonomy laws such as Law No. 18/2001 on special autonomy in Aceh. However, the separatist movement in Aceh continued until the signing of the Helsinki peace
accord in August 2005, which led to the new special autonomy Law No. 11/2006 (Law on Governing Aceh).

After political friction arose between Habibie and the military elites, a team chaired by Ryaas Rasyid tried to control national politics by managing a balance of power between the central and regional governments. Decentralisation is designed to prevent further conflicts and separatist expressions. Mietzner stated that “faced with the threat of territorial disintegration, the Indonesian elite turned to decentralization. First designed in 1999 and implemented since 2001, decentralization transformed Indonesia from one of the most centralist nations in the world into a polity with near-federal structures” (Mietzner 2014: 45–46). The decentralisation process was strengthened by the Helsinki peace agreement between GAM and the Government of Indonesia.

As part of the agreement, the combatants of GAM were allowed and encouraged to participate in political and economic development in Aceh. This began during the gubernatorial elections in 2006, which were attended by most Acehnese. This celebration of freedom of expression allowed the leaders of Aceh, including former GAM members and an independent candidate who was the governor and a former GAM spokesperson, to gain a majority of the votes. As stated by Galtung (1995: 4), a peace process is preserved by “the balance of power”. The GAM-led leadership was welcomed by the Acehnese after more than 30 years under the pressure of the Indonesian military and authoritarian New Order regime.

The 2006 gubernatorial elections in Aceh were a historical moment for the commitment of GAM and the Indonesian Government to implement peacebuilding and economic development in the region. Democracy and the political participation of the Acehnese in choosing their leadership changed the status of Aceh from a conflicted region to a peaceful
one. Its special autonomy accommodated the local political identity of groups in Aceh, which are different from parties at the national level.

Therefore, a study of the role of the EU and the European community in relation to peace and stability in Aceh is crucial. The initiative for peace negotiations began in 2004 just before the tsunami, which then became a catalyst for the ratification of the agreement supported by peace activists in Europe, especially under the NGO organised by Martti Ahtisaari in 2008. During the period of implementation of the peace agreement, within the context of regional autonomy and peacebuilding, the 2006 gubernatorial elections and the 2009 general elections are very significant to understanding of the dynamics of Aceh after the peace agreement when GAM was integrated into the Republic of Indonesia. The 2006 election period was a historical moment for enabling the role of the Acehnese in developing their own local politics and economy. It served as a foundation for the elections of 2009, when the Acehnese were able to develop local parties beside national party (Law No. 11/2006). Acehnese leaders could then compete with each other to work for the support of the Acehnese to vote for them in the 2009 elections. The awareness of the Acehnese leaders and the people of the importance of peace and stability for Aceh has strengthened the process of democracy.

The integration of GAM into the Republic of Indonesia under the Helsinki peace agreement was arguably one of the greatest historical moments for the cessation of conflict in the world. The peace process involved states and international organisations, especially the EU and ASEAN, which initiated communication between the leaders and combatants of GAM and the Government of Indonesia (GoI), as well as monitoring the implementation of the peace accord.
Therefore, the dynamics of politics, peace and security in the province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) is a top priority of the international community as part of its responsibility to preserve reconciliation and peace, which it has endorsed since the early peace initiatives. Husain (2007) and Kingsbury (2006) wrote about their personal experiences in supporting peace from very early days. Both agreed that the EU was pivotal in mediating between the parties and they both endorsed the peace agreement.

This chapter explores the theories of international relations and development studies. Aceh peace mediation and the international monitoring of the reintegration of combatants attracted both realists and liberals in post-tsunami and post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding, mediation, reintegration, stability and development. In addition, the chapter examines Galtung’s theories on ‘the balance of power’ and ‘the rule of law’ as two paradigms of peace through which to analyse the peace agreement and its implementation in Aceh. It analyses how the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) worked, as well as the prospects for peace and democracy in Aceh since the 2006 elections.

This chapter also attempts to answer some basic questions as to how the Aceh peace initiatives are related to European policies for global stability and the integrity of such policies, and whether the model of peace in Aceh could suit other conflicted regions of the world. Power-sharing, as part of any peace principle, has been established in the local government and politics of democratic Aceh; this concept needs to be analysed to predict the future of peace in the region. This chapter is based on qualitative research through the study of documents on Aceh and other written sources.

**Non-interference and Peacebuilding**

Acharya (2001) is critical of the doctrine of non-interference of ASEAN. He argues that “the salience of the doctrine of non-interference in Southeast Asia has long predated ASEAN …
the sources and exceptional salience of this principle have to be understood, however, in the context of the grouping’s search for internal stability and regime security” (Acharya 2001: 57). The principle of non-interference aims to prevent clashes between states in Southeast Asia. The war between Indonesia and Malaysia (1963–66), before the foundation of ASEAN in 1967, was the last regional conflict. Non-interference has been considered an effective norm or as “a cardinal principle of regional order (underpinning) a sub-regional reconciliation mechanism, or even the creation of a regional identity” (Jones 2012: 39). Like Acharya, Jones also criticised the ambiguity of the non-interference principle, which has not been followed by ASEAN members with regard to some cases of conflict such as those between Vietnam and Cambodia, and Indonesia and East Timor in the 1970s, and in ASEAN’s approach to Myanmar.

In addition, Kivimäki, who is concerned with the EU’s and ASEAN’s roles in peace mediation and the reintegration of GAM in Aceh, argued that “the strict interpretation of non-interference has made it difficult for other states or other external actors to offer good services mediation or arbitration in conflicts where the government of an East Asian country is a conflicting party” (Kivimäki 2014: 132). The peace accords in Aceh and the southern Philippines are important lessons learned by Southeast Asian countries ready to build a strong Southeast Asian peacekeeping force. Indonesia in 2004 proposed the formation of such a force. However, ASEAN leaders responded differently to the idea of this peacekeeping force. Some worried about the intervention of such a force.

The initiatives of the EU and ASEAN that are facilitating mediation and post-conflict transition are crucial elements of peace creation. According to Beer (1990):

Two major branches of peace theory, defined in this normative way, concentrate in turn on war reduction and peace creation. The first branch –
war reduction – accepts the international system as given and tries to alleviate its most extreme dangers by reducing and limiting war (p. 15).

The lessons of peace in Aceh, as well as in other places in Southeast Asia, are crucial resources for the development of international relations theory. They provide a genuine contribution to non-Western international relations; as Acharya and Buzan (2010) claimed, IR theory has grown in non-Western countries based on their historical conflict prevention, peace negotiations and international diplomacy for creating a stable region.

**EU and ASEAN for Peace**

The EU is one of several international entities supporting peace, stability and democracy in Aceh. The initiative for peace has been facilitated by many organisations and countries. One of the most significant moments was in 2004 when Jusuf Kalla – the Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare and later Vice-President of Indonesia – started serious peace negotiations after an unsuccessful agreement in the previous period. The Henry Dunant Center (HDC) initially attempted to mediate between RI and GAM in 2000. It arranged an agreement for temporary peace through the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in December 2000.

The peace discussion was discontinued after the Indonesian Government ordered GAM leaders and members to surrender and imprisoned some of them in May 2003. Among the peace negotiators arrested by Indonesian authorities when they were on their way to Banda Aceh airport for the peace talks in Tokyo in May 2003 were Nashiruddin bin Ahmed, Amni bin Ahmad Marzuki, Muhammad Usman Lampoh Awe, Kamaruzzaman and Sofyan Ibrahim. They were released after the Helsinki peace accord was signed, but Sofyan Ibrahim died in prison during the tsunami (Kingsbury 2006: 25; Husein 2007: 20). The order to arrest them
disappointed the GAM leaders and they decided to stop the discussions; they considered that the government had betrayed the agreement (Aspinall & Crouch 2003; Nurhasim 2008: 113).

On the role of the EU and ASEAN, Ahtisaari stated during a speech at a conference in Jakarta:

The EU and the five participating ASEAN countries have put their full political weight behind the implementation of the peace agreement. Once a peace agreement has been reached, it is crucial to be able to deploy quickly. The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) filled a potentially harmful vacuum through its one-month Initial Monitoring Presence phase. The mission has since gained the confidence of both the parties and civil society through its neutrality and transparency (Ahtisaari 2006).

Speaking on the process of preserving peace and stability in Aceh, Ahtisaari continued to endorse the support of European and other international communities for the sustainability of peaceful democracy and economic development in Aceh. To ensure the continuation of the EU’s support for peace and stability in the world, he argued that “if the EU wishes to be a major player in world affairs, it needs to work in cooperation with all institutions, governments and non-governmental actors concerned. I believe this principle should be one of the beacons guiding EU external action” (Ahtisaari 2006[1]).

The role of the international community in rebuilding Aceh after the 2004 tsunami has been an early contributor to peace as well. There are two important organisations from Europe involved in the peace process and its implementation — the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM).

The CMI is a CSO based in Helsinki, Finland, which promotes sustainable security. It was founded in 2000 by former president Martti Ahtisaari, who is the chairman of the organisation. Besides managing peace and reconciliation in Aceh, the CMI has resolved
conflicts in Namibia (Africa), Kosovo and other places. Ahtisaari’s character and experience have been very influential in mediating conflicting parties. Kingsbury described Ahtisaari as “bluff even by conventional Finnish standards of directness, (who) on occasions betrayed the slightly paternalistic qualities of his original occupation as a school teacher” (Kingsbury 2006: 16). Ahtisaari’s personality has helped him to solve problems and mediate in many places. He combines informal diplomacy through the CMI with formal diplomacy between states, as he is a former president of Finland. In the peace process between GAM and GoI, the Finnish Government supported the funding through the CMI (Kingsbury 2006: 17). In the implementation of the agreement, the role of the EU in a broader sense was endorsed by the Finnish Government, as Finland is an EU member.

Ahtisaari described the role of the CMI in the peace agreement and implementation as follows:

The CMI has of course been closely following the implementation of the accord to be able to assist in dispute settlement, if needed. I am happy to say that the parties, with the help of the Aceh Monitoring Mission, have been able to settle differences at the lower tiers of the dispute settlement mechanism, which is how it was always intended (Ahtisaari 2006 [1]).

Compared to the HDC, the CMI was in a better position and enjoyed a higher level of trust after the peace agreement. It successfully mediated the peace negotiation and engaged with other partners from states and international CSOs to support political transition and economic development in Aceh.

The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) is an EU monitoring mission in Aceh established by the EU under the Council for Joint Action 2005/643/CFSP on 9 September 2005 and launched on 15 September 2005. ASEAN members, especially Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei,
Singapore and the Philippines, as well as Norway and Switzerland, joined with the EU to reconstruct Aceh.

The process of peace resulted from a new breakthrough in the separatist conflict, as stated in a seminar at the University of Syiah Kuala on 21 September 2006 entitled ‘The Aceh Model of Resolving Conflict as an Alternative Conflict Resolution Model for Other Territories’. The approach to ending conflict in Aceh and the integration of GAM into the Republic of Indonesia provide an alternative method for other conflict regions (Husein 2007: 2). This model of peace has inspired other peace mediators to end conflicts in many regions; among these are conflicts in southern Thailand and the southern Philippines. The Thai and Philippine governments have consulted with Indonesian authorities on how minority Muslims in their regions can integrate peacefully.

A representative of the Thai army who was involved in a peace-monitoring mission team in Aceh stated that the Thai government is learning in detail how the peace process in Aceh can be adapted to solve the conflict in southern Thailand (Sholeh 2007). The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) and the army elites of Thailand consider the integration of Aceh into Indonesia is the right model for how Malay Muslims in five provinces in the south of Thailand (Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani, Satun and Songkla) could be integrated to create national unity.

What is the role of ASEAN? In a report published by the ASEAN Secretariat, it was stated that the establishment of peace in Aceh was closely related to the recovery and rehabilitation of tsunami victims. Support for GAM integration was one aspect of humanitarian aid after the tsunami. ASEAN then became involved with the EU in the AMM in the process of disarmament and rehabilitation of former GAM combatants both inside and outside of prison. This included combatants returning to their home territories and their direct involvement in
local politics. This was one of the important elements for ASEAN in preserving regional stability.

Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, stated:

The EU encouraged the efforts for peace in Aceh from day one by providing political and financial support for the negotiations in Helsinki that led to the signing of the peace agreement. However, without the political vision of the Indonesian Government and of GAM, who respected the undertakings given in Helsinki from the beginning, and the support of the people of Aceh, the AMM would not have been possible. The EU will continue to stand by the people of Aceh in the ongoing peace and reconciliation process (Solana 2006).

The governments of the United States, Australia and New Zealand also joined Europe and the countries of ASEAN in supporting peace in Aceh. Donor agencies such as USAID, AusAID and NZAID assisted CSOs and the Aceh government as part of their commitments to reconciliation and peaceful democracy in Aceh. The participation of GAM combatants in local democracy is a very interesting phenomenon which raises the question as to how democracy can be a strategic instrument in achieving peace and reconciliation.

Reintegration of GAM

The reintegration covered many groups of Acehnese; central in this process were those related to GAM combatants. In a study by the World Bank on the integration of GAM, it was revealed that the members were divided into three groups (World Bank 2006: 4). Firstly, there were political prisoners who needed to receive amnesty as part of the agreement between GAM and GoI. Secondly, there were the active combatants of GAM called the Tentara Nasional Aceh (TNA) from inside and outside Aceh. Thirdly, there were the non-active
combatants, GAM police and civilians, who had trained GAM combatants. This group took the role of GAM intelligence officers during the conflicts.

Article 3 of the MoU on Amnesty and Integration into Society stated that:

The Indonesian government will, in accordance with the constitutional procedures, grant amnesty to all persons who have participated in GAM activities... Political prisoners and detainees held due to the conflict will be released unconditionally as soon as possible and not later than within 15 days of the signature of this MoU (Kingsbury 2006: 203).

The release of prisoners occurred on Indonesian Independence Day, 17 August 2005. By the end of August, the prisoners released numbered 2000 people (World Bank, 2006). This was a cause for celebration for the Acehnese, in particular GAM families, who enjoyed family gatherings after so many difficulties during the conflicts. Many of their family members had been killed by Indonesian military forces. They demanded truth and reconciliation as part of the peace process, similar to what took place in Timor-Leste. The families also felt they received enough financial compensation from the Indonesian Government after losing relatives. Prabowo, the former commander of the Indonesian special forces (Kopassus), asked forgiveness for the Indonesian army, which killed Acehnese fighters during the presidential election campaign in July 2014. It is important for the Indonesian Government to proceed with an attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation in order to continue the democratisation and peacebuilding of the Aceh region in the future.

International organisations have attempted to accommodate the reconciliation process. The World Bank has studied the expectations of former combatants who have integrated and the way in which they have adapted in the early stages of reintegration. These former combatants would never forget the conflict and how the Indonesian military forces fought
against them. However, they now wanted to begin a smooth transition. Many of them had been unable to study at formal schools or dropped out of elementary schools or high schools because of pressures from the local military. It was hard for them to compete with other Acehnese citizens who had had a chance to study at schools and universities. International organisations encouraged and supported them to continue their studies or join training programs to achieve their career goals.

For former combatants who did not have any political experience when they became parliamentary members in kabupaten (districts), cities or provinces, they were invited to join political training programs organised by the School of Democracy. Nur Djuly, one of the negotiators representing GAM, argued that it was a hard and long process to teach former combatants due to an absence of experience and intellectual capacity. One major obstacle to proper training was that many former combatants did not have the reading skills necessary for any real form of academic progress.

Syadiah Marhaban, another member of the GAM delegation in Helsinki, also said that among the former combatants involved in politics, inong bale (women) combatants did not receive proportional support to join parties or as parliamentary members. Marhaban stated that women were heads of families during the conflicts and they also facilitated logistics for fighters. However, now they were forgotten. International organisations attempted to strengthen the role of women in politics and development. However, Acehnese culture does not allow women to take strong roles in politics. A woman bupati candidate complained that she was tortured by Muslim priests who stated that “women are not allowed to be leaders”. But the idea that leadership roles are not allowed to be taken by women is a misunderstanding of the religious interpretation of Prophet Muhammad. This was related to the context of female leadership during the time of the Prophet and does not relate to all women. Aceh itself has historical experience of women who took commanding roles during
the war against the Dutch colonial armies. Cut Nya Din is a good example of a popular commander during the war against the Dutch.

Marhaban (2012) argued that:

There is no lack of potential woman leaders in Aceh, but the male elite, especially those who consider themselves ‘religious’, set the ‘social ceiling’ very low. There are two basic interrelated dimensions of democracy: the open competitive space for citizens to gain any political position and power, and adequate space for activities that guarantee political participation for all citizens. The basic mechanism to allow participation is to organize open, free, and equal elections. The formal procedures of elections are noted as one of the challenges for increasing women’s representation in politics, because both legislative and executive positions are the core policy makers; thus it is important for women to also participate in this process. However, an election is a competition in which most men candidates have the advantage due to their social connections, economic resources and social status (p. 10).

Marhaban, a former female combatant returned to civilian life, was a 2011–2012 Fellow at Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, researching post-conflict management, gender and political transformation. She represents former combatant members promoting peace, development and security in conflict and post-conflict regions. She also represents UN women’s projects.

**Democracy, Reconciliation and Development**

The high participation rate of the Acehnese in the 2006 elections and the rise of local politics in the 2009 elections show the strength of the initiatives of the Acehnese in reconciliation
under constitutional democracy. LawNo. 11/2006 on the governance of Aceh is a significant law to guide peace and democracy.

Martti Ahtisaari, also the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, stated in his Nobel speech:

The peace process in Aceh showed how important it is that a country’s political leadership is committed to finding a solution to an internal conflict. Joint efforts by the political leadership in Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement resulted in a peace agreement. However, it was only a start. Social and economic reforms can only progress if both negotiating parties and the population at large are committed to them in the long term. Work remains to be done in developing a national system that protects, sustains and improves the quality of life in Aceh (Ahtisaari 2008).

This argument emphasizes the importance of commitment among conflicting parties and that the growth of the economy, stability and security will strengthen the future of peace in Aceh. The international community is expected to continue its interest in and support for the process of democracy and economic development in Aceh. The active participation of the Acehnese people in politics and overall development has created a positive foundation for peace in the longterm.

As in other post-conflict regions, Aceh is not free from individuals and groups that feel they have not received what they expected after the signing of the peace accord. Some former GAM combatants continue to receive funding because of the difficulties of the economy and the lack of jobs soon after returning.

The first task for the EU after signing the agreement was the foundation of the AMM, initiated by EU members and then supported by ASEAN members in its implementation.
the Indonesian Army. The most important element was the gubernatorial elections in December 2006. The combatants were welcomed back to Aceh and returned to their normal lives. The period of rehabilitation was very significant in terms of the future of peace in Aceh. It took a significant period of time to recover from the psychological trauma suffered by the combatants and to rebuild their efforts to return to their lives as farmers, sailors or traders. Many of them had nothing after losing their families in the tsunami. The EU, through the World Bank and EU offices in Jakarta, provided valuable funds to aid in the recovery of Aceh after the conflict. ASEAN countries also worked with the EU on the difficult road to rehabilitation.

In the 2009 elections, the EU and ASEAN also continued their role in supporting the implementation of peace. They supported the construction of buildings prior to the elections for candidates and they also monitored the elections. Braniff said:

> In Aceh, the EU’s collaborative mission, the AMM (Aceh Monitoring Mission), with Norway, Switzerland and seven of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding represented a key departure in the EU’s external relations activities. Firstly, the EU found itself operating in cooperation with another regional organization (ASEAN) in an area far from its neighbourhood. Secondly, the EU’s intervention in Aceh represented an opportunity for the EU to redress criticisms of selectivity and widen its contribution to international peacebuilding. The mission commenced on 15 August 2005 and lasted until 15 December 2006 (Braniff 2013: 3).

In the early years of the reintegration of GAM, the EU supported the reintegration process of combatants by providing funding of EUR 2,450,000 as part of the EU’s wider Aceh Peace
Process Support Package (APPS). The funds helped to support justice and police reform in Aceh, the organisation of local elections and the strengthening of local governance reform and implementation of the Law on the Governing of Aceh. According to the reports ‘Support to Aceh Reintegration and Peace Agency’ (BRA) and ‘Peace Building in Aceh’, the objective of the EU project was “to support the reintegration process of former combatants and reduce the vulnerability of victims of conflict, with a special focus on women and marginalized groups, by improving access to sustainable livelihoods and income opportunities” (Annex I 2007: 4).

The deployment of a peace monitoring mission and the funding support to Aceh were part of the EU’s ‘human security’ approach, a new way of promoting peace. The human security approach stresses “the possibilities of international non-military intervention, including peacekeeping forces, monitoring missions, and other mechanisms such as election observation and a range of aid programs to assist vulnerable groups or build civil society institutions” (Barron & Burke 2008: 21–22).

Like the EU, ASEAN is attempting to establish a strong institution of security and peace to create a stable and prosperous Southeast Asian region. ASEAN established the Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) in May 2011 and it conducts research on peacebuilding activities and broadens networks with other institutes and entities in the region, as well as other regions and at the international level, in promoting a culture of peace (Wandi, Nicolescou & Cristescu 2012: 9). The establishment of the AIPR strengthened ASEAN as a mediation institution after its success story in cooperation with the EU on political transition in Aceh after the Helsinki peace agreement. The Aceh peace process has enriched ASEAN in regional peacekeeping and peace operations.

ASEAN had a bitter experience during the Timor-Leste political transition. ASEAN was criticised “for failing to initiate any preventive diplomatic efforts in the case of Timor-Leste
in 1999, and for rejecting a collective intervention following the violence that erupted after the referendum for independence” (Caballero-Anthony & Haywood 2010: 4). Former foreign minister of Thailand Surin Pitsuwan, now the Secretary-General of ASEAN, said that it was hard for him to deploy ASEAN in the transition of East Timor’s ASEAN did not have experience in peacekeeping forces (Jakarta Post, 14 September 1999). The Indonesian Government and prominent academics encouraged ASEAN to take a stronger role in mediating political transition in Timor-Leste. Lambang Trijono, head of the Center for Peace and Security Studies of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, said that Indonesia had to ensure that the peacekeeping force was comprised of members from Asian countries, including China. This was a sentiment against the Australian and US peacekeeping forces because of their tendency to favour the pro-independence groups (Jakarta Post, 15 September 1999).

Now ASEAN is more confident in supporting peace and mediation in Asian regions. After its involvement in the Aceh peacebuilding process, Malaysia headed a team for peace in the southern Philippines between the MILF and the Philippines Government. They had learned from the development of peace in Aceh. Some former GAM peace negotiators assisted both the Philippines Government and the MILF in successful peace negotiations and, most importantly, the implementation of a peace agreement. On 7 October 2012, the Government of the Philippines and the MILF signed a peace agreement.

**The Future of Democracy and Peace**

The EU is expected to continue its role in supporting peace in Aceh. The visit of the former Finnish president and UN peace mediator, Martti Ahtisaari, to Indonesia in February 2009 to attend an international conference on civil conflict resolution in Banda Aceh was a very important moment for the Indonesian Government and especially the Acehnese people
Ahtisaari’s visit strengthened the process of peaceful democracy in Aceh. It attracted the international community’s interest in looking closely at the 2009 elections after a rise in violence had occurred. Sets of violence, among them murders, intimidation, shootings and terrorist acts towards local politicians, threatened democracy and peace in Aceh.

Then Indonesian President Yudhoyono, at the inauguration of an infrastructure project in Banda Aceh on 23 February 2009, stated that: “I hope no one will infuriate the Acehnese people for opting for peace over conflict— the same thing we have chosen and wanted. So let’s secure and maintain peace in Aceh” (Maulia 2009). For the sustainability of economic development and the prosperity of Aceh, which are pivotal to supporting peace, the new budget officially supported reconstruction projects organised by the Aceh-Nias Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (BRR), with a total budget of Rp 715.3 billion (US$59.6 million). The project covered the reconstruction of Keuliling Dam in Aceh Besar (valued at Rp 270.43 billion), Aceh Polytechnic in Banda Aceh (Rp 160 billion), Ulee Lheue Crossing Port (Rp 74.2 billion), Aceh Tsunami Museum in Banda Aceh (Rp 67.9 billion) and the ‘Aceh Thanks the World’ Park (Rp 2.4 billion). The president also handed over the mandiri National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM Mandiri) funding, worth Rp 222.9 billion in total for 30 regencies and municipalities in Aceh, as well as 3000 basic commodities packages for underprivileged local residents (Maulia 2009).

Peaceful democracy was challenged by a rise in violence and intimidation in Aceh approaching the April 2009 legislative elections. From January to February of 2009, there were more than 15 violent incidents in Aceh related to the elections. In October 2008, a grenade exploded at the house of Muzakkir Manaf, the Party Aceh chairman and former commander of the GAM combatants. On 16 January 2009, a bomb exploded in front of the UKM Hotel in Banda Aceh, destroying three cars, one belonging to the Party Aceh, popularly known as the party of the GAM combatants. At the end of January 2009, two armed men
raided the KPA’s Aceh Besar branch in Kajhu village, killing one former GAM member and wounding another. On 4 February 2009, the secretary of the Aceh Transition Commission (KPA) branch in Bireuen, Dedi Noviandi, was killed while driving his car in Gampong Baru and a day after, on 5 February 2009, a gunman killed two former combatants and wounded others. They were also members of the Party Aceh.

The Indonesian Military (TNI) Chief Djoko Santoso stated that, approaching the 2009 polls, vandalism, intimidation, threats, attacks and murders might occur at the hands of warring parties and interparty factions (Jakarta Post, 24 February 2009). This was closely related to the April 2009 elections which would be an important test of the peace accord. Ben (2012: 157) argued: “tensions between Party Aceh supporters and elements of the security forces also continued to simmer. Within the military, many remained suspicious that GAM still harboured secessionist ambitions”.

A criticism of the Jakarta elites was that the foundation of the Party Aceh and the orientation of former GAM leaders in reconstructing Aceh through international cooperation was in contrast to the cosmopolitan character and culture of the Acehnese, as also argued by Avonius (2007):

What kinds of cosmopolitan voices or other signs of cosmopolitanization could one detect in post-conflict and post-tsunami Aceh? Cosmopolitanization can be seen in ways by individuals as well as institutions who perceive the current openness in Acehnese society and the blurring of national boundaries. It is the transforming of the foundations of everyday consciousness and identities, and through this influence, the way individuals perceive their own lives, environment and future opportunities. The ultimate aim of a cosmopolitan individual is not
seen as becoming a good citizen of a nation-state, though this may still be highly valued (p. 166).

Avonius’ argument opposed the belief of many Acehnese nationalists that former GAM leaders continued to gather resources for a new Aceh region separate from the Republic of Indonesia. Many Acehnese in Malaysia, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Britain and the United States still consider themselves part of Aceh and now support the peace and development of Aceh. The identity of the Acehnese in a broader sense also needs a public forum for expression. Local parties and other forms of participation in economics, politics and civil society are elements of democracy and are pivotal for the foundation of long-term peace. The European and international community can play a stronger role in this peacebuilding without disturbing the unity and integrity of Indonesia.

Conclusion

The EU and ASEAN have contributed to stability and peacebuilding in Aceh. They mediated peace initiatives and deployed the AMM for building security and peace for the Acehnese after more than thirty years of conflict. They also funded programs for the democratisation, reconstruction and development of Aceh after the earthquake and tsunami. The transition of combatants was well established, with some challenges in relation to poverty and political intimidation during elections. The human security approach of the EU was followed by ASEAN, which established an institute of peace. The Acehnese example of peace and democratisation has demonstrated an approach in which intensive engagement at a regional level can open the door to peace and stability.

Security problems can be resolved by ASEAN member states. This was a critical issue for ASEAN, which failed to employ a useful presence in the Timor-Leste political transition. A criticism of the ASEAN non-interference principle was based on its reluctance to play a
stronger institutional role in the post-conflict transition in Timor-Leste. After the result of the August 1999 ballot, Timor-Leste decided to separate from Indonesia.

Further partnership between ASEAN and the EU should be continued. Their peacebuilding cooperation could be broadened by supporting peace in the transitions taking place in Africa, the Middle East and other conflict regions. This would be a positive step towards an ASEAN security community and the unity of ASEAN countries in the future.

There has been further discussion on the processes of democratic transition in Aceh, especially in relation to the gubernatorial and district elections and major elections held in April 2012. The elections were suspended four times due to violent attacks and killings organised by former combatants. However, the rise in violence did not trigger further conflict. This means that the establishment of democracy assisted by the international community after the Helsinki peace accord in 2005 effected democratic consolidation in Aceh, which this thesis argues continues to work towards peaceful and stable democracy. As Paris (2004) argued, third parties including states and civil societies from the international community influence and strengthen peace efforts in post-conflict democratic transition.
Chapter 6

Democracy and Peace in Aceh: The 2012 Election

“The best solution to the Aceh question is negotiation”

(President Abdurrahman Wahid, *Jakarta Post*, 12 July 2002).

Introduction

Democracy has been an effective means of maintaining peace in Aceh since the first gubernatorial elections held in 2006. The number of violent attacks decreased dramatically and former local commanders began to make their transformation from combatants into politicians. This contrasts with other post-conflict democratisation such as in Rwanda, Africa, where “political liberalization not only failed to reconcile the warring parties in Rwanda but also apparently served as a catalyst for the genocide by threatening Hutu elements with the prospect of losing power” (Paris 2007: 75). In Angola, the number of killings after the signing of the Bicesse accord in 1991 was approximately 300,000 people, which exceeds the estimated number of Angolans who died in the 18 years of civil war before the peace agreement (Paris 2007: 67).

The second gubernatorial elections held in 2012 confirmed the continuation of peace and stability in Aceh, where “political parties may help to consolidate peace by forming coalitions between groups formerly in conflict” (Hillman 2012: 150). Coalitions among political parties during the 2012 elections were observed to be part of the preparations for national legislative and presidential elections in 2014. For example, Prabowo Subianto, a former Kopassus commander declared as a presidential candidate for 2014, decided to form a coalition with Muzakkir Manaf by joining his campaign during the 2012 elections and donating funds to Party Aceh. Manaf also invited Mayjen Sunarko, a former military
commander of Aceh who fought GAM through TNI operations during the conflict, to join a Party Aceh campaign that claimed to unite all ethnic groups in Aceh, including the Javanese who live predominantly in Central Aceh. In relation to the support of former military commanders for Muzakkir Manaf and his party, Party Aceh leaders claimed that “they can appeal to all sectors of society and will have the support of key institutions” (ICG 2012: 6).

Sunarko argued that it was the right time to support Aceh democratic and peace transition after the violence. He said that his role was strategic, to mediate between various ethnic groups in Aceh, the Acehnese and non-Acehnese speakers in society (Sunarko, interview in Banda Aceh, February 2012). In line with Sunarko, Manaf stated a similar reason. During the declaration of his Vice-Governor candidature on 13 February 2012, Manaf said that “Acehnese came from varieties of ethnic groups. They deserve to have equal rights for protection and treatment from government” (Manaf 2012).

