Islam, Democratic Peace, and Ethnoreligious Conflict in Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the conceptual complexity of the relation between the minority or majority and the nature of states politically. Since in the multiethnically and religiously countries, democracy is often challenged by the minorities’ protests emerging political instability. That is why the prospect of democracy in these countries is discussed later to understand the power base to sustain a peace building. It also compares the Nangroe Aceh Darussalam case to other conflict cases in the two neighbour countries to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Aceh conflict resolution model to find valuable lessons from the Aceh experience to set up an efficacious prescription for the ‘never ending conflicts’ in the Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines.

Keyword: Islam, democracy, ethnoreligious conflict, state, peace building.


Kata-Kata Kunci: Islam, demokrasi, konflik etnoagama, negara, bangunan perdamaian.
Ethnoreligious conflict has become one of the most destructive threats to global peace. The tensions also become serious problem of instability in the Third World states’ politics. In his controversial clash of civilization theory, Huntington (1993) identified the ethnoreligious aspects, as part of the civilization, has replaced ideological competition as the major source of conflicts in the post-Cold War period. Regardless of the theoretical framework controversy, after Soviet Union collapsed, many ethnoreligious struggles has really turned violent, and this phenomena has continued until now. Huntington categorized intercivilizational conflict manifested in two categories both fault line and core state conflicts. While the core state conflict is defined as the global level conflicts among states of different civilizations, the fault line conflict is understood as the social group conflicts among different civilizations within states.

Not many conflicts can be overcome elegantly. Most of them might be able to be muffled, but they are basically still maintained within the pattern of ‘arise and sink’ and metamorphose itself into a latent conflict potentially blasting at anytime. However, there are some conflicts which can be solved permanently. Among several massive conflicts in the Southeast Asia, the peace of Aceh is still the only one achievement which can be reached properly through negotiations over the table. The path breaking memorandum of understanding (MoU) approved in August 2005 between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Helsinki has made the dialog more respectable in the Southeast Asia rather than confrontation by military forces. Special autonomy (otonomi khusus), similar form of decentralization, has been agreed by both as the win-win solution to stop the conflict.

In responding the process of negotiation and agreement towards peace in Aceh, the focus group discussions such as the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialog (HD Centre) and Singapore’s Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), expressed their admiration of the peace Aceh and agreed it as a model for other conflict resolutions in the Southeast Asian conflicts (the Jakarta Post, 29 November 2006). The attempts must be striven continually, since as Dorothy Thompson (1935) said: “peace is not the absent of conflict, but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflicts”.

These highly appreciative achievements of the Aceh peace then initiates the governments of Thailand and the Philippines to endorse dialog with their Muslim minorities as the way to solve their conflicts. Thailand and Philippines governments have requested to Indonesia experiencing to find the solution of Aceh conflict, to guide a peaceful solution within the framework of Thailand’s territorial integration, in terms of the
ethnoreligious conflict in restive Southern Thailand provinces (*the Jakarta Post*, 14 August 2007; *the Bangkok Post*, 1 February 2009).

The questions are, are the conflict anatomies in those countries similar? Is special autonomy really effective to be a conflict resolving mechanism, while the further federalization of multiethnic states along ethnic and religious lines will help to prevent the conflicts? Based on the Aceh experience, what are the supporting and impeding factors to succeed peace building? What lessons are able to be taken from the Aceh conflict resolution model to be a peaceful solution for other ethnoreligious conflicts in the Southeast Asian countries? Is that possible Thailand and Philippines governments implement what Jakarta did to Aceh in addressing the roots of insurgencies in their Southern territories?

This paper critically elaborates the conceptual complexity of the relation between the minority or majority and the nature of states politically. Beside that, the writing is also aimed to examine the Aceh conflict resolution model as the valuable lesson and experience to find an efficacious prescription for other conflicts in the Southeast Asian countries. First of all, attention is focused on the conceptual explanation of the majority and minority relations intensifying tensions in Southeast Asia, and then followed by the exploration of the conflict anatomies in these countries. The next discussion will elaborate the Aceh conflict resolution to find the valuable lessons for the Southern Thailand and Philippines’ lasting conflicts.

However, the writer strongly argues that the composition population and social structure will determine the nature of state. The instability of state might correlate with its indifference and unresponsiveness to the grievances of the minorities generating the feeling of deprivation and alienation. Meanwhile in the multiethnically and religiously countries, democracy are often challenged by the minorities’ protests causing political chaos and instability in the security matter. To respond the situation, the state usually uses its legitimate monopoly on violence to deal with the problem of internal instability, security, and nation unity.

The semidemocratic state tends to do everything to stabilize the situation, including using confrontation strategy through military operation and implementing counterterrorism approach, including to the minorities demanding justice and the right equality. Meanwhile, the state with well established democracy tends to use accommodation strategy in which special autonomy is convinced as an effective conflict resolving mechanism and can help to prevent the further ethnoreligious conflicts. However, the solution has strengths and weaknesses which must be overcome to support the peace building process.
Ethnoreligious Conflict and the State’s Internal Colonialism

Ethnically, the Southeast Asia is consisted of four major groups namely Malays, Thais, Burmans, and Viets (Jha 2009, 12; Gullick & William 1991). Based on the population distribution, Malays are dominant in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Philippines, while Thais mostly live across Thailand and Laos, a part in Myanmar and also some in Vietnam. Meanwhile, Myanmar is certainly dominated by ethnic Burmans, the ethnic Viets are disseminated in Vietnam, few in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. As majority in their countries, the four ethnic groups can dominate the social, cultural, political, and economic sectors forcing thousands of minority ethnics to integrate within.

The heterogeneity of the Southeast Asian society is also enriched by various religions, including Islam, followed by the huge population in the region. In Southeast Asia, the Muslim exists as the majority in just several states such as in Indonesia is consisted of 85 percent of the total population about 213–220 million, while in Malaysia, the Muslims are 55 percent of 23.3 million citizens, and in Brunei Darussalam is approximately 75 percent of 345 thousands population. In the rest of the countries, the Muslims exist as a minority particularly in Thailand, Burma, and Vietnam which are generally Buddhist, and the Philippines commonly recognized as the Roman-Catholic state. According to several sources (Hassan 2003, 430; US Department of State 1999; Houben 2003, 153), the Muslims are 15 percent only of 4.02 million population in Singapore, while in Thailand is 5 percent of 63 million, 5–6 percent of 78.5 million in Philippines, 500 thousands of 2 million in Cambodia, 12 percent of 50 million in Myanmar, 45 thousands of 7.8 millions in Vietnam as well as one thousand Muslims of 5.5 million in Laos.

