Passing on the challenges or prescribing better management of diversity?
Decentralisation, power sharing and conflict dynamics in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

In 1999, following the end of the 32-year rule of Suharto's New Order administration, Indonesia embarked on an ambitious decentralization program. Decentralization and greater regional autonomy emerged in response to demands for the vast and diverse regions of the country to self-manage as well as to bring government services closer to beneficiaries. It can also be seen as a response to the long-standing grievances existing in the regions against 54 years of centralised government administration. The structural and institutional changes have, on the one hand, achieved the initial aims of the legislation and to some extent addressed existing grievances in the regions. On the other hand, however, such change has opened up spaces for new forms of local-level elite competition and grassroots mobilisation around a variety of local identities and interests. It has also led to a proliferation of district-splitting and shifts in local-level demographics. All of these aspects have the potential to interact with local-level conflict dynamics, either ameliorating tensions or potentially triggering new conflicts. This paper uses the cases of Poso and Donggala districts in Central Sulawesi to examine these dynamics. Poso is an area which has experienced communal violence as well as conflicts involving the state, whereas Donggala has not experienced violence on the same scale. Both regions have multi-ethnic and religious populations.

This paper argues that decentralisation has had both positive and negative indirect impacts on conflict dynamics in both areas. Firstly, it has allowed for the direct election of regional heads. This has changed the nature of local politics, which of course heightens local tensions through competition for power. At the same time it involves the populace in decision making, to some extent alleviating the grievances they may have had. Secondly, it has changed population demographics by redrawing administrative boundaries. In both districts this is resulting in greater ethno-religious segregation. It has also changed the boundaries around the voting populace, which can play into conflict tensions if such boundaries reinforce sensitive identity cleavages. Carving out new regions creates new district legislatures and executives, which can fuel competition for these fiercely sought-after positions and the associated political power, as well as group competition for the resources in the 'new' region. However, it simultaneously reduces competition pressures in the 'mother' region, as was the case in Poso.

This is not to say that the demographic, structural, and institutional changes stimulated by decentralisation will necessarily lead to violent conflict but rather that they do interact with or potentially stimulate local tensions. Felt grievances, perceptions of inequalities, and claims to minority rights are just some of the contentious issues which can interact with decentralisation policies. Effective interventions, awareness and forethought, as well as conflict management strategies which channel these tensions into productive outcomes rather than destructive violence, will ensure that diversity flourishes in multi-ethnic and religious states such as Indonesia, while adversity is curbed. This will also ensure that what is a potentially a temporary phenomenon resulting from transition does not solidify into long-term grievances and potentially violent conflict.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Passing on the challenges or prescribing better management of diversity? Decentralization, power sharing and conflict dynamics in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

By Rachael Diprose

1. Introduction

In 1999, following the end of the 32-year rule of Suharto's New Order administration, Indonesia embarked on an ambitious decentralisation programme. Decentralisation and greater regional autonomy emerged in response to demands for the vast and diverse regions of the country to self-manage as well as to bring government services closer to beneficiaries. It can also be seen as a response to the long-standing grievances existing in the regions against 54 years of centralised government administration.

The implementation of the decentralisation laws (Laws No.22 and 25, 1999) finally began in 2001, devolving power from the central government to the district *(kabupaten)* level, bypassing the provincial level of government that had traditionally represented the central government in the regions. Apart from providing greater autonomy over district government policy formulation, district and village-level regulation creation and budgetary control, the laws allowed for the recognition of the diverse local identities in Indonesia. The laws allowed for new regions to be carved out of pre-existing administrative areas *(pemekaran)*, for more attention to local needs, and, among other things, for local governments to create taxes, to elect by vote of the local parliament the Governor and District Head (previously appointed) and the election of representative councils and village heads at the village level by the populace. Parts of the legislation were revised through Law No.32, 2004, which to some extent rolled back the authority in the regions, but did allow for the direct elections of the District Head and the Governor (*Bupati* and *Gubernur*, respectively) by the populace.

The regional autonomy and decentralisation debate which has long been a part of public discourse is closely inter-twined with local and national identity politics, elite interests at the national and local level, the struggle to promote nationalism and restrain regionalism, and grassroots demands in both remote regions and those more proximate to the centre of national government in Jakarta on Java island to accommodate the diversity of cultural groupings across the nation. Not long after Indonesian independence from the Dutch, dissatisfaction with centralised rule motivated calls for greater regional autonomy and decentralisation. The changes initiated through decentralisation in the new Millennium on the one hand have achieved the initial aims of the legislation and to some extent addressed existing grievances in the regions. However, on the other hand, structural change has opened up spaces for new forms of local-level elite competition and grassroots mobilisation around a variety of local identities and interests. If managed constructively, these aspects have the potential to stimulate creativity in the regions, encourage better governance and accountability in the administration of public services, better accommodate local needs and interests, and even defuse the contentious politics surrounding local identities and minority rights. However, the changes brought about by decentralisation can also have both positive and negative impacts on local conflict dynamics, and if sensitive identities are mobilised in the absence of effective intervention mechanisms to channel such mobilisation constructively, there could be destructive consequences.

This paper seeks to examine briefly the history of decentralisation and the associated identity politics and demonstrate that centre-periphery relations have been contentious at least since the period following Independence, as well as to explore the indirect impacts

structural change has had on conflict management in Indonesia. It uses the case of Central Sulawesi to examine these dynamics, an area which has experienced communal violence as well as conflicts involving the state, particularly in the Poso District and to a lesser extent in districts such as Donggala. In particular, this paper examines the experience of decentralisation in these two districts: Poso, an ethnically and religiously diverse area which has experienced large-scale communal violence; and Donggala, an area with similar levels of ethno-religious diversity that has not experienced the same levels of inter-group violence. Both regions have been a part of Central Sulawesi since the province was formed in 1964, and they are the districts that match most closely in terms of ethno-religious diversity.

Section 2 of this paper examines the history of identity politics, grievances against the central government and demands for regional autonomy and decentralisation. It argues that expressions of diversity in the regions are a part of the cultural and ethno-religious heritage of such a multi-cultural state, but do not necessarily threaten the unified Indonesian state, as such expressions of values and claims of autonomy rarely involve secessionist claims. Rather, the increased emphasis on the importance of regional identities is an aspect of grievances towards centralised rule and repression of diversity. It also argues that such grievances have long existed in Indonesia, and form a historical backdrop to the recent legislative changes. Section 3 discusses some of the key legislative changes which have taken place since the end of the New Order regime, with specific reference to the election of Provincial and District Heads, the carving out of new regions, and the opportunities decentralisation and other legislative changes in the reform period provide for the expression of diversity and better attention to local needs. Finally, Section 4 of this paper examines the more recent impacts of decentralisation on the conflict dynamics in a Central Sulawesi, with specific reference to district-splitting, direct elections of regional representatives and identity politics. It argues that decentralisation has had an indirect impact on conflict dynamics in Poso, both in terms of changing the population demographics and ameliorating the residual tensions of the inter-group conflict that has been ongoing and changed form several times since 1998. At the same time, decentralization has led to new sources of tensions which could trigger conflicts in the future. It also argues that similar dynamics are evident in Donggala. With the planned district-splitting in Donggala in the future, an awareness of the tensions this is creating is important for designing conflict-management strategies to ensure that more serious conflict does not result.

2. Identity politics, grievances, and historical demands for autonomy

Struggles for regional autonomy in Indonesia did not simply stem from '*reformasi*' (the reform period) following the end of the New Order regime. Instead, contested power relations between the centre and the regions can be found as early as the 1950s.[1] The regional autonomy debate has long been entangled with the identity politics of, on the one hand, loyalties to the unified, single Indonesian identity fought for with the birth of the Independence movement, and on the other hand, the diversity of Indonesian regional identities existing across the some 10,000 islands within its borders. According to Feith (1962: 27), by 1949 there were 366 traditionally self-aware ethnic groups in Indonesia, including ten major groups with populations of over 1 million. While some of these groupings unified to overthrow the Dutch and form a single 'Indonesian' identity, natural loyalties to the communal and quasi-communal groups still existed in parallel with the unified Indonesian consciousness. Some deemed ethnic group loyalties to be in competition with loyalties to the state and the national community in the 1950s, and thus 'local 'patriotisms' and demands for self autonomy were seen as a threat to national unity (ibid: 29).