Aceh democracy and peace has also been strengthened by more than a decade of democratic consolidation across Indonesia. Aceh is an exception in Indonesian politics which was given wider space for the development of local parties. Hillman stated that “the Aceh case is especially interesting because Indonesia has elsewhere banned local political parties from contesting elections” (2012: 150).

This chapter examines the dynamics of electoral democracy in connection with the April 2012 elections. During the national elections of 2009, former GAM leaders made a coalition with the Democratic Party. At the national level, the 2009 elections provided a legitimatemandate for President Yudhoyono’s regime to continue into a second term (Aspinall et al. 2010). The Democrat Party gained full support from Party Aceh and won a significant number of votes, while Jusuf Kalla, the head of the peace negotiation in Helsinki, received very few votes.
After the end of Yudhoyono’s term, Party Aceh changed its political alliances. Prabowo’s Party Gerindra was the predominant choice. Deputy Governor Manaf popularly called Mualem to be on the advisory board of Party Gerindra in the province of Aceh. The connection between Prabowo and Mualem had begun during the campaign period of the 2012 elections. Prabowo and Party Gerindra supported, both politically and financially, Zaini Abdullah and Manaf as candidates for governor. In the elections, GAM strengthened its political legitimacy by attempting to maximise its authority in managing the political and economic arenas in Aceh, through dominating strategic positions in local parliament and government at the provincial and district levels. However, the number of violent attacks approaching the 2012 and 2014 elections in Aceh challenged the initiatives of peacebuilding. This thesis argues that the spirit of democracy is threatened by political violence, which endangers the future of peace.

**Foundation of Democracy**

After the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, Indonesians enjoyed freedom of expression and the euphoria of democracy. Civil society and the mass media could criticise government policy and monitor political parties. Uhlin (1997) called this the “third wave of democratization” of Indonesia, which began after the Cold War and the end of the New Order regime. For security reasons, students, activists and society in Aceh were more unrestricted after the New Order. The call for a referendum was endorsed by student activists, probably influenced by the referendum in Timor-Leste in 1999, so the third wave of democratisation in Aceh was effective. President Habibie faced the challenge of a rise in demand for a referendum during his first year in power. Students did not give support officially to an independent state of Aceh, but their protests around the importance of human rights violation investigations and international support for the demand pushed the central government to pay more attention to Aceh. President Habibie visited Aceh in March 1999 to stabilise the region.
and saw “overwhelming support for an internationally supervised referendum similar to that held in East Timor as tens of thousands of people demonstrated in front of the Baiturrahman mosque in Banda Aceh” during his visit (Sulistiyanto 2001: 447).

The peak period of democratisation can be seen in the bottom-up initiatives of reconciliation in 2000 and 2001 between Aceh and Indonesia during the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid. Kamaruzzaman (2012), a GAM negotiator mediated by the HDC, confirmed that President Wahid, as well as GAM, genuinely supported the peace initiative called CoHA, involving leaders of GAM in Aceh and overseas. Bulqaini, who frequently talked to President Wahid representing the dayah, argued that the president appreciated the role of the ulama and students in the peace initiatives. He believed this bottom-up reconciliation would achieve a comprehensive result more if the security forces did not interfere (Bulqaini 2012, 2014).

Global democracy movements and Indonesian democratisation and decentralisation from 1999 strengthened the spirit of democracy in Aceh. The tsunami and earthquake in December 2004 shocked the GAM leaders overseas and they finally agreed to support more serious peace negotiations in 2005.

Consequently, the political parties tried to accommodate the voices of the people by reforming their policies to achieve broader support. Party leaders in government who do not devise and implement their policies based on the aspirations of the people quickly realise that they usually get punished by receiving lower votes during the next election. For example, some candidates for parliament in Aceh failed to win seats due to failure to contribute to the prosperity of the local community, especially their constituents, in the 2014 elections (see Chapter 7).

Through the regulations set down for regional autonomy by Laws No. 22/1999 and No. 32/2004, local communities could participate in electing their local leaders. The 2004 election
was a starting point for direct elections where people could vote for parliament members, heads of districts and the governor of their own region. The spirit of national democracy strengthened the process of reintegration of GAM after the 2005 Helsinki peace agreement. Based on the mandate of the MoU from Helsinki, which was reflected in Law No. 11/2006 – the Law of the Government of Aceh (LoGA)– former combatants participated in gubernatorial elections in 2006 (Kingsbury 2006).

The 2012 elections tested democratic transition in Aceh: whether it went to a new authoritarian regime or successfully transformed Aceh towards democratic consolidation and peace. In comparison to post-conflict elections in Africa, Aceh has moved towards stable and peaceful democracy with the participation of most Acehnese. One of the reasons for the current stability and peace is the existence of a precondition for democratisation: economic development and peacebuilding facilitated by international states and the central government in the early reintegration period after the Helsinki accord and almost a decade of democratic consolidation in Aceh.

Mansfield and Snyder (2007: 281) quoted Linz and Stepan’s argument on the five preconditions of consolidation: “a useable state bureaucracy, rule of law, autonomous political parties, a free and lively civil society, and an institutionalized economic society”. Democratic consolidation in Aceh was supported by an effective bureaucracy managed by local governments under the coordination and monitoring of the central government, autonomous local and national political parties, and the rule of law. Problems in the last decade after the peace accord include the amount of violence targeting political leaders and sympathisers of political parties.

CSOs have attempted to play a strategic role in monitoring democratic process. However, their monitoring and reporting to Panwaslu and Aceh police have not been responded to
effectively. Party Aceh has strong authority in securing its political operations at provincial and district levels. This is a threat to democratic consolidation and peace with free and fair political participation supported by the rule of law. A violent approach to secure political interests has weakened the process of democratic consolidation.

Mansfield and Snyder identified:

A syndrome of incomplete democratization and war in transitional regimes that lack the institutional infrastructure needed to manage the turbulent processes of increased political participation, especially in settings where unresolved issues of national identity can be exploited for antidemocratic purposes (2007: 281).

Aceh’s democratisation is part of the spirit of Indonesian national politics. This nationwide political participation and freedom of expression have turned Indonesia into the third largest democratic country after the USA and India. However, it is hard to describe how political parties access the funding machine to strengthen their power. Palmer argued:

If Aceh’s democracy proves to conform to the Indonesian standard, with the same reliance on elite-level patronage networks fuelled by massive corruption, then it seems likely that local governance will not improve. In this case, corruption, poverty and a sense of grievance will remain and could threaten the peace, at least in the long term (2010: 290).

Palmer’s concerns were realised when a deadlock between the Aceh executive and the legislative branches occurred, which negatively affected the development of democracy in the province. About a year before the 2012 elections, political rivalries influenced government policy. The DPRA managed to pass a by-law (qanun) to support the budget, but Governor Yusuf did not sign it until the central government threatened to cut the general allocation.
PA commanders and the combatants in Aceh initially agreed to support Yusuf as a gubernatorial candidate from the ranks of GAM. However, the older elites of PA disagreed. The reformist GAM representatives and people with a civil society background were ousted from PA. The rivalries continued during the gubernatorial elections in 2012, when the pair Yusuf–Muhnan were supported by reformist former combatants. The competition became stronger after Yusuf launched the PNA, which ran in legislative elections in 2014 and gained two seats in the DPRA.

During the 2012 elections, PA dominated the vote in most districts of Aceh. PA won 11 of 17 candidate pairs of head and deputy heads of districts and majors, and a pair of governor and vice-governor (KIP Aceh 2012). Its election strategy worked well, including attacks and intimidation. The elections were preceded by some violence where about 15 people were killed and some others injured. Some were local leaders who had opposed the leadership of the central board of PA, especially the role of Malik Mahmud in the centralisation of the gubernatorial candidate’s appointment from GAM’s senior leadership circle. Younger leaders hoped to conduct a democratic procedure for the governor’s appointment and gave some names as alternatives; among them was Yusuf, the incumbent governor of Aceh and former GAM chief of information.

Before Mahmud appointed Abdullah as the candidate for governor and Manaf as the candidate for vice-governor, leaders of the KPA organised a gathering to choose a former GAM representative as a gubernatorial candidate. Most of them chose Yusuf to be the candidate representing former GAM members. The process of appointment seemed to be democratic, supported by most KPA representatives from all districts of Aceh; however, the decision was opposed by the central board of PA. As this friction deepened, violence began to occur. Democracy, it is contended here, is always challenged by violence and intimidation, especially approaching elections; likewise, after elections, a government cannot reach its
planning targets. Thus, in Aceh, investments and development became one of the significant problems of the current government.

The current politics of Aceh are also affected by culture and the economy. After thirty years of conflict which not only destroyed the foundation of the Acehnese economy but also the culture, people are slowly returning to work and to living normal and peaceful lives. From urban cities to villages, people are enjoying gathering at their local kedai (coffee shop), where they discuss local politics. They feel that they have given ample opportunity to former GAM leaders to represent them in government, at the provincial and district levels as well as parliaments (DPRK). They wanted to make sure that security and dignity were preserved. This is an important characteristic of Acehnese agricultural society. They rarely join campaigns, but vote for any candidate from Aceh.

As a result of being first intimidated and then promised protection and welfare by the former GAM apparatus, they voted for PA candidates. During one of the campaigns, Manaf said that “every relative will get a million Rupiah per month if his team wins the election. The fund comes from the rich natural resources of Aceh”. The people in rural communities believed that Manaf’s promise was possible because it was time for former GAM leaders to lead Aceh. They considered Yusuf to be too close to Jakarta and he did not properly support former GAM people. A group of former combatants in Bireueun who took over migrant farm areas to grow agricultural commodities said that “Mualem and Dato Zaini Abdullah are the best leaders for Aceh. They will help Acehnese during this difficult period of transition” (interviews in Bireueun, February 2012).

\textsuperscript{5}Fieldworks note by author, Banda Aceh, March 2012.

\textsuperscript{6}Mualem means teacher. It was a popular nickname for Muzakir Manaf during the conflict period. Manaf was a veteran of the first batch of soldiers from a Libyan training camp who then taught further generations of Acehnese in Libya. These men later filled strategic posts in the districts of Aceh. Libyan veterans became district and sub-district commanders and now have become heads of districts or MPs from PA.
In general, the Acehnese economy depends largely on the agricultural sector. Based on the research of Unsyiah (2009), around 38% of Acehnese work in the agricultural sector. They moved from wet fields during the conflict period to dry fields during the post-conflict period. According to Indonesian statistics, the greatest percentage of Acehnese live in rural villages. They are the strongest support base of PA.

**International Support**

The 2012 elections highlight the significant contribution democracy has made to the maintenance of peace since Aceh’s 2006 elections, held a year after the peace agreement between GAM and the GoI. Many Acehnese have welcomed this new democratisation, with approximately 78 per cent of voters participating in the 2009 presidential elections, the largest turnout for direct elections in any Indonesian region. But as the elections approached, flaring tensions among Acehnese leaders – especially between former GAM elites – had observers concerned over potential threats to the continuation of peaceful democracy in Aceh. A number of former GAM combatants were killed recently and local Acehnese see this as closely related to the tensions and rivalries evident among political groups in the province.

But the international community has invested billions of dollars in supporting Aceh’s transition to peaceful democracy. At the ASEAN Leaders’ Special Summit held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, two weeks after the Indian Ocean tsunami, the leaders of 26 nations and international organisations agreed to donate US$4 billion in aid to further the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh. Australia also contributed AUD$1 billion over five years through the Australia–Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development; of this aid, millions of dollars were targeted at the support and reintegration of former GAM members. The programs associated with this funding will help to ensure the continuation of rehabilitation
and integration efforts by overcoming any inequitable distribution of resources, thereby supporting stability and peace and rebuilding communities.

The Multi-Stakeholder Review, a partnership between the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Legal, Political and Security Affairs, the National Development Planning Agency and the Aceh Peace-Reintegration Agency, reports that the total amount of funds committed to the process of reintegration and peace building is Rp9 trillion (US$895 million) – one-seventh of the tsunami reconstruction funds. The Acehnese government will also receive close to US$7.9 billion in special autonomy funds between 2008 and 2027 as a result of the LoGA.

Adequate funding is of crucial significance in maintaining the peacebuilding process and the progress of reconciliation; decentralisation and democratisation have positively affected the transition to peace. However, for the positive momentum to continue, area-specific institutions need to be strengthened and, where necessary, created. The importance of institutions for supporting peace in post-conflict regions cannot be overstated. In Aceh, strong institutions in local government, parliament and civil society are still needed.

But the ongoing dispute over regulations pertaining to the 2012 elections between the winning Party Aceh and the incumbent governor’s camp threatens to destabilise Acehnese efforts to implement further reforms. The Party Aceh’s threat to boycott elections is counterproductive to the party and to the democratisation process. If this dispute is not resolved, it will overshadow more pressing issues in the development and peacebuilding program. These include capacity building for rural Acehnese so they can revitalise important agricultural initiatives, such as the region’s high-quality coffee plantations. Another issue is the high unemployment rate. Law enforcement training for MPs is also important if they are to create effective regulations for Aceh’s development and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission regulation, which has been keenly anticipated by human rights
organisations and victims of conflict, is still pending due to the ‘political negotiation process’ and is another issue which needs prioritising.

The World Bank reports that investors still perceive Aceh as a risky place to conduct business, meaning that growth will be limited and efforts to reduce poverty will likely lose their effectiveness. This must be remedied. The Acehnese government must change the perception of the region so it is seen as a secure and safe business environment. Providing high-quality infrastructure is a large part of this. These challenges will not be overcome unless Aceh’s political parties and leaders give priority to the broad interests of local inhabitants, rather than their own narrow interests.

The current precariousness of Acehnese politics has not had a positive effect on the media, CSOs or the Acehnese people in general. Fear of political violence is rising after the killings of local leaders and other violence suspected of being closely related to rivalries among local political groups. If these political elites and civil society groups cannot manage their political conflicts, it will destroy a great deal of important investment in the region.

**Dynamics of Politics**

Aceh is currently the only province in Indonesia in which local political parties have developed to the point where they hold more interest and power than national parties. National parties, which were popular before 2005, lost significant support from the grassroots. The Acehnese prefer local parties which they assume better understand local issues than do national parties. At least, they are closer to their constituents than are national parties. Thus, parties at the national level are challenged by local parties, who pay more attention to problems at the local level. The former minister for human rights, Hasballah M Sa’ad, stated: “it would be difficult to secure long-term peace if former combatants were forced to join national parties. GAM had no linkages with national political parties …
facilitated the former rebels’ stable entry into mainstream politics” (Hillman 2010: 3). The issue of local parties has been one of the most difficult areas of negotiation. Kalla said:

We knew the issue of local political parties would be a difficult one for parliament in Jakarta. And we understood that we had to make the MoU in such a way that parliament would adopt it into law. We were finally convinced to agree to allow local parties in Aceh on the last day of the talks. I made two points in response to political opposition on this matter: we had local parties in Indonesia in the first elections in 1955; and Papua’s special autonomy has a provision for local parties – even though it is not implemented. It means parliament has agreed to allow local parties.

Hamid Awaludin, the head of the Indonesian negotiating team, said it was one of the most difficult steps of the negotiations when GAM proposed local political parties. This issue was very sensitive and raised opposition from political elites in Jakarta, would have preferred to give leadership positions to GAM elites at the provincial and district levels. Awaludin stated that “there were some 10 political parties which had signed up to support GAM activists who wished to run for leadership positions in Aceh in the future” (Awaludin 2009: 276). This proposal was opposed by the GAM negotiators, who were determined to run their own parties. The democratic process preferred by GAM was regarded as positive for the democratisation of Aceh after decades of war.

The purpose of the Helsinki peace agreement was the creation of a permanent peace in Aceh and for former GAM combatants and leaders to integrate with the other Acehnese and become like other Indonesian citizens. These aims seem to have been achieved quite easily, as these individuals are very much part of Acehnese society. During the conflict, they
struggled along with their fellow Acehnese against the repressive Indonesian regime, especially the armed forces. However, there is a serious question regarding the rise of violence and threats during the 2012 elections and afterwards. A group of former explosive squad members of GAM from North Aceh, headed by Vikram (aka Ayah Banta), was behind a series of killings and attacks approaching the elections. Yusuf stated that these shootings were purely due to economic reasons. It could be argued that his statement at this critical time was only for the sake of stability and a positive image of Aceh democratisation, which he had tried to establish in his leadership in local government. He argued: “They did so because of jealousy toward Javanese workers”. However, M. Nasir Djamil, one of the members of the third commission of the DPRA who visited Aceh in January 2012, argued that the killings were related to politics. He said that if the Acehnese were jealous of the Javanese workers holding the lowest jobs, who were digging trenches for Telkom optic cable for less than 1 million rupiah (US$110) per month, then they, the Acehnese themselves, should accept such lowly jobs. He also said that Aceh needed a state of civil emergency (Tertib Sipil).

Yusuf opposed the idea of a civil emergency, which he considered “conflicted” (Serambi Indonesia, 12 January 2012). In addition, he argued that the shooting by the group of former combatants headed by Ayah Banta was planned by the Party Aceh; he claimed that the real aim was to terrorise the region in order to receive serious attention from the central government in order to delay the time of the election (Irwandi Yusuf, interview by author, Banda Aceh, April 2013). In Yusuf’s appendices of data given to the Constitutional Commission in order to challenge the victory of Zaini Abdullah and Muzakir Manaf, it was stated that the terrorist tactics employed – that is, the ordering of the shooting of former commanders of KPA and the intimidation of voters in rural areas (where the Acehnese mostly live) – actually gave support to Yusuf’s campaign. It was also claimed that his campaign team received serious threats of shooting, killing and intimidation.
However, the Constitutional Commission decided that Yusuf’s arguments contradicted the statements of the police and government. The head of the police said that the 2012 election was proceeding very peacefully without significant threats of violence. Yusuf himself also said soon after the day of the election that the result was the outcome of peaceful elections and confirmed his appreciation of the final decision of the Provincial Independent Election Commission. He stated that he understood that the decision of the Commission was in the end final and reflected the consideration of the central government aimed at making Aceh peaceful and creating opportunities for former GAM leaders to lead the local government; this was, he said, a political decision (Yusuf 2013).

In the 2006 elections, Yusuf was supported by the younger generation of GAM leadership. His challenger, Ahmad Humam Hamid-Hasbi Abdullah (popularly called H2O), was supported by senior GAM leaders. Deciding on candidates for the position of governor and deputy governor was done via a democratic process. GAM representatives from all over the world had a meeting to discuss who would best represent GAM. Despite this, the central GAM leadership disregarded the result of this meeting and effectively appointed H2O without consultation. These tensions among the GAM leadership continued until the 2012 elections when Party Aceh, the winning party of the 2009 elections and the legitimate representative of GAM, appointed vice-gubernatorial candidates without consulting KPA district leaders. Some KPA leaders who were disappointed with what they called an “undemocratic appointment process” asked Yusuf, the incumbent governor, to run for a second term. KPA leaders tend to be former local commanders of GAM. Some MPs from Party Aceh at provincial and district levels are also in Yusuf’s camp. These tensions escalated into violence leading up to the 2012 elections.

At least twenty people have been killed in Aceh since March 2011. Their deaths are believed to be closely related to current politics (ICG 2012). Six of these were killed between
December 2011 and January 2012, before Party Aceh was allowed to join the elections in February. Some of those targeted were local commanders who supported Yusuf. This violence heightened tensions among the Acehnese people, who had enjoyed relative peace and stability since the 2005 peace agreement. People forced by police to secure their neighbourhoods by staying home at night. This practice is called *Siskamling* (*Sistim Keamanan Lingkungan*), a model of behaviour created by the New Order to make communities become aware of their neighbours. This exposed community members to violent experiences and subsequent trauma. TNI also asked the police to secure Aceh in order to resolve the violence. Acehnese human rights activists responded by saying that the existing security forces were sufficient to secure Aceh from any threat. Zulfikar Muhammad, executive director of the human rights NGO PB HAM of Aceh Utara, argued that “Both groups from Jakarta and Aceh took advantage of this violence. They wanted to suspend the elections” (Muhammad 2012).

**Political Violence**

The most challenging democratic transition was the 2012 election, when frictions among former combatants turned to violence. Thirteen people died in incidents involving former combatants. In the middle of a televised public debate on 5 April 2012 four days before the poll, Yusuf asked Abdullah and Manaf, the pair of candidates for governor and vice-governor from Party Aceh, what they knew of the killings and attacks: “the terrors that have taken place in Aceh. The [national police] know the perpetrators came from [Zaini’s party]”. Abdullah responded that the police needed to complete their investigation and that Yusuf’s question was “provocative” (Bachelard 2012). Yusuf was confident that the killings were attached to Party Aceh’s elite. He said: “The perpetrators are associated with Party Aceh and they were instructed by the elite of Party Aceh for their political interests, forcing the central
government to postpone the elections in order to reduce my power and influence in Aceh” (Yusuf 2013). Bachelard (2012) quoted Aspinall’s views on the killing operations:

> It is likely that Partai Aceh was behind some or all of the 13 killings. The organisation still has the feeling of an army corps, with strict codes, loyalty and hierarchical leadership. It is a habit of heart, a part of their ideology, that they solve problems through violence. According to the rebels’ code, Irwandi is seen as a traitor to the movement.

It is important to look at how the victims were targeted and the consequence of the operations. There was a change in operations. In the 2009 election, TNI personnel attacked Party Aceh members, leaving many of them dead. This was an intelligence operation against the rise of former combatants who had managed to establish a new local political party. Some candidates from Party Aceh were killed and their offices attacked. However, Party Aceh continued to participate in politics and dominated the result. In the national legislative election, Party Aceh formed a coalition with the Democratic Party of President Yudhoyono and won about ninety percent of the vote. They expected a reward from the incumbent Yudhoyono in supporting the political interests of Party Aceh. They supported Yudhoyono personally as presidential candidate and head of the Democratic Party as an expression of thanks for his continuing support of peacebuilding in Aceh.

In the 2012 elections, Party Aceh was very confident of winning, especially in its strongholds: Aceh Besar, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireuen, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara, Aceh Timur, Langsa, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat Daya and Sabang. However, attacks, killings and intimidation conducted by supporters of Party Aceh drew attention from local and national political elites. If former combatants were confident in their candidates, the political violence was arguably an approach to discredit the incumbent Yusuf as leader of the province of Aceh.
This began with internal frictions within GAM between older and younger generations. Malik Mahmud attempted to control GAM. Kingsbury described how these frictions arose during the peace talks: “internal divisions within GAM became evident during the peace talks and surfaced over the selection of a candidate for the position of Aceh’s governor. There was agreement to found a new political party based on the old GAM” (Kingsbury 2012). There were also divisions between older, more religious GAM members and young, modern GAM members, who tended to be secular. Friction and disappointment also developed in the GAM grassroots after reintegration. Many of them were ignored by the GAM elite and became frustrated with the integration process. For example, a group of former combatants tried to establish a farming centre in Bireuen, an area of transmigrants who had left during the conflict. The former combatants used their early reintegration funds for agricultural investment. However, due to limited skills in farming and no assistance from local government, some of them left the farm and chose to return as freelancers in providing security for local businesspeople or assisting in tenders for local government projects. Jamaeka disagreed with the argument that former combatants managed local government projects by intimidation. He said that former combatants were only individuals who had difficulty finding jobs and provided security for local business leaders by accompanying them to meet local government officers and asking to win projects (Jamaeka 2012).

Economic gaps between combatants also attracted violence. This was the reason that Ayah Banta and his former combatants killed and attacked in 2011 and 2012, because of disappointment with Governor Yusuf who, they claimed, did not pay attention to the financial position of former combatants. Yusuf opposed this argument and said that as Aceh governor he tried to be neutral in accommodating various political and social groups, and was committed to regular financial support for former combatants. Yusuf (2013) stated that “I paid
special attention to the former combatants in Aceh Utara and Aceh Timur, including Ayah Banta group by providing them millions rupiah”.

The violent attack operations began on 22 July 2011, when Saiful Husen alias Cagee, a former head of KPA Batee Iliek and a member of Yusuf’s campaign team, was shot dead after leaving a coffee shop at 11.15 pm. Shortly before Cagee opened his car, he was shot by a gunman using an AK47. After the shooting, the gunman escaped by car. Cagee died on the spot and police found three bullets, two in his head and one in his foot. Cagee as the head of KPA Batee Iliek had had a political clash with the Bireuen head of Party Aceh, especially after Party Aceh decided to propose Abdullah and Manaf as candidates for governor and vice-governor in February 2011. Cagee was among some heads of KPA and leading figures in Party Aceh who were forced to resign or personally resigned from KPA and Party Aceh (Serambi Indonesia, 23 July 2011).

After the shooting of Cagee, the central government believed that it was only a clash between combatants. Further attacks targeted Javanese workers in private and state companies. This attracted significant attention from the Ministry of Home Affairs, which later rescheduled the elections in order to give a chance for Party Aceh to participate. A violent attack targeted the labourers of PT Setya Agung plantation in North Aceh on 4 December 2011. Setya Agung, a company based in Medan, North Sumatra, had rights to plant palm oil, cacao and rubber over an area of some 8000 hectares in North Aceh. Like other companies operating in Aceh, it had an agreement with a GAM-owned company, CV Cimita Rata, which was responsible for managing the rubber farm. Many of its labourers were former combatants, but the company also hired Javanese workers from Medan and housed them in a barracks belonging to Setya Agung. This happened over many years and relationships between labourers from Aceh and from outside Aceh had worked well. It is common in rubber plantation that Javanese workers hired by some companies in Aceh. They are popular as hard workers and
experienced in maintaining the plantation. In many farmings managed by former combatants, Javanese workers play strategic role in growing the plants. In Bireuen, some Javanese women are permanent workers contracted by former combatants to look after the farms. These women are married to Acehnese.

However, before the election of 2012, relations changed. These men were contracted by a CV Cimita Rata official rumoured to be loyal to Governor Yusuf. Further attacks targeting Javanese workers were political. The plantation labourers were sitting in a food stall near the barracks near midnight on 4 December 2011 when four or five men approached from the direction of the palm oil plantation. They asked the workers where they were from and demanded to see their ID cards. Then they asked them to lie on the floor, shot them and left. Three died on the spot, several months later another died and five were seriously wounded (ICG 2012). A week later, on 10 December 2011, someone shot at the car of a Setya Agung manager, but no one was injured. Another non-fatal attack on 23 December 2011 in North Aceh on a company carrying out an oil and gas survey appears to have been an extortion attempt and, unlike the killings of the Javanese, produced two arrests.

A second fatal shooting happened at the base of the telecommunications company, Telkomsel, in Bireuen on 31 December 2011. About fifty Javanese men had been contracted to lay a fibre-optic cable for Telkomsel. They rented a house near the main road in Bireuen. About 8 or 9 pm, two men rode up on a motorcycle. One got off and went into the house, where there were about fifteen labourers. Without speaking, he shot them. Three were killed at once; seven others were injured. On the same night in Banda Aceh, a Javanese trader was killed at a toy shop. Javanese workers in Aceh Utara were also targeted on 1 January 2012; one person was killed, another seriously injured. Again nothing was said; the killer just shot the workers. Finally, on 5 January 2012, three Javanese workers from Semarang died in Aceh Besar.
Initially the provincial police chief declared that all these murders were the result of business rivalries and economic jealousies – as if Acehnese were targeting Javanese for taking their jobs. This statement was an attempt to hide the weak capacity of local police in investigating these attacks due to local politics. The director of Setya Agung disagreed with the police statement about job competition. He said there was a major labour shortage, especially for rubber tappers, so if any Acehnese wanted a job, he or she could have it. The jealousy argument also did not make sense, because the people killed were at the bottom of the income scale, only looking for enough income to buy a kilo of rice. Djuli (2012) said that Acehnese people are reluctant to work at lower level, dirty jobs like what the Javanese did. Therefore, it was not possible that the shootings were due to jealousy about jobs as the Aceh police stated.

On 21 February 2012, the police chief announced that three of the shootings had been committed by the same group and the police knew who they were, but refused to say anything more. A month later, police arrested the perpetrators, six former combatants and members of KPA and Party Aceh. The shootings had a definite impact on the foreign investment community, which felt insecure in Aceh.

It is arguable that the killings were related to the lobbying initiated by Party Aceh to run for the 2012 elections. On 12 December 2011, Director-General Djohermansyah made an agreement with Muzakkir Manaf, head of Party Aceh, to delay the elections until Party Aceh could participate in the election. This was responded to by other candidates from parties and independents in Aceh as unfair treatment. They had prepared for almost a year and spent a lot of funds. Yusuf argued that what Djohermansyah agreed with Party Aceh destroyed the foundation of democracy in Aceh (Yusuf 2013).

As shootings continued on 10 December 2011, 31 December 2011, 1 January 2012 and 5 January 2012, the home affairs ministry began arguing strongly and publicly for postponing the elections to accommodate the demand of Party Aceh. This is a clear indication that the
Shootings were related to the political negotiation. Party Aceh forced the central government to listen and to agree with its demands. President Yudhoyono responded to the rise of violence by instructing all stakeholders to maintain peace and security, which are prioritised in Aceh. The Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Djoko Suyanto, said (*Antara*, 10 January 2012):

> The president has expressed deep concern about the lawless actions, and hopes such cases will not recur. We don’t want the peace process and peaceful situation that have prevailed in Aceh for the last five years be disturbed by irresponsible persons. The national police are now trying to identify and find the perpetrators of the violence.

After some meetings between the central government and stakeholders in Aceh, a new political arrangement was managed. On 12 January 2012, the home affairs ministry submitted an appeal to the Constitutional Court for a review of the 2007 Election Law that would provide the ministry with the authority to delay the election. On 16 January 2012, the court made a statement that after pressure from the presidential palace, registration should be reopened for a week to allow candidates who had not yet registered to do so and the election schedule should be adjusted accordingly, but with the poll no later than 9 April 2012. The ministry’s appeal regarding the transfer of authority was denied, but the other ruling gave Party Aceh a chance to participate in the elections after a new delay was agreed.

Responses came from the stakeholders in Aceh. The KIP argued that there was no way it could manage another week of processing new candidates, doing the required background checks and still schedule the election on 16 February 2012. The schedule was pushed forward the maximum delay permitted by the court, until 9 April, and the court agreed. Party Aceh now had what it expected: Yusuf completed his term on 8 February 2012.
Party Aceh agreed to the new date with enthusiasm and immediately registered Abdullah and Manaf as a candidate pair for governor and vice-governor. The Constitutional Court, whose ruling in November 2011 had been rejected by Party Aceh on the grounds that it had no authority to change the LoGA, was now gladly accepted as a legitimate source of law as long as it produced decisions in line with the party’s wishes. On 24 February 2012, the provincial legislature finally passed the long-delayed *qanun* on election procedures that included a provision allowing independent candidates. This is evidence that Party Aceh’s priority all along had been removing Yusuf from local government office and that once this was effected, compromise elsewhere was possible. Yusuf said that the political movement of Party Aceh was against the principle of democracy and the spirit of peace in Aceh after the Helsinki accord, which provides open opportunity for all individuals in Aceh politics (Yusuf 2013).

