Dispersive Power-Sharing and Political Stability

The case of post-conflict Aceh

Nabilah Nur Abiyanti

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Department of Political Science

University of Oslo

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Abstract

Power-sharing is increasingly favored as a peace agreement provision as means to end intrastate war. One form of power-sharing, dispersive power-sharing, emphasizes partitioning the policy making process and providing regional elites with security and autonomy is attractive for conflict of territorial nature, such as the case of Aceh, Indonesia. The 30-year conflict between *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh Movement/GAM) and the Government of Indonesia finally reached an end through the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2005. The implementation of its two striking provisions –autonomy and establishment of local political parties have been applauded by many peace scholars and democracy scholars alike. Despite its arguable pacifying effect, the peace agreement is elitist in nature, and many scholars mainly put their focus on the former warring parties to come to its conclusion.

The objective of this thesis has been to examine in what ways have dispersive power-sharing institutions influenced post-conflict political stability in post-conflict Aceh. I have addressed this question by examining the post-conflict dynamic processes that constituted the nexus of state-society where local government and citizens interacted, and how they relate to each of the four operational concepts of political stability employed in this thesis – authority, resilience, legitimacy, and replacement (the change in authority).

In order to connect the empirical data with the research question, I have used an explanatory case study design, with semi-structured interview as the primary data collection method. The interviews were conducted during fieldwork in Aceh for six weeks, with 14 ordinary citizens and 9 experts. The analysis of the empirical data was guided by the theoretical framework linking *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices to each operational concepts of political stability.

The empirical findings suggested that regional autonomy and elite-oriented nature of the agreement increased authority of the former rebel elites, as they provided bigger opportunity for former rebel elites to preside the government. Nonetheless, it poses the risk of lacking legitimacy, signaled rigidity of the local government and disempower electoral participation in election. All of which potentially disrupted the political stability in Aceh fifteen years after the signing of the Helsinki MoU.

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All mistakes and inaccuracies are my own.
Yogyakarta, June 19, 2021

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List of abbreviations

CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
DM	Military Emergency/*Darurat Militer*
DOM	Military Operation Zone/*Daerah Operasi Militer*
DPR-RI	House of Representative/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia*
DPRA	People's Representative Council of Aceh/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh*
GAM	Free Aceh Movement/Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
GoI	Government of Indonesia
HDC	Henry Dunant Centre
JK	Jusuf Kalla
LoGA	Law of Governing Aceh/*Undang Undang Pemerintahan Aceh*
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
PA	Aceh Party/*Partai Aceh*
PD	Democratic Party/*Partai Demokrat*
PDA	Aceh Peace Party/*Partai Damai Aceh*
PDI-P	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle/*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*
PKB	National Awakening Party/*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*
PNA	Aceh National Party/*Partai Nasional Aceh*
Polri	Indonesian National Police/*Polisi Republik Indonesia*
PRA	Aceh People's Party/*Partai Rakyat Aceh*
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
TNI	Indonesian Military Forces/*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

1 Introduction

> The entire discussion about power sharing and sustainable peace looks inherently flawed when it does not focus on what peace is all about: security for the people – Andreas Mehler (2009)

Power-sharing peace agreements are increasingly favored as a mean to end intrastate wars. For some scholars, implementation of power-sharing provision reflects credible commitments of former warring parties, expected to lead to sustainable peace (see Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007; Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008). This is reflected in the case of Aceh, Indonesia. The history of 30-year conflict between *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM/Free Aceh Movement) and the Government of Indonesia (GoI) ended with the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 15, 2005. Several attempts at peace had been exhausted, but in the end, the Helsinki MoU was the one that finally brought Aceh to peace. The Helsinki MoU emphasizes on *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practice (Bormann et al., 2019; Gates et al., 2016) – regional autonomy and elite-oriented arrangement through the establishment of local political parties. One year after the signing of the Helsinki MoU, an election was held in Aceh, with former GAM winning the local executive seat. In 2009, the established local political parties had already competed in the legislative election, with the victory of local party with exclusive former GAM. Fifteen years later, former GAM members still dominated the local executive as well as legislature seats.

For many peace scholars, the successful integration of former GAM members increases the possibility of sustainable peace in the long run. The provision of local political parties is also considered to be the first step of democratization of Aceh, as it was proposed to increase political participation in a post-conflict society. Nonetheless, criticism of power-sharing still stands – they mostly benefit the former warring parties, while civil society, the opposition, and most importantly, the civilian population are excluded from the equation. Much of the literature on power-sharing lacks attention to the sharing of power with the civilian population and how the sharing of power among the elites impacts the civilian population.