The heterogeneity of Southeast Asian society based on ethnicity and religion often invites problem of identity. The usage of Islamic identity does not face any significant challenges and rivalries from other elements of society in the Muslim majority countries such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. But in the countries where Muslims become a minority group such as in Thailand and Philippines, the Muslims have to struggle and suffer in retaining their separate cultural and religious identities. The similar thing also happened in Aceh before the reconciliation in 2006, where the majority Sunni population in this province did not agree with the concept of secularism as the base of Indonesian state. The jealousy also emerged among Acehnese because of economic domination by outsiders particularly from Java (Swain 2009). Those institutionalizing Islamic movements then became a political struggle for self determination seriously oppressed by their governments (Jha 2009; Ibrahim 2003). The situation encourages general feeling of the Muslim societies in the region, particularly in the
Muslim minority countries, that Islam in Southeast Asia was ‘under attack’ (Houben 2003; Ganessan & Hlaing 2007).

However, there is much controversy over the causes of ethnoreligious conflict. According to the genres of anthropology, the primordialists convince that “people are naturally ethnocentric, exhibiting trust and preference for those of their own cultural group while felling more distant from, and distrustful of, those of other cultural groups” (Brown 1994). It would follow that ethnic and religious communities would have problem in managing their intergroup relations particularly when competing over resources (Issacs 1975, 39-45). Meanwhile, the structuralists identify the conflict as a consequence of the involvement of political community acting as ‘identity entrepreneurs’ (Tellis 2000, 17-73 in Swain 2007, 2). On the other hand, political scientists believe the conflict of interests in the struggle for power as the main source of conflict. More specifically, the Marxian political scientists understand conflict as the class struggle for power (Miles 1984, 217-237).

In other perspectives, ethnoreligious conflict also can be seen as the impact of modernization. Kuntowijoyo (1991, 48) and Jomo (1992, 79) argued the wave of modernization has led to social transformation and radical changes eroding traditional values and religious beliefs. The situation then encourages social awareness of identity to defence their values, norms, and religious doctrines from the changes. That is why, when one group attempts to impose its values and beliefs on others, the counter action potentially turning to conflict will occur as the form of self identity protection.

Geertz in *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973, 259) also argued that modernization has intrinsically created new social imbalances increasing social tensions. Modernization inevitably increases social interactions changing from irrationality to rationality and unawareness to awareness of the groups’ needs and demands. The rationality then becomes pillars of ethnoreligious consciousness to prosecute their rights and interests by utilizing ethnic and religious entities to advance their bargaining positions against their adversaries namely states and the majorities. In this context, the quality of relation between the majority and the minority groups plays important role in setting up a social and political equilibrium.

State intervention usually gets involve to overcome the ethnoreligious conflicts. The majority will politically dominate the state authority and legally possess the legitimate monopoly on violence in society. As the control holder over the state, the majority could chose either confrontation or accommodation strategies to approach the potential threats from the minorities. Peace will occur when the majority is able to
respect and guarantee the minority’s rights without any restraint and
discrimination, while the confrontation emerges when the idea of ‘one
nation’ and ‘one state’ is forced by the authority to create homogeneity
within the society alienating the existence of minorities (Swain 2007).
The frequently happen is the state nationalism is characterized by
hostility, brutality, and cruelty from the majority to the minority, while
the minority obedience over the state is characterized by the majority
superiority and their highly appreciation over the instruments of
violence (Satha-Anand 2004 in Saravanamuttu 2010, 5). Majority
groups tend to display sense of domination over the opportunities and
power distribution based on their features of nationalism (Jha 2009,
95). As the majority, ethnoreligious groups are able to arbitrarily
determine the government composition representing their dominant
political configuration. Then, the state is politically not an independent
actor anymore driven by elites representing the interests of majority and
alienating the minorities. The situation is then called by Brown (1994,
159) as the ‘internal colonialism’.

To deal with that, the presence of democracy is expected to improve
public sphere to demolish cultures of discrimination commonly faced by
minority groups by setting up productive dialogue for social well being in
the countries (McIntyre 2003, 497). Furthermore, Bardhan (2002) is
also in line with McIntyre (2003) arguing that decentralization or special
autonomy is a good solution for the problem of majority-minority
relation. Special autonomy will open up the possibility for minorities and
ender-represented groups in market and state to more actively and
accountably participate in the administration’s policy making process.
By providing more space for the minorities, the atmosphere of mutual
respect can be set up as the basis for the establishment of lasting peace.

Does Democracy Really Promote Peace?

Democracy is generally considered as an effective instrument for peace
building. Since the well established democracy is able to reduce the
likelihood of discrimination and political repression over ethnoreligious
minorities. Democracy is also convinced as an effective counter-
terrorism strategy, since democracy provides more space of freedom of
speech and association for people including the terrorists to freely
express their voices and aspirations through nonviolent structures. But
the fact shows that ethnoreligious conflicts commonly occur in the well
established and newly emerged democracies. According to Swain (2007,
5), quoted from the Uppsala Conflict Data Project, about 14 of 16
international ethnic conflicts actively escalated in 2004 are in
democratic or semidemocratic countries, while seven of them happened
in Asian democratic countries.
Democracy cannot be only understood as the presence of elections. Democracy should be defined as the functioned system of rules guaranteeing checks and balances in power, a division of power, constitutional protection of minority rights, freedom of speech and association, a free press, respect for human rights and equality before the law (Kjaer 2004, 165). That is why the triangle principle of governance namely transparency, accountability, and participation are inevitably needed by democracy to perform its best. Democratic governance is needed to keep the power accountable and stay focus on the people's interests while the people also can participate into the process of government.

At this level, political accountability will open the hampered communication between minorities and the authority. That is important because every government, no matter how patrimonial and authoritarian, still frequently claim as democratic. That is why, labelling states having good democratic instruments but still alienating, repressing and discriminating their minority groups as democratic, is completely misleading. That is what Liddle (1997) called as ‘pretended democracy’, while others classified as ‘predatory democracy’ (Robinson 2002), ‘facade or pseudo democracy’ (Haynes 2001, 5), or ‘patrimonial democracy’ (Webber 2006).