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[1] This paper is limited in that it does not discuss centre-regional power relations prior to Independence

However, Feith (1962) contends that during this period territorial integrity was bolstered by intermarriage and intermigration (not forgetting that similar social phenomena exist today). Feith also argues that ethnic diversity itself was not a political cleavage, but only contributed to such cleavages when one group had strong traditions of hostility towards another (ibid: 28).[2] Similarly, Liddle's research indicated that ethnic group / sub-national group loyalties existed in parallel to national identity, and were not an alternative to membership in the Indonesian nation, particularly due to the values shared with other groups in the region, and the overriding national structures provided by the party system (Liddle, 1970: 208). His work also emphasised the critical importance of the 'sense of belonging' to the nation which at the time existed independently of sub-national loyalties (ibid).

Demands for greater autonomy for the regions in Indonesia emerged instead from dissatisfaction with the centralised administration. Following the struggle for Independence from the Dutch in 1945, Harvey maintains that many hoped for social and economic improvements for the general population. Instead, there was disappointment with the minimal change achieved by the central government administration, stimulating discontent with the centralised system (Harvey, 1977: v). Even at the time the 1945 Constitution was instituted, the virtues of implementing a federal constitutional structure were still being debated as an alternative to the unitary structure given the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of the nation in formation (Booth, 2000: 1). However, this was discredited in the eyes of the national leadership due to the Dutch strategy of allowing the creation of the Federal State of East Indonesia in 1945-6, which Chauvel (1996: 62) argues was created as a reaction to the colonial government's Java- and Sumatra-focussed policies.[3] According to Chauvel, 'local patriotisms' originally combined to establish the State of East Indonesia because the groups in this region were marginalised in the context of the dominance of Java and Sumatra[4], both geographically proximate to the central government as well as being numerically and politically dominant.   Such sentiments are echoed in the regional autonomy debate that again emerged in the 1990s, which Booth, (2000:1) argues had roots in the perception that the regions outside Java were marginalised due to the highly centralised system of government with its centre in Jakarta.

In the 1950s too, the regions outside Java – where the central government administration was based – complained of economic and political marginalisation from the centre[5], perceiving that government policy favoured Java (Harvey, 1977: 1).[6] For example, many of Indonesia's exports originated from the islands outside Java whereas Java was a net importer. However, the currency exchange rate was overvalued, favouring import prices rather than export prices, thus discriminating against the exporting regions (Feith, 1962:6-7). Similarly, the regions in the islands outside Java were dissatisfied with the appointment of central government officials, particularly from Java, to the regional governments. *Pamong pradja* (central government representatives who monitored and led – *memimpin* – the regions) were sent to the regions outside Java, which the 'outer islands' considered as encroaching on their autonomy (ibid: 488).[7] The Commanders (*panglima*) of the Indonesian Armed Forces (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* – ABRI)[8] were also

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[2] For further discussion of the rise of nationalism in Indonesia see Kahin (1969)
[3] For discussion of the collapse of the Federal State see also: Feith (1962: 71)
[4] Chauvel, (1996: 70). See also Eriksen (1993: 150) who defines such sentiment as 'localisms' which are usually of an ethnic, religious or regional nature asserting their demands vis-à-vis the centre.
[5] The 'centre' is the common term used to refer to the central government and administration and / or the 'centre' of national politics.
[6] See also Kahin and Kahin, (1997 :Chapter 3) - English: Subversion as Foreign Policy, The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia – 1995
[7] See also Legge (1961: 19) on regional autonomy in the 1950s
[8] The armed forces are now named *Tentara Nasional Indonesia - TNI*

appointed by the centre to the regions. Rarely was a local commander appointed to his own region due to the 'tour of duty' policy, whereby regional commanders were subject to regular transfers (Harvey, 1977: 12). Indonesian Historian Ong Hok Ham argues that:

> 'This has been the strategy of central governments for hundreds of years, and the Chinese empires for thousands of years. It also occurred in the pre-Colonial kingdoms as a means of not allowing the Commanders to develop a significant power base in their region of origin'.
>
> Interview, Jakarta, 19 May 2002

This policy led to dissatisfaction in the regional branches of the ABRI who desired 'native sons' (*anak daerah)* appointed to their areas of command (ibid: 9; Feith, 1962: 496). The concept of *anak daerah* is similar in emphasis to that of *putra daerah*, a contemporary term that conveys a similar idea of 'sons of the soil' and was particularly prevalent in the regional autonomy discourse at the time of the implementation of the regional autonomy laws. However, in the present era of regional autonomy, 'local sons' is a more appropriate translation that conveys the local/regional nature of the 'sons' and their claims (where 'sons' can have ethnic heritage either within or outside the region as long as they were born or grew up in the region), rather than the more ethnic sentiments conveyed by the term in the past.[9]

Such policies, the numerical dominance of the Javanese in the population both in the 1950s[10] and today, and the fact that the centre of politics was in Jakarta, only enhanced the perception of Javanese imperialism among the inhabitants of the 'outer islands' (Legge, 1961: 232). The result was the birth of many ethnically based organisations among the Sundanese in West Java, Lampung people in southern Sumatra, the Minangkabau in West Sumatra, and the Acehnese in the 1950s which were avowedly cultural in aim but engaged in political activity (Feith, 1962: 491). For example the Sundanese Youth Front (*Front Pemuda Sunda)* was established in June 1956, issuing pamphlets titled 'Destroy the PNI and Javanese Imperialism' (ibid: 492).

Historically, when grievances against the centre have emerged, so too have regionalism and demands for greater autonomy for the regions outside Java (ibid: 487).[11] Legge (1961: 231) argues that the very motto of the Republic, "Unity in Diversity" (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), recognises the reality of the strength of regional awareness and the presence of distinct societies in the regions such as the Minangkabau (in West Sumatra) or the Batak (in northern Sumatra). Both ethnicity and economic differences between regions were significant factors in explaining local patriotism at the time (ibid). Although the discourse at the central level has often painted these local patriotisms as a source of inter-ethnic conflict and a threat to national integration, instead they can be seen as the mobilisation of groups dissatisfied with centralised governance.

The rebellions of the 1950s synthesised such anti-central government sentiment in the regions. For example, the Permesta rebellion[12] in Sulawesi was launched to oppose the increasing influence of Sukarno and the Indonesian Communist Party, as well as the strength of the ABRI (Harvey, 1977: 151-153). The complaints in the regions and the

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[9] 'Son(s) of the region' or 'local son(s)' is the translation used for the term *putra daerah* to distinguish the use of the term following the end of the Suharto administration in 1998. 'Native sons' is the translation often used in various texts prior to this period. See for example the translation for *'anak daerah'* in, Harvey (1977: 9); and the translation for 'putera daerah' in Malley (1999: 90). For further discussion of this discourse see Diprose, Rachael (2002) *Putra Daerah: Identity, Grievances and Collective Action,* Honours Thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

[10] Liddle (1970: 5) contends that the Javanese totalled approximately 45 million of 100 million population in the 1950s.

[11] See also Harvey, (1977: 7) and Legge (1961:13)

[12] Declaration of Charter of Inclusive Struggle (Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam – Permesta) in Makassar, 2 March 1957 demanding provincial autonomy. Harvey (1977: 1 and 173)

emergence of this and other movements were synonymous with 'ethnic particularism'[13] and 'regionalism'[14], but the leaders of the movement were not willing to allow such sentiments to fully develop for fear of destroying the unitary state that they had originally supported.[15]   Harvey (1977: 152) explains that the goal of the rebels was to change national policy through regionalism, <u>not</u> separation from the Indonesian state. Eventually, such demands for greater self-management were accommodated through the ratification of regional autonomy laws in the 1950s: Law No.32, 1956[16], and Law No. 1, 1957[17]. Yet, following the end of these rebellions, the key provisions of the 1956/57 Regional Autonomy Laws were revoked in 1959, when Sukarno implemented Guided Democracy (Legge, 1961: 209).

Following the end of Sukarno's Old Order, the New Order administration from 1966 continued to strengthen national identity and the central administration. The New Order endeavoured to solidify the imagined Indonesian identity by promoting its own role as the guardian of the state ideology: *Pancasila* (the five principles).[18]   It insisted that all community organisations, political parties, and religious groups acknowledge *Pancasila* ideology as their sole principle, essentially challenging their diverse ideologies. Particular attention was paid to the development of *Bahasa Indonesia* (the national Indonesian language) to promote modernisation and national identity (Foulcher, 1990: 306). It was developed as the national language and tightly controlled by the government, subordinating regional languages (ibid: 305).