The motives behind the killings and attacks were political and directly or indirectly instructed by the elite of Party Aceh. No killings have taken place since 5 January 2012; people in Banda Aceh associate the cessation of attacks with the Constitutional Court’s ruling on 16 January 2012. The implication is that Jakarta understood the inherent threat of more violence and capitulated to the will of Party Aceh (ICG 2012). Violent approaches seemed an effective method for Party Aceh as political communication with the central government, especially in the case of the 2012 elections.

On 12 March 2012, about a month before the election, police arrested six people who had been involved in the attacks and killings. Aceh police chief Insp. Gen. Iskandar Hasan confirmed that the suspects were all Acehnese, who had possibly planned to execute the attacks in the lead-up to the Aceh elections. He said that: “there is a possibility that the planned attack was aimed at disturbing the election. But we don’t know if the explosives were to be detonated on the day of the poll…” Police confiscated five bombs, which were
made from pipes and iron bars” (Afrida & Simanjutak 2012). In addition, police said that “the men who were arrested in Aceh Utara were allegedly involved in the murder of Cagee” (Afrida & Simanjutak 2012). Party Aceh spokesperson Fachrul Razi said “it’s true that the suspects are former GAM combatants. We should wait for the court’s verdict. If they are really Party Aceh members and have committed the crimes, they will be dismissed from the party” (Afrida & Simanjunta 2012). In the court, Ayah Banta and his group confirmed that they had killed Cagee and thirteen Javanese workers as an expression of disappointment in Governor Yusuf. They claimed that he had not paid enough attention to them or other former combatants in the grassroots (lawyer of Ayah Banta 2013).

The killings, attacks, intimidation and terror approaching the April 2012 election in the province of Aceh went against the basic principles of the peacebuilders who had committed to developing lasting peace in Aceh. Political parties and the dynamics of politics should strengthen peace efforts and participatory economic development in Aceh. The violence reduced the quality of democracy and disappointed the spirit of the people, who expected a secure, peaceful and prosperous Aceh after about three decades of bloody conflict. Paris (2004: 188) said that “peacebuilders have sponsored elections in war-shattered states as a means of facilitating the peaceful management of societal conflicts through competition at the ballot box, rather than through combat on the battlefield”. So elections are a strategic instrument of competition among commanders of former combatants who transformed themselves from the battlefield to the ballot box. They disengaged themselves to become civilians who managed politics with a spirit of democracy, and free and fair competition among candidates.

However, Paris also said that:
Elections do not always foster peaceful forms of competition, nor do they necessarily produce governments committed to resolving disputes through negotiation and compromise – or, for that matter, governments committed to preserving democracy. If the parties that win elections are dedicated to the violent destruction of their rivals, or if they seek to undermine the very democratic institutions that brought them to power, elections may actually work against the goal of establishing a stable liberal democracy. Moreover, if the parties that contest elections attempt to build popular support by appealing to intercommunal fears and hatreds, the election campaign can itself rekindle the very conflicts that peacebuilders seek to mitigate (Paris 2004: 188–189).

Weak institutions of democracy, as Paris (2004) argued, potentially return a regime to authoritarianism. This is why the Acehnese were worried about the political dominance of Party Aceh and former combatants. Aceh needs a counterbalance from opposition parties and CSOs. However, institutions like the police, courts and other core democratic institutions have been interfered with by Party Aceh, which has weakened their role.

The violence approaching the April 2012 election also targeted women, who were a vulnerable group in society during and after the conflict. The National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) worked with 16 NGOs based in Aceh: PBHAM Pidie, PASKA, Pekka, Women Solidarity, Flower Aceh, Violet Grey, IPPI, SeIA, PKBI, LBH APIK Aceh, PULIH Aceh, Human Rights NGO Coalition, RPuK, KKTGA and BSUIA, which constitute the Monitoring Network 231 that documented and provided aid in 561 cases of violence against women from 2011 to 2012. The name was inspired by Article 231 Paragraph (1) LoGA to promote and protect the rights of women and children (Komnas Perempuan 2013). It was reported that:
Domestic violence was the dominant form (413 cases or 70%) with the remainder being violence in the community (148 cases or 26%). It was recorded there are at least 319 women victims of sexual violence in times of armed conflict that still do not have the right to truth, justice and recovery. Furthermore, violence against women was also found in the implementation of Sharia law and the increasing intolerance against military religions (Komnas Perempuan 2013).

The Acehenese women’s movement requested political parties to maintain the peace without intimidation and terror towards other parties and individuals in the 2012 election. Nursiti, a representative of the women’s movement, delivered a request for peaceful elections to the acting governor of Aceh, Tarmizi A. Karim, and said: “we hope acting governor of Aceh to conduct a peaceful and neutral elections of 2012” (Antara, 8 March 2012). The movement also addressed the request to all stakeholders in the 2012 elections and asked all parties to respect women candidates (Antara, 8 March 2012).

Local Parties

The legal right of the Acehnese people to develop local parties alongside the existence of national parties was the foundation of the 2009 election (Law no. 11/2006). Acehnese leaders competed against each other in the election to attract the support of the local population. The awareness of the Acehnese leaders and people of the importance of peace and stability for Aceh has strengthened the process of democracy. The question now emerged as we approached the 2012 gubernatorial elections of whether the government and MPs could agree on the management of the election process. The issue of independent candidature, which was approved by the UUPA (LoGA) for the 2006 election and legalised by the Constitutional Court for the 2012 election, became the main subject of dispute, while the more substantial issues of candidates’ programs and the urgent needs for Aceh’s future received less attention.
Kamaruzzaman argues that it was the result of national party arrogance in designing the laws (UUPA) for their political interests. After the 2006 election, the national political parties wanted all candidates for provincial and district leadership positions to be run through national party mechanisms (Kamaruzzaman 2012). Kamaruzzaman’s discussions with other Pansus (Special Committee) DPRA members were held before the foundation of local parties which allowed Acehnese leaders to manage local politics independent of Jakarta, contrary to the national parties’ wishes. This is also the reason that former GAM commanders avoided joining national parties, so as to ensure their freedom in managing political leadership based on their strength in Aceh.

Kamaruzzaman argued that “Irwandi has established a good foundation for stable social and economic development in Aceh after a long period of conflict. The Acehnese people have totally forgotten their severe past and are ready to work for their prosperity. People enjoy current peace and stability”. However, he was worried about the terror and violence organised by certain groups in Aceh for their own interests. He stated that “the frictions among former GAM leaders will ruin the future of peace building in Aceh. They were not well prepared to be strong and effective political leaders in a peaceful region”. Kamaruzzaman had represented GAM in the peace negotiations in 2000. He was imprisoned in West Java from 2001 to 2005 and released at the end of the peace negotiations after receiving amnesty as part of those negotiations. He was imprisoned along with Tgk Usman Lampoh Awe and Tgk Amni in Sukamiskin prison in Bandung, West Java (Awaludin 2009: 232). He now manages Kamaruzzaman Law Firm and has assisted national and international companies in investing in Aceh. However, he was disappointed at the rise of violence approaching the April 2012 elections, which disrupted the plan for ongoing and future

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7 Kamaruzzaman, interview in Banda Aceh, 18 January 2012.
8 Kamaruzzaman, interview in Banda Aceh, 18 January 2012.
investments. He worried that Aceh’s development and growth would be set back if not all groups could control their own political agendas.

**Peaceful Elections**

International observers stated that the 2012 election in Aceh ran quite peacefully. ANFREL reported that although there was some violence that occurred for a few months before the election, overall they witnessed a peaceful voting process. The International Crisis Group (2012) argued that the rise of killings and violent attacks between December 2011 and March 2012 could threaten the peace in Aceh. ICG showed evidence that the killing of fifteen or more people approaching the 2012 election were closely related to the election. Fear, intimidation and trauma became important factors in the support of Party Aceh candidates, who “guaranteed’ stability and security”. Törnquist stated that “democracy had to be set aside in order to ‘save peace’…if it (Party Aceh) was not elected, peace might be at risk” (2013: 245–246).

Aceh held its elections for governor in 2012, an event that underscored the significant contribution democracy had made to peace since Aceh’s 2006 ballot. Many Acehnese welcomed this new sense of democracy. About 78 percent of voters participated in the 2009 presidential elections, the largest turnout for direct elections in any region in the country. But as the poll approached, flaring tensions among Acehnese leaders – especially between GAM elites – had observers concerned about potential threats to the longevity of peaceful democracy in Aceh. A number of former GAM combatants were killed and local Acehnese saw this as closely related to the tensions and rivalries among political groups in the province. The pending election had been cancelled five times. In the first instance, it was scheduled for October 2011. Then it was rescheduled for 16 February 2012. However, after some disputes between Jakarta and Aceh and the rise of violence, which many viewed as being closely
related to current politics, the date was changed yet again. Finally, it was agreed that the
election would be held on 9 April 2012. These cancellations drove up the cost of holding the
election. Local government gave the Independent Election Commission (KIP) 210 billion
rupiah to manage the elections. The budget increased after the elections were rescheduled
from February to April 2012, to provide the salaries of those people working on the election
committees from provincial to village levels (Atjehpost.com, 12 January 2012).

Disputes between various candidates of the PA and other Acehnese politicians were no
surprise to GAM’s legal team, which gathered to discuss the UUPA draft. Kamaruzzaman,
who joined the GAM legal team, stated that “I warned Fery Mursyidan Baldan, the
chairperson of the special committee (Pansus) of DPR discussing RUUPA, that the decision
to approve only one of the independent candidates would create big problems in the
future”. He argued that the laws were designed for special autonomy, which psychologically
and sociologically is very different from the Helsinki MoU.

Party Aceh finally decided to run its candidates in the 9 April elections. However, it lost some
local leaders who had joined PA, but later separated from PA to join the election efforts of
independent groups. The declaration was attended by more than thirty thousand participants
from all over Aceh Province. PA officially announced its support for Abdullah (former GAM
minister of foreign affairs) as the gubernatorial candidate and Manaf (former GAM
commander after Abdullah Shafei and later head of PA) as the candidate for the post of vice-
governor. In order to strengthen the political legitimacy of the PA candidates, Manaf invited
two TNI generals –Soenarko and Djalil Yusuf– both of them former heads of Kodam Iskandar
Muda of Aceh. Soenarko stated that he had had a good relationship with the head of GAM
since 2000, when he worked in Kopassus and had duties in Aceh. This relationship continued
after he was appointed as head of Kodam in 2008–2009. A member of the PA elite, Hasbi

9Kamaruzzaman, interview in Banda Aceh, 18 January 2012.
Abdullah, argued that this was the result of reconciliation between two former heads of the military, TNI and GAM. Soenarko had personal reasons to accept the invitation to join Timses (the dream team) of Zaini–Muzakir (popularly called ZIKIR). He was very glad to join the ZIKIR camp in order to stop the progress of Yusuf, with whom he had had a bad relationship during his time as head of Kodam.¹⁰

Soenarko’s participation in Manaf’s camp was influential in rural Aceh. Local KPA/PA leaders and members were very confident that they would win the elections. They felt that the support of Soenarko would attract more Javanese in Aceh to vote for Abdullah and Manaf.

The head of the KPA in Takengon, where Soenarko’s Javanese mother originated, argued that more PETA members, the Javanese militia in Central Aceh who had fought against GAM during the conflict, now supported ZIKIR.¹¹

On the other hand, Yusuf’s camp responded that Soenarko’s role in supporting ZIKIR would be positive for Yusuf. They said that the Acehnese, especially GAM members, were still traumatised by the role of Kopassus and the military in fighting against GAM during the conflict, when they killed thousands of GAM fighters. The Acehnese would not easily forget the violent experiences inflicted by military forces. Soenarko was stated to be responsible for the killing of GAM members in 2000 when he headed the Kopassus forces in Aceh.¹²

However, Soenarko argued that it was urgent for the Acehnese to forgive all violence conducted by parties involved in the conflict and to focus on the future by accommodating broader political groups to develop Aceh.¹³ Soenarko was one of three retired TNI members who joined PA’s winning team of candidates for governor and heads of districts. In two interviews by this author with Soenarko, firstly during the declaration of PA candidates in

¹⁰ Soenarko, retired general, interview in Banda Aceh, February 2012.
¹¹ Interview in Takengon, February 2012.
¹² Informal talks with Yusuf’s team in Banda Aceh, February 2012.
¹³ Soenarko, interviews in Blang Pidie, 3 April 2012.
Banda Aceh in early February, and while he was campaigning along with Manaf on 3 April 2012, Soenarko stated during the public campaign that “my involvement in PA is to prove that PA is an open party for all Acehnese, regardless of ethnic and religious affiliation. I also invited Javanese in Aceh to choose the candidates from PA”.14

On the other hand, Soenarko’s recruits were anxious for PA consolidation. In some regions of Aceh Timur and Aceh Tengah, soon after PA announced its recruitment of Soenarko, the KPA commander of Pidie District, Tgk Sarjani Abdullah, who was now a bupati candidate for Pidie, confirmed that Soenarko was a strong symbol of reconciliation between TNI and TNA. Sarjani stated that local TNI members had never disturbed the activism of PA since Soenarko had joined Muzakir’s team. He said that, in the past, TNI personnel used to remove PA flags.15 PA was possibly the only party that put up their flags in main streets all over Aceh from province to villages; these flags flew in the streets since the PA declaration of running in the 2012 election. PA also allowed their members in cities and districts to label their private cars in support of local PA candidates for positions of governor, mayors and bupati. Cars that had pictures of candidates and the text, ‘vote for the candidates’, were free to drive all over Aceh. Some parties warned the Panwaslu (elections monitoring committee) to ask PA to clear its “early campaigns”.

The role of former GAM leaders in PA is crucial for the continuation of peace, stability and development. PA was optimistic about winning the elections in 2012. Manaf stated his party’s plan for the prosperity of Aceh:

We will work with all parties to exchange knowledge and fulfil all aspects that are urgently needed in Aceh development. We will recruit experts (from Aceh and outside Aceh) on education, health and agriculture. Our

14 Soenarko, campaign speech in Blang Pidie, 3 April 2012.
15 Sarjani Abdullah, head of KPA Kabupaten Pidie, interview in Pidie, 14 February 2012.
commitment is that the priority of the programs should be addressed for poorer communities (Nurlis and Yuswardi 2012).16

The Prospect for Democracy

The number of violent incidents in Aceh after the reintegration of GAM has been much lower than during the conflict period. In general, Aceh communities have enjoyed stability and peacebuilding since 2006. People are free and safe to travel all around Aceh. However, the fear of possible attacks rose as the April 2012 election approached. Such a spike in violence had occurred before the election in 2006 (provincial and district elections) and 2009 (regional and national legislative elections and presidential elections). The quality of democracy is threatened by violence and terror, which was orchestrated by certain groups in Aceh and Jakarta for their own political interests. Soenarko, a retired major-general and former commander of Kopassus, stated that some Acehnese political groups created terror and violence to get Jakarta’s support for their political proposals (Soenarko 2012).

Most analysts agreed that the rise of violence was closely related to the 2012 election. However, it is difficult to prove whether PA members or leaders were involved in the killings and attacks as a means of postponing the date of the election until after 16 February, when Yusuf completed his term as governor of Aceh. Other groups within Aceh may have created instability for their own business gains. Thousands of guns used during the years of conflict are still available in Aceh, hidden by local people. A former weapons trader, who supported GAM during the ceasefire in 2000, stated that the Helsinki accord failed to negotiate the destruction of existing weapons owned by Acehnese communities, whether they were linked to TNA/GAM forces or members of other militias (Ahmad 2012). GAM reported less than

thirty percent of its weapons were destroyed, as monitored by AMM. A former GAM negotiator confirmed that it was difficult to declare an accurate number of weapons owned by GAM. Members were still traumatised by the Indonesian Government’s failure to fulfil its promise in previous peace negotiations (Djuli 2010).

The Aceh police had frequently announced that hiding weapons was illegal under Indonesian law. They welcomed the Acehnese community to hand over any weapons they had or to show existing weapons to the police (Mardira 2012). However, the number of weapons handed over was lower than expected. A former GAM commander in Pidie argued that many Acehnese bought weapons out of their own pockets during the conflict: “The price of the weapons was quite expensive, around 10 million rupiah for an AK 47. If the Indonesian government is serious about ridding Aceh of weapons, they have to provide sufficient reimbursement to the weapons’ owners” (Intan 2012).

An effective campaign strategy is one of the most significant instruments of any election. During the campaign, candidates for governor or head of district provide their leadership platforms and their agendas in order to gain support from constituents. To manage good and ethical campaigns, an independent election committee regulates how each candidate and their team can attract voters. In post-conflict regions, campaigns can exploit the memory of a traumatic past with stories of violence, threats and other activities which go against human rights. This strategy has been used by most candidates in Aceh. However, Abdullah and Manaf successfully raised more sensitive and emotive issues. They said that the victory of their team would allow Aceh to become a strong, stable and prosperous region. They appealed to the Acehnese identity.

The Acehnese identity is strongly established from the golden period of Aceh’s history, when the sultans of Aceh managed their kingdoms well and established international diplomacy
which aided prosperity and stability. This history is reflected by current government and the people of Aceh, who are moved to achieve a success story like the sultans did in the past. The current spirit of Acehnese politics and development comes from their hope of becoming an independent and prosperous region, able to take a stronger role in maintaining regional and international stability. They have begun to take these steps by sharing and supporting peace initiatives in conflict regions in Southeast Asia, as well as other regions in Asia and Africa.

Abdullah and Manaf, in their campaign for the 2012 election, said that GAM’s struggle was motivated by defending the dignity of the Acehnese. They claimed that their participation in local politics was to apply the mandate of the Helsinki peace agreement and to implement the ideals of the Acehnese as prosperous and respected citizens.

The campaign strategies of Abdullah-Manaf and Yusuf-Muhyan will be compared and it will be argued that the messages they delivered influenced voters to support them. Abdullah and Manaf, known as Zikir (means ‘reciting’), conducted 55 campaigns from 22 March to 5 April 2012. They visited many cities and districts in Aceh province. Zikir’s team was the most effective team compared with other candidates. They were supported by a strong network in the grassroots, especially in rural Aceh, which was controlled by the KPA, a civil society group comprising former combatants and affiliated to Party Aceh. PA arranged their schedule to support the victory of their candidates for heads of cities and districts. The slogan they used was “Struggle and peace” (perjuangan and perdamaian), which is simple and clear. In their campaign, they stated 21 promises (janji-janji) divided into three blocks. Firstly, they had promises for grassroots voters, that is, they were easily understood by rural communities. However, many of these were irrational. For example, some campaign items made promises such as: a “pilgrimage to Mecca by cruise (number 7); free pilgrimage for adult Acehnese (number 8); a monthly fund support of 1 million rupiahs for each family from oil and gas revenue (number 15)” Thus, they played with the emotional dreams of rural communities. A
The Results of the 2012 Elections

KIP Aceh officially announced the results of the Aceh gubernatorial election on 17 April 2012 and confirmed the results for the 17 mayoral and district elections. The 9 April second gubernatorial election in Aceh had a slightly lower participation rate of 75.73%. The Abdullah–Manaf (PA) team, former foreign minister and former commander of the military wing of GAM, won the election, gaining 1,327,695 votes (55.78%). Former governor Yusuf received 694,515 votes (29.18%). Yusuf’s partner was Muhyan Yunan, the former head of the Provincial Public Works. These were followed by Muhammad Nazar-Nova Iriansyah (Demokrat, SIRA), former head of SIRA, incumbent vice-governor and head of Demokrat Party in Aceh, with 7.65%. The other two independents, Darni M. Daud, former rector of Unsyiah, and Teungku Ahmad Tajuddin, received 96,767 votes (4.07%) and 79,330 votes (3.33%), respectively (KIP Aceh 2012).

Since PA’s candidate pair managed to secure more than 55 percent of the vote, well above the 30 percent minimum requirement, a second round was not needed. In the elections for heads of districts and mayors, PA won in six districts and cities: Aceh Besar, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Aceh Jaya, Bireuen, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara and Aceh Timur. These were strongholds of the former combatant party. However, it appeared that second-round elections would take place in 5 of the 17 districts that had held local elections: Aceh Barat Daya, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat, Sabang and Langsa. No candidate pair in any of those locations appeared to have won more than 30 percent of the vote. According to electoral regulations, these second-round elections should take place no later than 60 days after the first round. PA lost in
Aceh Barat and won in Aceh Barat Daya, Nagan Raya, Sabang and Langsa. So the PA candidates won in 11 of 17 districts and cities, and as governor and vice-governor. This result proves the political dominance of the former combatants, PA, which is also traditionally supported by Islamic schools (Dayah) and the former military structure of GAM, KPA, which has influence in almost all villages in Aceh.

**Conclusion**

PA won the 2012 election as it did in 2006 and 2009. But that year was different: it was a reminder for PA to change its strategy by not using violence and intimidation as an instrument for getting support from the grassroots. It must become an effective modern party which attracts participation from the grassroots based on its programs. A challenge came from peer combatants who ran an independent candidate, incumbent Yusuf. Furthermore, Yusuf established a new local party only a few months after the elections – the Aceh National Party (PNA) – which is discussed in the next chapter.

The platform of PNA is different from that of PA. PNA has attempted to unite the leadership of the Acehnese people comprising a variety of stakeholders, such as local and national parties, CSOs, NGOs, businesspeople, ulama and academics. Even though former combatants – that is, Yusuf’s faction – are dominant in the party, it provides an open opportunity for non-combatants to actively participate in the structure of PNA or as candidates for parliament. Hasan Tiro is still the symbolic head of PNA; the party claims that it continues to uphold Tiro’s ideals in order to develop Acehnese politics for the dignity and prosperity of the Acehnese people.

The existence of former combatants, who are easily exploited by the elite for political purposes, is important to evaluate, as these groups are fragile in relation to the interests of individuals or groups with higher authority. Even though Ayah Banta argued that his team’s
violent attacks were motivated by disappointment in Yusuf, Nevada (2014) stated that the high rate of poverty among former combatants is a crucial factor. They are dependent on fresh funds and are only gradually learning to empower themselves. Some of them have begun to work as farmers, fishermen, local traders, teachers and labourers. They consider working their best way to keep the peace and are reluctant to return to conflict.

Friction also occurred between combatants from PA and non-combatant individuals and parties. Interviews conducted with candidates for heads of districts in Pidie and Bener Meriah during the 2012 elections revealed that they had been intimidated by PA with threats towards their families and attacks on members of their support teams. A woman candidate for head of the Bener Meriah district complained that she had even received a threat from the local ulama that women are not allowed to be political leaders, because they claimed it was against Islamic Shariah law. This problem of religious interpretation also affected Megawati Sukarnoputri when she was the presidential candidate in the 1999 national elections.

The next chapter examines the 2014 legislative and presidential elections in Aceh. Candidates from local and national parties competed. In this election, relations between local and national politics were contested: PA and the Gerindra Party formed a political coalition. In return, PA supported presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto, who won by a small margin against Joko Widodo. A new local party associated with former combatants from Yusuf’s camp, PNA, formed a coalition with the NasDem Party. In the presidential election, there was rivalry between Governor Abdullah and Vice-Governor Manaf due to their support for different candidates: Abdullah supported Widodo and Manaf voted for Subianto. Their different political choices affected the dynamics of local government policy in Aceh.
Chapter 7

Democracy and Peace in Aceh: The 2014 Election

Introduction

Indonesia, a pluralistic country both religiously and ethnically, is also diverse in its local politics. A rising sense of local ethnicity and religiosity has strategically changed the perspective on democracy; in addition, local politics has affected the structure of national politics. Decentralisation also influences the political sector, with differences at the local and national levels. The contention underlying the present study is that Indonesian politics, in general, is secular, but politics in Aceh, with its strong sense of ethnicity and religious values, present a new challenge in terms of the practice of democracy. The question is usually raised as to whether Islam is compatible with democracy. Aceh province has implemented Islamic law to serve as a constitutional basis for the structure of a secular democracy. In a political context, it is instructive to understand how political parties in Aceh have to accommodate the views of Islamists in reconciling this seeming contradiction between the religious and the secular.

Mietzner and Aspinall (2010:1) stated that scholars, in explaining Indonesia as a democracy, commonly “qualify the noun with a variety of adjectives, such as ‘collusive’ or ‘delegative’, ‘consolidated’ but ‘patrimonial’, ‘low quality’ or ‘secular’”. These qualifications of democracy as practised in Aceh do not, however, stop the Acehnese people from actively participating in the liberal democracy of post-Suharto Indonesia. Not only is there freedom of political participation, but other instruments of democracy, such as the media, also enjoy freedom of expression.

Changes in the political structure at the national level naturally influence the dynamics of local politics. National political parties extend their power to the provincial and district
political arenas. In Aceh, the national parties have attempted to gain votes from local support bases. This model has created deep political divisions in Aceh, in particular among GAM elites and combatants. In the 2009 elections, the Democrat Party gained total support from PA by more than ninety percent of votes. PA elites hoped to get benefits from the ruling Democrat regime (Hillman 2012). However, they were disappointed with weak support from Yudhoyono’s government, where proposals from Aceh that were endorsed by PA did not receive enough support from the President.

Thus, PA has changed its strategy since the 2012 gubernatorial elections, when the Democrat Party proposed its own candidate. Prabowo Subianto of Gerindra Party helped PA by providing a significant budget for the 2012 campaigns of Abdullah and Manaf. Sofyan Dawod, a Yusuf strongman, stated that Subianto donated 50 billion rupiah to PA to run its campaign, a claim that was denied by PA (Anfrel 2012: 17). Azmi, head of the BPPA (Barisan Pendukung Partai Aceh, Party Aceh Supporter Front) claimed to have witnesses from inside PA that Manaf received funding for his campaign. It was widely believed these funds were allocated by Subianto to PA as an investment in the 2014 presidential election and for furthering mutual political and business relations. Soenarko, Subianto’s trusted man for maintaining relations with Manaf, said that it is “a mutual relation between former special forces and former combatants who experienced violent battle during the conflict and now genuinely agree to make a permanent peace for the future of Acehnese and Indonesia” (Soenarko 2012).

The 2014 elections were crucial for local and national parties, not only because of the legislative elections, but also because the new president would play a pivotal role for the Acehnese. Yudhoyono had completed his second and final term as president. In 2014 Indonesians would vote for a new president. For the Acehnese, the new president is hoped and expected to support the process of development, democratisation and peacebuilding.
This chapter examines the dynamics of the 2014 legislative and presidential elections in Aceh in four parts, which aim to define: firstly, the way in which the violence and friction following the 2012 gubernatorial elections influenced the political environment before the 2014 election campaign began; secondly, how the legislative elections in 2014 were managed and how the results surprised the competing parties; thirdly, the way in which the presidential elections and the candidates – Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto – influenced the political dynamics in Aceh; and finally, how the prospect of democracy in Aceh after the 2014 elections might influence development and permanent peace. It is argued here that the Acehnese adopted a particularly critical attitude towards the candidates and parties they voted for through a desire to ensure that the winning candidates and parties are able to develop a political environment that will maintain peace and security. Economic prosperity and security are among the factors that Acehnese voters consider urgent for the future of Aceh.

This post-conflict election in Aceh about a decade after the peace accord worked quite peacefully. The small amount of violence did not provoke further conflicts. This goes against the argument of liberalists who have said that democracy should be facilitated. Greener argued:

> Advocates of contemporary post-conflict state-building efforts often operate under the assumption that outsiders can, and indeed should, help with or even drive this process – a notion that parallels the theme of the democratisation literature of the 1990s, which argued in essence that democracy can and should be ‘manufactured’ (Greener 2012: 419).

In post-conflict regions, the management of democracy takes great effort to ensure all parties respect others and participate in elections freely and fairly. Therefore, third parties are crucial for monitoring elections. Third parties in this context are security forces, police, international
monitoring agencies and CSOs. Greener (2012: 419) added that: “in practice, the term ‘post-
conflict state-building’ therefore tends to refer to the role of external actors – predominantly
members of the international community (including regional bodies, the UN, or various
coalitions of states) – who have the resources and motivations to shape other
states”. Greener’s argument is relevant to understanding how democratic institutions are
crucial in holding peaceful and productive elections. Elections are part of state-building,
which Fukuyama defined as “creating political and economic institutions that will be capable
of democratic governance and economic development – in other words, modelled on
neoliberal forms of politics and economics” (Greener 2012: 420). In the early period of the
reintegration process of GAM after the 2005 Helsinki peace accord, international
organisations played a crucial role in maintaining peaceful and democratic elections in 2006,
when Yusuf, former spokesperson of GAM, won the gubernatorial election. The culture of
democracy within GAM and Aceh contributed to a level of democracy which gave
opportunity to all Acehnese to participate in local and national politics.

Furthermore, democracy has been consolidated in Aceh to ensure the transition of politics
and peacebuilding. Hague and Harrop (2013: 55) said that: “consolidation of democracy has
only occurred when the new institutions provide an accepted framework for political
competition”. In this democracy, people have the chance to participate in the elections by
running political parties or voting for certain candidates, even though, in some districts, voter
behaviour is influenced by local politics and security issues. The consolidation of democracy
is greater after an elections in which the losing candidates respected the results and the winner
accommodated the voices of the Acehnese in local government programs. However, the
consolidation of democracy was challenged by the rise of violence approaching election day
targeting MP candidates and supporters of the parties.
Violence and Friction

The human rights NGO coalition of Aceh (2012) reported that it documented approximately 20 cases of physical violence and intimidation from 1 to 11 April 2012, the dates of the gubernatorial, head of district and mayoral elections in Aceh. As stated in the previous chapter with regard to the 2012 election, the gubernatorial election was held on 9 April 2012 with a voter turnout of 75.73%. The valid votes for the gubernatorial election numbered 2,380,386 of 3,244,729 registered votes (Anfrel 2012). Most of the violence and intimidation targeted Yusuf camp members and sympathisers, and other members of the winning teams of candidates for head of district and mayor competing against PA candidates. Unfortunately, this friction continued in the 2014 elections.

Not only are the former commanders, leaders and Helsinki negotiating team of GAM choosing different candidates for the presidential elections, but also the establishment of a new local party – the Aceh National Party – is challenging the domination of PA over former combatants. Muksalmina (2013) argued that the purpose of founding the PNA was to integrate former combatants and non-combatants and that this is the true duty of GAM – to protect and embrace all Acehnese without exception (Muksalmina 2013).

The International Crisis Group released a report in 2012 stating that, in order to understand the violence that occurred approaching the 2012 gubernatorial election, it is necessary to understand the war within GAM. Chris Subiantoro, deputy head of Kontras of Aceh, revealed that friction has been occurring since the 2006 gubernatorial election until the present day, when from January to March 2014 about 48 incidents of related violence occurred and two people were killed (Taufuqurroham 2014). Members of local parties, especially PA, frequently intimidated and attacked sympathisers of other parties. In this election, PNA supporters were the main target of these violent attacks. On March 2014, a group of women
from a village in Lhokseumawe had to lie to PA officials in their village that they were going to a nearby market for a celebration and not showing any signs of support for PNA. This was a safe way to join the PNA campaign in Lhokseumawe. Democratic freedom is limited in rural villages where PA dominates.