Theoretically, democracy may not represent all citizens’ interests. In the ethnically and culturally segmented societies, democracy precisely often facilitates the majority to conduct the zero-sum political behaviour. They tend to be predatory as having power to hijack the instrument of states and democracy alienating minority rights. The democratic implementation is then frequently characterized by the structured dominance of adversarial majority over the minority. That is why, “democracy in the diverse society is often challenged by instability and disharmony” (Swain 2009).

The explanation above does not suggest us to antipathy to democracy. Its implementation exhibits both various optimism and pessimism in the peace building process. Democracy will be really meaningful only when the ‘substantive democracy’ exists within both the realm of state apparatus and society (Ostrom 1991; Oyugi 2000). The existence of ‘substantive democracy’ is commonly signed by systems of transparency and accountability, freedom of association and speech, respect for human rights, protection of minority rights, independent judiciary, free press and others, which are strengthened by a democratic behaviour in which the majority of society qualitatively has a good political awareness and knowledge to proliferate public decision using rational political considerations (Putzel 1997). Without that, democracy would emerge its ironies leading to political decay and perpetuating political inequalities.
and economic disparities often initiating massive scale conflicts, rebellions, and insurgencies by the minorities.

As the product of social capital, substantive democracy representing democratic behaviour is the fuel of the ‘real democracy’. The democratic behaviour which is committed by the majority is then expected to demolish cultures of discrimination commonly faced by minorities by setting up productive dialogue for social well-being in the local level (McIntyre 2003, 497). Bardhan (2002) also argues that democracy will open up the possibility for minorities and ender-represented groups in the state to more actively and accountably participate in the administration’s policy making process.

The democratic society tends to chose accommodation strategy rather than confrontation approach to handle conflicts and to keep national unity. Since violence invites violence, and accommodation can bring peace and viable order. Beside that, the well-understanding of democracy tend to value negotiation, compromise, and the rights of others. The institutional structures of democracy will make the leadership more difficult to bring the nation to war. Philosophically, Immanuel Kant (1795) laid three reasons why democracy helps to promote peace. Firstly, people who are needed by the leader to maintain the power, will remove the ability of the leadership to make war capriciously. Secondly, there is a moral foundation from “an understanding of the legitimate rights of all citizens and of all republics” (Doyle 1986). Thirdly, economic interdependence encourages cooperation and accommodation rather than conflict.

Various ways can be used to accommodate the minorities’ voices and to avoid further social fragmentation such as power sharing policy among different ethnic or religious groups, creating autonomous areas and also federal forms of decentralized governance. Conceptually, decentralization can be considered as an instrument for peace building, either as the strategic offer in steps towards peace or in a situation where peace already exists to sustain and enhance the peace. Kauzya (2005) said: “decentralization strengthens both the central and the local governments by creating a situation of shared engaged governance where the concern of everyone is not who has power over whom but how the power is exercised for the well being of all the people.”
Democratic Peace and Ethnoreligious Conflict in Southeast Asia

The Experience of Aceh Conflict Resolution

Many scholars reject assumption that Aceh conflict was religious based conflict (Houban 2003, 165; Aspinall 2007; Beardsley 2009). It means that posing Islam as the decisive driving force in the confrontation between GAM and the Jakarta government would be highly misleading. Aspinall (2006) frankly concludes that Aceh conflict was an impact of Acehnese identity formation as a response to economic exploitation and Indonesian military violence, rather than an extension of the 1950s movement to build an Islamic state in Indonesia (Darul Islam). The insurgency was also often correlated to the disputes of majority and minority relation between the ‘exploited minority Acehnese’ and the ‘domination of Javanese’ in power and economic stages (Swain 2007; Rabasa & Chalk 2001).

Other scholars still believed Aceh insurgency was also motivated by Islamist ideology (William 2003; Reid 2006). The ideology was often associated to the movement of Darul Islam (Islamic state) and Indonesian Islamic Army (TII) under control of Kartosuwiryo that aimed at establishing the Islamic state (daulah islamiyah) in Indonesia. But lately the hypothesis was clarified by Azra (2003) that these movements actually did not have original Islamism ideology. They, still Azra argued, just politicized Islamic identity to express their disappointment with the Indonesian military policy of rationalization of paramilitary groups following Indonesian independence.

The Acehnese aspiration was responded by Soekarno administration (1962) by promising a broad autonomy with regard to religion, customary law (syariah law) and education for the region. But the promise just created disappointment. The situation worsened under military administration of Soeharto (1966-1998) exercising political repression and exploitation (Geertz 1960; Hefner 1999). Like what happened in Southern Thailand, ‘internal colonialism’ sponsored by the state exploiting natural resource made the processes of identity construction more intensive (Aspinall 2007).

After the fall of Soeharto in 1998, GAM found a strategic opportunity to transform itself into a more powerful capacity. Schulze (2004) noted that after Indonesia weakened by devastating monetary crisis in 1997, GAM was able to improve its number of members fivefold, and successfully control about 80 percent of Aceh territory through its civil shadow structure. At the time, political disputes emerged between military and civil elites in Jakarta, in responding the serious threats of
disintegration. After East Timor separated from Indonesia, the country suffered a fear; if Aceh voiced for independence, then other provinces like Maluku, Papua, East Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi would follow to voice their desire of independence.

The economic instability in 1997 inevitably emerged an opportunity to political dissidents to challenge the governments by posing serious threats to the unity and integrity of the nation-states. That was serious dilemma, while it still suffered economic hardship, but also maintained the nation state unity. On the other hand, military operation to rescue the state integration needed expensive cost. Just imagine how much the central government must spend money to donate war in Aceh when about 40,000 troops were deployed before 2004.

If one soldier needed about Rp 17,500 for daily meal allowances, Jakarta had to provide approximately Rp 700 million per day for the meal. While for bullets, it was reported that the central government must spend about Rp 25 billion per day or Rp 8.5 trillion annually (The Jakarta Post, 8 November 2002). The expenditure excluded the needs of heavy-duty guns including vehicles, bazookas, fire bullets, tanks, grenades, booms, fuel for transportation, the needs of communications, the maintenance of defense facilities, national and international campaigns and others. The high cost could not be covered by the state budget making the military must seek other financial resources from state enterprises and international investors. Moreover, to accomplish the war budget, both the military and GAM also linked to the lucrative trade in marijuana (May 2000: 2; Searle 2002; ICG 2001).