The New Order sought ideological legitimacy through policies that continually reinforced 'stability' in Indonesia following the instability which characterised the Sukarno regime after the attempted coup in 1965 that culminated in mass killings throughout Indonesia (Hooker: 1995: 5 cf Geertz, 1990: 89).[19] The cornerstone of New Order policies promoting stability was development. The Suharto government contended that development would drive economic progress and prosperity for the nation (Hooker and Dick: 3). This policy was implemented through Five-Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun – Repelita),* which the New Order contended must be based on centrally driven programs and central control. This was characterised by top-down decision-making and very little accommodation of local diversity. Guinness (1994: 269) contends that part of this strategy to assure stability included dual roles for the armed forces (*dwifungsi*) through military commands stationed throughout the archipelago performing both military and civil service functions, for example, having five armed forces representatives in each of the district and provincial parliaments. While development bought a rise in living standards in Indonesia, it also legitimised government policy and strategies, facilitating Jakarta's[20] expanding control over many people's lives (ibid). Meanwhile, Jones (2002: 64) argues that co-option of the political and business elite as well as emphasis on unity and stability allowed Jakarta to impose a centralistic regime and for the 'spoils' of development to flow into the hands of the military or 'cronies' with ties to Jakarta.

Foulcher (2000: 400) contends that plurality (*kemajemukan*) was never found in the political vocabulary of the Suharto regime.   Regional cultures and traditions were incorporated into national culture by the official promotion of their visual and decorative

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[13] McKahin, in Harvey (1977: vi)

[14] *Ibid.*; See also Harvey (1977: 152-3)

[15] Harvey, (1977: 153)

[16] This law was concerned with the financial relations between the centre and the autonomous regions.

[17] This law was enacted to modify the appointment of Regional Heads. Legge (1961: 52) viewed this as more an attempt to weaken their office and strengthen the role of the regional parliaments.

[18] The five principles of the Republic of Indonesia acknowledge commitment to belief in one God, a just and civilised humanity, national unity, and people's rule through consultation and representation, to achieve social justice for all Indonesians. See Guinness (1994: 271)

[19] See also Hooker and Dick (1995: 2)

[20] A synonym for the 'centre'.

aspects, but in doing so, other expressions of local culture were stifled (Foulcher, 1990: 302). The promotion of regional culture in this limited sense was used by the New Order as a means to defuse potential political problems and to 'prevent regional, linguistic, and religious differences from taking on a political force' (Hooker and Dick, 1995: 2). For example, sentiments that could be related to SARA (*suku, agama, ras, antar-golongan* – ethnic, religious, racial or inter-group relations) were repressed, particularly in the regions outside Java. Any text, such as writings in the mass media, that might inflame SARA tensions was banned, limiting the news reporting of ethno-religious tensions and controlling the public interpretation of all socio-political conflicts (Sen and Hill, 2000: 12). Hence, SARA could be used as an instrument to control the expression of local diversity in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the New Order constructed the national culture by intertwining many of the principles outlined in the previous section through its administrative policies and practices (Jones, 2002: 65). For example:

> "New Order political pressure forced national unity. This reduced the creativity of local culture which could only be conveyed in a ceremonial fashion. With *reformasi*, the enthusiasm for 'regionalism' began and was strengthened by regional autonomy. *Reformasi* meant freedom. Under the New Order, local communities were marginalised."
>
> Interview, Engineer, Lampung, March 2001

The central government also controlled the regions by appointing its preferred candidates to Provincial and District Head positions (*Gubenur* - Governor; *Bupati* – District Head/Regent; *Walikota* - Mayor*)*, sometimes referred to as 'dropping' from the centre. Malley maintains that in 1970, 20 of the nation's 26 Governors were from the military and 60% of all *Bupati* and *Walikota* also hailed from the armed forces (Malley, 1999: 76). In 1974, the New Order established a legal foundation for this pattern of central dominance by enacting Law No. 5, 1974 on "Government in the Regions". This law was a direct rejection of the decentralising and democratising principles of Law No.1, 1957 discussed in the previous section (ibid: 77). It legislated the means for the New Order to 'drop' its preferred candidates from the centre into regional positions through approving the Heads of Regions.

Several years later, Law. No. 5, 1979, on "Village Governance" was enacted (ibid: 77). Guinness argues that this law homogenised the existing village governments often based on tradition and custom (*adat)*, into smaller units. This split local power bases and forced these units to compete for scarce development resources. Consequently, a significant amount of conflict between villages and groups emerged because the communities were separated administratively, breaking the long-standing ties within and between communities (Chauvel, 1996: 66). Another policy developed by the New Order using the *Repelita* was the transmigration policy. Resettlement areas were first introduced by the Dutch between 1905 and 1941 to relieve population pressures, mainly 'migrating' transmigrants to the residency of Lampung in southern Sumatra (Hardjono, 1977: 16). This policy was continued by both the Sukarno and Suharto administrations. Guinness argues that local communities felt marginalised during this period, particularly when viewing the economic advances made by both spontaneous migrants and transmigrants in the regions. For example, in Sulawesi, the locals saw the success of the Sundanese, Javanese and Sumatran migrants in gaining access to the highest positions in mining companies in the region, strengthening the concept of the local identifications (Guinness, 1994: 292-3). Often communal land (*tanah ulayat)* was used by the government for transmigrant settlements or sold to large mining companies, further enhancing local grievances (ibid: 293).[21]

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[21] See also Evers (2002) on 'Indonesian Land Policy: Requirements and Challenges'

The above discussion demonstrates how the New Order's cultural and political hegemony through legislation, tight control and sometimes force, further stimulated grievances in the regions towards the centralised system of government and the restrictions on expressions of local culture and identity. Centre-region tensions and power relations in the post-Independence era, and the associated identity politics of a single national identity versus the multitude of regional and ethno-religious identities, have been debated since the 1950s; not as a source of separatism but rather as articulated demands for self-expression and self management. Eriksen (1993: 152-3) and other identity theorists recognise the existence of multiple loyalties to different identities at any one time.[22] Eriksen argues that it is the balance between these loyalties that is important, where multiple loyalties, for example to the state and a 'localism or regionalism', may actually reduce the potential for conflict between the two (ibid: 152). However, if shared interests and grievances are strengthened, one set of loyalties may override the other[23]. In the case of Indonesia, the snowballing of discontent with centralised government has at various points in time seen regional loyalties supersede nationalist tendencies, more to draw attention back to local needs than to threaten the coherence of the Indonesian nation.

3. Regional autonomy: new government structures, new political spaces and vested interests

> "Local and national identity can coexist. We have to strengthen the regions in order to strengthen the nation, which includes strengthening local identity. We have to return our focus to the local level in order to develop the nation."
> Chairperson of the Jakarta Residents Forum, Jakarta, August 2001

The new policy of decentralisation was first outlined in the Regional Autonomy Laws: Law No. 22, 1999 concerning 'Local Government'[24] and Law No. 25, 1999 concerning 'The Fiscal Balance Between the Central Government and the Regions'[25]. Beginning in January 2001, these laws devolved certain powers and responsibilities to district and municipal governments (*kabupaten/kota)* rather than the provincial governments, establishing a far more decentralised system than the de-concentrated[26] and co-administrated[27] systems of the past.

These laws not only facilitated fiscal decentralisation, but also devolved greater legislation and policy-making powers to the districts, thus allowing for the decentralisation of political

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[22] See also Johnston, 1994) 'New Social Movements and Old Regional Nationalisms'; and Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield (1994) 'Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements'.
[23] See Eriksen (1993: 153) for a discussion of gender versus ethnic group loyalties.
[24] Law No. 22, 1999 devolves central government powers and responsibilities to local governments in all government administrative sectors except for security and defense, foreign policy, monetary and fiscal matters, justice, and religious affairs, without conditions and limitations. It also transfers functions, personnel and assets from the central government to the provincial, as well as the district and the municipal governments. Usman (2001:ii)
[25]The Indonesian language references for these two laws are: Government of Indonesia (1999) *Undang-Undang Otonomi Daerah 1999 (UU No.22 Tahun 1999 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah (*Law No. 22, 1999 on "Local Government), Jakarta. Government of Indonesia (1999) *Undang-Undang Otonomi Daerah 1999 (UU No.25, Tahun 1999 tentang Perimbangan Keuangan Antara Pemerintah Pusat dan Daerah (*Law No. 25, 1999 on "The Fiscal Balance Between the Central Government and the Regions), Jakarta.
[26] Deconcentration is the delegation of authority by the central government to the governor of a province and/or a central government official in the province.
[27] Co-administration is when higher levels of government direct lower levels to undertake tasks and functions. The higher level of government provides the costs, means, infrastructure and human resources to carry out the tasks. The lower level of government is obliged to report to the higher level of government regarding the execution of these tasks or functions.

power and autonomy. Amidst a plethora of changes, the new laws allowed for the locally contentious and politically powerful positions of Regional Heads (*Kepala Daerah*) to be appointed by local parliaments rather than by the provincial government representing central government interests. Decentralisation and other new legislation also allowed for the 'blooming' (the lexical meaning of *pemekaran)* of new provinces, districts, sub-districts, villages, hamlets, and wards. Such legislative changes were also supported by amendments to the 1945 Constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 – UUD1945*), which were intended to strengthen regional autonomy.[28] Later, Law No. 32, 2004, revised the decentralisation laws allowing for the direct popular election of Regional Heads, rather than election by vote of the regional parliaments which was stipulated in the 1999 legislation. At the same time, the revisions rolled back the number of new provinces and districts that could be considered for formation and ratification by the national parliament in any one year, and modified the criteria which must be met to form these new administrative areas, although the phenomenon of *pemekaran* continues to this day.