The objective of this thesis is to explain the dynamics of *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practice and how they influence the four operational concepts of Margolis' (2010) definition

of political stability – authority, resilience, legitimacy and replacement (Margolis, 2010, p. 336). I argue that dispersive power-sharing institution influences post-conflict stability by consolidating the power of elites in the local government, while potentially disempowering the civilian population, which may affect the health of legitimacy, resilience, as well as replacement (a change in authority).

1.1 Research question

This thesis attempts to answer the following research question:

In what ways have dispersive power-sharing institutions influenced political stability in post-conflict Aceh?

I will answer this question by focusing on the civilian population as opposed to the common emphasis on the former warring parties. This is done by examining the post-conflict dynamic processes that constitute the nexus of state-society relations where government and citizens interact. This interaction will be analyzed with the help of a theoretical framework that compares *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices in Aceh – regional autonomy and elite co-optation – to a specific definition of political stability. The definition of political stability employed in this thesis is derived from the study by Margolis (2010), where stability is defined as the closing the gap between the formal – local government – and the informal – citizens (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). There are four operational concepts in this definition of political stability: authority, legitimacy, resilience and replacement. The causal mechanisms that might explain how these dispersive power-sharing practices have performed, in regard to each operational concept, is then tested.

This thesis is constructed under explanatory case study design. The empirical data are drawn from semi-structured in-depth interview collected during my own fieldwork in Aceh. Secondary data such as prior publication, news website as well as governmental website are also employed in order to ensure triangulation. Another attempt at triangulation is through "expert" interviews. The main participant of this thesis remains ordinary citizens. There are in total of 14 ordinary citizens and 9 experts interviewed.

1.2 Contributions to the academic literatures

Every study should offer something new that fills a knowledge gap in the existing literature. This thesis contributes to the existing literature in three aspects. First, the study of dispersive power-sharing has so far been studied primarily by quantitative methods and in parallel with inclusive and constraining power-sharing (see Bormann et al., 2019; Gates et al., 2016; Strøm et al., 2015). This thesis places dispersive power-sharing as its main focus, examining its *de facto* practice – regional autonomy and elite-oriented arrangements, qualitatively. Second, this thesis attempts to link dispersive power-sharing with a definition of political stability that extends beyond the "absence of violence", as previous peace and democracy scholars alike have done. Employing the definition of political stability provided by Margolis (2010) allows for a broader understanding of dispersive power-sharing based on the relationship between the local government and the civilian population, rather than emphasizing merely the relationship between the political elites.

Third, the case study research design allows for a closer look on the variations within case. The case of Aceh is by no means original, and various scholars have written on the peace process in Aceh taking different approaches, especially in the first years after the signing of the Helsinki MoU. This thesis, however, takes a different approach. Aside from the stated contribution, the framing of this thesis is shaped by how Aceh's civilian population perceives the system implemented for them by the elites. Furthermore, the scope of this thesis covers the time period from 2006 until 2020, making it relevant to assess the durability of the implementation of a power-sharing peace agreement.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter two provides review of relevant power-sharing literatures. This chapter also serves as the basis for the conceptualization of dispersive power-sharing and the measurements employed in this thesis. The third chapter begins with a review of literature on stability, which helps in determining the most useful definition of stability for this study. In the second part of the thesis, the third chapter outlines the theoretical framework guiding the analysis of the data. The fourth chapter describes the study's research design and the methodology. Details about the fieldwork and an assessment of the study's validity and reliability are discussed here. The fifth chapter provides a background for the case of Aceh,

focusing on the dynamics of conflict and peace, an offering a detailed discussion of the Helsinki MoU. In the sixth chapter, data collected from fieldwork is analyzed, guided by the theoretical proposition. The seventh and final chapter presents conclusions and gives suggestions for further research avenues.