To avoid the financial hardship, the civil elites initiated to transform from military to political diplomacy. Meanwhile the military elites still tried to convince that confrontational approach was effective to save the state integration by destroying the challengers on behalf of nationalism. According to ICG’s report (2004), at the time, the state military had interests to portray its image as the only one force capable to prevent disintegration of the state which might help to increase the army’s political influence in the domestic after ‘politically isolated’ after Soeharto government toppled in 1998.

Based on some strategic consideration, the conflict transformation was finally implemented and the efforts leading to peace were gradually done. In 2002, the proposed guidance of negotiations was drafted to recognize the desire of Acehnese to administer themselves peacefully in freedom and democracy. It contained, firstly, the conflict must be ended and peace will be established over transnational period, and the special autonomy would be conducted as the conflict’s solution. Secondly, the socio-economic life in Aceh would normalize with humanitarian aid and
economic assistance from the central government and international community. Thirdly, the consultative forum to achieve negotiated peaceful agreement would be held to arrange the Aceh’s special autonomy law as the legal basis for general elections in Aceh to enable GAM in participating in the Indonesian national elections of 2004 (Henry Dunant Centre, 10 May 2002). The negotiation advocated by the Henry Dunant Centre (HDC) was optimistically successful. But GAM’s inconsistency and Indonesian military’s ‘overacting’ broke the mediation’s agreement.

Outside of the forum, the GAM principle spokesmen Sofyan Ibrahim denied points in the draft of negotiation. The inconsistency was then responded by Jakarta by deploying more troops and intensifying the anti-insurgency operations in Aceh. But the international pressures calmed down the situation, and the negotiation forum was reformulated again. In Tokyo, 3 December 2002, several donor countries and international funding agencies under Japan and the United States’ coordination agreed to financially support Aceh for its rehabilitation, humanitarian assistance, demobilization of combatants, and reconstruction of health, education, and infrastructure facilities for international investment.

The steps to achieve peace were implemented. The commitments of both would be examined, and the placement of GAM’s weapons would be done gradually, the phase of demilitarization would be continued, while the revision of NAD law was going on. Unpredictably, GAM controversially disseminated wrong information among Acehnese that the final result of agreement would be independence of Aceh, followed by recruitment of fighters. The GAM’s behavior seriously damaged the negotiation forum again. The GAM was not only arrogant and inconsistent without any clear reasons, but also yielded obstructionism for the government’s political goodwill. Other diplomatic approaches were then used by involving many influential politicians, ulamas, and Acehnese traditional leaders to touch the heart of GAM’s officials and followers, because it was just realized the complicated political situation in Aceh could not only be solved by military approach but also by cultural diplomacy. Many Indonesian diplomats having cultural background of Aceh and Bugis were also sent to support the negotiation to make communication more effective and fruitful.

Suddenly, on December 26, 2004, the Indian Ocean Tsunami devastated the Aceh province, killing an estimated 164,000 people in Aceh (Pandya 2006; Beardsley 2009, 624). In the name of humanity, both Indonesian military and GAM laid down the weapons. The lack of availability of resource mobilization strategies and territorial objectives crucially forced them to return to the negotiation forum. Beside that, as a guerrilla
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troops, GAM was decentralized with irregular tactics and not mechanized forces. The condition made them highly dependent upon grassroots support. So if the grassroots supporters had been swept out by the tsunami, the movement would automatically become powerless.

As a result, by 15 August 2005, GAM and the Indonesian government signed the Helsinki Peace Accord in Finland, ending the never resolved conflict that had persisted more than three decades claiming about 15,000 lives, which was then called by Kalla as ‘the second birthday of the Republic of Indonesia’. Sukma (2006, 213) viewed the tsunami as the catalyst for the peace reformulation process, while Pandya (2006) and ICG (2005, 1) argued “tsunami had put Aceh into the international spotlight, made it politically desirable for both sides to work toward a settlement, offered ways of linking the reconstruction effort and peace process, and ensured the availability of major donor funding outside the government budget”.

However, the peace was not a direct result of the natural disaster itself, but also the outcome of many factors, including the pro peace political leaders represented by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Vice President Jusuf Kalla in 2004 direct presidential election. They have had serious political will to support the process of negotiation required to eliminate separatism and also to sustain the state unity. Beside that, military also had significant role since its counterinsurgency strategies was very effective in reducing the insurgents’ armed capacity, while the GAM also lost its international support after the Jakarta exercised martial law 2003 backed up by international parties. The situation had forced GAM to dating back with the Jakarta to the more serious negotiation since 2004.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) of the Aceh Peace contains issue of governance, human right, amnesty, security arrangement and establishment of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) (Schulze, 2007, 2010). Regarding to the governance matter, the constitution of special autonomy must be set up no longer than March 31, 2006, providing various privileges for Acehnese local government such as a right to use local symbol like a flag, crest and hymn, establishing local political parties to contain the GAM followers’ aspiration, including issuing a new identity card for all Acehnese to avoid irresponsible treatment for the former rebels. Aceh also has an authority to raise taxes, seek foreign direct investment, funds with external loans and set interest rates which are free from the Indonesian authority’s intervention. Aspinall (2006), Means (2009), Schulze (2009) and Askandar (2007) also noted that 70 percent of the revenue from all hydrocarbon deposits, oil, gas, and other natural resources will be handed over to Acehnese authority.
The MoU also had jurisdiction for the majority Acehnese Muslims population to have a right to formulate its legal system based on Islamic law (syari’ah) substituting Indonesian national law, including establishing independent court system, appointing regional police chief and prosecutors for its law enforcement system. The GAM members would be granted amnesty and would get political, economic, and social rights directly, while those who were still imprisoned would be released within fifteen days after the MoU ratification. They are able to be recruited as the organic and security for Acehnese administration. Meanwhile, Indonesian military was obliged to reduce its personnel until 14,700 TNI and 9,100 police while the GAM also must hand over 840 weapons and disperse its 3000 troops no later than 31 December 2005. The MoU implementation was under control of Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) consisted of European Union and ASEAN countries to monitor, value, and also to disqualify if there is a party who want to break the agreement implementation. After presenting many privileges for Aceh, Indonesian government through the MoU just maintain its authority in foreign affairs, external defence, national security, and fiscal policy to prove that Aceh is still administered within the unitary of Indonesia.