The initial legislation regarding the appointment of Regional Heads mentioned above was the source of much debate in Indonesia following the ratification of the initial laws, particularly as these positions are highly contested and represent significant sources of local power for local groups, and demand further discussion here. In a study conducted by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 78.2% of 1,092 respondents desired direct election of the *Bupati* and *Walikota* – not allowed in the initial regional autonomy laws (CSIS, 2001: 27). In interviews conducted in 2001 as part of this longitudinal study, various representatives of regional organisations and movements – which began to flourish with decentralisation – argued that direct elections would be more 'democratic' than election through the parliament at each level of the administration, as outlined in Law No.22. They also argued that a popular vote would be more representative of the will of the local community, and assist in changing the status quo as well as eliminating unfavourable past practices.[29] The respondents from *Sunda Tandang (*West Java)*, Forum Betawi Rempug* (Jakarta) and *Paku Banten* (Lampung) and *Lampung Sai* (Lampung) discussed the merits of the direct election of Regional Heads, including the Governor, as a means of avoiding the *money politics* involved in the voting process. It should be noted, however, that money politics is no less a feature of direct elections than it is of parliamentary appointment, as a means of buying party backing for candidacy and providing the extensive funds required for campaigns and securing votes in the elections. Regardless, as the above discussion demonstrates, it was clear that people wanted to choose their local leaders themselves.

Given the diversity of identity groups in Indonesia, claims of indigeneity or who could be identified as *putra daerah* were thus highly contested politically, as they could serve as a basis for claims to leadership and a means for mobilising grass-roots support. In the CSIS study, 59.7% of the respondents desired the Regional Heads at the district level to be *putra daerah,* defining *putra daerah* as those who were born, grew up and now lived in the region (ie, employing a civic definition of *putra daerah)* – but not necessarily having ancestral origins in the region. However, in-depth interviews conducted in other research on the *putra daerah* phenomenon at the height of the debate in 2001 discerned that the definition of 'local sons' was contested in the regions, with some emphasising ethnic origins and others emphasising civic ties, depending on the majority-minority demographics and indigeneity discourse in each region (Diprose, 2002). Most important in

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[28] For example, in the Second Amendment, articles 18, 18A, and 18B grant the broadest authority possible to the provinces, *kabupaten,* and *kota*, without differentiating the authority according to level of government. *Kompas* (2002, 12 August) 'Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Repubik Indonesia Tahun 1945 dan Perubahannya', p29-30
[29] Interview with a representative from Sunda Tandang, 19 August, 2002. Interview with member of *Forum Betawi Rempug*, 20 August, 2002. Interview with member of Paku Banten, May 2005, interview with member of Lampung Sai, March 2001.

this discourse, however, was the emphasis on 'sense of belonging to the regions' and commitment to develop a particular region, and this was particularly demanded of the leadership. Hence, much of the public debate over claims to be 'local sons' arose with the appointment or election of the district and provincial representatives. For example, in ethnically diverse Lampung, with its history of transmigration and spontaneous migration, definitions of local sons and the associated claims were polarised, as is evidenced in the following quotes:

> "In my opinion, *putra daerah* are those who were born, grew up, and are tied to Lampung. They [the leaders] must be concerned [about the region] and live here, not be 'dropped' from the centre. At the provincial level, it can even be said that the 'newcomers' who were born in the region are more concerned about Lampung than the indigenous."
>
> Resident, born in Lampung with East Javanese heritage, March 2001

> "*Putra daerah* are only those from the indigenous ethnic group[s] [in the region], Patrilineal ancestry is the most important factor [for determining *putra daerah* status]."
>
> Indigenous community leader, Labuhan Ratu, Bandar Lampung, March 2001

Regional autonomy also created a space for local customs and traditional communities, institutions, and organisations to grow and (re)-establish themselves. In some instances, these institutions remained throughout the New Order, in others they have re-emerged or been re-vitalised. Regardless, these groupings are also entwined with local identity politics, claims to power and leadership, as well as management of local conflict and problem-solving mechanisms. Acciaioli (2001: 88) argues that the legislative changes:

> 'open up a political space for the replacement of once nationally uniform institutions, local conduits of nationalist allegiance, by regionally variable organisations and procedures of governance that encode community aspirations in terms of adherence to local custom'.

Prior to and during the post-1998 transition, there has been an increased assertion by minority ethnic groups of their interests and separate identities, which they claim to be of parallel importance to their national identity as Indonesians. Legislative change has created the space for these debates to surface and for local needs to be accommodated. However, groups that may be labelled minorities when compared with other groups in the national context, often have majority representation at the local level where they are currently staking their claims. With regional autonomy, local politics is flourishing and consequently local identity politics are paramount in minority-majority claims and access to leadership positions. The next section examines how these dynamics play out and to what extent this impacts on conflict outcomes in the new decentralised context, which are also dependent on identity politics, mobilisation, and strategies to accommodate diversity. In the following section, I shall examine two particular aspects in this decentralisation process: the formation of new administrative areas and direct elections of the executive at the district level.

4. Decentralisation and its impacts on conflict management: the case of Central Sulawesi

Since the end of the New Order, new groups and institutions have emerged in local environments, creating new players and sets of local skills, as well as new sets of potential tensions, mediators, and actors in local conflicts. The residual judicial and security systems from the New Order period have either been too weak or too compromised to fully contain the violence experienced in some parts of Indonesia since 1998. Many of the grievances which have surfaced stem from differential access to the state, often dating

back to the New Order period (Bertrand: 2004), although these grievances have been somewhat accommodated by decentralisation. Between 1999 and 2004, reaching a peak between 2000 and 2002, large-scale communal violence broke out in Central and West Kalimantan, Ambon and North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi, amongst others.[30] Varshney *et al* put the estimated death toll from collective violence at over 10,700 between 1990 and 2003 with the bulk occurring in the later part of the period (Varshney et al, 2004).

Central Sulawesi is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse areas in Indonesia, with a total population of 2,215,449 people in 2003 (BPS: 2004). It is one of a number of provinces situated on the island of Sulawesi, a large island in northeastern Indonesia. Approximately 30% of the population of the province inhabit the inland regions, much of which is mountainous, while 60% live in coastal areas and a further 10% on the smaller surrounding islands which also form a part of the province, all of which influence the socio-economic environment in each area (ibid). The capital city, Palu, is located in the northwest of the province, strategically situated at a nexus of rivers, roads and a trading port. The province is religiously heterogeneous, with religious adherents for the most part being Muslims (78.4%) (ibid).

While the country is approximately 85% Muslim and 10% Christian, encompassing some 300 larger ethnic groups, in many (but not all) of the districts where conflicts are taking place the sizes of the ethno-religious groups are relatively balanced, as was the case in Poso at the time communal clashes began to break out in 1998. That is, ethno-religious groups are concentrated regionally. Many of these conflicts involve competing claims of indigeneity and grievances about political, economic and social marginalisation on the part of one or some of the groups involved. Ethno-religious groups that form minorities at the national level are concentrated regionally in some areas, making them significant players at the district level. While the conflicts in these areas have not been completely removed from national politics and elite interests, neither have they have been solely instrumentalised by local or national interests, as they are often rooted in long-standing grievances, some of which are discussed in the historical review in this paper.