The establishment of PNA is an alternative choice for some combatants who are tired of the violent behaviour of PA and the weak leadership of the PA elite; their failure to guide their members to protect the community has also attracted criticism. Djuli criticised the behaviour of party supporters, who he said were easily provoked by candidates. Money politics and intimidation are counterproductive to democratisation and peacebuilding in Aceh (Djuli 2014). For the Acehnese people, peace and security are their first priorities, direct elections are probably second and thirdly, the gaining of a better future for Aceh is widely supported. The seeking of victory through intimidation, terror and killings has destroyed, it is contended here, the foundation of peace and democracy in Aceh, with devastating results for the economic development of the province. During the periods of conflict, in particular from 2000 to 2005 when GAM gained strength against the TNI, the Acehnese suffered economically; the percentage of poor people in that period was about 30 percent (Statistics Aceh 2014).

The friction played out more strongly on the ground. During the 2014 election campaign, attacks against and killings of supporters of opposing candidates were common. Intimidation, anger and opportunistic attacks on opponents became a nightmare for the Acehnese people. To respond to this, associations of Acehnese women conducted long marches demanding that the parties and the government stop the intimidation, in particular against women (Kompas, 12 March 2014). The Aceh Election Network (JPA – Jaringan Pemilu Aceh) consists of five CSOs: ACSTF; Aceh Institute; Forum LSM Aceh; LBH Banda Ace; Mata; and Solidaritas Perempuan Aceh. This network reported serious intimidation in the legislative elections and found that a PA local member entered three voting areas and shouted to all...
voters to vote for PA. The head of the PPS (election committee) tried to stop the provocateur, who later threatened the committee (Jaringan Pemilu Aceh 2014). Among the election fraud that the ACSTF found was: (1) coercion from Gampong Pulo Mangat, North Aceh, at the TPS 27 polling station, conducted by a PA campaign member who entered polling booths and forced people to vote for PA candidates; (2) money politics by MP candidates, such as when a candidate from a national political party was caught red-handed distributing cash door-to-door to residents between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. one night prior to the voting; and (3) use of government facilities to campaign and to influence voters. This was especially true of the incumbent heads of districts (Simanjuntak 2014).

Hafidh, a representative of the Elections Supervisory Committee (Panwaslu), was concerned about the difficulty for Panwaslu in following up the report of fraud. He said:“the problem is that community members are unwilling to become witnesses, as well as lack of evidence, which is hindering Panwaslu in conducting further investigations” (Simanjuntak 2014).

Violent attacks that left some people dead occurred in Aceh. The Aceh Democratic Forum recorded 36 local cases of political violence since the beginning of the campaign period. The Forum’s spokesman, Agusta Mukhtar, said that the violence had doubled between 1 and 24 March 2014 with shootings, assaults, vandalism and damage of property, and grenade attacks (Yates 2014).

The violence began on 6 February 2014, when the head of PNAof Kuta Makmur was beaten to death by members of PA. On 2 March 2014, a PNA legislative candidate was shot dead. A month later on 1 April 2014, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a car decked out with political banners. Three people were killed, including a child of 18 months (Yates 2014). This attack targeted a PA legislative candidate as the car had a PA banner, and this was revenge for the 1 April shooting of a PNA legislative candidate. PA and PNA, both founded by
former combatants, competed violently in the 2014 legislative election. They could not abandon the method of combatants for managing relations with rival groups.

Violent attacks are common for combatants. In a democratic culture, former combatants need to transform themselves and abandon their old habits. There are many former combatant leaders who are committed to developing inclusive and democratic politics in Aceh. Inclusive politics accommodate various individuals from different backgrounds who have the same commitment to developing the economy and preserving peace in Aceh post-conflict. Former combatants need to learn, formally or informally, how to serve the community through political parties. Most people of Aceh have entrusted their leadership at provincial and district levels to former combatants, since they won in 11 of 17 districts and cities in the 2012 elections.

A further challenge is that weak institutions such as the police contributed to the rise of violence. Zulfikar Muhammad, executive director of the Human Rights NGO Coalition of Aceh, confirmed the weak position of police:

We feel our local police performance has been weak, especially in reducing gun violence. Our people continue to face acts of brutality ahead of the elections, despite additional troops deployed in Aceh. We challenge the National Police to solve the [April 1] shooting before the April 9 legislative elections. If they fail to do so, then they have failed to provide the citizens of Aceh with a sense of security during a crucial time (Yates 2014).

The police and TNI were deployed in the province of Aceh prior to the election. To secure the election, Aceh police chief Insp. Gen. Hamidi claimed that Aceh police had deployed 9133 personnel, or two-thirds of their total personnel, to safeguard polling stations across Aceh. Police also deployed 1400 officers of the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) and 341 personnel
from the National Police headquarters in Jakarta. In addition, Major General Pandu Wibowo, Iskandar Muda Military Command chief, said that TNI sent 2100 soldiers to the polling stations. This was a joint security operation to respond to the rise of violent attacks, especially between supporters of PA and PNA, two local parties that represent former GAM combatants (Perdani 2014).

However, the security forces did not properly protect democracy or free and fair elections. They only managed to secure the province in general. Even the Aceh police could not find the criminals involved in some attacks prior to the election. The head of Panwaslu, Asqalani, said he would investigate every report provided there was sufficient evidence to substantiate it. He said Panwaslu had received 34 reports of alleged violations from 13 districts in the province of Aceh, including the killing of three people, one of them an 18-month-old infant, a few days before the election. However, these violent attacks could not be solved by police and did not provide clear evidence of the breaking of election regulations. Bireun police chief Adj. Sr Cmr Khadafi said the victims had been riding in a car covered in pictures associated with PA when attackers suddenly fired shots at the car at an intersection in Geulanggang Tenguh village in Biruen subdistrict. It was assumed the attackers were from another local party which was taking revenge after some attacks targeting its leaders and members (Hasan 2014).

Women in Aceh Politics

Women candidates from various local and national political parties contesting the 2014 legislative election conducted a long march for a peaceful election in Banda Aceh. The women candidates urged all parties in the province of Aceh to provide freedom to women to choose any legislative candidate without intimidation. The long march started in Blang Padang Field of Banda Aceh and received attention from the people along the road. The
chairperson of the Political House of Aceh Women (RPPA), Idaryani, said that the long march aimed to support peaceful elections, as well as introducing the women candidates to the voters: “here we do not carry the party colour, but the female candidates who will enliven the political exchanges for the five years to come. Here are the candidates that will strengthen and support for the quality of democracy in Aceh” (Kompas, 12 March 2014).

During the long march, the Aceh women participating in the 2014 elections signed a petition for a political agenda: rights for reproductive health and sexuality; rights for education, especially for women; and political rights which were not discriminatory against women and minority groups (Kompas, 12 March 2014). In Aceh politics, women are discriminated against not only within the parties but also within the society, which still considers that women’s participation in political activism and leadership goes against Islamic law. This is the experience of Wahyuni, a woman activist who ran as a candidate for vice bupati in Bener Meriah, who was told by local ulama that women should not be leaders in politics. According to Siti Zuhro from the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI): “women still face the social stigma prevalent in patriarchal society that perceives men as more dominant and capable than women. It is not true that Islam restricts women. But in Indonesia, not all Muslim give equal opportunities to women” (Jong 2014). Based on a study of women in Aceh conducted by LIPI, it was concluded that:

Women were found to be discouraged from entering politics and becoming community leaders because of local conservative Islamic values. Aceh is one of the provinces with the lowest number of women at the local council level. In Aceh, only four out of the 69 council members are women. Besides social stigma, female politicians face constraints from the government and political parties’ lack of commitment to the improvement of the quality of female political candidates (Jong 2014).
Women are protected by law underscoring affirmative action: women must account for a minimum of 30 percent of a political party’s list of candidates for the House of Representatives and local legislature (DPRD) and the Regional Representatives Council (DPD). Currently, 108 of 506 lawmakers in the House are women – only 18.06 percent. This number is much lower than in neighbouring Timor-Leste, which has 38.5 percent female representation in its parliament (Jong 2014). However, Sigit Pamungkas, commissioner of the General Election Commission (KPU), argued that the minimum requirement of 30 percent is not necessarily a pro-women policy: “individuals who are competent and are concerned about gender issues. So, just because the legislative candidates list has met the minimum requirement of 30 percent, it doesn’t necessarily mean they are individuals with pro-gender ambitions” (Jong 2014).

Training and workshops are needed especially for women in order to be able to choose candidates who respect women and prioritise the rights of women. A women’s NGO, Women Solidarity Bungoeng Jeumpa of Aceh (SP Aceh), confirmed that political education is important for women. In the 2014 election, SP Aceh conducted political training in ten villages which was intended to empower women to exercise their political rights and vote for candidates who supported the interests of women. In the training, women voters learned how to trace the track records of candidates and monitor the 2014 elections (Solidaritas Perempuan 2014). Illiza Sa’aduddin Djamal, now Mayor of Banda Aceh, said:

Women’s activities were never attended by the leaders in Banda Aceh. Every time that leaders or prominent figures were invited, only a representative would come. But I won people’s trust at the election by spending most of my time with my people, especially women. I always make them my priority (Brown 2014).
PNA candidate Cut Nurlina agreed with Djamal that women should be prioritised in politics. She stated that: “I really hope that by being elected I can do something for people in my area. When I heard that there is intimidation, murder threats, it doesn’t make me afraid or want to back down” (Brown 2014).
Surprising Results

The 9 April 2014 legislative election in Aceh resulted in some surprises. Firstly, Acehnese voters delivered a clear message of disapproval to the ruling PA, which had been dominant in Aceh government and politics, winning the 2009 legislative election. PA still won the 2014 election but with considerably decreased percentages in its east coast strongholds. Secondly, its serious challenger came not from a GAM-led local party but from national parties, especially the Nasdem Party. Finally, its political partnership with Gerindra affected the decrease in the numbers of voters. This means the alliance weakened the politics of PA (IPAC 2014).

In the early phase of the 2014 legislative election, former combatants supporting the PA–Gerindra coalition were confident that this move would strengthen its political power. They claimed that PA had a guaranteed base of strong ground support, while Gerindra stated that it would provide sufficient budget for the 2014 elections. The head of Gerindra Aceh, T.A. Khalid, stated at the launch of the Gerindra campaign in Lhokseumawe city and North Aceh on 24 February 2012 that “we expect to gain a victory for PA in the Aceh parliament and a Gerindra win for the national parliament” (Agus 2014). Khalid was confident that Gerindra, supported by PA, would dominate the vote and be able to facilitate Acehnese aspirations for their place in the central government (Khalid 2014).

Gerindra and PA shared their campaign and verbally supported each other. Acehnese scholars argued that there would be “a rebellion” of combatants against Manaf (Hamid, interviews in Jakarta, March 2014). Combatants opposed the political coalition silently by not voting for the candidates from Gerindra, as it had been founded by Subianto, former commander of Kopassus, the group responsible for killings and violence against GAM during the conflict before the Helsinki peace accord.
It is surprising that the legislative election of 2014 brought a bitter result for Gerindra. In the provincial legislature, Gerindra only gained 2 seats or 2.5% of a total of 81 seats. In the national legislature, Gerindra, which predicted it would get 80% of the total seats, only gained 2 seats or about 15.4% of 13 seats. A surprising result also eventuated for the Democratic Party, which had dominated the 2009 national legislature when it won 7 of 13 seats or about 53%; in 2014, it dropped by 2 seats to win just 14.5% of seats (see Table 7.1). This result was contrary to the expectation that Gerindra Aceh would finance PA’s campaign and be rewarded by winning in the national parliament in a similar fashion to the Demokrat Party gains in the 2009 elections.

Furthermore, KPA was not solid in supporting Gerindra. Even though PA officially declared its support for Gerindra’s candidates for the national parliament, former local commanders affiliated with KPA flirted with other parties. For example, KPA Pasee declared its support for Fernandez, a Golkar candidate, who won the seat in the national parliament (Fahmi 2014).

Table 7.1. Seats in the Provincial Legislature (DPRA) after the 2009 and 2014 Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golkar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partai Patriot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKPI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partai Daulat Aceh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasdem</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The decrease of about 10 percent of PA seats in the 2014 election (see Table 7.2) requires further analysis: firstly, some combatants close to Yusuf established a new party – the PNA – which created friction among former combatants; secondly, PA performed poorly at the local level. To gain more votes from a majority of Acehnese, PA needed to open up its program and embrace more political and civil society leaders. Thirdly, there rose a new national party headed by an Acehnese – the Nasdem Party – which gained 9 seats in the Aceh legislature and 2 seats in the national legislature (see Table 7.2). Yusuf (2014) argued that victory should not be sought through intimidation and this political approach was punished, as the political domination of PA decreased.

Table 7.2. Seats in the National Parliament after the 2009 and 2014 Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 Elected MPs</th>
<th>2014 Elected MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PKS (15.4%)</td>
<td>Nasir Jamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>PKS (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. Raihan Iskandar</td>
<td>Nasir Jamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demokrat (53.%)</td>
<td>T. Riefky Harsya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demokrat (15.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T. Riefky Harsya</td>
<td>T. Riefky Harsya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ali Yacob</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mirwan Amir</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ir Nova Iriansyah</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Golkar (15.4%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teuku Irwan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sayed Fuad Zakaria</td>
<td>M Salim Fachry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presidential Elections

It was predicted by some analysts that Subianto’s financial support for the campaign of Abdullah and Manaf in the 2012 gubernatorial election was a part of his plan to run as a candidate for the Indonesian presidency two years later. Sunarko claimed that the 2012 election was “a place for reconciliation between former special forces and combatants” (Sunarko 2012). He realised his military men had killed combatants during the conflict when he was the head of Kodam Iskandar Muda of Aceh. As stated in the previous chapter, Sunarko actively joined campaigns in some cities and districts. His main duty was persuading former militias who were pro-government during the conflict to support Abdullah and Manaf as governor and vice-governor of Aceh. In the 2014 election, Sunarko became a major member of Subianto’s winning campaign in Aceh.

Manaf, vice-governor candidate and former GAM commander, declared after the legislative election campaign in February 2014 that PA totally supported Subianto as the presidential candidate in the July 2014 election. At the official launch of Subianto as presidential candidate in Jakarta on 16 June 2014, Manaf, head of the advisory board of Gerindra Aceh,
claimed that “if SBY got 93 percent in the 2009 elections, Prabowo will get more than 90 percent” (*Republika*, 16 June 2014).

The friction among the PA ranks with regards to support for the presidential candidate was clear after Governor Abdullah officially declared on 26 June 2014 his support for Kalla and Widodo (known as Jokowi-JK) in the presidential election. On the first day of his visit during the campaign in Aceh, Kalla prayed in the Baiturrahman mosque and visited Hasan Tiro’s tomb, accompanied by Governor Abdullah (Taufiqqurahman 2014). Abdullah said that his support of Kalla was due to his central role in the Helsinki peace agreement: “this support will strengthen the effort to implement the Helsinki peace accord and UUPA” (Djalil 2014). Kalla was a key figure in Acehnese support for Jokowi-JK in the 2014 presidential election. It was only Kalla who attended the campaign in Aceh.

During the campaign period, Nairn’s articles on the role of Subianto’s team in the assassinations of PA activists were popularly discussed among human rights activists, journalists and the members of Acehnese parties. Nairn claimed that Maj. Gen. Sunarko, a campaign team member for Abdullah–Manaf and now supporting the campaign of Subianto–Rajasa, was involved in assassinating some eight PA activists during the 2009 elections. Nairn claimed that “at least eight PA activists were assassinated in the run-up to the April elections. The killings were, according to the officials with knowledge of the program, an attempt to disorient PA supporters and pressure the party to not discuss independence” (Nairn 2010). Nairn stated that Sunarko, who was head of Kodam Iskandar Muda of Aceh, confirmed the killings by TNI personnel. Among the victims was Tumijan (35), a PA activist and palm oil worker from Nagan Raya, who was abducted and his body found two days later in a sewage ditch near an army outpost. In the campaign period for the gubernatorial election, Sunarko actively persuaded the Acehnese, and especially the minority Javanese in Central Aceh, to support Abdullah and Manaf, arguing that “it is the best time for Acehnese for local
and national reconciliation, including making a friend with former military generals for national interests” (Sunarko 2012). In addition, in the presidential election, he continued to play a support role in the Subianto–Rajasa campaign, asking Acehnese militia members to support Subianto.

Most former elites of the combatants were opposed to voting for Subianto due to his track record as former commander of the Special Forces, which were responsible for military operations against GAM during the conflict. Djuli, a member of the GAM negotiating team in Helsinki and one of the founders of PNA, argued that:

There is no way I could stay at home on Election Day, given the possibility that a military strongman such as Prabowo could take control of this republic and halt our hard-won democratization. Indonesia is on the right path to attaining the ideals set and laid out by its 1945 revolutionary founders for becoming a great and prosperous nation based on democracy and the philosophy of bhinneka tunggal ika (unity in diversity) (Djuli 2014).

Figure 7.1 shows a comparison of the 2014 presidential election result in four post-conflict regions in Indonesia, Aceh, Maluku, Papua and West Kalimantan. Aceh and Papua have separatist movements, and ethnic and religious conflicts occurred in Maluku and West Kalimantan from 1998 to 2002. The figures show that Subianto–Rajasa only won in Aceh with 1,089,290 votes against 913,309 votes for Widodo–Kalla. Jokowi-JK won significantly in Papua and West Kalimantan, and won narrowly in Maluku. The split among the combatants and elites of PA affected the vote results for Subianto; as a concession, Subianto got a lot of access to business in Aceh.
Future of Democracy

Democracy in post-conflict regions faces challenges from the historical burden of violence and in relation to the participation of all conflicting parties to continue the process of democratisation and peace. Democracy constitutes a critical foundation for the maintenance of peace and the support of economic development in Aceh after more than a decade of the reintegration process. However, the rise of violence in the elections of 2012 and 2014 raises questions about the prospects for democracy. People tend to be apathetic to the current regime, which they consider is becoming more authoritarian. To some extent, non-combatants are still discriminated against in the areas of government policy and economic projects. Djuli, former head of the Aceh ReintegrationPeace Board (BRA), argued that the reintegration of combatants has failed. Those in the grassroots have protested about how the abundance of special autonomy funds is only a “drop” inside the regime circle. Several
former combatants have threatened to fight violently against the current local government regime to achieve what they claim to be the right of the people of Aceh to force a just and equal development policy for all (Djuli 2014).

In addition, in a tone of optimism regarding the current democracy and peace accord in Aceh, Yusuf, founder of PNA, argued that:

The post-conflict democratization process in Aceh also suffered from the legacy of a long and protracted conflict where victories were sought through violence, intimidation and terror. This mentality carried over to the post-conflict period – which is common in all areas in the world where armed conflicts have taken place. It takes approximately two decades to completely heal the psychological wounds and scars of conflict – and overcome conflict-era behaviours. Indeed, in terms of negative events, what happened in Aceh could be categorized as mild to medium forms when compared with other post-conflict regions. Acehnese are fast learners – and the local parties will learn, too, as they grow and mature. Although there have been bumps in the road, and surely there will be more, in all, local parties are critical to sustaining peace in Aceh and continuing its development (Yusuf 2014).

Yusuf’s optimism about the politics in Aceh is likely based on his experience as the first governor of Aceh after the peace accord. There is always a door open to peace for the Acehnese. Their past is history, their future is a reality by preserving and maintaining security and peace for the prosperity of the people (Djuli 2014).
Conclusion

The 2014 legislative and presidential elections have marked a crucial step towards democracy, peace and prosperity in Aceh. However, violent attacks, intimidation, terrorism and the targeting of opposing parties and individuals threatened the initiative for peace. This also threatens the prospect of economic development in Aceh. Governor Abdullah assured investors in seminars and business clubs in Jakarta and Banda Aceh that Aceh is safe for foreign and national investors. However, they are still reluctant to invest seriously. The Singaporean ambassador confirmed that security and stability are priority considerations for Singaporean investors. They are willing to invest in Aceh, but are closely monitoring the current political situation, which is still unstable.

The next chapter examines democratic transition and post-conflict peacebuilding in the southern Philippines and in particular how the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) managed the peace accord and transformed themselves into civilians. The chapter compares GAM and MILF in post-conflict transition. It argues that the transformation of former GAM combatants provides an important lesson for MILF in how to integrate with the Republic of the Philippines.
Chapter 8

Democracy and Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia: How MILF Learned from Aceh

Introduction

People in the Southeast Asian region have shared and learned from each other in developing regionalism, democratisation, development and security; such collaborative endeavours include initiatives for peace and reconciliation that need a process of legislation and democratic participations from all parties. They have learned from each other how neighbouring countries can successfully overcome conflicts and maintain stability and peace. In spite of their diversity, they have displayed cultural commonalities, strengths and weaknesses in developing post-conflict democracy. ASEAN was established in 1967 from the perspective of common interests among its founding members. Acharya (2001) argued that countries in the Southeast Asian region have experienced critical historical moments and are confident to unite within a boundary of security and community. State and civil societies among ASEAN members have been actively involved in conflict resolution, as well as helping community members in natural disasters. A decade after the end of the colonial period, Southeast Asian territory was portrayed as “a region of revolt, the Balkans of the East, or a region of dominoes. The weak socio-political cohesion of the region’s new nation-states, the legitimacy problems of several of the region’s postcolonial governments, interstate territorial disputes” (Acharya 2001: 4).

As a region with a diverse range of ethnicities, religions and cultures, Southeast Asia has had problems of ethnic and religious conflicts and disputes, such as in Bangsamoro in southern Philippines, Aceh in Indonesia and Pattani in southern Thailand (Tan 2007). However, these countries have shown that they are able to cope with such challenges. This is the reason
underlying the importance of the harmony and unity of states and civil societies in Southeast Asian countries, which have shared common experience and learn from each other; for example, disaster management, reconstruction and rehabilitation after the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh in 2004 created important lessons for neighbouring countries to learn in terms of managing possible disasters.

Bland (2013) stated that “the Philippines president, Benigno Aquino, pledged a swift recovery from Typhoon Haiyan during a visit to Guiuan, one of the areas hardest hit by the catastrophe; the Aceh experience offers some useful lessons for Manila”. Furthermore, the experience of Indonesia in overcoming conflict and regional disputes is also an important asset to share with regards to security, stability and peace in Southeast Asia and other regions. Ambassador Hasjim Djalal argues that “Indonesia has had some experience in the management of disputes and potential conflicts in Southeast Asia, either in the context of multicultural cooperation or from its national experience. Some of these disputes were between states, while in some cases they were internal disputes” (Djalal 2011: 628).

Like Indonesia, Malaysia has also had experience of managing conflicts and mediating interstate disputes. Mediation between MILF and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) was managed by the Malaysian Government from 2001 to the final round of the peace accord and the signing of the Framework Agreement of the Bangsamoro (FAB) on 15 October 2012. MILF began a rebel movement in 1997 and rejected the peace accord between MNLF and GPH mediated by Indonesia, Malaysia, Libya and the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation). Salamat claimed that MNLF is secular and therefore he founded MILF, which is Islamist (1998).

This chapter discusses the democratic process of reconciliation and peace in Aceh, Indonesia, as well as the way in which the separatist movement, in particular MILF in the
southern Philippines, learned from Aceh. After 15 August 2005 and the Helsinki peace accord between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Republic of Indonesia, the legislation process was conducted by DPRA (the Aceh legislature) and DPR (the national legislature); this joint effort produced the new special autonomy law, the Law on Government of Aceh (UUPA) No. 11/2006. This is a remarkable result of the democratic process of regional autonomy. This law is more powerful in terms of the interests of the region than any of the previous laws granting special status to Aceh. Special autonomy Law No. 44/1999 on Special Status for Aceh was replaced by legislation created after the 1999 national elections. Two years later, the national legislature passed Law No. 18/2001 on Special Autonomy for Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, which significantly increased concessions for Aceh on oil and gas and other natural resource revenues, a much larger share than other provinces in Indonesia.

One of the most crucial points of Law No. 11/2006 is that local political parties are allowed to establish themselves in Aceh. As a result, former combatants have transformed from paramilitary groups into political parties. They have participated in two gubernatorial and head of district elections in 2006 and 2012, and two national legislative and presidential elections in 2009 and 2014. A number of violent attacks occurred during each of these election campaigns. However, the democratic process is now proceeding and all competing political parties have agreed to support peace. This raises the question of how the dynamics of democratisation in Aceh can be a good lesson to learn for permanent peace in the southern Philippines and how MILF members might adopt initiatives of peace and democracy in Mindanao.

This chapter examines three strategic issues relating to how MILF can learn peacebuilding from Aceh. Firstly, a lot can be learned from the legislation enacted and the style of negotiation adopted. The role of a third party as a mediator and the support of international
states and organisations are both crucial, not only in the process of mediation, but also in the implementation stage. In this process, both Aceh and the southern Philippines have become priority concerns of states and international agencies.

Secondly, political legitimacy is critical, in particular from the national government and legislature, as well as from the negotiating parties. The Aceh peace initiative of 2002 failed due to military disruption of the peace accord and disagreement among GAM members regarding the proposal of regional autonomy from a negotiating party’s government representative.

Thirdly, the most crucial aspect of the peacebuilding process is the implementation of a peace accord, especially in relation to the issues of democratisation, economic development and reintegration. In post-war and post-conflict regions, the participation of former combatants in local politics augurs well for future prospects of peace. A democratisation process participated in by all parties and protected by the national constitution strengthens the efforts for permanent peace. Both GAM and MILF agreed on the establishment of local parties, which was decided clearly in the respective peace accords.

However, it is important to see the political dynamics that are operating. Violent disruption conducted personally by individuals of former militias and combatants – a group which probably lacks access to the economic advantages of the democratic process – will be challenging. Given the difficulty for security forces of ensuring all weapons used by insurgents have been handed over, law enforcement – or in Galtung’s argument, the importance of law and order to post-conflict transition – becomes a matter for urgent enforcement. In this context, political leaders in post-conflict regions have to prioritise security, stability and peace. In the Aceh experience, peace is regarded as more important than democracy. This is why the central government postponed gubernatorial elections in
2012 some five times due to security threats, attacks and killings. In addition, as part of the accord implementation, economic development needs to be prioritised, as high poverty rates in Aceh and the southern Philippines negatively affect the crime rate.

However, it is important to understand that every conflict requires a different approach and each needs creativity. What GAM initiated in order to resolve the Aceh conflict is not similar to the way in which MILF managed to end their insurgency. Lingga argued that “to adopt one peace process as a model for resolving another conflict, though there might be some similarities, may not work well, for every conflict has its own distinctive characteristics, and the process of resolving every conflict has its own dynamics” (Lingga 2007: 13).

The periods of the peace efforts for GAM and MILF were also very different. The Helsinki peace accord had been initiated before the Boxing Day earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004. Awaludin (2008) states that on 7 January 2005, GAM met Martti Ahtisaari in Finland. On 9 January 2005, Vice-President Kalla delivered a memo to President Yudhoyono about the current state of GAM and reported that he had just talked to the commander, Muzakir Manaf, two days before. The President considered that the negotiations should be conducted as soon as possible. Then the Indonesian delegates went to Helsinki at the end of January 2005. The negotiations were mediated by former Finnish president Ahtisaari. The negotiation between GoI and GAM was intensive and the accord was finally declared on 15 August 2005. So the negotiations took about six months.

Compare this to the fact that MILF was involved in a long mediation with GPH for about 16 years. Iqbal reported that “it encompassed four Filipino presidents and eleven government chief peace negotiations. (The MILF has four chief peace negotiators). Three major wars – 2000, 2003, and 2008 – were fought during this period. Until today, the parties still struggle
to finish the peace process” (Iqbal 2013). MILF fighters celebrated the FAB peace accord signed by MILF and the GPH on 15 October 2012, about 16 years later.

Islam is the religion of a minority group in the Philippines – approximately 4 or 5 percent of the total population of about 87 million. Most live in the southern Philippines and are the majority in only 5 of the 26 provinces: Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-tawi and Basilan. There are also significant minority populations of Muslims (between 15 and 30 percent) in the provinces of Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Lanao del Norte (Collier 2006).

**International and Regional Support**

The first lesson is the necessity for the support of international and regional states, organisations and civil societies for mediation, negotiation, peace accords and their implementation. Effective efforts towards conflict resolution involve “different kind of agency (international organizations, states, non-governmental organizations, individuals), address different groups (party leaders, elites, grassroots), and vary in form, duration and purpose” (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2009: 168). In Aceh’s case, international support came from the process of mediation and the implementation. It was also due to the earthquake and tsunami, and international states and organisations concerned about permanent peace in Aceh. Hamid Awaludin, head peace negotiator from the GoI, said that:

This was international support for the Aceh peace talks… the new Indonesian Government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla peace initiative being strongly supported by the international community. How did international support speed up the peace process? This cannot be separated from the tsunami disaster where the international community was shocked contributing massive humanitarian aid to Aceh and helping with reconstruction post-tsunami. It is reasonable and rational to
assume that none of this would have occurred without a peace process underway between the Indonesian Government and GAM (Awaludin 2009: 251–252).

Given the pressure from international states and organisations on both Indonesia and GAM, the process of mediation was faster and more comprehensive than the peace negotiation mediated by HDC from 2000 to 2003. GAM negotiators confirmed the international pressure after the disastrous destruction in Aceh. Djuli and Rahman stated that: “the tsunami of December 2004 gave the international community strong reasons to convince Jakarta to come to the table. GAM also perceived that there was no alternative to taking whatever road was available to end the war, and declared a unilateral ceasefire three days after the tsunami in order to allow in emergency assistance” (Djuli & Rahman Accord 20).

The concept of dialogue as the method of conflict resolution, initiated in 2000 by President Wahid, strongly influenced GAM that the post–New Order government was serious about accepting them as part of the Indonesian citizenry. In his first visit to Aceh since 1958, after about fifty years in exile, Hasan Tiro gave a speech in front of the Baiturrahman Mosque in Banda Aceh on 11 October 2008, when he stated: “Aceh has been forgotten by the world for quite a long time; however, after the earthquake and tsunami, and the Helsinki peace accord, Aceh became an international concern to support directly to the people of Aceh who were devastated and lagged behind in all aspects” (Tiro 2010: 303–304). Tiro’s visit was welcomed by the people of Aceh. Thousands of people gathered to welcome the former head of GAM. International states and organisations are strategic in mediating conflicts, as they have legitimacy and power in managing dialogue and creating trust among the conflicting parties.