The implementation of the MoU has been considerably successful to satisfy all parties. Schulze (2009) noted that more than 1500 GAM prisoners was given amnesty and released from prisons in the mid 2005. Until the end of December 2005, GAM also handed over about 2000 weapons which was decommissioned, disqualified, and destroyed by AMM assisted by Badan Reintergrasi Damai Aceh (BRA) consisted of GAM representations, Indonesian government, and civil society. On the other hand, redeployment of Indonesian military personnel was implemented gradually. Schulze (2010) noted that by the end of redeployment process 25,890 TNI and 5,791 police had been withdrawn. When the precondition of peace had been settled well, the reintegration process began to run. Financial approach was conducted by giving Rp 1 million per GAM combatant, for 3000 GAM combatants from various districts. Aceh governor also provided Rp 3 billion for GAM members through regent or bupati and GAM commander in 15 locations in Aceh. New pair of governor and the vice governor, including 19 regents and mayors was also peacefully elected in the December 2006 local elections. The local political parties such as Partai GAM which then changed its name to be Partai Aceh, Partai GABTAHT which is constituted based on Islamist ideology, and Partai SIRA (Suara Independence Rakyat Aceh), have also been established to contain the voice of grassroots. Meanwhile, the formalization of Islamic law and the system of rules of Aceh governance have been regulated by the Law for the Governance of Aceh (LoGA).
Despite some are considerably successful, the implementation of mega project of Aceh peace has still left various dissatisfactions from many parties. The distribution of reintegration money which did not reach all targeted recipients for instance, has encouraged widespread protests among the GAM combatants itself. Moreover many GAM personnel in the district level just accepted Rp 175 thousand only from Rp 1 million based on the agreement. The former GAM combatants’ lack of economy and jobs after the conflict also emerged various social problems and crimes. Recently, Aceh also suffered internal inflation after the departure of many international donors after they finished their post-tsunami reconstruction projects. The voice of amendment of the LoGA also simultaneously emerged criticizing too much the central government’s intervention. The demands to establish a human rights court and a truth and reconciliation commission was not followed up seriously by Jakarta which is suspected hidden its interests to protect the elites of state-military and police from the human right court which would become international attention (Kompas, 16 August 16 2010).

Meanwhile, politically, after the elected governor Irwandi Yusuf’s administration exercises the power since 2006, many dissatisfaction also have been voiced by critical local people. “There is no hero anymore, they (GAM elites) have enjoyed the power, and they forget to the main objective of the Acehnese social welfare. There are only heroes oversleep”, the local said. The situation further sharpens GAM’s factionalism which has been emerged after the governor succession. The situation was also worsened by the political communication and synergy between the local Aceh political parties and Indonesian national political parties which have not been thoroughly well-established, making the political reintegration process a bit impeded. The continuity of local corruption and lack of development also nurturing unsatisfied among ex-insurgents and Acehnese grassroots which might potentially re-emerged the voice of independence if the special autonomy fails to bring prosperity, justice and fundamental political change in the post-conflict Aceh governance.

Although Aceh would be powerful to run the development agenda after supported by huge budget from 70 percent revenue of natural resources, but other concerns also arise. According to Means (2009, 275), the source was considerably less than had been anticipated a few years earlier. According to the Exxon Mobile’s seismic tests of the yield potential fields, Aceh gas fields were about 80 percent depleted after a long-time exploitation. There is a serious decrease trend in gas production time to time, from 1994 Exxon Mobile operated six production lines in Arun to be two lines only in 2008, and expected to be one only in 2009 to 2014. The similar trend might also happen in other
natural resources. The condition potentially shakes Aceh’s a long term internal stability.

**Southern Thailand’s Conflict Anatomy and the Peace Prospect**

The Southern Thailand conflict is commonly seen as a struggle for identity of language, religion and culture. Like what happen in Aceh and Mindanao, the Southern Thailand conflict is also correlated to antagonistic centre-periphery relations and the minority-majority relation. The Southern Thailand provinces namely Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani and Sarun are consisted of largely Malay-speaking Muslims, distinguishing them from the Thai Buddhist majority. Historically, Patani belonged to the Malay world. But the British colonial rejected to attach Patani to Malay kingdom, but integrated it to the Siam administration in 1902 (Yegar 2002 in ICG, 2005). When the king of Patani loss of power in 1993 as a result of Siam’s administrative restructuring process, the massive protest posed by people of Pattani symbolizing the first step of conflict between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhist (Dorairajoo 2004).

In 1909, the border of British Malaya and Siam was decided, in which the treaty relinquished the Pattani sultanate covering Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala to be under the Thai administration. The removal of local aristocracy was followed by the Thai government’s assimilation policies strengthening Thai culture in those provinces (Yegar 2002 in Upward, 2006; ICG 2005; Melvin 2007). The policy has undermine three pillars their Malay identity including; firstly, a belief in the greatness of the kingdom of Pattani, secondly, an identification with the Malay race, and thirdly, a religious orientation based on Islam. Meanwhile, the assimilation policies also imposed three pillars as comprised of the monarchy (the devotion to the Thai kingdom), religion (adherence to Buddhism) and language (proficiency in speaking Thai), made the confrontation with the local people inevitable (National Identity Promotion Office, 2006).

The replacement of Islamic law by Siamese law and the compulsory attendance of Thai secular state schools stimulated strong resistance from the Muslims. The Muslims movement led by Haji Sulong then demanded full autonomy, but that was responded by arresting him. As what happen in Aceh, the special autonomy has been viewed as a political step to struggle for independence (Smith 2004). Besides oppressing in cultural and religious aspects, the majority also conducts resource exploitation. As generally known, the Southern Thailand produces approximately 90 percent of the Thailand’s natural rubber, and is also rich in the natural resources and farming production (Jha 2009,
Despite its contribution to the central government’s revenue very high, the Southern Thailand territory is still under-developed comparing with other provinces. To respond the arbitrary, in the 1970s, Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and Patani National Liberation Front (PNLF) declared to confront Thai government erupting massive violence across the regions. About 2000 people were killed in the confrontation.

In 1980s, under Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, the peace making attempts were conducted by the Thai government to accommodate the minority’s voices and demands. A number of progressive concessions to the Malay separatists had been provided including; improving education and socio-economic development packages, reducing military approach, recruiting the Muslims into the state administrative structure, providing more space to use Malay language, legally setting up Islamic education (ICG 2005; van Dijk 2005). But, the insurgency movement does not find the end since they do not see the good and sincere intention of the Thai government to offer full special autonomy.