Against this structural back-drop, over the past seven years, violent conflict has taken place in several regions in Central Sulawesi: either as incidents of large-scale collective violence or smaller-scale incidents of collective and individual violence, all resulting in loss of lives and property (estimates of deaths are in the thousands). Much of this has been concentrated in the Poso District, where the Muslim/Christian groups were almost equal in size at the onset of the conflict. The triggers of some of the major incidents of violence between 2000 and 2002 were youth clashes and seemingly small incidents between individuals, which resulted in the loss of some 2000 lives and wide-spread property destruction.[31] However, local grievances, and to some extent supra-local interests, form the backdrop to the clashes between local groups organised around their Muslim and Christian identities, both claiming indigeneity in the region.[32]

These conflicts, while local, have linkages to the national sphere of politics, patronage, and change. Cote (2005: 4) argues that from 1970 until the 1990s, New Order

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[30] Conflicts of a more separatist nature have also escalated in Aceh and Papua – where sections of the populations in these provinces battle for greater access to resources and self-autonomy/determination. Smaller scale violence has been present all over Indonesia, particularly in West and East Java, East Nusa Tenggara, Riau, and other provinces. It has partly taken the form of waves of vigilantism, and partly inter-group violent and non-violent disputes similar to the disputes which proceeded the mass escalation of violence in the 'high-profile' conflict provinces. While the rumblings of these conflicts were present before the end of the regime (often preceded by smaller outbreaks of violence), they peaked following the end of the New Order.
[31] Varshney et al, 2004; interviews with Muslim and Christian leaders in Poso, May 2005
[32] For more information on the conflict in Poso see: Aragon, Lorraine V. (2002); Aragon, (2001), Cote (2005); HRW (2002), UNDP PDA Assessment (2004)*;* YAPPIKA (2003)*,* ICG (2005) *,* and Varshney et al (2004)

development policies were often based on local patronage of the different groups in Central Sulawesi, including assertions <u>against</u> the GKST (*Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah* – Central Sulawesi Christian Church) synod, giving rise to grievances with the state and other dominant community groups. Throughout the New Order regime, outbreaks of violence were not uncommon between Muslims and Christians as well as some between migrant and indigenous groups in Palu (the capital) and Poso, but these episodes were promptly repressed by the government (HRW, 2002: 6). However, Cote (2005: 4) contends that during the early 1990s, patronage from Jakarta shifted <u>towards</u> GKST, partially stimulating the Islamic claims to power during the violence between 1998 and 2004. Yet, in the final days of the New Order, Islam was increasingly privileged over other religions at the national, provincial and sometimes local level, leading to resentment within the Christian communities (Aragon: 2001: 54). The situation was compounded by migration dynamics where mostly Muslim migrants (some from the government's transmigration program, but mainly through spontaneous migration for economic reasons) were increasingly viewed as demographic threats to the historically Christian domination of the highlands.

Examining these demographics in both Donggala and Poso is important for understanding how the decentralisation laws have been used at the local level as a conflict amelioration mechanism and some of the impacts this has had, as well as where they could be a trigger for future conflicts. It cannot be said that decentralisation is the major force in reducing conflict in the region. However, carving out new regions within structural spaces allowed for by the legislative change has significantly affected population demographics, the creation of new administrative areas and control over natural resources, in turn affecting elite power struggles and alliance building as well as the struggles for representation of ethno-religious groups in the local executive and legislature. Thus, decentralisation has had some indirect impacts on the conflict dynamics in the region. Furthermore, the direct election of the executive provided for in the revised decentralisation laws have changed the nature of local politics and representation at the district level, which in Poso at least was considered one root of the conflict (HRW, 2002; Aragon: 2001). See for example the following quote:

> "The carving out of new regions has become a protracted struggle due to the history of the region. If we take for example Poso, Tojo Una-Una, and Morowali, these were three separate kingdoms [within the bounds of the Central Sulawesi province]. Even Central Sulawesi was carved out of North Sulawesi back in the 1960s by combining the Donggala and Poso Districts to form the new province. Years ago, Poso gave birth to Banggai District, which later split again to form Banggai and the Banggai Islands. Recently since decentralisation, Poso has given birth to two new districts, Morowali and Tojo Una-Una, and Donggala has given birth to three as well, Palu city, Toli-Toli and Parigi Moutong. Donggala also has a grandchild, Buol District which was born out of Toli-Toli. Thus, Donggala has three children and one grandchild and Poso has three children and one grandchild!"
>
> <div align="right">Journalist, Palu, 24 July 2006</div>

The following figure shows the Province according to the latest district formations.

Figure 1: **Central Sulawesi following the formation of Morowali, Parigi Moutong, and Tojo Una-Una under decentralisation**

4. 1 Poso: local inequalities and the changes stimulated by decentralisation

Prior to the onset of the conflict in 1998, the population of Poso was split almost evenly between Muslims and Christians.[33] By the second and third phases of the conflict in 2000, mobilisation overtly took place along religious lines and the clashes between groups during this period have been described by many locals as inter-religious warfare.[34] The Christians mainly involved in the conflict were of the Pamona ethnicity and smaller groups of other ethnicities from the highlands and the Muslims were predominantly coastal Bugis, Gorantalese, and in later phases of the conflict, the Javanese. While many of the latter three groups have been in the area for generations, some still consider these groups to be 'newcomers' based on local migration patterns. Thus, in forming the two major religious blocks involved in the conflict, there were coinciding ethnic divides and these were further reinforced by a local 'us-them' discourse around who can be considered locals and who are considered 'newcomers' given the local migration patterns (although this was largely spontaneous migration).

The qualitative interviews conducted in Poso between 2005-6 revealed two of the major complaints underpinning the onset of the conflict (although there are many more) in 1998. The first was the disruption of informal power-sharing agreements between Muslims and Christians which traditionally involved rotating the District Head position between the two groupings. Since the 1990s, a Muslim *Bupati* had been in place for two consecutive periods, and the same person was again appointed in 1998 in the month preceding the first outbreak in December of the inter-group violence. Second, there were grievances surrounding the marginalisation of certain groups – predominately Christians – from the district legislature (elected) and the executive (all appointed prior to 2004), particularly the key civil service positions in charge of civil service appointments and the allocation of government projects and contracts, all of which created the space for the favouritism of particular groups in particular sub-districts and villages. Entangled with this was the issue of the high-level corruption involving Farmers Credit Union (KUT) funds in 1998 by those

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[33] BPS Poso (1998) Poso Dalam Angka, 1997, BPS Poso
[34] For a brief chronology of the phases of the conflict to date, see Brown and Diprose (2006)

close to the district executive. Many respondents in the in-depth interviews conducted for this research over the past two years claim that such favouritism, the domination of the executive by particular groups, and subsequent corruption have had an adverse affect on the standard of living of those who have been marginalised from such access to resource allocation and decision making. Many respondents in the interviews from both sides of the conflict give these reasons as an explanation of how a seemingly normal fight between youths of different faiths began to spread with each phase of the conflict and took on religious overtones, as the broader grievances began to be channelled through the disputes between the youth.

While religion is the first identity label used to distinguish 'us' and 'them' when articulating such complaints in Poso, there are also nuances of ethnic marginalisation, particularly of the Pamona and Napu groups claiming they have greater indigeneity and associated rights in the region compared to the 'newcomer' Gorantalese, Bugis people, and the Javanese (although these claims of indigeneity are locally highly contentious, where migrant status is selectively applied and some of the newcomer groups have been in the area for several generations).

When we examine local perceptions of inequalities and grievances in Poso based on a survey conducted in 2006 by CRISE at the University of Oxford (random household and individual selection with stratification being used at the sub-district level), it is evident that there are inequalities between the religious groups according to the wealth indexes created from the survey. While on the one hand, this survey has been conducted in a post inter-group conflict environment (individual acts of violence continue to occur), on the other hand the findings are in line with the discourse of complaints about the roots of the conflict and the marginalisation of particular groups from political and economic processes. Higher percentages of Muslims had access to medium level (Wealth Index 2) and luxury goods (Wealth Index of 3) compared to Christians. This was also the case in Donggala although the differences were not as extreme.

Table 1: Wealth index by religion, Poso and Donggala 2006

Wealth Index	Poso		Donggala	
	Muslims %	Christians %	Muslims	Christians
0	4.6	14.6	13.9	22.0
1	10.7	24.4	28.9	29.9
2	39.7	34.7	36.9	37.0
3	45.4	26.2	20.2	11.0

The complaints of favouritism and the potential economic and political gains which can be achieved through accessing the public sector continue to pervade public perceptions and discourse, as is evident in the figure below (also drawing on the results of the 2006 CRISE survey). Access to government jobs, contracts, private sector employment and government services are perceived to be affected by both ethnic and more prevalently religious identity.