Ahtisaari considered Aceh peacebuilding, development and democratisation one of the greatest success efforts of peace initiatives in three decades. This was the result of hardwork
by the Acehnese, the Indonesians and the international community. The success story of Aceh peacebuilding and democratisation has influenced other conflict and post-conflict regions. Former peace negotiators, from both GAM and RI, have been invited by the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other states and conflicting groups to share their good experiences in peace negotiations and the establishing of agreements. Djuli, GAM negotiator in Helsinki, stated that he had visited the Philippines and shared his experience in negotiation and peacebuilding for the success of peace negotiations and peace establishment between MILF and the GPH. On 27 March 2014, MILF and the GPH signed a Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. The peace process, mediated by the Malaysian government, is supported by the international community. Among them is Muhammadiyah, an organisation which is actively involved in monitoring peace negotiations and implementation in the southern Philippines.

Political Leadership

In relation to the peace initiatives in Aceh and the southern Philippines, with particular regard to political legitimacy, Lingga stated that “a new political thinking or new initiative can only move forward if it has the support of those who wield power and influence in decision-making” (Lingga 2007: 14). This is what the Philippines learned from the success of the Aceh peace process and how political leaders managed to overcome the conflict and provide genuine peace to the Aceh region. Political legitimacy, not only during the negotiation process but, most importantly, after the accord was implemented. President Yudhyono and Vice-President Kalla were able to communicate with national leaders, including military generals who were critical of the negotiation initiated by President Wahid and President Megawati, and mediated by HDC between 2000 and 2003. Yudhyono and Kalla not only achieved strong political legitimacy, but were also able to reassure national parties, parliament members and the military. They showed willingness to reform and modernize the
Indonesian military and allow devolution of some powers to the regions” and Yudhoyono had resolved that “the military option alone would not work. In his own words, he had come to appreciate that for a peace process to be successful it would require focused, sustained, creative efforts and determination at the highest level of leadership” (Feith 2007: 2).

The leadership factor has been crucial in Aceh democracy and peace transition, and will work in the mediation and peacebuilding process between MILF and GPH. In the southern Philippines, the layers of political leadership are more complicated. The governments of presidents Aquino, Estrada and Arroyo were constrained by threats of a military coup (Lingga 2007). The peace accord between MILF and GPH is now in the hands of congress and the senate, for the approval, in particular, of the establishment of local parties. If the agreement does not go against the constitution and if the president is willing to negotiate with congress and the senate, the peace accord is constitutionally able to be implemented in the Bangsamoro region.

MILF has transformed itself into a social organisation that controls local political parties. A MILF member of the peace panel said that there is a consensus that MILF will organise a local political party and MILF will become a social organisation similar to Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah di Indonesia. He said that: “Party support and party-building should go on concurrently, as it is now clear the struggle is moving away from the military and towards democracy. We are transitioning from the bullet to the ballot” (Meisburger21).

Political legitimacy includes the participation of the previous rebel movement, the MNLF, which signed a peace agreement with GPH in 1996 with the initial support of a Quadripartite Committee comprising Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Somalia, and the OIC. This process was continued by the Tripoli Peace Agreement in 1976. In 1991, Indonesia was invited for the transition of the Quadripartite Committee into the Ministerial Committee of the
Six, adding Indonesia and also Bangladesh. In 1993, Indonesia was elected as chair of the committee. Finally, in 1996 the peace agreement was signed. The GPH and MNLF peace initiatives took not less than 70 meetings involving more than eight countries. Ali Alatas, former foreign minister of the RI who chaired the negotiation, said that: “It is an Agreement that represents a just, comprehensive and durable political settlement to the conflict situation in the Southern Philippines … It is also expected to have a profound and positive impact on the stability and economic progress of Southeast Asia (Alatas 2001: 309).

Alatas (2001) was confident that peace would strengthen the harmony and unity of the diverse peoples of the southern Philippines. The peace agreement in the southern Philippines has certainly had an impact on stability and security in Southeast Asia. However, the peace agreement was reported to be a failed experiment. In January 1997, GPH began another peace initiative with MILF, which had not joined the MNLF negotiation process (Iqbal 2013). In return, MNLF criticised the peace agreement between GPH and MILF made in October 2012.

Iqbal, one of the negotiators representing MILF, was concerned that the FAB contained some obstacles. Among them was the refusal of MNLF to support the peace initiatives. Iqbal said that “until now, MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari is lashing out at the GPH–MILF peace negotiation, especially the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro (FAB). He described the process as an illegal exercise and the FAB as a menu for war in Mindanao” (Iqbal 2013).

Iqbal believed FAB was not the final decision. The process needed the support of all parties in the southern Philippines, especially in the autonomous region of Mindanao. Iqbal stated that:

Truly, peace-making is not an easy task. It is as unnerving as it is exhausting. It is not the forte of the genius or the strong. They are known to have less patience in talking to the naïve and the weakling. Only those imbued with a purpose and mission — and armed with perseverance — can
make it through to the end. After all, it is not by force that negotiation moves forward; rather, it is the collaborative work of the parties that sets it in motion (Iqbal 2014).

Like Iqbal, Alatas believed that the involvement of a multilateral organisation such as OIC was an urgent part of political legitimacy and confidence for the state and the people of the Philippines to overcome the conflict in the south. Multilateral organisations can be pressure groups for conflicting parties to initiate peace negotiations and to implement peace accords under monitoring and support of multilateral organisations including OIC, ASEAN and the EU. The conflict in the southern Philippines has been taken advantage of by regional insurgents as a hub of Southeast Asian paramilitary training that has disrupted security in the Philippines and across Southeast Asia. Karnavian (2009) argued that Indonesian jihadists supported MILF in a secret operation targeting aGPH military base:

The Indonesians covertly took part in many attacks on the Philippines Armed Forces, and also helped defend certain territories with the locals. It was also reported, although MILF denied this claim, that JI and MILF has set up a SOG (Special Operation Group) … carrying out urban attacks” (Karnavian 2009: 120).

Political legitimacy will strengthen the initiatives for peace and prevent security threats in the Philippines and neighbouring countries. As a minority group, Muslims in the southern Philippines will face a challenge from the majority of the people of the Philippines, who are Christian. The inter-faith harmony reflected in the peace process will reduce the feeling of threat for the majority of the people of the Philippines. For example, the issue of Islamic Shari‘ah adopted by MILF from the Law on Governing Aceh has implications for the opposition from non-Muslims in the south.
It is possibly also a conflicting interest inside MILF, in which religious scholars, *ulama* and *ustaz*, are influential as military commanders and religious teachers. Many of the core leaders graduated from Middle Eastern universities. Salamat Hashim, the founder of MILF, who undertook a PhD at Al Azhar University, Cairo and dropped out to found the organisation, said that “the MILF is the realisation of the ideas, efforts and sacrifices of Bangsamoro students in the Middle East who banded together and clandestinely organised themselves in 1962” (Hashim 1998). Hashim claimed that MILF is more committed to Islamic *Shari‘ah* than MNLF: “The MILF adopts the Islamic ideology and way of life. Furthermore, the Islamic Front believes in the Islamic concept of state and government. In contrast to this, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is more inclined to secularism” (Hashim 1998).

Some scholars in the Philippines criticised the Islamic *Shari‘ah* points stated in the FAB. According to La Vina:

> The Bangsamoro Basic Law shall provide for justice institutions in the Bangsamoro. This includes: (a). The competence over the *Shari‘ah* justice system, as well as the formal institutionalization and operation of its functions, and the expansion of the jurisdiction of the Shari‘ah courts; (b). Measures to improve the workings of local civil courts, when necessary; and (c). Alternative dispute resolution systems (La Vina 2013: 25).

In addition, LaVina argued that the basic law should pay respect to indigenous culture and other Muslims who interpret the *Shari‘ah* differently. Given the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the Bangsamoro people, the basic law has to recognise “the multi-ethnic character of the region comprised of the Lumad communities, the Islamized Moros or Bangsamoro, and the settler communities and their descendants” (LaVina 2013: 27). Even though the FAB clearly states that indigenous people have rights not to follow the
The Bangsamoro people are culturally Islamic. Their brand of Islam has developed for centuries since the Muslim kingdom period. It shares a common character of cultural Islam with other Muslims in Southeast Asia. MILF misunderstood the deep character of Muslims in Aceh. The GAM spokesperson for the Aceh Rayeuk (Aceh Besar) stated that “the Aceh conflict cannot be resolved by Islamic Shari’ā offered by an outside party, because Islamic Shari’ā is already deeply rooted in the Acehnese nation. We have a perfect [kaффah] Islamic Shari’ā, while what the outsiders offer is only its skin” (Aspinall 2009: 216). Originally Islamic Shari’ah, proposed in Aceh from 1999, was intended to isolate GAM. The central government challenged GAM, saying that if it did not support Islamic Shari’ah, then the Acehnese would not support them (Aspinall 2009). If MILF adopted an Aceh-style peace agreement, there would be many useful issues that positively supported peace efforts involving civil society and local government. Islamic Shari’ā in Aceh is commonly preserved by the conservative group of ulama in the Aceh Peace Party, which gained only one seat in the DPRA. The combatants who currently dominate local parties are nationalist-secular. Tiro represents this generation, who changed the strategy of Beureu’eh from the struggle for Islamic Shari’ah to the ethno-nationalism of Aceh; this became a powerful movement for more than three decades. As suggested by
Kingsbury (2005), “despite its clear Islamic influence, GAM is a nationalist organization, the political goals of which are explicitly based on territory rather than religion. Further, explicit on the political agenda of GAM is the ending of the imposition of Islamic Law in Aceh”.

In addition, based on his conversation with Malik Mahmud, Prime Minister of the State of Aceh, Kingsbury (2005) argued that “GAM opposed the imposition of Syari’ah laws in Aceh by Jakarta because GAM’s struggle is motivated by and based on independence and not on religious issues. Jakarta is merely using syari’ah laws as a propaganda ploy to deviate public opinion from the real issue of conflict”. Furthermore, the rise of Islamic Shari’ah law implemented in Aceh and endorsed by the conservative lobby impacts on the interests of foreign investment, which is urgently needed by Aceh to increase economic growth and overcome the high rate of employment.

Islamic Shari’ah is becoming part of the Acehnese identity, making them different from most parts of Indonesia where Shari’ah is not regulated officially, but incorporated into daily culture. In the 1990s, Aceh also implemented Shari’ah culturally. This was welcomed by the international community, which had supported Aceh’s struggle against the military pressures of the central government of Indonesia.

**After the Peace Accord**

The final challenge is the peace implementation process, in particular, the dynamics of democratisation, economic development and reintegration. This is the most crucial period, when it will be seen whether MILF can transform itself into more of a CSO with a connection to the local political party. MILF claims that it is much better prepared than MNLF. In the democratisation process, MILF has to recruit new cadres and work professionally. Some people from the south have visited Aceh to learn how to conduct their political transition.
Furthermore, for a long time there has been a pressing need to focus on developing the regional economy. There is a high rate of poverty and a low level of economic growth. It is argued here that decades of war and conflict have destroyed the foundations of the economies of the people of both Aceh and Bangsamoro. This should be a priority program initiated and continuously managed by MILF similarly to the way in which the current local government in Aceh under the special autonomy law attempts to invite foreign investors to Aceh. The Singaporean ambassador said that Singaporean investors are eager to invest in Indonesia, but are closely monitoring the security situation and political dynamics that might affect their investments. For the business community, security and stability are the first requirements before they decide to come to invest.

The author has had personal experience of contacting business leaders in Jakarta after being approached by former combatants. They agree that Aceh’s natural resources are rich and attractive for business. However, they have decided not to invest after monitoring the number of killings and attacks during the 2012 and the 2014 elections, which among others killed some labourers working for PT Telkom. Some foreign businesspeople have also been kidnapped recently. This is counterproductive behaviour for a local government that is attempting to increase economic development.

As in Aceh, economic development has become a critical issue in this post-conflict period in the southern Philippines. The poverty rate in the autonomous region of Mindanao in 2012 was 56 percent, the highest rate in the Philippines (Yap 2014), even higher than the poverty rate in Aceh during the conflicts between 2001 and 2004 of around 30 percent, the second highest rate in Indonesia after Papua (Statistics Indonesia 2014). In addition, the Bangsamoro people have the highest unemployment rate, which endangers the processes of peacebuilding and development. High unemployment potentially encourages crime. Meisburger stated that
“the existing economy is primarily agricultural. Constraints to the economic development in the Bangsamoro region are significant and include widespread corruption, poor governance, and insecurity caused by clan violence and the ongoing separatist conflict” (Meisburger 2012: 9).

A further challenge is the poor quality of infrastructure, especially the roads which are a gateway for imports and exports from the Bangsamoro region to Sabah and Indonesia. Trade between Tawi-Tawi and Sabah, for example, is strategic to improving the local economy in the region (Meisburger 2012). The gap in the economic development of post-conflict regions has become a problem. During the conflicts, economic development collapsed. People chose to remain secure by staying at home or migrating away from their villages. They lost the opportunity to work in their agricultural and other fields.

The bombings and attacks by insurgents in 2013 in Cagayan de Oro city and Kotabato in the southern Philippines were an important test for the peace accord signed by MILF and GPH a year before. People began to question whether the accord was a comprehensive solution for creating peace and stability in the region. They argued that some insurgents and militia groups should be involved in the peace process in order to gain a comprehensive package for a permanent peace. President Aquino III has established a stage for MILF’s transformation of combatants from antagonists of the GPH into mainstream political players (Lau 2014; Yap 2014).

MILF declared that it would transform into a social organisation similar to the two largest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which manage schools, *dakwah* (religious preaching), and build hospitals, private universities and
cooperation – community centres for business development\textsuperscript{17} – as well as influencing political parties. The National Mandate Party (PAN) was founded by the former head of Muhammadiyah and later head of the People’s Consultative Assembly, Amin Rais. The Nation Awakening Party (PKB) was founded by the former head of Nahdlatul Ulama and later President of the RI, Abdurrahman Wahid. Rais and Wahid played a significant role in the political transition after the fall of the New Order.

MILF’s plan to set up the United Bangsamoro Justice Party (UBJP) is a remarkable stepping-stone of insurgent transformation into a mainstream political actor in the Bangsamoro region (Meisburger 2012; Sholeh 2014). However, UBJP will compete with other local parties which have been established to run for local and national elections in the south. The political context in Bangsamoro is influenced by certain factors: “(a) the existence of deep social cleavages, tensions and mistrust, (b) insecure and vulnerable populations that can be easily influenced or intimidated; (c) a residual proclivity to use violence to influence politics” (Meisburger 2012: 11).

The important lesson from Aceh is the way in which the combatants from Party Aceh intimidated the people to gain political support in the 2012 election. For the Acehnese, security and safety are major priorities in their lives. They will support whoever and whatever party will protect them from threats. This is counterproductive to the establishment of permanent peace. However, people are becoming aware that they should support candidates or parties which have been working for peacebuilding and developing the economy.

\textsuperscript{17}The Ministry of Religious Affairs claimed that there are at least 17,000 pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) established in Indonesia affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama and some with Muhammadiyah. They teach moderate Sunni Islamic studies. Ulama graduated from these schools have played a crucial role in the Indonesian revolutionary, modernisation and political-economic development. They are the backbone of diverse Indonesian unity and have also developed thousands of cooperatives and Islamic microfinance programs (Sholeh 2007). In addition, Antonio claimed that “by the beginning of 1999, more than 1,500 USPs (unit simpan pinjam, Islamic saving and loan unit) had been established in Pesantren in 15 provinces. As well as providing training for over 3,000 managerial and 160 other USP staff, P2KER (People’s Economic Empowerment Project) has channelled working capital of Rp 16.68 billion (USD 1,339,400) to the USPs since 1997 (Antonio 2008: 260).
In the 2014 elections, the Acehnese were reluctant to vote for Subianto, former Special Forces commander from Party Gerindra. Manaf, head of PA, and his followers attempted to influence people, especially in the rural regions. Gerindra Aceh targeted 80 percent of seats, similar to what the Demokrat Party gained in the 2009 elections, supported by PA. The head of the Demokrat Party, President Yudhoyono, had played an important role in the Helsinki peace accord. The Acehnese clearly understood this and rewarded his party with almost 90 percent of the votes for the national and provincial legislatures. On the other hand, Subianto, who verbally apologised for the role of members of the Special Forces in killing Acehnese in the past during his presidential campaign, was sidelined by voters and punished by the Acehnese. Gerindra only gained 2 seats (2.5%) in the Aceh legislature and 2 seats (25%) in the national legislature, which was far from their targets.

The people and state of the Philippines must realise the ongoing conflict in the south has threatened security across the region. ASEAN has discussed the issue of the insurgents in the southern Philippines and is now more actively engaged in preventing conflict in the Southeast Asian region, a crucial step from its initial establishment in 1967 in order to avoid wars among states in the region.

ASEAN members are committed to helping each other. The transition of Timor-Leste in 1999 was the first test which challenged ASEAN members in supporting peaceful transitions. However, ASEAN as an organisation was not ready to deliver peacekeeping forces. It was fortunate that some ASEAN members: Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, delivered their representatives to Timor-Leste. The dominance of Australia in the transition process raised high expectations from the Indonesian Government in relation to support of ASEAN members. A further test was the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh after the
Boxing Day earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004. ASEAN members along with the EU and other international agencies came to help the Acehnese.

The EU and ASEAN also established the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) to strengthen the transition of GAM combatants after the Helsinki peace agreement on 15 August 2005. The MoU transformed the Law on the Government of Aceh (UUPA), which regulates local parties and other special autonomous regions, in the MoU called “self-governance”. On 9 April 2014 three local parties contested the elections: PA, PNA and PDA. PA gained 29 seats in the DPRA, PNA 3 and PDA 1 of 81 seats. The establishment of local parties was specific to Aceh.

**Lessons from Aceh**

The people of the Bangsamoro region learned, from Aceh and Indonesia, how to implement their peace accord. This occurred in several different ways. Firstly, the visits of leaders from Aceh and other parts of Indonesia allowed the sharing of democratisation and peace initiatives. They came to the southern Philippines to share their experiences and also learn from the dynamics of peacebuilding in the south. Conferences and seminars on peacebuilding in Southeast Asia are often held in the south. Secondly, representatives from Bangsamoro visited Aceh and other parts of Indonesia to learn about the processes of democratisation and peacebuilding which worked very well after the collapse of the New Order. This included learning how the combatants of Aceh transformed into effective political players.

In this process, capacity building for former combatants is crucial. Their inclusion and the intention for them to learn how to apply political and economic development theory taught at universities and in short courses for their practical learning will help to transform them into strong and accountable political leaders who are respected by non-combatant leaders, intellectuals and other minority groups. Their willingness to protect the diverse society of the
Bangsamoro – as the former combatants of Aceh should do – is strategic to their political legitimacy in order to develop the economy of the Bangsamoro people and maintain peace.

Djuli said that he frequently went to Manila and the southern Philippines on the invitation of the GPH to share his experience and knowledge about how GAM negotiated in Helsinki and their transformation into effective modern political and social leaders. Djuli said that to help the combatants’ transformation, he managed the School of Peace and Democracy (Sekolah Perdamaian dan Demokrasi, SPD), in which hundreds of combatants were prepared to be candidates of the Aceh legislature who could work effectively to balance power and to serve and protect the diversity of the Acehnese people. As new players in local politics, combatants have to open their minds and set the stage at the same or a higher level than the other local and national political leaders (Djuli 2013).

Muksalmina, a former GAM commander at Aceh Besar, confirmed that the SPD training had changed his mind. In 2000, Muksalmina took it a high priority to develop the economic knowledge of the central command of GAM. He realised that “the legislature candidates from GAM were under-capacity. Furthermore, the thoughts and attitudes of combatants who used to fight during the conflict have to be transformed into those of modern political players who have the capacity to understand and protect the diverse Acehnese community” (Hadiwinata et al. 2010:26). So in 2012 Muksalmina and other combatants founded PNA, which gained 3 seats in the DPRA (provincial legislature) and some seats at the district and city levels. Muksalmina is the executive head of PNA and the head of the board is Yusuf, former spokesperson of GAM who served as the first governor of Aceh after the Helsinki peace accord. He was imprisoned in Aceh prison and only able to leave the prison when the tsunami almost killed him.
Djuli (2013) shared his experience in developing combatant capacity not only for practical preparation as candidates for legislatures and executive heads of districts and mayors, but also in order to be transformed into protectors of Aceh society. This is how MILF commanders have to learn and prepare to transform into a modern civilian working mode to protect the community without arms and to set a high level of performance in the local legislature. At the first Aceh election in 2006, a year after the Helsinki peace accord, combatants won the gubernatorial election. Yusuf and Muhammad Nazar, an independent candidate supported by combatants, gained 38.20% or 786,745 votes. At the district level, combatant-supported candidates also won in the districts of Pidie, Aceh Jaya, East Aceh, North Aceh and West Aceh, the city of Lhokseumawe and the city of Sabang (ICG 2007; Ichwanuddin 2008: 134–135).

Like Djuli, local NGOs based in Aceh were also invited to the southern Philippines. Wiratmadinata, secretary-general of Forum LSE Aceh, a network of 60 local Acehnese NGOs, discussed the decades-long conflict in Aceh and the historic Helsinki accord at a forum organised by an NGO based in Mindanao. The Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, the Asia Foundation and USAID organised a forum on Aceh and the Mindanao Peace Process in Kotabato city in August 2008. The organiser of the forum made a press statement, as follows:

The forum aims to: identify factors that contribute to the success of the implementation of the 2005 Helsinki Agreement for Aceh; describe the role of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in the initial implementation of the agreement; suggest recommendations that the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) can consider in the ongoing peace talks from the Aceh Peace Agreement, and locally, from the experience of the Moro National
Liberation Front (MNLF) when it forged the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) with the GRP in 1996 (MindaNews 2008).

CSOs such as the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies are a crucial factor in peace and mediation efforts involving civil society in peacebuilding during and after conflict. CSOs can play an important role in social movement, as they are powerful groups for ending conflict and initiating community awareness of violence prevention and democratisation. CSOs can manage advocacy programs for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. Paffenholz (2010: 387) argued that “civil society organizations were in many cases also effective in bringing issues to negotiation or a post-agreement agenda”. This is strategic in a post-conflict environment where former combatants transform into civilians, give up their arms and participate in development and political activism.

Sofyan A. Djalil, an Indonesian negotiator at Helsinki, said that it was agreed to allocate funds for the reintegration of combatants: the “reintegration fund is allocated to GAM for reintegration into civil society” (Djalil 2012). However, reintegration presents a great challenge for many combatants who depend on arms for their security and confidence. Moreover, they continue using arms to uphold their demands for justice and feel alienated from the process of peacebuilding and economic development. The reintegration process can take years and decades, involving the government and community.

Djuli had a different argument from Djalil on how the funds allocated for the reintegration process help to transform combatants:

It would be too naïve to even think that giving Rp 10 million (USD 800) to a former combatant who had spent practically all his adult life in the jungle would automatically change him from a killing machine into a law-abiding civilian. It is to their credit that, despite the extreme hardships they have
been suffering these last 10 years of peace, very few former GAM soldiers have resorted to violence to air their grievances (Djuli 2014).

Djuli’s argument was in response to a group of former GAM commanders, led by a young man named Nurdin, aka Abu Minimi, who openly challenged the current governor and former foreign minister of GAM, Abdullah, and vice-governor Manaf, former chief of GAM’s central military command, to resign or die, demanding justice in government policy, in particular for former combatant families. Minimi claimed: “there are so many widows and orphans of combatants living in abject poverty while they bask in luxury” (Djuli 2014).

The southern Philippines peace initiatives are more difficult than those carried out in Aceh in terms of the rise of armed militia groups which were established based on religion, ethnicity or ideology. The Bangsamoros’ peace efforts have also been challenged by a number of violent attacks and threats from existing armed groups. A further challenge in the southern Philippines is disarmament, the hardest process for combatants. Currently, some militant groups inside MILF have separated from the agreement and continue to fight the GPH. The Abu Sayaf group also opposes the peace agreement. They even support the jihad in Syria and Iraq; some Philippines fighters have joined other jihadists from Southeast Asia in Syria and Iraq, establishing the Katibah Nusantara Lid Daulah Islamiyyah, Malay Archipelago unit, for Islamic State. Coalitions for peace and security are not only the duty of the Acehnese and Bangsamoro people; they should be a systematic movement of states and civil societies in Southeast Asia.

Local Politics

A further lesson from Aceh relates to the transformation of combatants into political actors who leave behind their military skills and attitudes, and begin to work as civilians, advocating government policy, public service, development budgets and services for all ethnic and
religious groups of Aceh. The transformation of MILF combatants into a CSO and political party activists will be tested after the congress passes the basic law in 2015 and the involvement of a MILF-affiliated party in the national elections in 2016.

The Aceh peace accord and its implementation have had positive influences on the process of peace in the southern Philippines. Among the terms of the agreement is the establishment of a local party in the Mindanao region. MILF agreed to set up a local political party called the United Bangsamoro Justice Party (UBJP). In April 2014, MILF vice-chair for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar said that they had finalised plans to establish a political party. The plans had begun a year before, following various consultations and discussion with local leaders and the MILF’s central committee, the policy-making body of the organisation. He said that “the party is based on justice and is not exclusive. This is open to anybody who wants to join the party” (Manpulig 2014).

Before joining the 2016 elections in the Philippines, MILF leaders learned from local parties in Aceh. They visited PA, the Aceh Peace Party and some stakeholders in Banda Aceh in December 2014. A delegate from MILF visited the PA office in December 2014 to learn about its political policy and political platform. Bato Mohammad Zainoddin, head of the delegates, said that “our visit is to adopt the political system and tricks conducted by the Party Aceh as a local party which (is similar to UBJP) to have special autonomous (self-governance) region status from the central government…Principally we have to learn politics and regulations managed by the Party Aceh and adopt it to our new party, UBJP” (Ar-Rifai 2014).

Currently the tabled laws regulating the establishment of a local party in Mindanao are currently being discussed in congress. Some congress members oppose the idea of a local party, which they argue as being against the constitution. This reminds us of the opposition
by Jakarta elites to the idea of local parties in Aceh, which was the most difficult item negotiated in Helsinki. Awaludin, head of the GoI negotiating team, described how the negotiation lasted until almost midnight before both parties agreed.

Women in Peace Efforts

Women are very pivotal in peace efforts, reconciliation and post-conflict development in Southeast Asia. In Aceh and the southern Philippines, women have been actively involved in negotiation panels, maintaining justice in peace implementation and strengthening civil society and political capacity of combatants. Their role is strategic in mediating between combatants and non-combatants, including active efforts to communicate with state and non-state actors in ensuring permanent peace and justice. On the other hand, it is clear that women and children are the most vulnerable victims of conflict and war. They have to play a triple role as a mother of children, as head of the family and as negotiator between the military and paramilitary to protect their family from the threat of conflict and war. Women have taken risks for their families. At the end of 1999, military operatives searching for GAM in villages implicated in the rise of IDPs. The military even checked IDP camps looking for combatants possibly hiding in the camps. Kamaruzzaman stated that:

The military attacked the refugee camp in the Abu Beureueh Mosque in Pidie on 13 October 1999. The attack was aimed at finding a number of suspected members of GAM who, it was thought, were hiding in the refugee camp. The volley of bullets, which were fired in a number of different directions, caused chaos, with 10,000 IDPs running for cover and many women who were victims of sexual violence suffering from shock (Kamaruzzaman 2006: 262).

To prevent further violation, women in Aceh initiated an advocacy lobby group to protect the rights of women and children. On 2 June 1999, Flower Aceh mediated a dialogue between
women, comprising of NGOs and student activists, and housewives, to discuss the conditions in Aceh. As a follow-up, they set up a network of individuals called Women Volunteers for Humanity (RPuK), which had a special duty to help women and children in the camps (Kamaruzzaman 2006).

Acehnese women also played a crucial part in two peace efforts in the period of President Wahid from 2000 to 2003, in particular in the Helsinki peace negotiation and the reintegration of combatants. Shadia Marhaban, the only woman in the Helsinki peace negotiation representing GAM, has been actively involved in the reintegration process of combatants in Aceh. She founded the School of Peace and Democracy of Aceh (SPDA) to build the capacity of combatants in the legislature, political parties and civil society. Marhaban has also actively supported the mediation process between the GPH and MILF (Djuli 2015).

Conclusion

The peace accord between MILF and the GPH in October 2012 marked a crucial result after almost 16 years of peace initiatives. Mediated by the Malaysian government and with the support of the OIC, Japan and Indonesia, and civil society, the peace agreement will strengthen security and stability in Southeast Asia. Serious efforts on MILF’s part in establishing peace have forced Indonesian and Southeast Asian jihadists to leave their training camps in the south. The accord will also be positive for the people in the Bangsamoro and southern Philippines region in relation to economic development, education and improving the quality of life of the people, the poorest in the Philippines.

Learning from Aceh’s democratisation and peacebuilding is crucial for MILF, especially in how to transform from combatants into political actors. MILF has adopted some points from the Helsinki peace accord and LoGA, which are reflected in the FAB, for example, the
sharing of natural resource revenues, the transformation of combatants into a political party and the role of Islamic *Shari’ah* as part of the identity of the Bangsamoro people. Adopting *Shari’ah* in Bangsamoro will have more difficult implications than what the people of Aceh currently struggle with; in the implementation of *qanun*, Islamic *Shari’ah*, especially in criminal law (*hudud*), took the longest process of consultation. In 2008, MILF’s proposal, supported by President Arroyo, was amended by Christian politicians in the south, which caused further conflict. In addition, some insurgents operating in the south are not included in the negotiation. They are potential spoilers of the peace efforts.

Further discussions involved how former combatants from Aceh and Timor-Leste have transform from paramilitaries into political parties and civilian organisations. This chapter has also examined the relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, an engagement to develop regional politics and security in Southeast Asia. The challenges for former combatants are the integration and transformation processes, which are crucial factors in democratic consolidation and peace transition.
Chapter 9

Democratic Transition and the Transformation of Combatants in Southeast Asia: Lessons from Aceh and Timor-Leste

Introduction

The democratic transition of Aceh reflected in the 2012 and 2014 elections is a good foundation for preserving peace initiated by local government and CSOs in Aceh, as discussed in previous chapters of this thesis. The consolidation of democracy by the participation of former combatants and other factions in the elections strengthens development and peace efforts. It is interesting to compare Aceh post-conflict to democratic transitions in post-war Timor-Leste. To begin the chapter, it is important to understand comparative studies of conflict and post-conflict regions in Southeast Asia.


The present study contributes further comparative analysis to this area of investigation in comparing post-conflict Aceh, Timor-Leste and Mindanao, all of which are strategic to democratic consolidation in Southeast Asia. They share a common experience of separatist movements and insurgents which later became leading groups in national and local politics. The combatants, guerrillas and veterans of conflict transformed into political leaders, businesspeople and human rights activists, leaving their conflict and war experiences in the past to adopt better post-conflict lives.
The major challenge for these post-conflict regions has been how to overcome the existing violence and security threats from former combatants who are disappointed and alienated from the current economic development (Kingsbury 2012; Miller 2012). The former argues that “in circumstances in which independence from colonialism has often been couched in terms of the material benefits of liberation, the reduction in material welfare of newly-liberated peoples often created new sets of challenges for less experienced post-colonial governments” (Kingsbury 2011: 767). In a comparative analysis of Indonesia’s Aceh, Sri Lanka’s Eelam, the Philippines’ Bangsamoro and Timor-Leste, Kingsbury (2012) stated that those post-conflict and conflict regions are a legacy of colonialism which challenges separatist minority groups to integrate or finally become independent from the colonial states. There is an interesting contrast between Aceh’s and Timor-Leste’s experiences with Indonesia in their conflict periods.