After enjoying the period of impermanent stability with the scale of violence was significantly decreased in 1990s, the new various violence and confrontation has erupted again after 1997 economic crisis, started by the people attacking police offices in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. They got angry and disappointed by the half hearted government in building peace shown by daily violence posed by the state military. The people kept silent for so long, steadily accumulating disappointment and anger to Thai’s policies still conducted assimilation in the name of political integration policies. Beside that, the attempts to increase economic development and to overcome unemployment were not accompanied by the serious efforts to improve Malay Muslims participation in local business and administration (Smith 2004; Yegar 2002 in ICG, 2005). The people then critically valued the Thai government has still shown no insincerity to provide special autonomy to solve the conflict (Houban 2003, 161; Tan-Mullisn 2006; Yusuf 1998; Liow 2006).

Furthermore, the military operation has been extended worsening the situation and intensifying violence that claimed thousands lives in 2004. The highly significant role of the military in the Thai government makes the prospect of conflict reconciliation efforts weaker. Many parties including military, politicians and other local governments enjoying the nature of the Southern conflict take some advantages from the chaos. In the higher level context, many parties also worried that the conflict reconciliation would absorb the state budget too much, this automatically threatened other provinces’ budget allocation for their development. The military and its client businesses have also been able
to enjoy the monopoly system during the conflict protecting them from new business competitors. Since the intensive conflict would reduce the flow of investment in the Southern (Janchitfah 2004, 143; McCargo 2006). Van Dijk (2005, 190) stated, “corrupt and brutal policemen, military officers and civil servants, local politicians, criminal gangs, hit men of influential people, and crooked businessmen fighting out conflicts over drugs and contraband trafficking, extortion rackets, gambling syndicates, and prostitution”.

At the same time, the insurgent movements have been divided into several organizations making them lost their focus, coordination and effectiveness. They suffer the lack of a clear agenda as the common target of the political struggle (Melvin 2007; Schulze 2010). The government’s effort to build negotiation with the leader of Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) who has been exiled in Sweden would be useless because the insurgent organization has been divided into 17 groups with various targets, agendas and ideologies. Beside PULO, there are Barisan Nasional Coordinate (BRN), Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani, Mujahedin Islam Patani, Barisan Nasional pember-Basab (BNPP), and also Bersatu which is also consisted of five groups itself.

Because of the fatal fragmentation of the insurgent groups, the negotiation process would be more untouchable since the government would be difficult to control their movements and to find the representative top leader of the insurgents. The international war on terrorism followed by the Bangkok administration to exercise its counter-terrorism actions arbitrarily to suppress the minority, rather than using counter-insurgency strategies and negotiation, also has made the conflict more complicated and inexplicable. The Thai national political instability caused by long lasting civil-military competition for the power has seized more public attention rather than the concerns to solve the conflict intensity which is remain high.

**Southern Philippines’s Conflict and Its Challenges to Peace Building**

Like what happens in Southern Thailand, the conflict of Southern Philippines is also constituted by the disputes of central-periphery relation posing economic disparity, political marginalization, social injustice, and cultural discrimination suffered by minority Moslem community. The state’s treatment over the minority has inspired them to rebel against the majority Roman Catholic Philippines since 1960s via Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Historically, the Moros was being forefront of resisting Spaniard and other colonials such as America and Japan, inspiring conversion from Islam to other religions,
Ahmad Khoirul Umam

particularly to Christianity in 1521. Since the thirteenth century, the Moros had been well institutionalized within the sultanate system based on Islamic religion. But the long term colonialization era has successfully changed the territory to be a majority Roman Catholic country.

As theoretically stated above, the majority will always pose their own language, culture, and tradition, as the country’s identity and the symbol of power hegemony (Hall 2007, 91). The majority is also will pose its domination in all aspects of state (Jha 2009, 95). And then ‘internal colonialism’ practices sponsored by state will be inevitable (Brown 1994, 159). Like what Bangkok did to its Southern minority, Manila also implemented assimilation policies by conducting state sponsored migration to bring the Christian settlers from Luzon and Visayas to live in Mindanao which was settled by Moslems. The policy has effectively managed to marginalize the Moslem community proven by the reducing percentage of Moslem population in Mindanao. According to Abubakar (2007, 34), the Moro percentage of population was 76 percent in 1903, dramatically reduced to be 19 percent in 1990 and now about 20 percent. The Moslem community has been systematically driven out from their ancestor land. Beside that, the state’s arbitrary also is intensively felt by the Moslems through political misrepresentation, human right abuses exercised by military, and lack of participation in economic development.

After the Moslem minority suffered suppression and injustice for long time, the steps to peace begun in 1976 through Tripoli Agreement signed by MNLF leader Nur Misuari and the President Marcos. Unfortunately, the agreement regulated autonomy and a constitutional procedure was not implemented well undermining the precondition for peace. The similar failure experience emerged again in the era of President Aquino offering the concept of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in 1989. The ARMM concept was then continued by the President Fidel Ramos who also established Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) as a follow up of 1996 Final Peace Agreement to streamline the process of economic development.

After signing the agreement, MNLF commanders gained positions in the local administration while the MNLF insurgents were incorporated in the Philippine Army and National Police. But, again, lack of governance, limited resources, and bureaucratic isolation from national government had trapped the process of negotiation into the bitter situation. The Moros distrust over the governments strengthened because of half-hearted efforts to lift their anguish. In November 2001, as the prominent leader of the insurgents, Nur Misuari stated that the peace agreement signed by MNLF was ‘as good as dead’ (van Dijk 2005, 2007). The
provocation was followed by insurgents’ attacks on the Philippines army and police offices, and the confrontation became inevitable.

The situation more intensifies voices for independence. The chaos condition was directly responded by the government by massively deploying troops and posing anti-insurgency operations to suppress the movements. Human right abuses by the state security forces reached alarming level. Criminal justice system was powerless before the military arbitrary. Rapes, torture, kidnapping and disappearances, extrajudicial killings by the military had become ‘constitutional’ on behalf of nationalism. After unsuccessful talks and broken agreements in July 2003, the President Aroyo indeed declared all-out war against the insurgents. The systematic killings had been more intensive after the government joint into the global war on terrorism and generalizing the insurgent elements as terrorist correlated to the international terrorist group Al-Qaeda and the Jamaah Islamyah (JI). The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bombing on a ferry in Manila claiming 118 innocent people in 2004, made the Manila government and international parties more convinced that international terrorism has planted its cells in the Southern Philippines. The grassroots’ original question of ancestral lands and justice seemed to be directly wiped out by the issue of terrorism. As a consequent, by enjoying the military assistance from various developed countries for the counter-terrorism actions, the Philippines intensify the operation, making the situation worse and leading the conflict escalation to reach war level killing hundreds people during 2003 to 2005 (Hall 2007, 97).