Figure 2: CRISE perceptions survey: perceptions of identity and its impact on opportunities in Poso (N=300)

Religion and ethnicity affecting opportunities for:
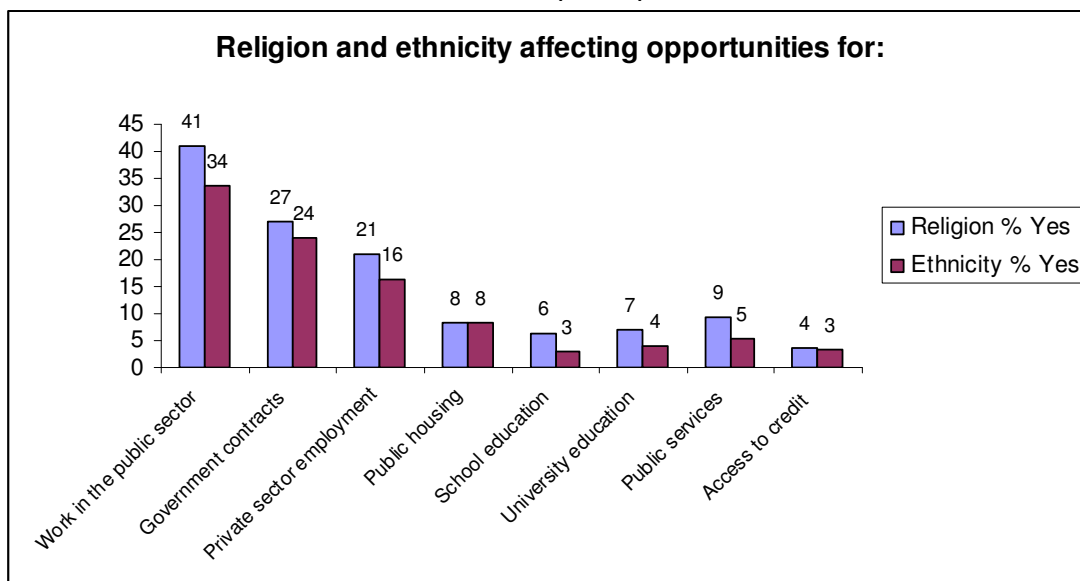
However, with decentralisation, a number of new districts, sub-districts, and villages have been carved out of existing territories in the region, partially as a conflict amelioration mechanism. Several Christian and Muslim sources confirmed that while there was some discontent amongst Muslim elites particularly about the formation of Tojo Una-Una disrict, the proposal to form both Morowali District in 1999 and Tojo Una-Una in 2003 was broadly accepted and endorsed by the district parliament. The region-splitting process is also a part of a broader strategy to increase the number of districts and sub-regions in order potentially to create East Sulawesi province (Tirtosudarmo, 2006).

District-splitting has changed the demographics in Poso significantly. The first example was the carving out of Morowali District from the Poso District in 1999. It not only reduced the number of Muslims in the district (although not as significantly as the Tojo Una-Una formation) but also, the informants in the qualitative interviews revealed, created more jobs and potential opportunities for elites in the new district, reducing competition between elites for power in Poso District, which has also been seen as one of the root causes of the conflict. Immediately prior to the conflict and during its initial stages, many elite positions in Poso were dominated by Muslims, particularly from the Bungku and Mori sub-districts (this was confirmed by both Muslim and Christian sources). These two sub-districts were then incorporated into the new Morowali District, shifting some of the elite competition and the rough demographic polarisation of Christian and Muslim identities to the new district.

Large-scale inter-communal clashes began to subside by the end of 2001 with the declaration of the Malino Peace Accord. This is not to say that the violence stopped, but rather changed form. In 2001 and for some of 2002, violence instead took the form of raids or attacks on villages, which involved burning down houses, rather than large, full-on clashes between groups, which had all but disappeared by the end of 2001. Human physical violence then began to take the form of attacks against individuals through 'mysterious' shootings, killings and disappearances.[35] It was also around this time that planning for the carving out of a second district, Tojo Una-Una, began to take place. Two elite sources from the different communities confirmed that the formation of the new

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[35] Interviews with representatives from Yayasan Tanah Merdeka, LPSM, Poso Centre, KPKPST and other NGOs monitoring violence in the region (2005 and 2006)

district was sped up as a conflict-amelioration strategy to reduce some of the pressure in competition for elite positions and to meet some of the grassroots grievances pertaining to marginalisation. While this was met by some dissent on the Muslim side, which in recent years had dominated the executive in particular, again the district legislature fully endorsed the proposal. By 2003, Tojo Una-Una was formed, shifting the demographics in Poso to 65% Christian and 30% Muslim.[36] The Muslim population is still predominately found in coastal areas and the Christians in the highlands. This provided the opportunity for Christians, now the vast majority in the region, to increase their claims on the district executive and access to government and resources.

Aside from splits at the district level, a number of new sub-districts and villages have also been formed in Poso, most recently Poso Kota sub-district, where many of the physical clashes between groups once occurred. This sub-district has now been split into two with the formation of South Poso Kota. Poso Pesisir sub-district, another location of the violence, has been split into three sub-districts, shifting the Christian-Muslim majority lines. Both changes have created greater ethno-religious segregation at the sub-district and village level. At the village level, following the return of refugees from the inter-group phase of the conflict, many of the once-mixed villages are religiously segregated. This is also evident from the CRISE survey results, which demonstrate a high level of religious and ethnic segregation at the village level, a phenomenon which is not new in Poso but which has been strengthened as a result of the conflict. This is different to Donggala, which is less religiously but more ethnically segregated.

Figure 3: CRISE perceptions survey: perceived level of village segregation, by religion (N=600)[37]
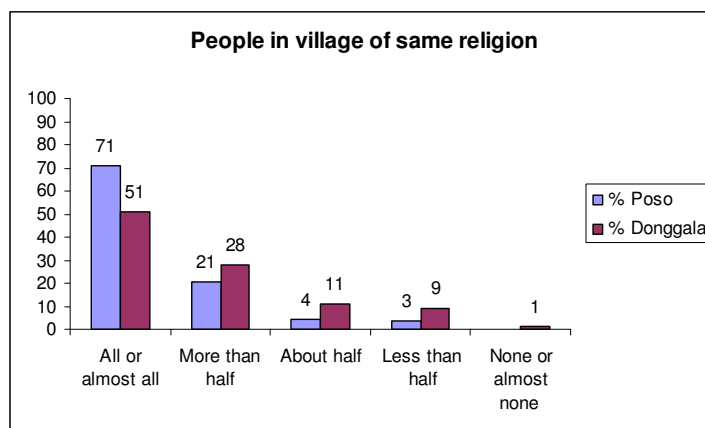
Figure 4: CRISE perceptions survey: perceived level of village segregation, by ethnicity (N=600) [38]
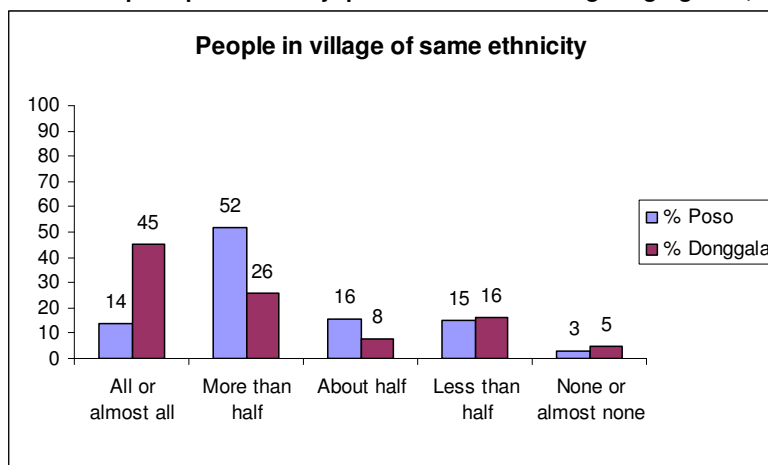
In other parts of Poso, not affected by the conflict, new sub-districts have been carved out of earlier administrative areas, such as in Lore Utara, the homeland of the Napu people, which now has been split into three sub-districts. However, this has created new tensions in the region, as traditional and customary communities are concerned that they will no longer be able to access their traditional lands since they are now in new sub-districts, potentially creating future sources of inter-sub-district and village conflict. The ownership of these traditional lands is already in dispute, as many have been handed over to large public companies such as PT Hasfarm (a plantations company in Lore Utara) by the state, stimulating tensions between the company, the community and the state. Splitting the region is further complicating the broader conflict over land ownership.