2 Literature review: what is power-sharing?

In the growing literature of peace and conflict literature, the study of power-sharing has become increasingly salient for peacebuilding practitioners and academics alike. The term power-sharing is mainly understood as an institutional mechanism in which political opponents are included in a joint executive coalition government (Binningsbø, 2013, p. 89). However, in a review of the literature on power-sharing over the last 40 years, Binningsbø (2013) concludes that there is a lack of agreement among scholars on "what power-sharing is, what the aim of it is and how does it work"(Binningsbø, 2013, p. 89). According to Binningsbø (2013), what is meant by power-sharing depends on the preference of the writer as well as the reader (Binningsbø, 2013, p. 90). Jarstad (2008) suggests that there are two strands in the study of power-sharing: the "conflict management" approach and the "democratic theory" approach (Jarstad, 2008, p. 108). These two strands assume different potential outcomes of power-sharing. Most conflict scholars focus on power-sharing as a means to end violence, which, according to Jarstad (2008), denotes all types of sharing and division of power between former foes, with less emphasis on democratic representation and election (Jarstad, 2008, p. 109). Conflict theorists argue that the main reason why most peace agreement fails lies on what scholar refer to as the "commitment problem". While they are inconclusive with regard to the effect of power-sharing arrangements on peace accords, many conflict theorists see power-sharing as a mechanism to manage uncertainty during the peace process (Jarstad, 2008, p. 111). Hence, the conflict management strand focuses mainly on the process during the formulation of peace accords and less on the institutional adoption of the concerned peace accords.

The "democratic theory" strand, on the other hand, places emphasis on how to make democracy function in societies divided along ethnic lines. Democracy theorists treat power-sharing as a way to foster moderation and improve the quality of democracy (Jarstad, 2008, p. 111). Many democracy theorists take their starting point in Arend Ljiphart's theory on consociationalism (Jarstad, 2008, p. 110). The works of Ljiphart (1969, 1977, 1985, 1999) on consociational democracy have thus become central to the literature on power-sharing. The concept denotes an institutionalized form of democratic conflict management for divided societies, introduced as an alternative to the majoritarian electoral system (Jarstad, 2008, p. 110). This is seen as a solution considering that, in divided societies, politics is polarized and, in most cases, parties representing ethnic minorities have little chance of forming a majority government(Jarstad,

2008, p. 111). Due to this, Ljiphart argues that majoritarian politics is not only undemocratic, but it also bears risks of resulting in civil strife (Ljiphart, 1999, pp. 31-33 see Jarstad, 2008, p. 111). Consociational democracy as introduced by Ljiphart has two dimensions: a socio-political dimension focusing on the pluralistic character of society, and a political dimension emphasizing the political cooperation of elites (Ljiphart, 1977, p. 5 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 95). There are four institutional features characterizing elite cooperation: first, a grand coalition, second, a system of mutual veto power, third, segmental autonomy provisions (federalism) and fourth, proportionality. Ljiphart argued that these features tend to be positively correlated and considered to mutually help stabilize divided societies (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 167). Over the years, scholars started to develop more on the concept of power-sharing, departing from the early studies by Ljiphart.

According to Binningsbø (2013), these two strands of discourse are not necessarily incompatible. Although democracy theorists mainly write about the stability of democracy, lasting peace remains a dependent variable for these theorists (Binningsbø, 2013, p. 99). And despite the initial focus of conflict researchers on power-sharing as means for achieving peace, most of them are also concerned about democratization. This can be seen in the works that are critical of power-sharing as a peacebuilding tool, arguing that, although power-sharing can be effective in terminating war, it can be counterproductive to democratization efforts (Jarstad, 2008; Sriram and Zahar, 2009, see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 99). Highlighting the two possible outcomes of power-sharing – positive and negative – Binningsbø (2013) suggests four potential outcomes of power-sharing: democracy, non-democracy, peace and armed conflict.

As stated earlier, the works of most democracy theorists depart from Ljiphart's theory of consociationalism. Ljiphart (1977) argues that consociational democracy is best prescribed in divided societies. Although the initial focus is on elite-level cooperation, over time, Ljiphart contends that this will develop into cooperation among common people. Much like Ljiphart (1977), Norris (2008) finds that power-sharing strengthens democracy (Norris, 2008 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 93). Norris focuses on broad-based and inclusive political institutions and discusses four power-sharing institutions that enhance democracy: parliamentarism, elections based on proportional representation, federalism and a free press (Norris, 2008 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 100). Norris further argues that a government's dependence on support from the parliament encourages cooperation and broad-based policy change in parliamentary systems. Second, proportional representation elections (PR elections) create an environment in which

small parties have better chances of electoral success, which then strengthens minority representation in decision-making bodies. At the elite level, proportional election will help strengthen elite cooperation, while inclusion also strengthens democratic attitudes among citizens who feel that their interests are being represented. Third, Norris argues that the component of decentralizing decision-making power from the national to the subnational level opens up broader access points for the citizenry, which should increase public participation in policy-making, while politicians become more accountable and responsive (Norris, 2008, p. 160 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 100).