The people have been frustrated and seem to almost lose their trust that they are actually citizens who have government, constitution, and state. The situation indeed will be much more serious challenge for the government to set up peace building process after the ‘on-off negotiation’ and military violence. Many negotiations have been tried to build talks, but a ‘vote of no confidence’ still colors both parties’ behaviors. Ironically, as the victim, the inclusion of Moslem leaders and the local ulama participation in the work of civil society in Mindanao are still limited. Conversely, there is a stronger force from the majority Christian settlers group rather than the Moslem itself (Abubakar 2007, 58).

The situation sharpens misunderstanding between the Government of Republic Philippines (GRP) and the MNLF. The role of criminal elements such as Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) which was born after the 2003 negotiation and the Pentagon Group also make the conflict more complicated. The occurrence of the suspected terrorist network which is associated to the MILF’s alliance consisted of the elements of the Jemaah Islamiyah, Rajah Solaiman Movement, and the ASG itself also
potentially extends a long-term extremist insurgency and terrorism. Meanwhile the emergence of feudal conflict among Moro communities itself also creates additional problem for peace builders.

Because of not properly handled in a long time, the government is also trapped by ‘lost command’ of the insurgent groups itself. As what happens in Southern Thailand, fragmentation is also experienced by the Southern Philippines’ insurgent group. After the MNLF split in 1977, it was the MILF’s turn to be fragmented after its leader Hasyim Salamat passed away in July 2003. The organization has seriously factionalized along tribal, generational, ideological; either Islamist or nationalist, and strategic lines; either military or political diplomacy (van Dijk 2005, 208). The government is hassle because of that. The government must build negotiation with both MILF and MNLF, for instance, on the separated tracks of peace process with different mechanism, point of agreements, and approaches. The problem of Bangsamoro representation makes the peace dream as more utopian.

Fatally, as Schulze (2010, 260) noted, another worsening factor namely intra-governmental rivalry strengthened the Manila’s reluctance to engage into the serious negotiation process. The lack of sincere intention of the authority to establish peace automatically makes the efforts to transform the conflict from military to political diplomacy seriously hampered. Special autonomy still becomes a very long waited dream, while the minority is still suffering and the conflict would be never ended until the sincere intention for peace born by all parties, particularly from the government to win the hearts and minds of the Moros. For the next, the government should be to the point in responding the conflict by overcoming issues of identity, sovereignty over the ancestral land, and justice by providing political governance for the indigenous people. By doing that, the demands of self determination could be able to be muted. To implement the concept and for winning the hearts and minds of the Moros, the special autonomy still become the best choice for sustaining peace within the unitary state of the Republic Philippines.

Conclusion

All the analyses and elaborations presented in this paper basically refer to the various major questions related to the relation between majority and Islamic minority, as well as the potential acceptance of special autonomy by the majoritarian democratic Southeast Asian countries as apart of the alternatives in negotiation to set up sustainable peace in their conflict areas. Domestic extremism consisted of the discriminated and marginalized minorities should be approached by using accommodation strategies like what Jakarta did to solve the conflict in
Aceh. Hence, predominantly the Roman Catholic Philippines and the Buddhist Thailand governments should further prepare to modify its counter insurgency to avoid the overlap with the counter terrorism strategies. Beside that, they also should further try to build negotiation with the insurgent groups to set up sustainable peace.

The precondition of peace can be achieved when the conflict is able to be transformed from military to political diplomacy. The first step of the peace precondition toward negotiation is how to neutralize all elements involved. The precondition also will automatically break if the minority still enjoys external support for its insurgent movements, or while the minority still suffer oppression from the majority. Suggestions of ‘dogs should not bark’ in the negotiation process should be taken into account, otherwise negotiation may paradoxically encourage more massive minority rebellion or conversely provoke a majority backlash, putting the negotiations to start from zero again. Conversely, when both insurgent and government parties can restrain themselves and try to be more patient during the process, the meeting points towards peace are easier to be found. Since, when the mutual trust well-establish during the negotiation, the minority would be willing to gradually evaluate and moderate their demands for independence while the majority also would stop repression for achieving a sustainable peace.

To succeed the precondition phase, the neutral third party or mediator is inevitably needed to balance the process of negotiation, to provide valuable information, to open dead-lock communication, to avoid gap in knowledge and resources which might be hampering the mediation, and also to bring international funds and resources for reconstruction in the next step after agreement achieved. In case of the Southeast Asian region, the institution of ASEAN actually has the potential to become an effective regional body for crisis mediation, conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict building through mediation, research, cooperation and development of an institutional framework to deal with regional conflict and security issues. Unfortunately, the desire for being a pivotal actor in the regional peace is hampered by its internal framework of noninterference, where every country is prohibited to intervene others’ domestic policies to protect the principle of state sovereignty. Beside that, ASEAN also tends to be reluctance to open itself from the third-party involvement, particularly from external-ASEAN countries.

Aceh is the only one successful conflict case in the Southeast Asia to have been successfully transferred the conflict from military to political diplomacy. There are several factors encouraging willingness of the GAM and the Indonesian government to sit back on the table of negotiation. Firstly, the failed negotiation in 2003 had motivated Jakarta to conduct
a massive counter-insurgency during 2003-2004 successfully destroying GAM’s military capacity and its virtual governmental structure. Before the implementation of the military operation, Jakarta also successfully convinced international parties to support its policy under Martial Law 2003 by arguing the step was crucial for establishing stability as the foundation of the successful negotiation. After realizing the lost of international support and its military capacity, GAM was inevitably forced to reconsider its strategies by transforming the movements from military to political, and also was forced to set aside its demand of self-determination and accept the Jakarta’s strategic offer of special autonomy (Schulze, 2009).