While the district-splitting may have alleviated tensions and elite competition in Poso, it has potentially passed on the challenges of managing diversity to the new districts. For example, in Morowali, which now neighbours Poso, there is intense competition between elites over access to government positions and resources. The region is also rich in natural resources, including plantations and minerals, which provides considerable incentives for mobilisation and power-seeking. Bearing in mind that parts of Morowali were once involved in the Poso conflict, the local history of tensions between the predominantly Muslim Bungku kingdom and the predominantly Christian Mori kingdom provide a context in which there is potential for conflict in the future. Managing these tensions is required to ensure constructive rather than destructive competition takes place. Currently, the discourse in the district pertains to splitting the region again into the Mori and Bungku Districts, respectively.

One further consideration regarding the impact of decentralisation on conflict dynamics in Poso is the scope the laws have provided for direct election of the District Head (*Bupati*) and how this intersects with local tensions. While the decentralisation laws have allowed for direct elections in Indonesia, this new political space did not result in violence during the direct elections of the District Head in Poso in 2005. Brown and Diprose (2006) attribute most of this to the array of interventions put in place to ensure that the elections remained peaceful, in particular the deliberate inter-religious pairing of all candidates during the elections (Brown and Diprose, 2006). Altogether, five slates of candidates stood for the District Head/Deputy District Head elections in Poso. Each pairing comprised a Muslim and a Christian; in three out of the five pairings, the Christian candidate was for the *Bupati* with a Muslim as his deputy; in the other two, vice versa.

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[38] Unweighted results

Given the grievances over marginalisation discussed above, the history of violence and the emphasis the population placed on local security, as well as the fact that, following the implementation of decentralisation and district-splitting, the population was 65% Christian, it is not surprising that Piet Inkiriwang, a Christian whose mother was indigenous to the region, and a candidate who was backed by the Christian PDS party, won in a landslide. His popularity in the elections, despite the fact that he had spent most of his working years outside the province, was also reinforced by his background as a Police Chief, which many voters saw as an opportunity for ensuring better regional security following the height of the conflict. Interviews conducted pre and post-elections revealed that his party backing, background in the police, and available funding for the elections were responsible for his win over other 'local sons'. Frans Sowolino explained in one interview just how expensive it was to run in terms of campaign costs, saying he spent just over Rp280million (approximately US$30,000). The results of the elections show the extent to which religious demographics played into the votes for slates 2 & 3, which were backed by parties with strong religious links and accounted for the majority of the votes garnered.

Table 2: Poso election results by sub-district[39]

Sub-district	1.Dede/Lies		2.Piet/Thalib		3.Muin/Osbet		4.Frans/Kahar		5.Edy/Awad	
	Vote	Rank	Vote	Rank	Vote	Rank	Vote	Rank	Vote	Rank
Lage	9.6%	4	47.3%	1	9.6%	3	25.4%	2	8.2%	5
Poso Kota	14.6%	4	18.9%	3	31.2%	1	11.2%	5	24.1%	2
Poso Pesisir	10.9%	5	22.9%	3	25.9%	1	16.0%	4	24.3%	2
Poso Pesisir Selatan	7.0%	4	66.0%	1	4.6%	5	8.2%	3	14.3%	2
Poso Pesisir Utara	16.5%	4	26.8%	1	19.7%	3	21.8%	2	15.2%	5
Pamona Utara	6.9%	4	56.1%	1	2.8%	5	22.9%	2	11.3%	3
Pamona Selatan	10.6%	3	38.2%	1	9.7%	4	35.3%	2	6.2%	5
Pamona Timur	1.7%	5	60.8%	1	4.6%	4	24.5%	2	8.4%	3
Pamona Barat	3.7%	4	61.8%	1	2.6%	5	22.5%	2	9.4%	3
Lore Utara	18.9%	3	40.5%	1	12.3%	4	21.0%	2	7.3%	5
Lore Selatan	4.8%	4	65.3%	1	2.4%	5	16.0%	2	11.4%	3
Lore Tengah	5.9%	5	63.8%	1	7.2%	4	12.8%	2	10.3%	3
POSO	10.3%	5	42.6%	1	12.9%	4	20.8%	2	13.3%	3
Christian-majority Sub-district	9.4%	4	49.8%	1	7.6%	5	23.4%	2	9.8%	3
Muslim-majority sub-district	13.4%	4	20.2%	3	29.4%	1	12.8%	5	24.2%	2

Of course, demographics, history, public policy, and elite interests/incentives are not the only aspects to be considered when evaluating conflict dynamics. Mobilisation structures, grassroots grievances/interests, identity consciousness, national interventions, deliberate fostering or provocation of conflict and, most importantly, local conflict-intervention mechanisms are all important elements for understanding sub-national patterns of conflict and violence. The discussion above looks at how the implementation of decentralisation has intersected with some, not all, of these elements. However, it does demonstrate that there have been some indirect impacts from decentralisation on conflict dynamics in the region. An awareness of these dynamics is important for managing diversity and structural change in other regions in Indonesia, particularly in Central Sulawesi, such as Donggala, discussed in the next section.

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[39] Source: *Seputar Rakyat*, 5:2.

4.2 Donggala

Donggala is the second district examined in this study in terms of the relationship between conflict and decentralisation there. Donggala, once the seat of the provincial capital and located next to the current capital, Palu, also has a high level of ethno-religious diversity and some local-level conflict (although this has never escalated to the extent that it did in Poso), is resource rich, and has seen several instances of the formation of new districts under decentralisation. Donggala is yet to implement its District Head elections, which will take place some time in 2007-8. Donggala is 65% Muslim and approximately 30% Christian following the carving out of Parigi Moutong which was ratified in 2002 and implemented in 2003. The demographics in Donggala is one of mixed ethnicities, with the majority professing the Muslim faith which coincides with the trend in the province overall. As we saw in Table 1, Christians are generally poorer than Muslims in Donggala, although they are a minority in both the district and the region, which is one significant difference to Poso and which affects the incentives for locals who may feel marginalised to mobilise on a large scale, resulting in violent conflict. Figures 3 and 4 also demonstrate the level of reported ethno-religious segregation in the area, although it is not as high as in Poso.

Similar grievances to those in Poso were evident in Donggala over ethno-religious identity affecting access to government and private sector jobs as well as government contracts (see Figure 5 below), however the intensity of the felt grievances was stronger in Poso (see Figure 2). Identity affecting access to credit was more prevalent in Donggala than it was in Poso. Furthermore, felt grievances pertaining to ethnic identity were more common than those pertaining to religious identity in Donggala compared to Poso, where religious identity featured more strongly. This was also found to be the case in the qualitative interviews conducted in 2005-6.

Figure 5: CRISE perceptions survey: perceptions of identity and its impact on opportunities (N=300) [40]
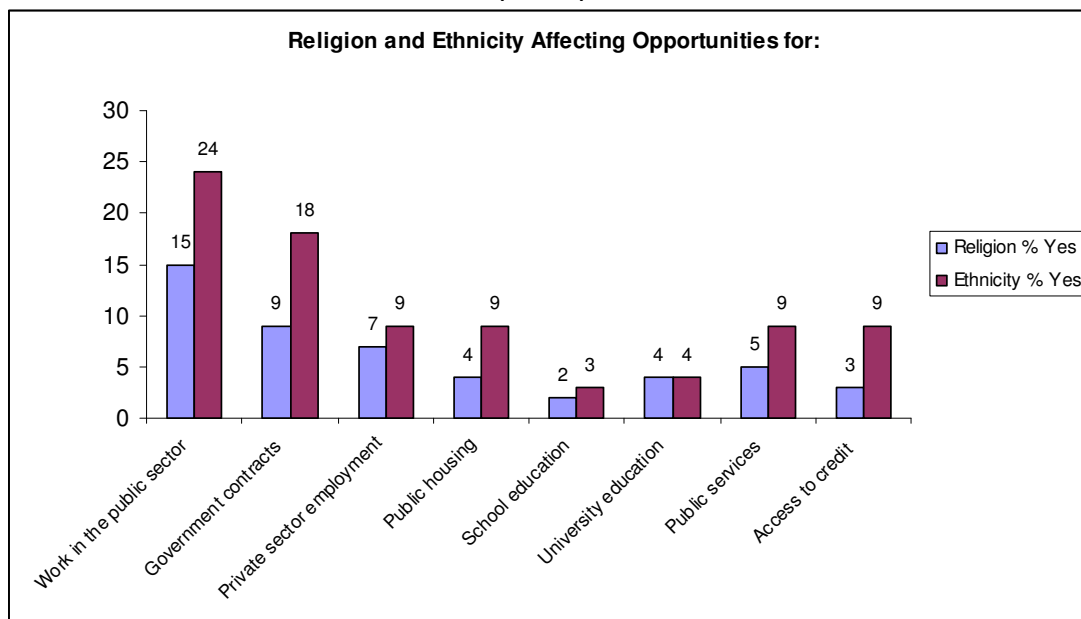
When we examine the population dynamics in Donggala, a different phenomenon seems to be taking place compared to Poso. As is in the case in Poso, there are four large ethnic groups in Donggala: amongst the indigenous there are the Kaili in the highlands