On 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste became the youngest sovereign state in the world, after about 24 years of violent war against the Indonesian state. Tan (2007) categorised the war as a war against the state terrorism of Indonesia. The war ended after a referendum of the people of East Timor on 30 August 1999 in which 78.5 per cent voted for independence (Carey 2007: 374). This referendum inspired the Acehnese, who demanded a referendum for Aceh organised by student movements in that same year. The central government of Indonesia responded by providing regional autonomy laws in 1999 and 2001 which granted wider opportunities for Aceh to develop Islamic Shari‘ah, which is unusual in a secular national constitution. The greatest transformation came after the Helsinki peace accord in August 2005, when former members of the GAM separatist movement agreed to integrate into Indonesia.

The former combatants and guerrillas discussed in this chapter were members of paramilitary groups that had been involved in conflicts and wars for almost 30 years in Aceh and about 24
years in Timor-Leste (East Timor). The Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) was established in October 1976 under the leadership of Hasan Tiro as a continuation of the Daud Bereueh Darul Islam rebel movement (Schulze 2003: 242); this movement later changed its name to Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) with a military wing, Angkatan GAM (AGAM). Tiro claimed that about 5000 combatants were trained in Libya between 1986 and 1989. However, Indonesian intelligence believed this number to be only 583 (Schulze 2003: 244). A few years after the training, in 2002, Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, claimed an active GAM guerrilla army of 30,000 (Schulze 2006: 226). Based on Indonesian military documentary sources, Sulaiman (2006: 139) stated that in 2003, GAM already had around 5326 armed personnel. Thousands of new sympathisers came from NGO activists and university students who set up a movement of political change supporting GAM in Aceh (Sulaiman 2006).

As a security strategy, a GAM peace negotiator reported in Helsinki that the combatants numbered only 3000 with about 800 weapons. In fact, there were more than thirty thousand combatants in Aceh in 2005 (Yusuf 2013). They also kept hundreds of other weapons and explosives for possible use in case the peace negotiations failed, as happened in 2001 when a Swiss-based NGO – the Henry Dunant Centre (HDC)– failed to mediate between GAM and the RI. However, GAM received the advantages of the dialogues and cease-fire periods between 2000 and 2003. Schulze stated:

> It became the cornerstone of GAM’s political strategy of internationalisation. It was used to gain international legitimacy and to obtain outside support for GAM’s struggle. From the beginning, GAM’s participation in the dialogue was motivated less by what GAM could receive from Indonesia than by what it could receive from the international community (Schulze 2006: 239).
Former combatants in Timor-Leste are referred to as ‘veterans’ and include members of the Clandestine Front who, in the towns, carried out support work for the paramilitary group FALINTIL– Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor). Some Clandestine Front leaders were FALINTIL members, living covertly, and the Front reported directly to FALINTIL commanders. The student movement, RENETIL, is an example of the Clandestine Front in action. Some veterans are now working as non-military political activists in government and political parties, and FALINTIL has been integrated into the military and police services of Timor-Leste. The current President of Timor-Leste, General Taur Matan Ruak, is a former commander of FALINTIL who became chief of staff of the F-FDTL (Falintil-Defence Forces of Timor-Leste). After some protests due to feelings of discrimination between Western Timorese and Easterners, about 600 military personnel deserted in 2006. This created a national security crisis until 2008, when Major Alfredo Reinado, former commander of the naval unit of Timor-Leste and former leader of the rebels, was killed during an attack against President José Ramos Horta (Sahin 2010).

This chapter presents a comparative discussion of the transformation of combatants and guerrillas in Aceh and Timor-Leste. It analyses the process of post-conflict democratic transition; in particular, it investigates how former combatants are transformed from operating as a paramilitary force into that of a political movement. In this context, the dynamics of democracy are seen as a process of transition towards permanent peace. It begins by outlining some experiences of democratic transition in other post-conflict and post-war regions in Asia and Africa. In the second part of the chapter, a comparison is made between democracy in Aceh and Timor-Leste that examines how former combatants participated in democratisation and peacebuilding in each of these regions during their respective 2012 elections.
The discussion advances two arguments – firstly, that democratic transition has been regarded, in general, by many election observers as a relatively peaceful process. Although a number of attacks and killings occurred before the April 2012 elections in Aceh, it became peaceful during the voting and after the results of the election were announced. The elections of 2012 in Timor-Leste were also peaceful. Secondly, democratic processes are unlikely to be effective in supporting peacebuilding without prioritising the overcoming of fundamental economic challenges; barriers to the full implementation of the peace process lie in poverty, the slow progress of development and the lack of success of the transformation of those former combatants whose orientation was towards criminal activities. In conclusion, the chapter argues that the peaceful democratic transitions achieved in Aceh and Timor-Leste provide important lessons for peacebuilding in Asia, Africa and other conflict and post-conflict countries.

**Peace and Democracy**

Immanuel Kant’s theory of “perpetual peace” argues that the ideals of peace are nothing without realisation. It has been stated that “the irony of peace is the relative ease by which one can define it *a priori* at the same time as it is so difficult to realise” (Rasmussen 2010: 177). Nevertheless, Rasmussen argued that peace agreements can be a starting point towards lasting peace. Peace, he believed, should be the ultimate goal of every movement, including the aim of war and military intervention (Rasmussen 2010:179). The UN Security Council, for instance, could authorise “war in the name of international peace and security” (Rasmussen 2010: 179).

Rasmussen’s support of the ideology of peace, however, leaves questions about the nature of peace. In Iraq, for instance, despite the democratic transition, deadly attacks still occur against the so-called legitimate government long after the war. International intervention into
conflict in Timor-Leste and Aceh is important to examine through the arguments of semocratic peace theory, which state that institutions of peace are required to ensure peaceful intervention. For example, paramilitary groups in Aceh and Timor-Leste agreed to disarm during the security transitions facilitated by international states and communities. The AMM successfully mediated the transition and monitored the processes of the deployment of TNI and the disarmament of GAM.

In the conflict regions that emerged in Indonesia after the fall of the New Order in 1998, existing fragile relations among ethnic and religious groups escalated into bitter ethno-religious clashes after the 1999 elections; these clashes left more than 5000 Muslims and Christians dead in Maluku and Poso, in Central Sulawesi. Political campaigns and the strategies of different parties created further waves of violence in the conflict regions (Loveband & Yong 2006: 145; van Klinken 2006: 131). After the election results became known, violent attacks (which have been referred to as “phase three conflicts”) broke out in Maluku and attracted volunteer fighters from other islands to the region (Sholeh 2007: 146; van Klinken 2007: 89). Ruptures in fragile intercommunal relations in the conflict regions of Maluku and Poso were easily provoked by intensifying shootings which targeted different religious groups. People from different religious communities who had lived together peacefully were forced to separate into distinct Muslim and Christian regions. For many of them the trauma of conflict continues, as religious differences force clan members, former neighbours and even family members to live separately based on religious differences.

Due to the ethnic, religious and separatist conflicts that occurred after the resignation of President Suharto in 1998, some analysts suggested that Indonesia should move towards developing into a federation. The result of the referendum in Timor-Leste, held in August 1999, contributed to a rise in the demand for autonomy, accompanied by regional protests and violence, particularly in Aceh and West Papua. Student activists in Aceh
mobilised people and campaigned for a referendum on the status of Aceh. In November 1999, several hundred thousand people gathered in Aceh to protest in support of the implementation of Aceh’s special political status, which had been verbally agreed to by President Wahid but later revoked by the TNI (Kingsbury 2006, 10). Although President B.J. Habibie made it clear that a referendum like that of Timor-Leste would not be offered to Aceh (Aspinall & Crouch 2003: 6), Fuad Mardatillah, an Acehnese activist, said that the Timor-Leste referendum was an important inspiration for Acehnese students and young activists.

The movement in support of Acehnese autonomy had, as one important outcome, the development of peace initiatives between GAM and the RI, mediated by the HDC (Mardatillah 2013). The Aceh government also learned from the government of Timor-Leste how to develop its post-conflict economy and maximise the use of natural resources in support of local government, in particular the oil and gas industry. Aceh has long been concerned about the way in which the central government does not transparently negotiate with the local government on the revenues of energy resources as stated in the Helsinki MoU.

Some elites who have political interests gain support from their constituents by prolonging anger, hatred and negative sentiment against other groups, which is counterproductive to the essence of peacebuilding. Some of them have even attacked and killed leaders of other political groups for political purposes, for example, as happened in Aceh approaching the April 2012 elections. The International Crisis Group (2012) warned that Aceh’s political violence could affect the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Intellectuals and scholars committed to vote for a certain party in Aceh to preserve stability and peace; they said it was dangerous not to vote for PA, the dominant party in the province of Aceh. They believed that “the danger of violence would be higher if the Party Aceh lost” (ICG 2012: 6).
An increase in killings in late 2011 forced the central government to accommodate the political purposes of PA. Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amiruddin Usman, the Aceh desk coordinator at the Coordinating Ministry of Political, Legal and Security Affairs, said that Jakarta is serious about maintaining reconciliation and peace in Aceh (Afrida 2012). This is why the central government changed its policy towards the Aceh election and allowed PA to join the election (Usman 2013). This sense of trauma also appeared in Timor-Leste during the 2012 elections, when the people voted for stability and peace.

This suggests that, like democracy, which can encourage the participation of the people if they are confident of finding strong representatives, violence in one region can act as a fuse to provoke violence in other regions. Messages of anger from political and community leaders can also lead to violence, especially in fragile post-conflict and post-war regions. Therefore, in other conflict regions like Africa, peace is also prioritised over democracy. After three elections between 1992 and 2007 characterised by violent bloodshed, Kenyans decided, in their 2013 elections, to choose peace over democracy. Long et al. (2013: 142) argued that in relation to the 2013 elections in Kenya, “peace is obviously preferable to violence, it does not necessarily indicate a fully democratic process”. Lasting peace has also been a challenge to realise in post-conflict regions in Southeast Asia, particularly Aceh and Timor-Leste.

**Democratic Transition**

In some post-conflict regions, democracy leads to new types of conflicts, which may turn out to be worse than those that occurred before a peace accord was instituted. Some African regions experienced such worsened conflict situations after democratic elections were set up, which gave the opportunity for former leaders of combatants and armed militias to participate as candidates for parliament and head of districts and states. Among the many challenges to
peace following elections is the continuation of friction inside former insurgent movements. Leaders of movements who disagree with a peace accord often create new insurgents and more deadly groups after an election.

MILF, for example, is a group which opposed the peace initiatives and agreements negotiated between MNLF and the GPH in 1996. However, they eventually made their peace initiative a few years later and signed an agreement in 2012 that included significant steps for the implementation of the peace accord. This occurred after MILF learned from democratic peace-building in Aceh. According to Djuli (2013), GAM negotiating members shared their negotiation experiences in international conferences and workshops attended by MILF representatives who were interested in adopting some parts of the way GAM and GoI reached agreement in Helsinki, including the implementation of the peace accord.

Furthermore, the MILF leadership sent several representatives of CSOs, local government and former insurgent leaders to Aceh to understand how GAM successfully transformed and how democracy works in Aceh. Although violence continued during elections in 2006, 2009 and 2012 and still threatens, to some degree, the quality of democracy in Aceh, it is clear that stability and economic development have been achieved after the elections. Most leaders of political parties competed in the elections involving the DPRA or DPRK, as well as local governments at provincial and district levels. They have actively driven themselves in local democracy and development.

The 2012 elections in Aceh and Timor-Leste are important to analyse, particularly in terms of how the dynamics of politics in these regions have contributed to peacebuilding and reconciliation. It is also interesting to see how former members of armed forces and combatants in both post-conflict regions participated in these elections. The results of the elections brought significant victories for former armed forces members and former
combatants. In Aceh, the former foreign minister of GAM, Abdullah, in partnership with the former commander of the military wing of GAM, Manaf, won the election with 55.87% of the votes for their PA.

However, there was a lot of pre-election intimidation by PA supporters. Between 2011 and 2012, former members of GAM turned to fighting each other and supporting different parties. A series of shootings, bombings and attacks targeted political figures and their supporters (The Economist, 14 April 2012) and about 20 people were killed in violence related to the election. Former GAM combatants were involved in this violence and have been charged with up to 19 years in prison under counterterrorism laws. A human rights activist has argued that the violence had political motives and therefore should not be categorised as terrorism (Ghozali 2013). Yusuf, former governor of Aceh and former chief of information of GAM, was targeted by the group and they twice attempted to kill him. Yusuf said that “this is strongly coordinated by elites of Party Aceh, who are also former leaders of GAM. They are afraid of fair competition in the 2012 elections against me as an incumbent” (Yusuf 2013).

However, Ayah Banta, former chief of the GAM specialist explosive group from Aceh Utara, argued that his group’s attacks before the 2012 election were purely the result of their disappointment with Yusuf’s government policy, which “does not fulfil his own promise to support the prosperity of former combatants” (advocate member 2013). Shortly after the election, some GAM members were arrested and are now imprisoned in Jakarta and Banda Aceh. According to Yusuf (2013), former combatants are fragile individuals, especially those who do not have the capacity to compete for jobs and did not have the chance to complete their studies; many of them did not finish school due to the conflicts and their involvement with GAM.
The dynamics of politics in Timor-Leste have been more positive in democratic consolidation and political reconciliation. After independence was gained in 2002, Timor-Leste struggled with friction among former leaders and particularly divisions among former FALINTIL guerrillas between Westerners (*loromonu*) and Easterners (*lorosae*). Allegations of government discrimination towards FALINTIL veterans created national security threats which led to more than 100,000 internally displaced persons. This was made worse by antagonism in the political leadership between Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and President Xanana Gusmão (ICG 2006). After the 2007 elections, which resulted in a coalition government between Prime Minister José Ramos Horta and President Gusmão, a more peaceful and stable government was created. However, a security threat from deserters continued in 2008. It was reported that the F-FDTL fugitive, Major Alfredo Reinado, almost killed Prime Minister Horta on 11 February 2008 and President Gusmão’s car was shot at by Reinado’s second-in-command, Lieutenant Gastão Salsinha, an hour after Reinado’s attack on Horta (Kingsbury 2008: 33). The friction between FALINTIL veterans is among the challenges that still need to be overcome.

Democratic consolidation continued in Timor-Leste after now–Prime Minister Gusmão successfully achieved his second term of coalition government in the 2012 election. This consolidation has been further strengthened by the victory of his close aide, Taur Matar Ruak, as President. Stability is also continuing due to the positive political step taken by Gusmão to mandate former PM Alkatiri to lead the task force of a Special Zone of the Social Market Economy in Oecusse Ambeno; this move had the objective of giving a new perspective for the future, especially with regard to economic growth, employment and poverty eradication (*Tempo Semanal* 2013). As secretary-general of the FRETILIN party, Alkatiri maintains influential leadership at the grassroots level. People see this as the principle of national reconciliation in action among strategic leaders.
On the current challenges of Timor-Leste, Gusmão stated that “we lacked infrastructure, human and financial resources and political experience in democratic governance. Coupled with the impact of trauma, poverty and historical division, the fragile nation of Timor-Leste began its history with a cycle of unrest and violence” (Gusmão 2012: 208). All leaders of Timor-Leste are obliged to manage a stable and economically independent state, which then enables it to be an influential member of ASEAN. Timor-Leste also provides an important lesson for democratic transition in Aceh. Part of this is the foundation of the Commission of Truth and Friendship, which, unfortunately, does not meet the ideals of the human rights activists and local government of Aceh. They still propose the foundation of a strong commission of truth and reconciliation with the power of a local judicial process such as that in Aceh.

**Building Friendship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste**

A comparison between Aceh and Timor-Leste will elucidate the nature of friendship and reconciliation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. This does not mean that human rights violations in Aceh by the Indonesian Special Forces should be forgotten, without advocacy for justice. But it is important to share the experience of how Aceh learned from Timor-Leste political transition, especially in relation to the aspects of justice and human rights.

Prime Minister Gusmão said that Indonesia and Timor-Leste have both shown genuine interest in developing new relations after the referendum. They agreed to choose friendship and reconciliation (Gusmão 2013: 378). Timor-Leste is now the closest neighbour of Indonesia. Not only does it border the province of East Nusa Tenggara, but it was also part of Indonesia between 1975 and 1999 for approximately 24 years. Timor-Leste became a sovereign state after the referendum. Indonesian and Timor-Leste believe relations between them are an inevitable choice.
Indonesia and Timor-Leste have a lot of common interests and cultures, especially in West Timor near East Nusa Tenggara’s community borders. Many of the people here are originally from one family or have been neighbours for generations. Some other facts also support the friendship between the two countries. First, Indonesian is constitutionally recognised by the government and the state of Timor-Leste as one of the official languages in addition to Portuguese and Tetum. It is also supported by the people of Timor-Leste, who easily understand Indonesian. They learn naturally through TV stations from Indonesia.

After more than ten years of separation from Indonesia, the Timorese now consider Indonesia a strategic neighbour in the context of the economy, regional security and culture. In the economic sector, Indonesian commodities dominate the markets of Timor-Leste. In regional security, Indonesian security forces are often invited by the government of Timor-Leste to train the police and military or they manage joint training. This is crucial to maintaining security in the Asia-Pacific region. In the cultural context, the people of Timor-Leste enjoy Indonesian TV dramas, songs and dances. Many of the current political leaders of Timor-Leste graduated from Indonesian universities. The Indonesian language is easy to learn for the people of Timor-Leste. A TV journalist in Dili stated that “Portuguese is quite difficult to learn, while Tetum cannot provide enough vocabularies especially in sciences. Therefore, if you want to explain something in Tetum, and cannot find its vocabularies, we use Indonesian, which is easier and simpler” (Prabowo 2012). In addition to the influence of TV and other media, students are still using Indonesian language books as a source of learning. Bookstores in Dili sell books on economics, health, political and social culture in Indonesian from Indonesian publishers. It is difficult to get books in Portuguese or English.

People-to-people relationships forced leaders from both countries to choose friendship and reconciliation as the basis of mutual partnership in economic development and regional politics. Both countries are undergoing democratic transition. Aceh activists have visited Dili.
to learn about social justice and democratic transition after separation from Indonesia. People from Timor-Leste have also visited Aceh to learn about local politics and development after the Helsinki peace accord. Sharing and learning between post-conflict communities strengthens each people in democratic transition.

The relationship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste has been through a long process. After the result of the referendum in 1999, relations between the two sovereign states continued with different patterns. In many post-conflict and post-war countries, a way to seek truth and justice is commonly established. This step is one of the main objectives of peace and reconciliation. In the context of Aceh, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is the mandate of the MoU in 2005 as stated in Article 2 of Human Rights paragraph 2: “A Commission for Truth and Reconciliation will be established for Aceh by the Indonesian Commission of Truth and Reconciliation with the task of formulating and Determining reconciliation measures” (Kingsbury 2006: 203). However, the TRC process is deadlocked due to the absence of national legislation which implements the regulations at provincial level. According to Yusuf, “it is hard for Aceh to continue the regulations agreed by Aceh legislature. This is due to political decision in national level which involve cross-sectoral department in central government” (Yusuf 2013). The Qanun KKR (TRC) has been finalised by the parliament of Aceh (the DPRA). The Qanun KKR will be established as a permanent institution to facilitate the judicial process at the local level. The long procedure of establishing a truth and reconciliation commission takes from ten to twenty years (Aritonang 2013). Of course the process in Aceh must be supported by openness and positive initiatives from Jakarta that the reconciliation process is a priority after the New Order, such that various ethnic, religious and separatist conflicts require collective strength to overcome. The dynamics in Timor-Leste are different from those in Aceh and Indonesia. Leaders from both countries changed the word ‘reconciliation’ to ‘friendship’. This reflects their good
intentions, especially from the perspective of Timor-Leste, which has to prepare to compete with regional countries in Southeast Asia and Pacific regions.

The establishment of the Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF) between Indonesia and Timor-Leste is a political initiative that promotes peaceful and mutually beneficial relations between the two countries. Kiki Syahnakri, who for more than a decade served in the military on the border of Indonesia and East Timor, stated:

The goal of the work of the CTF is friendship. The big target can only be achieved through good faith and positive efforts of all parties, especially the CTF itself through a relatively clean process with accurate data, valid evidence and true testimony. The core of friendship is mutual understanding and paying respect with a spirit of justice, equality and peace (Syahnakri 2009: 121).

Syahnakri is one of few Indonesian military personnel involved in East Timor operations who understands Tetum well. Through Syahnakri, many Timorese joined the Indonesian army. Syahnakri’s argument is diplomatic language to support the CTF process for good friendship and relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in the future.

Syahnakri’s argument is in line with that of Prime Minister Gusmão, who stated that:

East Timor and Indonesia have chosen the same path to looking forwards. Peace must be achieved by joint efforts, where there is an understanding of hardship, an understanding of the various issues that have an impact on both sides. A willingness to resolve it through the most viable and peaceful way, respect for the situation and the conditions experienced by each party, and continuing dialogue for strengthening reconciliation will be beneficial for both countries (Gusmão 2013: 379).

Political transition in both countries from authoritarian regimes to peaceful democracy forced the leaders of both countries to promote peace and friendship. They attempted to leave behind
the dark history of the 24 years of Indonesian occupation of East Timor, which led to hundreds of thousands of deaths in both countries, especially Timor-Leste. Perhaps both leaders learned from the difficulties of post-war human rights courts and political transitions post-conflict in many other countries. Cambodia is another interesting example where only a few people have been prosecuted by the Cambodian and international human rights courts. For the people of Cambodia, this judicial process has not been fair, especially for the victims of Pol Pot, who killed civilians for the continuity of his authoritarian regime (Sok 2013). It must be learned from this kind of post-conflict and post-war justice, and especially for the sake of the welfare of both countries, particularly Timor-Leste, that ‘friendship’ is more meaningful than ‘justice’.

There has been a process of reconciliation within that friendship. Indonesia’s full support for Timor-Leste as a member of ASEAN shows Indonesian foreign policy supports the existence of Timor-Leste in international and regional politics. For the government of Timor-Leste, becoming a member of ASEAN is a top priority. Gusmão declared that “the membership in ASEAN in a priority for the Timorese State, since we consider that it is extremely important to belong to this family and to extract the implicit advantages that derive from here: security, stability, economic development and regional cooperation” (Gusmão 2012: 154). Gusmão believed that Timor-Leste could provide benefits as a bridge (connector) between ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum (the Pacific Island Forum) in a wider cooperation (Timur 2013).

Civil society and grassroots levels also support the idea of friendship, especially among students and businesspeople. Hundreds of students from Timor-Leste have studied in Indonesian universities. They are the best asset of the nation in building a relationship of true friendship. The Indonesian state and society have also responded positively to Timorese students in Indonesia. They have received scholarships from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Ministry of Indonesian National Education and Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as through the universities in Indonesia.

Unfortunately, Indonesian scholars do not have a strong interest in studying the dynamics of politics, regional security and diplomacy in Timor-Leste, and in particular the relation with Indonesia, perhaps because the process seems more political than natural from their perspective. Grassroots relationships through education can be a strong foundation for relations between the two countries. Therefore, this relationship should be driven not only from government to government but will be more meaningful and sustainable if people to people relationships are strengthened. People to people relations will bring a more substantial relationship with the support of the international community. This is part of state-building, especially for Timor-Leste and Aceh after their war and conflict.

There has also been strengthening of this relationship through shared culture and ethnicity on the borders of both regions. According to Naiobe, “emotional relationships built through the bond of marriage between the state of East Timor and Indonesia caused some residents who live in the border area between the two countries to live in peace and harmony” (Naiobe 2013).

**Future Challenges**

Relations between the two countries will be challenging and need to be managed for the benefits of both states and civil society. Historical and geographical relations between the two countries are not easy to address. Some of the challenges include: illegal trading on the border, human trafficking and inter-state crimes. Border security needs serious attention from both countries.

The dependence of the Government and people of Timor-Leste on Indonesia, especially the supply of commodities from Indonesia, means their friendly relationship is unbalanced. This
fact means the Timorese government has not followed up international recommendations on human rights violations committed by some military elites of the RI. Furthermore, for Timor-Leste, Indonesia’s support is also the way to become a member of ASEAN. Since the beginning, Indonesia has been the most serious support for Timor-Leste as a part of ASEAN, although up to now it has not been officially accepted as a full member, because the majority of ASEAN members consider Timor-Leste is not ready, especially in relation to the 2015 ASEAN free trade policies.

International human rights courts in dealing with war crimes often do not produce results in line with expectations. Cambodia is one example, in relation to how Pol Pot and his fellows were convicted. The human rights court did not meet the expectations of the people of Cambodia. The Cambodian people are in pain due to the freedom given to the criminals who killed Cambodian people, teachers, students, traders and professionals. Now they are free without significant charges of human rights violations (Sok 2013).

The Cambodian experience can be a lesson for other countries and post-conflict and post-war regions. A process of investigation is needed to investigate truth and give space for reconciliation of the parties to the conflict or between perpetrators and victims. Aceh and Timor-Leste share the same experience of how the Indonesian military committed human rights violations, which is now difficult to investigate properly. In a different experience in Africa, the testimony of the victims to the commission is crucial to declaring human rights violations against the victims during the conflict. This is a way of healing for post-conflict and post-war societies (Hidayat 2011: 30–31).

But reconciliation is not necessarily always established through the judicial process. Compensation that meets the sense of justice of victims’ families is also an alternative. The people of Timor-Leste are challenged by this model, especially for those living in refugee
camps in West Timor. Healing will reduce the tension between people of Timor-Leste who are pro-independence and those who are pro-integration. Several clashes between Timorese students in Yogyakarta were caused by a sense of “injustice” among the students (Mahmud 2013). Injustice perceived by the people of Timor-Leste, both pro-independence and pro-integration, has become one of the main issues for the two countries to resolve immediately. At least the political elites and the governments of both countries have a common agreement to build positive friendships. This agreement needs to be constantly monitored and implemented, especially concerning grassroots community groups (including students) who have direct experience of disharmony, violence and conflict especially related to the issue of economics and justice.
Strengthening Friendship

Efforts to strengthen the friendship between the two countries are a necessity that cannot be avoided through the relationships between either states or civil societies. There are some key factors that need serious attention from the governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia. First, the history of ‘embarrassing’ Indonesia about East Timor should be developed into a more positive energy through understanding from both countries about how they used to be a family and have now become neighbours who maintain good relations. Secondly, Indonesia as the largest Muslim country in the world and one of the few countries in Asia that has joined the G-20 (Islam 2011: 165) is important, especially for regional diplomacy in which Timor-Leste should take stronger initiative. Indonesian Muslims are moderate and tolerant. They are potentially a driving force to develop interfaith dialogue and moderate Islam in Timor-Leste. A current challenge is the rise of radical Muslims delivering Islamic studies in Timor-Leste. They are connected to Muslims in Eastern Indonesia, where religious conflicts have become burdens for religious and ethnic harmony. The Timorese people are also being encouraged to study in Indonesia through either state scholarship mechanisms or approaches to educational institutions in Indonesia. This could be a way of reinforcing relations between the two countries.

Until now, the greatest trauma of modern Indonesian history is the separation of former parts of Indonesia. Bhineka Tunggal Eka (Unity in Diversity) has become a political slogan that binds diverse ethnic, religious and cultural sectors of Indonesian society.

Conclusion

To conclude, democratic transitions in Aceh and Timor-Leste have proceeded relatively peacefully compared to those of other post-conflict and post-war regions such as Kenya, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq. This confirms the significance of state-building to
strengthen peace and development policy as a requirement of democratic peace. It is inline with the arguments of Mansfield and Snyder (2007) and Paris (2004) that institutionalisation before liberalisation is a crucial step towards permanent peace. What happened in Aceh and Timor-Leste with their peaceful democratic transitions supports the argument in this thesis that building institutions such as the rule of law, local government, political parties and civil society participation is required in order to build a peaceful democracy. However, incomplete democratisation may revert to autocracy, which threatens the peace and freedom for all parties to participate in the democratisation process. Mansfield and Snyder suggested that “reversal toward autocracy might be more peaceful than democratic transition, but more war-prone than the absence of regime change” (Mansfield & Snyder 2007: 267).

Aceh and Timor-Leste are both consolidating democracy, with challenges remaining to be overcome in some sectors. Trauma from war and violent conflict, poverty, unemployment and historical divisions, as warned by Gusmão (2012), are among crucial agenda items in the future for both Aceh and Timor-Leste. The ICG (2011) reported that there were violent conflicts in Aceh between combatants approaching the 2012 gubernatorial election, with more victims than the 2006 gubernatorial election.

Yusuf has founded a new party, PNA, which is the strongest competitor to the current government PA. The leadership of Aceh combatants is still very influential at the grassroots level. Fewer attacks and killings occurred in Aceh after the 2012 election; however, it was estimated that the violence might increase around the time of the 2014 parliamentary and presidential elections if not all political parties prioritised peace over politics. In the 2014 elections in Aceh, former combatant parties participated actively. PA was still dominant in provincial and district elections.
In the presidential election in July 2014, Subianto, who was supported by PA, won by a narrow margin against Widodo. The split among former combatants in supporting the former commander of the Special Forces (Kopassus) impacted significantly on the loss sustained by Subianto, who had claimed to be able to win at least 80 percent of the vote. The sentiment against former Kopassus operatives, who were responsible during the conflict for the killing of Acehnese combatants, contributed to this loss. Compared to Timor-Leste, politics in Aceh still depend on the political relationship between Aceh and Jakarta. Aceh has to play the game in continuing to demand the full implementation of the Helsinki MoU as a mandate of the peace accord.

It is the task and obligation of the political and community leaders of both Aceh and Timor-Leste to take their regions towards prosperous, democratic and peaceful futures. Gusmão’s strategy of accommodating the political leadership of former PM Alkatiri is considered by Aniceto Guterres, MP and head of the FRETILIN Party fraction, to be a crucial symbol of leadership reconciliation that will greatly impact on the grassroots level (Guterres 2013). The unity of political leaders in Timor-Leste is an important factor in the strengthening of development and peacebuilding. This is in contrast to the political reality in Aceh, where political frictions are contributing to the slow progress of development. The Acehenese people are still traumatised by threats of violence from former combatants whose commanders and leaders are managing governments in the provinces and districts of Aceh.