Secondly, although the role of military was still strong within the state policy direction, the top political leaders’ commitment for peace is another pivotal factor succeeding the conflict resolution. The elected President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Vice President Jusuf Kalla in the 2004 Indonesian presidential election had given a glimmer of hope to achieve sustainable peace in Aceh. They were well-known as the political leaders who had a political will to succeed the negotiation process by providing adequate resources and powers to back up the decision making through effective communication in order to both eliminating separatism and also sustaining the state unity. If the centre government could not be able to offering something better with a unitary state, the insurgents tend to pursue secession.

Thirdly, not only exercising military operation and political diplomacy, Jakarta also tried to approach GAM elites through use cultural diplomacy to make communication more fruitful. Government should understand well the characteristics, principles, ideology, cultural values committed by the rebels to set up soft-counter insurgency strategies which is sometime more effective to win the hearts and minds of the rebels. Hence the inclusion of local public figures, traditional leaders, ulama or religious leaders, and other Acehnese stakeholders and civil society elements within the negotiation process had very positive impact for peace building. Jakarta also sent its diplomats coming from Acehnese and Bugisnese having similar cultural background with GAM elites. As a result, many secret contracts between the Jakarta government and GAM elites behind the table streamlining a more serious back-channel talks since 2004 until the signing peace agreement in Helsinki, 15 August 2005.

Anyway, some still argue that Aceh was not as complicated as the conflicts in the Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. Since the insurgency in Aceh seemed to be motivated by ‘purely’ political economic factors rather than ethnoreligious one, with limited foreign interference within the conflict. Meanwhile, the Mindanao and Pattani
conflicts are not only driven by ‘central-peripheral disputes’, but also related to the majority-minority tension dominated by ethno, religious, political, economic, and cultural matters which are mixed up with the local crime and might also international terrorist networks. That is why Aceh conflict may be easier to solve than the Mindanao and Pattani conflicts.

In some extents, these hypothesis might be true, but the highly appreciative achievements of the Aceh peace still leave valuable lessons for the other Southeast Asian conflict areas. In setting up peace building process, Jakarta also faced some similar resistances like what happens in Thailand and Philippines. But the Indonesian government had successfully set aside internal differences and other conflict of interests in order to be united behind the process. Meanwhile, Philippines and Thailand governments still succumb to internal rivalries making the negotiations collapsed. Thailand government in particular, as generally known, still suffers internal political crisis after the failure of civil administration and the military coup that kept repeating lately. The central government instability automatically ignored the minority conflict issue. As a result, addressing conflict issues just became a temporary political issue rather than implementing it on a continuing basis. Too many conflicts of interests within both governments and the military corps enjoying the nature of the conflicts resulted the on-off negotiation. The ego centrist majoritarian governments also make them unwilling to seriously address the main issues such as the ancestral lands and the justice for ethnic, religious and cultural minorities.

Moreover, although the Thailand and Philippines governments are ready to set back in the negotiations, they would be bothered by the ‘lost commands’ of the insurgent group after their serious fractionalization making their movements more sporadic. The problem of insurgents’ representation within the next negotiation is another difficult aspect. The absence of the key figure or strong leader as the symbol of the insurgent movement potentially makes the negotiation process ineffective. However, the situation does not mean all parties have to give up in struggling achieving peace. Since, as Dorothy Thompson said, peace is not the absent of conflict, but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflicts.

The problem of fragmented insurgent group was also experienced by Indonesian government when GAM split into two factions namely Kuala Lumpur-based group under control of Irwandi Yusuf and the Sweden-based group leaded by Tengku Hasan di Tiro (Sastrohandoyo in The Jakarta Post, 7 May 2003). They had contradictive paradigms to shape the state of Aceh after independence. As a descendant of the last Sultan of Aceh, Di Tiro preferred to create a monarchy system delegating him as
the next Sultan, while the Kuala Lumpur-based group wanted to set up a modern Islamic republic. But Jakarta still tried to not give up by keep building communication with both sides and invited both within the negotiation. So, it is a matter of political will to solve the problem.

Something distinct triggering the successful Aceh peace which is not owned by the Mindanao and Pattani conflict cases is a highly influential catalystor like tsunami tragedy in Aceh which has suddenly and fundamentally changed the social, economic, and political landscapes of the region forcing the Indonesian military and GAM to laid down their weapons in the name of humanity. Thus, the Thai and Philippines governments must be more sensitive to find the precise momentum as the turning point which is potential to set up peace by bringing the momentum into national and international spotlight to make it politically desirable for both governments and insurgent sides to work together towards a peaceful reconciliation.

When the precondition of peace is successfully set up, then the special autonomy would be an effective instrument to sustain the peace agreement. In this occasion, I would like to re-assert that, within the majoritarian democracy like exercised by most of Southeast Asian countries, autonomy should not be viewed as the defeat of the central government to the local. Since a ‘win-lose’ solution will never result peace in the disputes of central-periphery relation. Autonomy as an alternative within the process of negotiation should be posited as a win-win solution for both central and peripheral parties. The concept of autonomy exercises the power ‘transferred’, not the power ‘taken away’ from the central to local. The system will strengthen both the central and the local by encouraging an atmosphere of share engaged governance in which the main objective is not who the power holder is, but how the power is exercised for the well being of the people and society.

However, autonomy is not able to guarantee to sustain peace. Autonomy can be an effective instrument of peace building if it is well managed to create prosperity, justice and democracy for the marginalized people. The aspiration nurtured by unsatisfied ex-insurgents for independence might gain strength again if the autonomy fails to bring prosperity, justice and democracy in the conflict areas. It means that autonomy must be well managed to manage the post conflict era and to retain the nation-state integration by providing adequate resources and capacity building to support good governance, democracy and development agendas.

If the autonomy and the points of agreement are not well-managed, they are able to lead to the more massive instability and war rather than sustainable peace. For example, the failed implementation of 1996 Final
Peace Agreement between MNLF and the Philippine government had indeed produced the nucleus of the more destructive and longer-term extremist insurgency, even though the MNLF commanders had gained governmental positions in the local administration and the MNLF insurgents had been incorporated in the Philippine Army and National Police at the time of agreement implementation. In a matter of time, centrifugal forces gradually began asserting themselves and, in the process, weakening the centre. After achieving international recognition, the ex-insurgent leaders would move to consolidate their power for independence. Elections would just facilitate the process of separation. That would be a serious step towards the state disintegration. And in some extends, behind its highly appreciative achievement of peace, Aceh still holds the potentials which should be considered carefully and accurately by the Indonesian central government.

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