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[40] Unweighted results

(predominantly Christian), the Kaili in the coastal regions (predominantly Muslim), the Kulawi in the highlands in southern Donggala (predominately Christian); and the newcomers, who are predominantly Muslim Bugis from South Sulawesi province. In the Poso conflict, blocks of people with coinciding ethno-religious identities and common grievances mobilised and were mobilised, partially explaining the conflict trajectory. While many of these grievances and identities also exist in Donggala, mobilisation is much more difficult as many of the identity groupings cut across the population rather than coinciding as they do in Poso. Firstly, the indigenous ethnicities cut across religions and account for two thirds of the population; and secondly, amongst the largest group of migrants, the Bugis only form approximately 10% of the population. The discourse in the in-depth interviews revealed that if elites tried to mobilise around contentious identities, it was common to revert to unifying common identities rather than a discourse of difference, as was the case in Poso. For example:

> 'In Kulawi, generally there is one overarching ethnicity which we call a family, but there are two religions. This [common family] is why we haven't experienced a clash like they have in Poso which was provoked by religious issues… maybe there have been instances where people have tried to provoke a conflict based on religion here and things have heated up a little, but we quickly got a handle on it and formed the Hintuwu Mome Panimpu Kulawi forum which aims to ensure that we remain unified and live together peacefully, without differentiating by religion. '
>
> Villager, Kulawi, 9 September, 2006

Decentralisation continues to impact on population dynamics and community relations through *pemekaran* in the region. Parigi Moutong has already been carved out of Donggala in 2003 , as have a number of new sub-districts, including South Banawa (from Banawa sub-district) and South Kulawi (from Kulawi sub-district). In some cases this has heightened ethno-religious segregation in the area. For example, in Kulawi there was once a large population of groups of 'newcomers' with ethnicities from all over the island, as well as the indigenous Kulawi people. Now, the indigenous Kulawi predominantly occupy Kulawi sub-district, and the newcomers fall under the jurisdiction of South Kulawi. Some are concerned that this could result in inter-sub-district conflict resulting from these changes. However, of note are the efforts of traditional *adat* (customary) elders to solidify relations and interaction between these ethnicities through the formation of the inter-sub-district *adat* council (covering Kulawi, South Kulawi, and Pipikoro) which has had much success at mediating disputes from within and between villages, as well as encouraging interaction between the different sub-districts. One of the motivations to form the council was a series of meetings and appeals to the population not to get involved in the conflict in neighbouring Poso. This demonstrates that locals are identifying the potential tensions and problems that could result from decentralisation, district-splitting and the consequent changes to population demographics, as well as changes in competition over access to power and resources. In response, interim institutions have been created (with some now becoming permanent institutions) to ensure that inter-group relations are promoted and problems are addressed as they arise.

There are current plans to form a new district out of Donggala – Kabupaten Sigi, which has been endorsed by the current District Head and could potentially be contentious in terms of ethno-religious demographics if incentives to mobilise are not managed. Plans for the formation are well underway, with civil servant wages and electricity bills being levied to fund the initiative in some areas. At present there are 11 sub-districts which will potentially move into the new district: Sigi Biromaru, Dolo, Palolo, Kulawi, South Kulawi, Pipikoro, Gumbasa, Tanam Bulawa, Rio Pakawa, Pinembani, Marawola. The demographics of the new district will mean a 50-50 split of the population between religions, and will increase the number of ethnicities seen as newcomers as a percentage of the population, thereby reducing the cross-cutting identities. Interviews in the region

revealed that the grassroots discourse has not considered the impacts of such changes at all, but supports the formation of the district as it will increase their access to public services. However, several sources have confirmed that elite competition for key positions has begun, as has the formation of alliances between elites. Given the change in demographics, the new positions available, and the wealth of natural resources which fall within the potential boundaries of the new district, there are greater incentives now to mobilise around some of the more sensitive identities, which has rarely occurred in these sub-districts in the past. Learning from the experience of Poso, it is important that these challenges are recognised and pre-empted in order to manage tensions in the future.

5. Conclusion

This paper seeks to examine the history of grievances, demands, and identity politics since Indonesian Independence which led to decentralisation following the end of the New Order. It also discusses the indirect impacts that decentralisation and the consequent structural change has had on conflict dynamics in Central Sulawesi.

This paper argues that the importance of regional identities in part springs from grievances towards centralised rule and the repression of diversity, but notes that such identities can also exist concurrently with national Indonesian identity through the encouragment of civic nationalism, which allows for diversity. Expressions of diversity in the regions are a part of the cultural and ethno-religious heritage of such a multicultural state, but such expressions of values and calls for autonomy rarely involve secessionist claims. Instead, such grievances towards centralised rule have long existed in Indonesia, and form a historical backdrop to current legislative changes in implementation and revision of the decentralisation laws.

While the new laws satisfy one set of long-standing grievances by providing opportunities for the expression of diversity and better attention to local needs, there are two key components of the implementation of decentralisation that have the potential to interact with identity politics and conflict dynamics in the regions: the direct election of Provincial and District Heads and the carving out of new regions. On the one hand, these changes have been demanded by the Indonesian populace and have widespread popular support. On the other hand, any such significant structural and institutional change will have ripple effects and can result in new tensions. This paper argues that decentralisation indirectly interacts with conflict dynamics, particularly by stimulating changes in population demographics through district-splitting, and by providing for local autonomy and local participation in decision-making through direct elections, which interacts with and changes the nature of local politics and competition for power and resources. This can have positive and negative consequences, that is it can both ameliorate past tensions and grievances but also stimulate new ones.

Looking at the experience of Poso and Donggala, the indirect impacts that decentralisation has on conflict dynamics are evident. These include, but are not limited to, stimulating ethno-religious segregation, changing population demographics and creating new locations of inter-group tensions, as well both decreasing elite competition for power in conflict areas through the creation of new regions and consequently jobs, and creating incentives for local elites in both new and existing areas to compete for power and resources by mobilising sensitive identities. This is not to say that the demographic, structural, and institutional changes stimulated by the laws and demanded by the populace will necessarily lead to violent conflict, but rather that they do interact with or potentially stimulate local tensions.

Felt grievances, perceptions of inequalities, and claims to minority rights are just some of the contentious issues which can interact with decentralisation policies. In Poso, where

prior to the conflict the population of Christians and Muslims was polarised, there were coinciding religious and ethnic identities which could be mobilised into blocks around grievances pertaining to different standards of wealth and ethno-religious marginalisation from the government and to some extent the private sector. While this does not explain how such grievances resulted in violent conflict, changing the population demographic through district-splitting and opening up spaces for access to the government through direct elections has to some extent alleviated the grievances of at least part of the populace and reduced some of the conflict-inducing pressures. But it has also increased ethno-religious segregation and triggered new tensions in some of the new administrative areas. In Donggala, which has long had cross-cutting ethno-religious identities, the felt inequalities between groups were still there, but they were not as strong as in Poso, and the ethnically fragmented population saw ethnic identity as more important than religious identity – thus, to date, large blocks of people have not really formed and consequently there is a weak basis for mobilisation. However, decentralisation has also led to *pemekaran* in this region, shifting the identity politics from 'cross-cutting' to coinciding identities in the potential new district of Kabupaten Sigi and some of the newly formed sub-districts. Recognising the potential tensions this could and is beginning to cause, locals have begun to establish conflict-management mechanisms to sustain peaceful community relations.

Effective interventions, awareness and forethought, and conflict-management strategies which channel these tensions into productive outcomes rather than destructive violence will ensure that diversity flourishes in multi-ethnic and religious states such as Indonesia, while adversity is curbed. This will also ensure that what is a potentially a temporary phenomenon resulting from transition does not solidify into long-term grievances and potentially violent conflict.

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