Several works on power-sharing argue that power-sharing institutions have a negative effect on democracy, with most arguing against Ljiphart's (1977) study of consociational democracy. In their study of South African transitional political order, Jung and Shapiro (1995) found that power-sharing prevents institutional opposition, which they consider to be vital for the longevity of democracy. Institutional opposition is important for the legitimacy of democracy, as it ensures that discontent from citizens is directed towards "the government instead of the democratic regime", creating space for citizens to influence legislation, the bureaucracy and enable them to seek recourse through courts (Jung & Shapiro, 1995, p. 272). Power-sharing erases just these. By including all groups in the government, the combination of elites becomes stagnant, risking the possibility of patronage hierarchies (Jung & Shapiro, 1995, p. 273). In addition to that, mutual vetoes characteristic of consociational power-sharing could potentially turn into mutual logrolling, where "governing elites give other powerful players what they want on issues that matter intensely to them, in order for them to get consensus on issues that matter for them" (Jung & Shapiro, 1995, p. 274). Without political confrontations among the elites, the likelihood that these elites will be called to be accountable by members of potential alternative governments becomes small to none (Jung & Shapiro, 1995, p. 274).

Jarstad (2008) also describes that power-sharing may affect democracy in several respects, including activating what she termed the horizontal dilemma, the vertical dilemma and the temporal dilemma. In trying to resolve conflict, most power-sharing peace agreement include the sharing of power only between warring parties, mainly because most agreements are negotiated between warring parties (Jarstad, 2008, p. 124). In implementation, this may block other political movements from power, and any opposition groups lag behind, as resources are dominated by former warring parties (Jarstad, 2008, p. 124).The term 'vertical dilemma' here refers to the issue of efficacy vs. legitimacy. As most power-sharing peace agreements are elite-

driven, it is more likely that elites will hold executive positions. When elites are appointed in a power-sharing government, however it is difficult to know how representative they are (Jarstad, 2008, p. 125). The third dilemma is the temporal dilemma, which mainly focuses on the question of how to proceed with the system in place in the future. Power-sharing peace agreements emphasize representation of target groups instead of ideas and ideologies (Jarstad, 2008, p. 127). When all groups are included in a government, it is difficult to then hold the politicians accountable, and may even render election meaningless (Jarstad, 2008, p. 128).

While some scholars argue that power-sharing institutions bring a pacifying effect to conflict, by looking at the reason why some peace agreements fail, Walter (2002) argues that the lack of appealing guarantees is the underlying reason as to why combatants walk away from the negotiation. Her study focuses on what she sees as a key gap in the study of civil war resolution: the signing and implementation stage of a peace agreement. This stage is crucial, as the process leading up to it is when combatants are most vulnerable. When they are demobilizing, disengaging, disarming and handing over their control, combatants are vulnerable to possible surprise attacks by the other party, and by surrendering control over their territory, the other party could easily seize control and instead permanently exclude them from power (Walter, 2002, p. 21). Due to this, Walter finds it is important to include power-sharing provisions that will mitigate the fear of being double-crossed (Walter, 2002, p. 22). Walter (2002) argues that there are two types of guarantees that will make combatants confident in signing and subsequently implementing a peace agreement: third-party security guarantees and political, military and territorial power-sharing.

In the study, Walter (2002) distinguishes between two types of guarantees. She argues that third-party security guarantees are a short-term solution, that is crucial during a demobilization process, while power-sharing serves as a long-term solution to the next stage: political participation. What is important in this stage is to address combatants' longer-term worries about being permanently excluded (Walter, 2002 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 102). Many studies of post-conflict political transition propose democratic elections as a vital peace-building initiative., Walter (2002), however, argues that this may be insufficient in convincing combatants to sign and implement a peace agreement (Walter, 2002, p. 28). Instead, she argues that protection should be provided in the form of a specific quota of power, guaranteed distribution of key ministries, or shared control over executive position, where competing factions have a say in how the post-conflict state is run (Walter, 2002, p. 30). When these are

offered, in addition to third-party security guarantees, peace is more likely to follow (Walter, 2002 see Binningsbø, 2013, p. 102)