The next chapter examines Islam, democracy and international affairs, in particular how Acehenese democracy and peace processes have become lessons for activists in peace studies and diplomatic actors from other states and civil societies. These actors will deliver the experience of Aceh democratic consolidation to the managing of conflicts in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Civil society is represented by Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, which have actively engaged in conflict prevention and ending
violence. The chapter includes recommendations on how to develop moderate Islam in Timor-Leste and Southeast Asia from the experience of Aceh and the world.
Chapter 10

Democracy and Regional Peace: Lessons from Aceh

Introduction

The Acehenese democracy and peace processes are among comprehensive lessons in regional and international peace-making and peacebuilding. Aceh after the peace agreement in 2005 is a promising special case. Tornquist said of Aceh: “the combination of democratisation, local parties and peace was at the core” (2013: 235). In addition, Aspinall (2009: 10) stated that Acehnese scholars and common people identified themselves in “endlessly repeated phrases like ‘Aceh is identical with Islam,’ ‘Islam and Aceh are two sides of the same coin,’ and ‘Islam is the blood and bones of the Acehnese’.” Kingsbury (2010), Aspinall (2009) and Djumala (2013) argued that discussing Aceh democracy and peacebuilding needs an understanding of how Islam, nationalism, democracy and peace have operated in the process. Kingsbury said that combatants who are committed Muslims have adopted democracy and inclusiveness within the combatants’ political leadership. It can be seen in the 2006 first gubernatorial elections in Aceh after the Helsinki peace accord. In line with Kingsbury, Aspinall looked at a close relationship between Islam and nationalism in Aceh context. Aspinall said:

Between the 1970s and early 1990s, leaders of GAM, as well as calling for Acehnese independence, continued to espouse formal Islamic goals suited to the Darul Islam tradition. The fact that the famous ulama and Darul Islam veteran Tengku Ilyas Leube became minister of justice in the Aceh Merdeka cabinet was itself a sign of the movement’s attitudes toward shari’a. Some of the organization’s documents from this period suggest that it aimed to establish an ‘Islamic State of Sumatra-Aceh’. Hasan di
Tiro himself spoke openly in such terms to the international press (Aspinall 2009: 199).

Aspinall’s analysis confirms how Islam is a crucial factor in understanding Aceh and Indonesia, including in the context of the democratic process. Islam has become part of the identity of Aceh and Indonesian politics, although Indonesia is not an Islamic state.

Foreign Minister of the RI, R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, at the Fourth Bali Democracy Forum entitled ‘Consolidating Democracy in Pluralistic Society’ on 7–8 November 2013, said that Indonesia is an influential state in the Asia-Pacific in relation to the processes of democratisation and peacebuilding through the Bali Democracy Forum, which is “an inclusive platform among states to exchange experience and best practice on building democracy. This has been part of regional architecture of democracy” (Natalegawa 2014). In this forum, President Yudhoyono described how Indonesia has met the challenge of a pluralistic society:

As a plural state, Indonesia is a reflection of Asia-Pacific diversity and plurality. For centuries, civilisations, races, religions and cultures have established a home in these islands [of the Indonesian state]. Today, we are a nation with a quarter billion people, consisting of three hundred ethnic groups, seven hundred spoken languages, religious plurality spread in more than seventeen thousand islands. Our generation’s motto is ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity)’. We have worked very hard to build an inclusive and democratic nation state in a diverse society (Yudhoyono 2014).

The Bali Democracy Forum is a main element of Indonesia’s strategic role in preserving stability, peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa and other conflict regions. The Indonesian role is not only through the state, but also through civil society. Indonesia has taken an active part in ending wars and conflicts by deploying armies and
policies with UN peacekeeping forces. Civil societies such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah also play an important role in international peace missions.

Acehenese democracy and peacebuilding have been influential in global peace. The state, civil societies and individuals have actively promoted the experience of Aceh peace to peace initiatives in Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. This chapter focuses on how the Indonesian government and civil society play a part in the mediation, reconciliation, peacebuilding and development of post-conflict and post-war regions from the Acehenese transition and peace efforts to regional and the global peace. Some comparisons are made to peace initiatives in Timor-Leste, the southern Philippines and southern Thailand as strategic lessons learned for further peace studies and conflict resolution. The chapter argues that the multitrack diplomacy lessons from Aceh’s peace process are important to overcoming conflicts and wars, and to strengthening democratisation and peacebuilding in post-conflict and post-war states and regions. Multi-track diplomacy in this context is the building of peace by governments, CSOs, human rights activists and peacemakers through a diplomatic approach.

This chapter examines three aspects: the concept of multi-track diplomacy and Acehenese democracy and peace in understanding the diplomatic approach; the peace initiatives in Southeast Asia and the Middle East reflected from Aceh’s lessons; and lastly, the challenges of the Aceh transition which are crucial to learn in order to prevent further conflicts. The final part of the Aceh lesson is similar to the problems of post-conflict regions in Africa, where more violent conflicts occurred after elections and political transitions. Djuli (2014) stated that violent threats from some former combatants were due to the complexity inside the combatant groups. Many of them have been left behind by development which is politically controlled by the combatant elites, especially in PA circles.
On the other hand, Ambassador Supriyadi (2014) claimed that Aceh democracy and peace are one of the greatest results of diplomacy for Indonesia, the third largest democratic country in the world and the largest Muslim country, which is very influential in overcoming conflicts and wars in other regions. Furthermore, Supriyadi (2015) said that the successful experience of democracy and peace in the Aceh transition has been a pivotal lesson for the peace initiatives between Palestine and Israel, actively encouraged by Indonesia with the support of states and civil societies from East Asia and Southeast Asia. This offers a criticism of liberal peace theory, which argues that institutionalisation before liberalisation is crucial in order to construct a transition of government after conflict. In addition, Aceh peace and democracy are the result of commitment by local, national and international leadership to making genuine peace. Yudhoyono confirmed that “I am responsible and actively lead the negotiating role because it was a sensitive issue. Pros and cons on the peace process. I could not delegate the task to other people. I have to assure parliament members, TNI, police and all Indonesian people that peace solution is needed. The most important is that Aceh must be part of Indonesia” (2014: 566).

**International Coalition for Peace**

Peace efforts are managed in order to achieve a standard of peace for people living in conflict and war regions. The UN has a standard by which to consider whether the basic social, political and economic rights in of the people have been fulfilled. Alger conducted extensive field research at UN headquarters in New York City and Geneva, Switzerland:

> With respect to human rights, under UN auspices the states assembled have drafted standards for human life on the planet through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and covenants on civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, and an array of other treaties on genocide, women’s rights, elimination of
Peace efforts in the international context refer to coalitions of states to overcome conflicts and wars by deploying peacekeeping forces to reduce the number of victims of conflict and aid in transitions post-conflict and post-war. Transitions in Timor-Leste, Aceh and Mindanao from conflicts to peace have required the significant support of international coalitions. At this level, state actors are the main players in building peace and preventing violence. This is a track one diplomatic approach.

Peacekeeping forces coordinated by the UN have contributed greatly to peacebuilding. This type of operation also strengthens international cooperation to preserve peace and stop violence. Timor-Leste’s political transition was secured by an international coalition. Ramos-Horta stated that: “What the experience of Timor-Leste teaches us is that there are no short-cuts to peace; peace is a journey that must be reached step by step, a foundation that has to be built bloc by bloc”. Caballero-Anthony and Haywood said that ASEAN members also contributed to peacekeeping in Timor-Leste in 1999 and Aceh in 2005. ASEAN rejected collective intervention following the violence after the referendum for independence in Timor-Leste. This policy was criticised in that ASEAN failed to initiate preventive diplomatic efforts (Caballero-Anthony & Haywood 2010). However, members of ASEAN such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines participated in supporting the Australian-led coalition, which means that “ASEAN countries were not completely passive in the immediate aftermath of the violence” (Caballero-Anthony & Haywood 2010: 4).

ASEAN members also contributed to peacebuilding in Aceh. Caballero-Anthony and Haywood stated that five members of ASEAN, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam, following the cessation of hostilities in 2005 between the
GoI and GAM, participated in an EU-led civilian Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) to implement the MoU. AMM’s duties included “overseeing the demobilisation of GAM and the decommissioning of its armaments, as well as monitoring the human rights situation, the process of legislative change, and the reintegration of GAM members” (Caballero-Anthony & Haywood 2010: 4). Furthermore, peace efforts were also conducted by CSOs, individuals and other non-state actors.

**Post-Conflict Democracy**

Post-conflict and post-war states and regions have experienced democratic transition differently. Violence before and after elections may trigger further conflicts, especially in states and regions where democratic institutions are not well established. Yamano, Tanaka and Gitau (2010) examined the violence after the 2007 presidential election in Kenya, where about 1000 people were killed and over 500,000 people were displaced. The presidential candidate who lost the election executed members of ethnic groups who had voted for the winning candidate. In Kenya, post-conflict elections have contributed to more violent conflicts. Post-conflict violence like Kenya’s legitimates the view that conducting elections too soon after a civil war raises significantly the threat of war happening again.

However, Brancati and Snyder (2011: 2) argued that “early elections do not necessarily increase the risk of war under all circumstances. Decisive victories, demobilization, and peacekeeping diminish the fighting capacity of former combatants who might otherwise be tempted to return to war when faced with unfavorable election results”. A weak democratic transition in Kenya triggered more violent and bloody conflicts when it attempted to hold early elections after the main conflict had been resolved. Mansfield and Snyder (2005: 265) argued that:
Not only does an out-sequence transition run the risk of failing to culminate in consolidated democracy, but it also risks triggering intense nationalism and war. This is most likely to occur when a country’s political institutions are especially weak at the outset of the transition from autocracy to a partially democratic regime, and when elites are threatened by democratization.

Mansfield and Snyder’s (2005) arguments are relevant to understanding the behaviour of the political elites in Aceh, especially those in PA who were threatened by Yusuf’s proposal as an independent candidate for governor in the 2012 election after PA’s elite refused to endorse him. Ayah Banta, one of the combatants in the grassroots, led a force that attacked and killed local commanders supporting Yusuf. They also killed some labourers from Java working for the national telecommunication company. This rise in violent attacks pressured Jakarta to postpone more than three times the schedule of the election, until after Yusuf ended his term. This strategy aimed to reduce political influence of Yusuf in local government, especially at district level.

**Democracy, Peace and Security**

Democratic institutions established in Aceh were a very crucial factor in supporting the democratic process. The initiatives of the Aceh Election Commission to encourage a peaceful election through the media and written agreement from all candidates helped to prevent further conflict provoked by attacks and intimidation by certain parties to gain political advantage. In addition, the Acehnese are tired of conflict and the provocation of individuals and parties which tends to create further conflicts that go against their economic and political interests. Combatants still dominate local governments; however, their authority and powers are decreasing, being challenged by new candidates and new parties which have gained significant support. The Nasdem Party is among those which have won the hearts of the
Acehnese. Some individuals have also won against former combatant candidates who claimed the ability to dominate the vote by more than 80 percent. This argument is supported by analysis of the 2012 and 2014 elections.

Democratic transition in Aceh has also been influenced by a stable and peaceful democratic process at the national level with a high percentage of participation of the people. In general, they are critical of policies of the regime which go against the interest of the people. For example, the Democratic Party lost significant votes after the arrests of their political leaders by the Anti-Corruption National Commission (KPK). The Democratic Party lost a significant number of seats in the 2014 election in Aceh.

Last but not least, the most crucial factor in democratic transition is the role of civil society. Meredith Applegate, Operations Coordinator, Indonesia, of International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), said that:

Civil society and many other electoral stakeholders have prioritized making the elections in Aceh peaceful; however, sporadic instances of violence and intimidation have been reported in several districts, particularly during the months prior to Election Day. Efforts to support peaceful elections in Aceh have targeted political parties, journalists, the public and other electoral stakeholders (Applegate 2012).

Based on fieldwork and discussions on the 2012 gubernatorial and head of district elections in which former combatants were involved in local parties and other Acehnese in local and national parties, this thesis argues that democratic transition is supporting peacebuilding and peacemaking (see Chapter 6). The Independent Electoral Commission in Aceh (KIP Aceh) officially announced on 17 April 2012 the gubernatorial election results and confirmed the 17 other mayoral and district election results. The PA candidate pair of Abdullah and Manaf won the gubernatorial election with 1,327,695 votes (55.87%), while the incumbent governor
Yusuf gained 694,515 votes (29.18%). Since PA’s candidate pair succeeded in obtaining over 55 percent of the vote, well above the 30 percent requirement, a second round was not initiated. However, second-round elections did take place in 5 of the 17 districts that held local elections: Aceh Barat Daya, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat, Langsa and Sabang. No candidate pair in any of these districts and cities appeared to have obtained more than 30 percent of the vote.

More than seventy percent of the Acehnese voted for their leaders in government and their representatives in parliaments, although violence occurred in some parts of the province. The intimidation, attacks and killings in some polling stations in Aceh suburbs went against the principles of democracy, freedom and justice. NGOs based in Aceh closely monitored the elections. Furthermore, the KIP managed a peaceful election by asking a commitment of all candidates to prioritise peace in the democratic process.

The process was challenged by the attacks and killings by GAM special forces headed by Ayah Banta. They were arrested after the election. A big question is how GAM transformed into a terrorist group. The thesis argues that GAM is a secular movement, but Islamic ideology that developed within individuals transformed them into militants and radicals. The court sentenced Ayah Bantato life in prison and he is now in Nusakambangan prison, where Indonesian terrorist group leaders and leading activists spent years in order to reduce their influence on other detainees in common prisons. Unfortunately, the environment of Ayah Banta’s detention has made him even more radical. A detainee claimed that Ayah Banta has declared he will follow Abu Bakar Al-Baghdady of Islamic State in Iraq and the Middle East. Small numbers of young Acehnese have joined a terrorism training camp in Janto.

As one of the democratic institutions, KIP Aceh should work to maintain peaceful elections. KIP commissioners are nominated by an independent selection board made up of community
members, women, academics and NGOs. However, PA has taken advantage by appointing members of KIP Aceh for its own political interests. ZyAd (2014) claimed that:

What is exceptional about elections in Aceh is that the KIP selection process provides for interference by parliament. In contemporary Aceh, PA dominance in the regional legislature allows them to elect commissioners uncontested and the process of selecting commissioners is subject to unusual politicking. PA has proven exceptionally willing to exploit democratic political process for their own gain. Unsurprisingly, Aceh’s PA-dominated parliament has appointed KIP members favourable to party interests. As a result, in the election we have witnessed commissioners at the provincial and district levels who are either affiliated informally to the party or openly active on the party board such as in Sabang.

This political party’s influence on the election commission affects the quality of democracy. The commission guarantees a democratic process which protects the rights of participants in the elections. However, PA appointed its own people in the commission to secure the result of the elections. PA won 11 of 17 heads of districts and one pair of governor and vice-governor. The protests from individuals and parties, including Yusuf and the PNA, about the political violence approaching the 2012 and 2014 elections have been ignored.

**Democracy and International Affairs**

Not many countries’ global image has undergone such fundamental change as Indonesia’s within such a short time. Indonesia had been extensively observed to be one of the foremost contributors to Southeast Asian stability by the mid-1990s (Sukma 2012). After the political disorder of 1998–99, however, there rapidly developed a reason for international and regional apprehension. Indonesia’s image was severely affected by domestic issues: economic
hardship, communal and political violence, the threats of separatism and the rising problem of religious terrorism and fundamentalism (Sukma 2012).

Indonesian domestic politics, especially having successfully dealt with separatist movements in Aceh in 2005 and ethno-religious conflicts in Maluku and Poso in 2002, became a political foundation for the state to involve itself more broadly in international affairs. Basri (2012: 46) concluded that “it is true that Indonesia has the potential to play an important role in the regional and global economics, but only if it can overcome supply-side constraints”.
Civil Society and Peacebuilding

Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are the two largest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, with members claimed to number approximately forty and thirty million respectively. They promote peacebuilding and democratisation in Indonesia and represent Indonesian Muslim diplomacy in international affairs. They undertake second-track diplomacy in disseminating peace around the world. van Bruinessen (2012: 125) argued that: “Muhammadiyah and NU enjoy strong legitimacy as representatives of broad segments of the Islamic community (ummah), and they have remained the largest and the strongest embodiment of civil society throughout the twentieth century”.

The second World Peace Forum, held jointly by Muhammadiyah and the Cheng Ho Multi Culture Trust and supported by the Center for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilizations (CDCC), took place in Jakarta from 24 to 26 June 2008. With the strategic and timely theme, ‘Addressing Facets of Violence: What can be Done?’, this was a momentous event for Indonesia and especially the host Jakarta, where violence had recently occurred in June 2008. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) attacked peace activists under the banner of religion (Islam). This attack was just one of many violent acts in the first decade of post-New Order Indonesia. Religious radicalism and violent jihadist groups have grown significantly, enjoying the new freedom and democracy in the country. What should Muhammadiyah and the government do after international peace dialogue?

In this forum, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, along with President Yudhoyono, presented messages of peace. The coalition is an important circle of peacebuilding, which is imperative in this period of world transition. The peace forum helped to revive the image of Indonesia away from being a new
hub of radical movements and towards being a tolerant and moderate country. This image development is very significant not only to maintaining Indonesia’s strategy for foreign policy but also to reconstructing the new Indonesia, where democracy is peacefully implemented and people preserve multiculturalism and pluralism as the Indonesian identity, as agreed by the nation’s founders in 1945.

Muhammadiyah, Indonesia’s second-largest Islamic CSO after Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), plays a very significant role in supporting peace. This is strategic for Muhammadiyah, which initiates peace by making coalitions with the West. Each CSO represents different segments of Indonesian Muslims. Muhammadiyah has established thousands of schools and dozens of universities, hospitals and orphanages in many big cities, and even a few banks, all of them well managed and organised system. On the other hand, NU is less professionally organised, reflecting the different social backgrounds of the rural masses and small-town businesspeople (van Bruinessen 2012).

In 2008, NU also managed an international forum for peace coordinated by the International Conference of Islamic Scholars (ICIS) which was also attended by world leaders. Muhammadiyah and NU are supported by the government and the international community to preserve peace in the region. In this sense, Muhammadiyah and NU, as the largest CSOs in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, play strong roles in peacebuilding.

This international cooperation is now challenged by the rise of radicalism and terrorism, which some people regard as not dangerous. The killings in Maluku and Poso, and bombings in Indonesia and the rest of the world, have been conducted by terrorist groups grown from a spirit of radicalism and religious militance. According to the research of LP3ES (2007), the numbers of radical groups involved in violent jihad are very small, not more than 1 percent of
the Indonesian population. Of 10,000 Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, around 200 are introducing a radical jihadist curriculum. Hence, the number of radical groups is much smaller than mainstream moderate and tolerant groups. However, it will continue to grow if the governments and civil societies of Indonesia and the world do not take action to develop a peaceful form of Islam supporting interfaith and intercultural dialogues and endorsing education for poor people.

LSI polling in 2007 on the commitment of Muslims to *Shari'ah* implementations showed it is understood in a variety of ways by people. When they are asked about conducting *Shari’ah* has part of their daily Muslim activities, the number of voters for *Shari’ah* implementation is very significant. However, when they are asked what they think of *hudud* (cutting off the hands of criminals), the number of proponents is very low. People misunderstand the meaning of *Shari’ah*, although they have implemented it in their daily lives as part of the culture. The peaceful Malay culture of Islam demonstrates good assimilation between Middle Eastern Islam and Southeast Asian culture. Mainstream Muslim CSOs have to unite and continue making coalitions for preserving peace and strengthening their role in teaching moderate and tolerant Islam. This is one of the tasks for the participants in the World Peace Forum.

In international diplomacy representing Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah have played a strategic role. They represent moderate Muslims and genuinely promote peace and reconciliation. During the negotiation between MNLF and the GPH in the 1990s, Abdurrahman Wahid as head of the NU central board helped the GPH and Foreign Affairs of the GoI in facilitating communication with Nur Misuari, the MNLF leader. Wahid has communicated with Musuari for a long time through their global engagement. Wahid also helped in overcoming conflict between Palestine and Israel. And it was during his short term as president of the RI that good relations began between Indonesia and the Middle East. *Ulama* of Indonesia have shared their experience in Al Azhar and other Middle Eastern universities.
with *ulama* from Southeast Asia and the Middle East. This is the power of Muslim CSOs and the leadership of Indonesian Muslims which have been actively involved in overcoming international conflict.

The experience of Indonesian Muslims in overcoming conflicts in Aceh, Maluku and Poso has strengthened Indonesian initiatives in peace efforts in other conflict and post-conflict regions. In addition, Muhammadiyah is one of the CSOs officially monitoring the processes of peacebuilding, negotiation and implementation of the peace accord between MILF and the GPH.

**Indonesian Muslims in Global Peace**

As stated in the discussion of earlier chapters of this thesis, peace studies, negotiation and conflict resolution are the concern of not only international relations (IR) study but also sociology, psychology, political science, law and other disciplines. At postgraduate level, the study of peace and conflict resolution is interdisciplinary and incorporates various social sciences. However, the theory of conflict and peace was originally discussed in sociology. Lewis Coser is among the early sociology scholars who wrote systematically on conflict resolution, before other sociologists developed conflict into a more complex phenomenon. The discussion of peace, mediation and conflict resolution has been carried out in conjunction with discussion of violence, conflict and war.

Martin Shaw, reader in the sociology of politics at the International University of Hull, UK, has interestingly discussed criticism of sociology in relation to IR. Shaw analysed the views of Barry Buzan, one of the most influential realist figures in the study of IR. According to Shaw, Buzan in his book *People, States and Fear* put security in material objects such as countries or weapons. However, Shaw stated that these materials return to humans. Therefore
people must be the central security object. Buzan’s security concept was considered by Shaw a static definition (Shaw 1994).

In the study of IR, conflict resolution is related to diplomacy and international security cooperation. There are several actors involved in negotiation and conflict resolution, which is relevant to understanding how Aceh democracy and peace provide lessons in regional diplomacy and global peace. Weatherbee (2005) looked at three levels of international actors in Southeast Asia: regional state actors, extra-regional actors and non-state actors. The Acehnese and Indonesians have been involved at all three levels. State and non-state actors have actively participated in international conflict resolution. This is based on lessons they learned from the democratic and peaceful transition in Aceh. Non-state actors have played strategic roles in Aceh and other conflict regions. They are NGOs and INGOs (Goodhand 2006). Smoker, Davis and Munske (1990) analysed the approaches to international conflict of several actors, namely states, multinational corporations, international government organisations, NGOs and INGOs.

The work of Kant provides a strong foundation for individual rights and freedom and has been influential in shaping Western liberal democracy. Kant considered that a “zone of peace” can only be created between liberal (democratic) countries. His ideas stimulated the French Revolutions of 1776 and 1789. Kant was very critical of practical politics that do not pay attention to the wishes of the general public, who expect a comprehensive peace. He published an essay entitled ‘Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch’ in 1795, almost simultaneously with the Treaty of Basel between Prussia and France in March 1795.

For Kant, a peace treaty is only a temporary pause, not peace itself. His theory has become the classical theory of peace. In the tradition of IR, Kant is included in the classical liberal group. According to Kant, to create peace, the rights of citizens should take precedence.
There are three related aspects of Kant’s concept of peace: (1) the external sovereignty of states and the changing nature of relations among them; (2) the internal sovereignty of states and the normative limitations of classical power politics; and (3) the stratification of world society and globalisation of danger which makes it necessary for us to rethink what we mean by ‘peace’.

To understand the role of Indonesian Muslims in negotiation and conflict resolution needs an understanding of the basic principles of conflict resolution, which in fact have been practised by Muslim leaders in various social conflicts in post–New Order Indonesia. The Muslim–Christian peace agreements in Poso in Malino I (2001) and in Maluku in Malino II (2002) involved many Muslim leaders of Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and NU, and boarding schools, and government agencies represented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Indonesian Ulama Council. They were intense negotiations and communications for peace efforts in Poso and Maluku with Christian leaders. Likewise, the unrest in Solo (1998) and Situbondo and Tasikmalaya (1996) involved negotiation and communication with different ethnicities and religions, namely the Chinese community and Christians respectively, because the targets of the riots were shops belonging to Chinese businesses and also churches and Christian schools.

In negotiation and conflict resolution, the principle of persuasion was an important method conducted by Muslim leaders. They become mediators who wisely used the persuasion approach, which is more concerned with the way to peace than a threat or demonstration method to force others to follow the aspirations of a group. According to Ledgerwood et al. in *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, persuasion is an approach that can change behaviour and actions on the basis of mutual trust from violence to peace, while negotiation is a process that is carried out by two or more entities together to discuss issues that have become a source of conflict, for the benefit of all parties.
In practice, a cross-cultural negotiation approach often involves religion, language and customs in reaching the best solution, in common interest towards peace.

In many peace efforts, Indonesian Muslim leaders negotiated with leaders of different religions and ethnicities using a cross-cultural approach to the common interest. They used persuasion with each community both before and after the peace agreement was negotiated. They were mediators for the communities involved in the conflict. Traditional and religious leaders in the Malino II peace efforts and some agreement in Maluku reportedly used both persuasion and negotiation. However, Muslims argue that customary law needs renewal without violating the religion. This is a challenge for the old tradition, which used to be a means of peace but now needs transformation with a modern and contextual understanding of conflict resolution. In Aceh, dayah and ulama have played strategic roles, especially during the first peace negotiation initiated under President Wahid.

As part of the middle class, Muslim leaders play a strategic role in peace efforts. According to Saeed, Muslim leaders as part of Indonesia’s middle class have played a role in many things including interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution and gender equality. They are active in strengthening civil society since the New Order and occupy a strategic place in the resolution of conflict and social unrest. However, in Islamic studies, Indonesian Muslims have not become an object of discussion. Besides being geographically far away from the birthplace of the divine religions, also Islam’s development is in a later phase in the Middle East and Africa. The Islamic character in Indonesia incorporates Islam and local tradition, which has made Indonesian Muslims more moderate and tolerant than Muslims in the Middle East. This includes Aceh.

This is what makes Islamic Indonesia open and accommodating of modernisation and global change. With the strengthening of Indonesia’s economy, it is expected that Muslim leadership
will emerge. Sukma said that “by defining Islam as a force for peace, tolerance and harmony, the government has sought to articulate an image of Indonesia’s brand of Islam as a moderating voice between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds, and within the Muslim world itself” (Sukma 2012: 86). President Wahid tried to take a strategic role in the Islamic world to open up and introduce new changes from Indonesian democracy. Initial priority was given to countries that were sceptical or did not know about Indonesia, among others Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria and other countries in the Middle East and Africa. This is how Wahid mediated some conflict problems in Middle Eastern, African and Asian regions. Basyar stated that rebuilding diplomatic relations with the Middle East become strategic for the Wahid government. During the Suharto period, Indonesia considered that diplomatic relations with the Middle East were not a priority. Unfortunately, controversy ensued when Wahid tried to open diplomatic relations with Israel.

Furthermore, Wahid revitalised relations with Timor-Leste by rebuilding a relationship with the Portuguese. In the terms of Smith, the foreign policy direction of the Wahid government was more unorthodox than those of the earlier leaders of Indonesia. He combined the power of religious knowledge and long experience in NU and other NGOs, as well as international leadership.

The leadership of Indonesian Muslims and their role in global peace can be seen in the initiatives of CSOs in peace efforts. van Bruinessen (2012: 135) stated:

Indonesian efforts to mediate in international conflicts (the Southern Philippines, the Middle East) have been relatively modest, but at least the government has been positioning itself for a new international role in the Muslim arena…Indonesia’s growing confidence is also evident in the increased charitable activity directed
towards Palestine, in which several Indonesian Muslims charities have been competing for attention.

Tibi’s idea in *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change* is also interesting to consider in understanding the dynamics of religion in the midst of conflict and political transition. In line with the interpretation of Tibi, Cambodian religious leaders provide another one of many examples of how religious leaders play strategic roles in the development of non-violence and peace. Appleby in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* was keen to explain the importance of religion. Appleby also remained aware of the radicalism and fundamentalism that appear in religious communities, but not from religious roots. The trigger is the economy and politics.

Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, aged 68 years, is a Cambodian Buddhist monk who in 1993 led hundreds of pastors, dozens of NGO activists and tens of thousands of people to support the first democratic party in Cambodia after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge. A year later, Ghosananda also led national reconciliation followed by hundreds of other Buddhist clergy. Figures like Ghosananda are in the same position as Mother Theresa (Christian), Mahatma Gandhi (Hindu) and Muhammad (Islam) in conducting social liberation from all kinds of authoritarianism.

In Indonesia, civil society movements were developed by Islamic schools and NGOs such as LP3ES. They developed Islamic schools and *dayah* through research methodology and management. This movement produced a new generation of graduates from Islamic boarding schools such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, Emha Ainun Najib and Muslim Abdurrahman, who strengthened the position of Islamic boarding schools as a strong element of civil society against state hegemony. Other notable figures in the conflict resolution and peace movement are M. Din Ahmad Syamsuddin and Syafi’i Maarif (active in interfaith
dialogue), Husein Muhammad (gender equality), Tuan Guru Turmudzi Badruddin (conflict prevention in Lombok) and the Ulama Boarding School in Aceh, including Tgk. H. Ibrahim Bardan (Chairman of Ulama Dayah Aceh), in mediating between the GoI and GAM before the Helsinki peace agreement in 2005, and other traditional and religious leaders in various conflicts and violence in Indonesia.

Indonesian leaders have been involved in mediation, peace initiative and conflict resolution with states and civil societies. The Acehnese involved in peace negotiation in Helsinki have shared their experience in peace efforts in the southern Philippines. Djuli and Marhaban are among the active participants in peace initiatives and conflict resolution in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and African countries. They have visited conflict regions and presented their experience in seminars, workshops and training. Marhaban is from Aceh and now working for peace in the UN. Indonesian leaders have mediated between the Khmer Rouge and the Government of Cambodia, between Bangsamoro Muslims and the GPH, between Muslims in southern Thailand and the Government of Thailand, in peace efforts between Palestine and Israel, and others. The GoI has also deployed peacekeeping forces to Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and other conflict and war areas to support the UN in overcoming violence and restoring democracy.

Several other figures are among the important Indonesian leaders who have mediated national and international conflicts. Ali Alatas was Indonesia’s foreign minister for four cabinet periods between 1987–1999 under Presidents Soeharto and Habibie. Alatas was born in Jakarta in 1932 and graduated from the Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia, in 1956. From his work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in Southeast Asian countries, Alatas was nominated by a number of Asian countries in 1996 as UN Secretary-General. At least two peace agreements in Cambodia (between 1988 and 1991) and the Philippines (between 1993 and 1996) were mediated by Alatas. The first initiative was attended by representatives
of the warring factions in Cambodia, namely King Norodom Sihanouk Hun Sen representing the Khmer Rouge, held in Bogor in July 1988 with the name Jakarta Informal Meeting. In this meeting, Alatas stated that “any settlement, to be just and durable should be attained through political means and not by force of arms”. After several meetings, a peace treaty was signed at the Paris International Conference on Cambodia on 23 October 1991. This peace effort involved the UN and ASEAN, as well as international organisations that participated in facilitating the reconciliation process.