Jarstad and Nilsson (2008) also find that certain dimensions of power-sharing have an effect on peace. Their study focuses on the implementation of power-sharing provisions in peace agreements, observing three dimensions of power-sharing: political, military and territorial. Jarstad and Nilsson (2008) argue that peace is likely to prevail when power-sharing provisions with great concessions made by the signatories are implemented (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008, p. 207). They find that power-sharing carries a high cost of implementation, especially military and territorial power-sharing that reflects a signal of commitment to the peace process, bringing the effect of a more durable peace (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008, p. 211). However, when territorial power-sharing is implemented, rebels will lose part of the territory they used to control. Furthermore, implementing territorial power-sharing in a form of devolution of powers can be complicated, as when power is devolved, this requires new laws and institutions (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008, p. 211). Territorial devolution often also means that local bodies are established or enlarged, that new bureaucracy is employed, and that local politicians will take on new roles as they expect greater powers and enhanced status (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008, p. 211). After implementing these measures, there would be huge costs associated with trying to abolish them again, making a return to war less appealing.

By contrast, studies such as Roeder and Rothchild (2005), Tull and Mehler (2005) and Mehler (2009), find that power-sharing can lead to armed conflict. Roeder and Rothchild (2005) argue that power-sharing institutions have perverse consequences in post-conflict societies. Power-sharing institutions empower the ethnic elites from previously warring groups, and they also create incentives for these elites to press demands when peace is established, lowering the costs for these elites to escalate a conflict (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005, p. 29). When regional leaders are given greater powers to control their own territory, these powers can be abused by pressing the central government for further devolution, and extracting income that can then be invested in future fighting capacity (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005, p. 37).

Tull and Mehler (2005) similarly argues that guaranteeing rebels a take in the state power makes a violent path seem appealing to would-be leaders. As a result, these power-sharing arrangements may contribute to the reproduction of insurgent violence (Tull & Mehler, 2005, p. 376). Their study analyzes the factors underlying insurgent violence in Africa by looking at

the external actor. When external actors in a peace process, such as Western mediators, prescribe a power-sharing arrangement, they may be as much of a problem as a solution (Tull & Mehler, 2005, p. 394).

Tull and Mehler (2005) postulate that power-sharing is not conducive to peace in a war-torn country for several reasons. They observe that some power-sharing agreements are too complicated to be implemented, and without the long-term backing of external actors, they are bound to collapse, igniting a return to war (Tull & Mehler, 2005, p. 393). Furthermore, by empowering warring parties, power-sharing arrangements risk generating more insurgent groups, hoping to be included in a new peace agreement (Tull & Mehler, 2005, p. 393). Another aspect that must be considered is how these power-sharing may impact civil society opposition. Including insurgents in the government leaves peaceful civil society parties in an uneasy position, as they are either forced to take a pro-government position, and risk being considered as an insignificant partner, or take a pro-rebellion position and risk exposing themselves to accusations of collusion (Tull & Mehler, 2005, p. 390)

The study conducted by Mehler (2009) emphasizes the lack of attention of most power-sharing agreements on "broad-based participation by those who should benefit in the first place – citizens" (Mehler, 2009, p. 453). He argues that power-sharing agreements remain lacking in providing sustainable solutions to all aspects of complex crisis situations, outside of confined elite focus (Mehler, 2009, p. 454). His study observes several cases of peace agreements in Africa from the period 1999-2003. He notes that in a case such as Liberia, a power-sharing agreement established a government that was controlled by armed groups (Mehler, 2009, p. 463). The election was also filled with intimidation and warlord politics were still practiced by the warring party who was in office. Another war broke out two years after the election. Another case supporting Mehler's (2009) argument is the power-sharing agreement signed between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union/Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations in Zimbabwe (Mehler, 2009, p. 470). Immediately after the signing of the deal concerning distribution of key ministries, disagreements arose between the parties. It was striking that the focus was once again on elite concerns (Mehler, 2009, p. 471). The agreement was also heavily criticized for being an 'elite deal between a few individuals, with no attempt to involve civil society' and because 'the process used in coming up with the deal was not all-inclusive as the civil society was not given an opportunity to participate' (Mehler, 2009, p. 471). Departing from the notion that peace

depends on "when the people feel they are at peace", Mehler (2009) concludes that the discussion on power-sharing and sustainable peace is inherently flawed when it does not focus on what peace is all about – security for the people (Mehler, 2009, p. 473).