Furthermore, to bridge the conflict between MNLF and the GPH, Alatas played an important role in the peace agreement between the GPH and Muslim militias. Until now MNLF remains compliant with this agreement. At the request of the two conflicting sides, Alatas led a reconciliation process which was attended by both parties in Bogor Palace in April 1993. Alatas stated that “Negotiations require a spirit of conciliation, mutual concessions and a desire to achieve peace and a just solution”. The peace efforts continued the spirit of the Tripoli Peace Agreement in 1976 by creating broad autonomy under the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Philippines. After more than 70 informal meetings, nine areas were agreed on: autonomy; national peace; regional security forces; education; economy and financial system; revenues from mining and minerals; system administration; representation in the national government, legislative bodies and the executive, and the judiciary; and the introduction of shari’ah ‘ah Islam.

Unfortunately, organised militia groups were not included in the peace agreement. Among them were MILF and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). MILF and ASG strengthened their ranks with large groups of militia from various organisations and regions in Southeast Asia. Fatchurrohman Al Ghozi, Dulmatin and Umar Patek – three of those involved in the 2002 Bali bombings – are among the mujahideen from Indonesia who fought with MILF and ASG.
Al Ghozi died in the Philippines, victim of the Philippine army after escape from prison. Dulmatin died after being arrested in March 2010. Patek is now in Porong prison, East Java.

Likewise, Muhammad Yusuf Kallahas become one of the important leaders in the peace process, both domestic and abroad. The peace agreements between Muslims and Christians in Poso in Malino I (2001) and in Maluku in Malino II (2002) cannot be separated from Kalla’s role in mediation and reconciliation in these Muslim and Christian communities. The peace agreements influenced the decline in clashes between two different religious communities. Even when he was Vice-President, Kalla tried to prevent violence following a gun battle between Brimob and Tanah Runtuh Poso in October 2006. With his experience of mediation, Kalla as Vice-President accompanied President Yudhoyono after the results of the 2004 elections and attempted to approach the leaders of GAM to integrate with the RI. Finally, after some negotiation meetings supported and facilitated by the EU, GAM and the RI reached a peace agreement in 2005. This provided an opportunity for GAM leaders and members to be active in politics and other activities for the realisation of peace and prosperity for the people of Aceh. In the 2006 gubernatorial election, a GAM representative, Yusuf, managed to win and lead an Aceh government after almost thirty years of conflict. In the 2009 elections, GAM established a local party different from the general parties in Indonesia based in Jakarta.

Alatas’s and Kalla’s approaches represent the character of Indonesian mainstream Muslims, who are progressive and moderate. Kalla is often represented as an NU figure from south Sulawesi. In an NU conference in Makassar in 2010, he received a tremendous response from the conference participants and the NU community. His charisma and persona have become an important part of his activities and programs in maintaining peace and mediating conflicting groups from various religions, ethnicities and politics. These leaders were actively involved in national and regional peacebuilding when they took strategic positions in the
Indonesian Government, Alatas as foreign minister and Kalla as vice-president. Indonesia has since taken a stronger role in democratisation and peace efforts in Southeast Asian region. With experience in Aceh and Timor-Leste, Indonesia has proposed a strategic long-term program of peacekeeping forces established under ASEAN.

To help mediate in the Burmese case, Indonesia approached Myanmar to demand that the Myanmar Government transform towards democracy and to ensure the Myanmar Government paid more respect to human rights. In his capacity as the 2010 chair of ASEAN, Sukma (2012: 81) said that:

> Indonesia offered to mediate to end the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia – the first such initiative ever undertaken by an ASEAN member state. Although Indonesia still abides by the association’s cardinal principles of non-interference and consensus, one cannot fail to conclude from these major initiatives that its policy towards ASEAN has begun to change significantly.

Indonesia has transformed into a confident state helping its neighbours in ending conflicts and promoting global peace. Its new economic capacity as the tenth strongest world economy has left behind old stereotype. Former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans (2012: xvi) stated that: “old stereotypical habits of thinking about Indonesia still remain depressingly familiar: that it is military dominated, authoritarian and undemocratic, and a hotbed of Islamic extremism which makes it a dangerous country”.

This stereotyping is also common in Aceh, where the practice of Islamic law, some analysts argued, goes against the universal principle of democracy. Criminal laws (*jinayat*) and other Islamic laws are *qanun* (law) which are argued by women activists as discriminatory against women. These regulations have also reduced the interest of international investors in investing in Aceh. This challenge also became a concern of Governor Yusuf, who was:
“careful not to reject sharia as such, but he vowed to stop its repressive expansion under his watch, because Sharia law was created not to get humans into trouble but to form an Islamic community” (Miller 2010: 44). Furthermore, other GAM leader maintained that: “the Acehnese did not want Islamic law from outside forces, because Syariat Islam is already the flesh and blood of the Acehnese nation” (Miller 2010: 44).

Islamic Shari’ah, however, is part of the identity and dignity of the Acehnese who rejected history through the implementation of Islamic Shari’ah. In practice, the law is intended as a foundation of a peaceful and prosperous community with ethics that protect the community. However, the intention to protect the Acehenese community has become discriminatory. Islamic Shari’ah provides legitimacy for local governments that pretend to prioritise ethics and morality, but are incapable of good governance. Aceh is still the poorest province in Sumatra and some leaders in Aceh have been charged with involvement in corrupt government projects. In February 2014, Governor Abdullah approved a Qanun Jinayat (criminal bylaw) which stated “non-Muslim or military suspects will be tried in a sharia court unless the violation is covered by the Criminal Code (KUHP) or by the Military Code respectively” (Simanjuntak 2014). This was an amendment of the provocative 2009 Qanun Jinayat that introduced the sentence of stoning to death. Bantasyam, a legal observer and peace activist based in Aceh, questioned the substance of the law:

It would be awkward if Islamic law was applied to non-Muslims regardless of whether the violation was categorized as a shari’a violation. If based on the principle of individuality, then Islamic law applied only to Muslims. If based on the principle of territoriability, then whoever was in Aceh would have to follow Islamic law just as it is implemented in Arab and sharia-based Islamic countries (Simanjuntak 2014).
However, Islamic Shari’ah does not have a direct correlation with politics. Indonesian voters have been consistent in their choices in national elections; since 1999, the percentage of the vote gained by Islamist parties has never reached even 25 percent.

As the third largest democratic country after the United States and India and with a good economic foundation, Indonesia has reason to be confident in regional and global engagement in peace and stability due to at least four factors: “the demographic bonus provided by a relatively young population; Indonesia’s generous endowments of energy and commodities; its stable macroeconomic conditions; and its political stability” (Basri 2012: 30). During a meeting of G20 leaders in Pittsburgh, President Yudhoyono “proudly shared Indonesia’s experience with far-reaching policy changes in 2005 and 2008 that raised fuel prices and allocated the extra funding to the poor in the form of cash transfers and health and education programs,” comments which informed a Pittsburgh communique that suggested countries “phase out and rationalize … inefficient fossil fuel subsidies while providing targeted support for the poorest” (Basri 2012: 28–29). Indonesian confidence in building a stable and democratic country has led it in regional leadership on initiatives for peace and development. Indonesia has provided a good lesson for some countries in Southeast Asia.

Lessons learned from post-conflict transition have been managed by states and CSOs in Southeast Asia. They have shared their experience in conflict resolution in each ASEAN member. Human rights activists, journalists and academics from Southeast Asian countries attended a workshop in March 2007 entitled ‘Peace Journalism in Southeast Asia’. They invited as a speaker a Thai general who had experience in the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). He said that Aceh’s democratic and peaceful transition would be adopted by the government of Thailand to solve separatist conflict in southern Thailand.

Conclusion
Indonesian experience in Aceh with democratic consolidation and peacebuilding has strengthened Indonesia to share its experience in mediation and peace efforts in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Some Acehnese individuals, local governments and CSOs have visited conflict and post-conflict regions to help overcome conflict and share Aceh’s experience in democratic transition. Marhaban, the only female negotiator in Helsinki in 2005, assisted the GPH and MILF in mediation and negotiation, including persuading both parties to give more spaces to women representatives. Individuals and organisations from the Philippines also visited Aceh to learn directly from the people how to resolve conflict and maintain peace.

Individuals from the Indonesian government such as Kalla and Yudhoyono have been actively supportive of regional and international peacebuilding. Kalla and Yudhoyono played strategic roles in the reconciliation process and maintaining security and peace in Aceh. They also visited conflict and post-conflict regions to share their experience in building peace. Individual Acehnese and Indonesians representing non-state and state actors have also been involved in diplomacy for peace. Kalla was invited by the authority in Palestine to help in mediating the conflict between Palestine and Israel. The GoI, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed a program to mediate peace between Palestine and Israel by giving training and building the capacity for the people of Palestine. The GoI also engaged with Myanmar to open the state and welcome the international community for the development of Cambodia.

In addition, NU and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, have played strategic roles in preserving peace in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Some individuals in these organisations have participated in mediation between Muslims from the southern Philippines and the GPHs. Muhammadiyah is an official
organisation promoting peace in the Middle East. Similarly, NU played a strategic role in mediation in Palestine.

The challenge for peace initiatives is how democratic institutions develop as a requirement before liberalisation. Paris (2007) said that strong institutions lead to stable peacebuilding. In other words, weak institutions of democracy lead to the foundation of new authoritarian regimes. Strong partnerships between states and civil society strengthen peacebuilding and post-conflict development towards permanent peace and prosperity, as expected by the Acehnese when they voted in the 2012 and 2014 elections. Aceh peacebuilding has worked more successfully than the Mindanao peacebuilding process due to different levels of institutional and leadership support. In Indonesia, national leaders, the central government and civil society groups supported the Aceh peace and democratic process. Paris’s (2007: 188) argument that “peacebuilders have sponsored elections in war-shattered states as a means of facilitating the peaceful management of societal conflicts through competition at the ballot box, rather than through combat on the battlefield” is relevant to understanding peaceful democratisation in Aceh from the 2006 to 2014 elections, participated in voluntarily by most of the Acehnese population.

On the other hand, national leaders in the Philippines are still doubtful of permanent peace and democratisation in the southern Philippines. Moreover, fragmentation of religious and ethnic groups in Mindanao have challenged the prospects for peace and democracy in the region. Peace talks in the southern Philippines have to involve wider groups. Montiel, de Guzman and Macapagal highlight “the power of social representations to nuance meaning-making within bigger social groups who are involved in peace talks. The conventional way of analysing conflict and peacemaking is through broader categories may add to a deeper understanding of a territorial peace process” (Montiel, de Guzman & Macapagal 2012: 45). In addition, armed competition among ethnic and religious groups for the sake of group defence
threaten the ongoing peace and democratic initiatives in the region. However, lessons gained from Aceh peace and democracy are crucial to the people of the southern Philippines for ending their conflict and uniting for more permanent peace.
Chapter 11

Conclusion: Lessons from Aceh Democracy and Peace

Introduction

To conclude the thesis, this chapter argues that Aceh has successfully gained a strong foundation for the continuance of peace; this is reflected in the dynamics of local democracy, with a high percentage of participation of individuals and local and national parties, an increase in economic growth and development, and the support of international states and CSOs. The foundation of democracy and peace in Aceh post-conflict is a strategic instrument for Indonesia, as a member of ASEAN, to inspire peace efforts in Southeast Asia and other areas of the world. In addition, this thesis has compared Aceh post-conflict to other post-conflict regions in Southeast Asia, in particular Timor-Leste and the southern Philippines, in order to highlight the processes by which peace can be achieved and maintained.

Individuals and organisations from these regions have learned lessons and mutually supported peace implementation by visiting and meeting in their own countries; additionally, some events have been officially managed by multilateral organisations such as the UN, the EU and ASEAN, as well as states, universities and centres of peace studies. This is how peace in one state can influence the overcoming of conflict within that state, as well as other conflicts in other states. This chapter also concludes that the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh after multiple disasters – the earthquake, tsunami and protracted conflict – has allowed post-conflict Aceh to lay a strategic foundation for Indonesia, as a member of ASEAN, to project Aceh’s experience and achievement of peace to regional and international peace efforts.

As stated by Martti Ahtisaari (2006), the peace accord in Aceh marked a great result – the ending of almost thirty years of separatist conflict has provided a lesson for peace activists.
from all over the world. Some individuals and groups from conflicting regions in Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world have visited Aceh to gain lessons directly from local political parties, NGOs and the local government on how to preserve peace and development. Gusmão said: “I cannot miss this opportunity to salute the Indonesian government for the creative and responsible way in which it has conducted the Aceh stabilization process (I consider it to be a triumph of Peace), a fruit of the commitment by the Indonesian leaders and civil society” (Gusmão 2012: 154).

On the other hand, Aceh government officers, human right activists, MPs and GAM and Indonesian negotiators have been invited to international peace conferences, workshops and seminars, and to post-conflict states and regions, to share their peace experience and learn from others in order to join together to make world peace. Djuli (2013) and Yusuf (2012), both GAM negotiators, said that they have been invited by governments and civil society groups from the Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka to share their peace negotiation and implementation strategies, which are important for overcoming conflicts in these regions.

Some Acehnese have also visited Timor-Leste to learn about democratic transition and the mechanism of the truth and reconciliation commission between Timor-Leste and the RI after independence. Timor-Leste finally agreed to build the Commission of Truth and Friendship (the CTF) as a result of the political negotiation between both countries. This was a shift from an international panel to a bilateral commission, which was seen by some analysts as a lack of response in relation to justice for victims of human rights abuses by the Indonesian army before the gaining of independence by Timor-Leste. Among the problems highlighted by the CTF is a perspective on truth based only on the considerations of senior officials and the lack of the victims’ perspectives in the testimony in the cases being investigated. Hirst, program associate with the International Center for Transitional Justice in Timor-Leste, said: “a fundamental flaw in the public hearing processes has been the identity
of the persons providing testimony. This problem was caused partly by the Commission’s focus on eliciting testimony mainly from accused perpetrators and senior officials rather than victims” (Hirst 2008: 24). Hirst’s concern as to the lack of victims’ perspectives brings into question the level of justice able to be achieved. Additionally, the CTF is strongly influenced by the need Timor-Leste has for bilateral relations; it is a young country trying to establish mutual relations with Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries by proposing to become a member of ASEAN. This proposal is supported strongly by the Indonesian government.

Aceh after a decade of the peace accord is still left with some problems and challenges, including the importance of establishing a truth and justice commission that can reduce the burden of its violent past in order to develop the economy and foster political stability in the future. Subianto, former commander of the Indonesian special forces (Kopassus), confirmed that Kopassus members attacked Aceh during the conflict and were responsible for human rights abuses. He hoped for forgiveness for Kopassus members and promised to support economic development in Aceh.

Furthermore, democratic institutions established after the Helsinki peace accord are expected to strengthen the peace initiative and raise morale, which will aid development in post-tsunami and post-conflict Aceh. In addition, peace initiatives in Aceh have positively affected security and peace in the Southeast Asian region. The spirit of democracy and peace in Aceh has been adopted by the Philippines to resolve conflicts between the GPH and MILF. In this process, Acehnese have been actively involved in the peace negotiations and implementation in Mindanao. Muslims from Mindanao have also visited Aceh to learn directly from local parties and CSOs.

CSOs are pivotal groups in post-conflict regions like Aceh. They are involved in initiatives for peacebuilding and coordinating with state bodies and society generally. They were
responsible for checking the proper practice of democracy during the elections conducted in 2012 and 2014, and building awareness across society of the importance of choosing candidates for local governments and MPs who could best ensure benefits for Acehnese society. Today, they are also critical of parties involved in political violence. However, their balanced approach is not always followed by a commitment from democratic institutions such as police and political parties to manage local politics for the building of peace in Aceh.

Lessons from post-conflict Aceh have been viewed from four aspects. Democracy as a pivotal instrument of peace is the first lesson, based on the two elections in 2012 and 2014 with a high percentage of Acehnese participation. However, intimidation, violent attacks and killings during the elections threatened the process of democratisation.

A second lesson is the regional autonomy of Aceh, in particular how it affects peace initiatives and relations between the local and central power structures – Aceh and Jakarta. The Law on Governing Aceh (LoGA) number 11/2006, which interprets the Helsinki peace accord, is viewed by some Acehnese as reducing their rights as agreed to in the accord; however, it is much stronger than the regional autonomy laws enacted in Aceh in 1999 and 2001. LoGA (2006) has empowered Aceh to manage its local resources with good financial support from revenues yielded by energy sharing. This model has strengthened the role of former combatants and other Acehnese to manage local government and development for the prosperity of Aceh. The number of poor Acehnese has also decreased significantly. However, corruption and mismanagement in local government have challenged the effectiveness of the regional autonomy policy for the prosperity of all Acehnese.

In addition, the critical role of international states and CSOs in post-conflict Acehnese democracy and development is a crucial lesson to learn. In international relations theory – in
both realist and liberalist philosophies – the international community is strategic in peace initiatives, from the mediation process to the implementation of peace accords. The continued support of international states and NGOs will always be needed if the Acehnese are going to be able to continue their contribution to strengthening development and peace in Aceh and the surrounding region. Some multinational companies have attempted to invest in Aceh. However, the threats to security and stability have prevented them from seriously committing to ongoing investment, even though local government has guaranteed the security of the post-conflict province. Former combatants in North Aceh and East Aceh are still threatening local government. This is part of the challenge of post-conflict regions where former paramilitary groups potentially become perpetrators. Law and order from government is crucial to make the peace transition work well and gradually. Lastly, a further strategic lesson from Aceh is the effect of peace, stability and development in Aceh from regional and international peace efforts.

Before leaving the subject of peaceful democratic transition in Aceh, it is important to look at theoretical debates on Aceh post-conflict from international relations to peace studies. Realism and liberalism have dominated the debates of this thesis. In realism, the national interest of Indonesia in terms of negotiation and peace accord implementation, and the non-interference policy of ASEAN are obvious. The criticism of realists in relation to the failed peacekeeping mission in post-conflict Iraq is important to understand in the context of the need for an inclusive approach through the open participation of all parties; it is only through a truly democratic and peaceful transition to a new government by direct election, or power-sharing among commanders and local leaders, that a post-conflict region can move towards permanent peace. Therefore, a liberalist approach suits the transformation of a post-conflict society, in particular a democratic peace or liberal peace approach. An alternative is a peace approach operating as a new mechanism in the UN to successfully overcome problems.
of post-conflict and post-war security and political transition. Finally, multilateralism is an effective approach in international relations to help post-conflict transition. It is discussed in the final section of this chapter.

**Democracy and Peacebuilding**

The findings of the thesis are consistent with the arguments of liberal peacebuilding, a dominant approach to peacebuilding from the 1990s. Liberal peacebuilding is based on the idea that “democratisation and liberalisation of the economy are integral to building sustainable peace” and “democracy is the key to peace both within and between states” (Dibley 2014:66). In this process, negotiation and diplomacy are more prioritised than war and violence, which gives a chance for conflicting parties to meet and find the best solution for them.

In 2003–04, hopes for peace in Aceh were considered close to ruined due to the unwillingness on the part of the Indonesian government and GAM to consistently use a diplomatic approach instead of one based on security interests and militarism. The Indonesian government lost patience with the dialogue and put its trust in military solutions. Similarly, GAM leaders retained their struggle for an independent state. They opposed the regional autonomy status established by the central government in 1999 and 2001 as a strategy to overcome separatist violence in Aceh (Aspinall 2013).

Fortunately, peace negotiations were recommenced in early 2005 with a keen response from both the government of Indonesia and GAM; they agreed to open an inclusive dialogue to end the conflict and to find the best peaceful resolution that would be beneficial to all parties (Kingsbury 2006; Awaludin 2009; Aspinall 2013). In this process, international support was a crucial factor following the earthquake and tsunami and it was hoped that international states and CSOs would be able to peacefully and comprehensively assist in the reconstruction and
rehabilitation of Aceh after the natural disaster. The negotiation worked very well due to the open-minded and inclusive approach of the negotiating members, who listened to each proposal and warmly agreed to the solution for ending the separatist conflict. Aspinall argues that “most remarkably, GAM had abandoned its cherished goal of independence. The Aceh case shows that unpredicted events, shifts in the balance-of-power between the warring parties and the dynamics around the negotiating table can lead to a dramatic and lasting breakthrough” (Aspinall 2013: 64).

In general, the thesis argues that democracy has worked constitutionally with a high percentage of participation of the Acehnese – above seventy per cent on average in both 2012 local elections and 2014 national elections. After the elections, political consolidation worked peacefully. Yusuf competed with Manaf in the 2012 elections and attempted to construct a coalition for the future development of Aceh. They arranged various meetings coordinated by former GAM elites. The working of democracy in Aceh is still considered a political ritual regulated by the government; that is, it still operates at the level of going through the motions. However, the quality of democracy is expected to rise. Analysts have named this ‘procedural democracy’ or ‘electoral democracy’, in which people participate in politics based on the procedure managed by an elections commission, with some weaknesses challenging the quality of democracy. In ‘classic democracy’, the separation of power among the legislature, judiciary and executive as a *trias politica* is a model of governance of states and designed to control fair and free politics. Government is checked by parliament. Law and order are managed by a judiciary system in which police are involved. Without such a democratic process, the system of checks and balances did not work properly in post-conflict Aceh.

Institutions that in classic democracy are expected to strengthen the foundations of democracy are weakened by the system presently operating in Aceh. Among the strategic
institutions is the police force, which has, as a main duty, the securing of the process of elections; additionally, the Election Commission (KIP) facilitates all the mechanisms of elections and the Election Monitoring Committee (Panwas) monitors the process of elections. The democratic process did not work properly in Aceh due to the tendency of institutions like the police, KIP and Panwas to support the dominant political party – Party Aceh.

A coalition of Acehnese NGOs monitored the 2012 elections and confirmed that PA had intimidated the voters, in particular, in PA’s strongholds in North Aceh, East Aceh, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Aceh Besar and other districts. Witness reports made to Panwas regarding intimidation were ignored. In addition, the police did not effectively respond to violent attacks related to the elections, including some killings. The number of violent incidents that occurred during the local election became a priority concern for the government and civil society, especially in terms of searching for a motive for the political violence. Ayah Banta, who led the GAM special force, confessed before the criminal court in Jakarta that his group had killed some targets as part of an expression of disappointment in the leadership of Governor Yusuf. He claimed that Yusuf did not support former combatants proportionally, especially with regard to their basic needs. Their dependence on the logistics facilitated by the Acehnese in rural villages during the conflict continued after the peace accord. Now they expected continuous financial support from the local government. Yusuf (2012) responded to this claim by stating that he had given special attention and provisions to combatants and their families, including Ayah Banta’s group.

Ayah Banta and some combatants who were involved in political violence are part of the ongoing challenge facing post-conflict Aceh, where the full reintegration of combatants has, according to Djuli (2014), largely failed. However, Djuli exaggerated his argument, not looking at some of the underlying factors acting against successful reintegration. Limited funds have been provided to facilitate the reestablishment of combatants into their new lives since
August 2005, after the peace accord was signed in Helsinki. Djuli argued that the reintegration of combatants has failed due to the high level of violence associated with former combatants. However, most former combatants at the grassroots believe they have contributed to the development of Aceh by serious involvement in reintegration programs, like farming and fishing, based on fieldwork in a farming area in Kabupaten Bireuen in January 2012. The funds provided by local government were allocated to former combatants dedicated to the rehabilitation of empty farming land formerly managed by Javanese transmigrants who left the land after some attacks by GAM during the conflict. A local combatant commander who coordinated the farming complained that some of the combatants who had agreed to join the farming rehabilitation program from scratch finally left the area. Some of them did not have enough patience for agriculture and moved to work in other businesses.

However, in general, combatants who did not graduate from elementary school feel that it is hard to gain a good job. They have to continue to a higher level of education, at least up to high school; this initiative has been facilitated by local government. A combatant who, subsidised by local government, had just graduated from high school said that soon after graduation, he successfully applied for a position in the 2012 election Panwas at the sub-district level (kecamatan). Now, he has positioned himself to monitor the elections and to be neutral towards all parties, even though personally he voted for PA. He plans to continue his study towards an undergraduate degree in Bireuen to further his opportunity to win available jobs.

Djuli (2013) confirmed that capacity building for former combatants is a must in order to transform them from a paramilitary mentality. Muksalmina alias Irwansyah, a local commander of combatants in Aceh Besar and now executive chairman of PNA, has enrolled in an undergraduate degree at Syiah Kuala University. He said that learning never takes account of age. Although he is now chairman of a local party and manages a good business,
his commitment to study for his undergraduate degree will not only transform himself, but will also positively affect other combatants in lower ranks to have higher motivation to learn, formally or informally.

Like Muksalmina, Teungku Jamaica has continued his undergraduate degree in English at Syiah Kuala University. Jamaica is a former spokesperson of GAM in Pasee and assisted Vice-Governor Manaf. Another local commander who completed a year of coursework on politics and peace at a human rights NGO based in Lhokseumawe said that he had learned how to respect other arguments. This is the way of co-existence and peacebuilding, by sharing ideas and thoughts coming from different perspectives. As a combatant, he had to pay respect to others, including former combatants.

Capacity building and education have started to transform combatants to become more inclusive and welcoming towards other Acehnese who do not have combatant experience. The foundation of PNA in 2012 was intended to establish an inclusive local political party which could accommodate academics, human rights activists and combatants. An academic involved in the foundation of the party said that it was a positive effort to combine combatants and non-combatants in building local political parties which will eventually result in greater open-mindedness among Acehnese and allow them to work together for the future of peace and prosperity through a political party (Mardatillah 2012). This will reduce the claim that the current peace has been initiated only by combatants. In the electoral campaigns in 2012 and 2014, it was stated that the current peace is the result of political initiatives of combatants to end the conflict and their commitment to reintegrate in the RI; in return, former combatants managing areas of local government prioritise development policy for combatants.

**Regional Autonomy**
The current dynamics of post-conflict politics and regional autonomy in Aceh are reflected in the history of Aceh, a province which has experienced political violence for almost three decades. Intimidation, attacks and killings approaching the 2012 elections influenced its political structure. After a few postponements of the elections, PA registered its candidates for governor and vice-governor – Abdullah and Manaf, respectively – to run for the election and they were successful in winning the election. Yusuf, the incumbent, gained second place. Political violence targeted individuals and political groups opposing PA. The violence threatened the democracy which had been developed following the first election in 2006, when former combatants also won. Kingsbury (2006, 2010) argued that democratisation inside GAM contributed to the development of democracy and peace in Aceh. The democratisation also transformed former combatants from paramilitary to political entities. In addition, CSOs developed by some elites of combatants facilitated parliamentary candidates. The Aceh Peace and Democracy School (SPDA) headed by Nur Djuli and Shadia Marhaban, both GAM negotiators in Helsinki, successfully transformed former combatants to involve themselves in local politics and attempt to preserve peace in Aceh.

In addition, the communication between Aceh and Jakarta needs to be reconstructed for strengthening democracy, peace and economic development in Aceh. The revenues from natural resources have to be managed more effectively to fairly distribute them to all Acehnese. Currently, local government tends to manage the funds for some regions that were ignored in the development program during the New Order—that is, Central Aceh, West Aceh and South Aceh. For Central Aceh, where local elites initiated two new provinces of ALAS and ABAS, special attention from local government is received in the form of more funds for the physical development of the region. The road construction in the region is expected to increase economic development, especially in areas of agriculture such as coffee beans and crude palm oil, which are popularly exported overseas.
Regional Peace

Multilateralism is an effective approach for overcoming conflict and supporting post-conflict transition. It involves coalitions among states to stop the conflict and support the economic and political transition. The recovery of Aceh post-tsunami and conflict was greatly supported by a multilateral coalition of international organisations and international states which paid great attention to peace and development in Aceh. The EU and ASEAN were involved in the monitoring of the peace implementation. Other states and organisations also supported capacity building for local government and parliamentary members, as well as education, in post-earthquake and post-tsunami Aceh. Their contribution is expected to continue to ensure that the process of democracy and peace works well. Deadlocks in negotiations between local and central governments have happened from time to time and the EU continues helping to mediate through Ahtisaari’s organisation.

Currently, the most pressing aspect is to what extent the Aceh peace process has been adopted by the Philippines to overcome separatist conflicts in Mindanao. MILF adopted the peace negotiation strategies of GAM and GoI, and they keep learning from Aceh as to how to establish local parties, DDR and the implementation of peace. The threats of violence in Mindanao are still acute due to the complexity of paramilitary organisations operating in the south. Marhaban, an Acehnese woman and GAM negotiator, represented Aceh in the UN regarding post-conflict transition, facilitated by the negotiating members. She encouraged the Philippines to involve Muslim women as GPH and MILF negotiators. This is one of the contributions of peace in Aceh to managing successful peace initiatives in the southern Philippines.

A further lesson from the achievement of peace in Aceh is how it can build Indonesia’s image and capacity to take a stronger part in international affairs, especially in overcoming
international conflicts. The Indonesian government can promote the success story of peace in Aceh for regional and international peace initiatives, including in Sri Lanka and Palestine. Indonesia has stepped further forwards in mediating peace and building capacity for post-conflict states. To overcome conflicts such as that of the Palestine–Israeli deadlock, Indonesia has tried to mediate them. Indonesia, in its capacity as co-chair with South Africa of New Asian African Strategic Partnership, has coordinated programs of capacity building with member countries of ASEAN and Africa such as Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, Morocco, Nigeria and Algeria, as well as with Palestinian state officials. The latter was based on several MoUs between Indonesia and Palestine formed in October 2007 on capacity building and training programs organised for Palestinians in Indonesia (Asia Pulse 2010). Indonesian leadership in peacebuilding in the Middle East peace process and the development of Palestine has continued through its becoming a host for the Second Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestine Development (CEAPAD II) in Jakarta in March 2014, attended by ministers and high-ranking officials from countries in East Asia and Palestine. At the end of conference, the participants made a joint statement of ‘East Asian Countries Partnership for Palestine’, stating that:

We highlighted the statement of the President of the Republic of Indonesia to continue Indonesia’s support for Palestine National Development, and the struggle to be a sovereign country, as well as a full member of the United Nations. This conference aims to renew the continuous commitment to support Palestine and to ensure the Palestinians are capable of providing essential services to their people (CEAPAD II, 1 March 2014).

Ambassador Supriyadi (2014) argued that Indonesian capacity in overcoming conflicts within the states of Aceh, Maluku, Poso and Kalimantan, and Indonesia’s active role in mediating between MILF and the GPH and the conflict in Cambodia has strengthened its image around
the world. Indonesian leadership in mediating the Palestine–Israel conflict by building the
capacity of Palestinian officials, Supriyadi added, was strategic for peace efforts in the
Middle East. An example of this is Kalla’s visit to Palestine in April 2010, when he shared his
role in the peacebuilding of Aceh; it is expected that similar initiatives will be adopted in the
future by the authorities in Palestine and Israel. The experience of GAM and Indonesian
negotiators in Helsinki in August 2005 has had the effect of them becoming actively involved
in peace negotiation and peace efforts in other parts of the world experiencing protracted
violence and conflict. Thus, the role that Aceh and Indonesia can play on the world stage in
terms of peace negotiation is significant and worthy of support, both internally and in the
wider world.
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