As my literature review suggests, different dimensions of power-sharing can yield different effects (see Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008; Rothchild & Roeder, 2005; Walter, 2002). In order to make a clear conceptualization of what I mean by power-sharing, how it is defined in this thesis, and which dimensions of power-sharing are studied here, it is important to discuss each dimension.

2.1 Dimensions of power-sharing: political, military, territorial and economic

Over the years, the literature on power-sharing has been perfected and typologies of the concept have become clearer. In the post-conflict context, particularly civil war, Walter (2002) identifies three separate dimensions of power-sharing: political, military and territorial. Political power-sharing is concisely defined as including former rebels in a joint government (Walter, 2002, p. 63). Military power-sharing involves allowing combatants to retain some of their troops, commonly by including equal numbers of both parties' soldiers in a new national army (Walter, 2002, p. 63). The third dimension – territorial power-sharing or territorial control – ensures that parties to a civil war gain administrative control over occupied territories (Walter, 2002, p. 64). This might entail establishing a form of regional autonomy, or setting up self-governing zones (Walter, 2002, p. 64).

Hartzell and Hoddie (2003, 2007) expand on the study by Walter (2002), adding a fourth dimension of power-sharing: economic power-sharing. The definition of each dimension is also sharpened, where political power-sharing entails the distribution of political power in the form of proportional representation in elections, administrative bodies and executive bodies (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, p. 320). Other than allowing combatants to retain their own security forces, military power-sharing can also take the form of integrating the rebels' armed forces into the state's security forces and mandating appointment of members of rebel groups to key leadership positions to neutralize the state's security forces (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007, p. 32). Territorial power-sharing is accomplished through territorial autonomy, providing groups at the subnational level with some degree of power and autonomy, allowing regions to protect their own interests (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007, p. 33). The fourth dimension – economic power-

sharing – distributes wealth and income with the intention of creating a balance among groups, or at least prevent domination of one particular group in terms of controlling economic resources (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007, p. 35). This type of power-sharing tends to rely on the use of "preferential policies", which are "laws, regulations, administrative rules, court orders, and other public interventions to provide certain public and private goods on the basis of membership in a particular group" (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, p. 36).

2.2 Inclusive, dispersive and constraining power-sharing

Expanding on the understanding of political power-sharing, Strøm et al. (2015) established three types of political power-sharing: inclusive, dispersive, and constraining power-sharing. These types depart from the definition of political power-sharing as:

> a fundamental agreement (often embodied in a constitution, peace treaty, or the like) that enables a broad set of actors to exercise power through participation in political decision making. Power sharing agreements can be attached to variety of institutions, such as cabinets and chief executives' offices, legislatures, civil service organizations, courts, armed forces, electoral commissions, educational institutions, and various administrative agencies. They may also be coupled with agreements concerning the sharing of economic wealth, military disarmament, or both (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 167).

Compared to most works on power-sharing that focus mainly on elite cooperation, this conceptualization allows us to consider a broader range of actors. The typology of four types of power-sharing as introduced in studies such as Hartzell & Hoddie (2003, 2007) and Walter (2002) – political, territorial, military and economic – focuses on the sharing of power horizontally. Strøm et al. (2015) presents a more nuanced typology that is basically conceptualized in vertical terms – that is elites versus masses (Røysamb, 2019, p. 12). The sharing of power in this conception is divided among political elites and ordinary citizens. Furthermore, each type corresponds to different ways in which ordinary citizens and constitution-makers might share political power (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 166)

The first type – inclusive power-sharing – resembles the broad and loose definition of power-sharing. It can simply be defined as giving each party a share of political power and decision-making processes (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 87; Strøm et al., 2015, p. 169). This type of

institution is commonly used as a concept in the existing power-sharing literature (e.g. Jarstad, 2008b; Jung & Shapiro, 1995; Mehler, 2009; Tull & Mehler, 2005). Strøm et al. (2015) finds that inclusive power-sharing is mostly introduced into conflictive societies and uncorrelated with electoral democracy (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 180). Giving a share of political power to each does resolve uncertainty and conflict at the elite level – mostly by co-opting elites. However, it does not provide guarantees of the empowerment of ordinary citizens (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 180). As there are no mechanisms to protect ordinary citizens, leaving them vulnerable to government repression, this could potentially lead to an unstable peace (Gates et al., 2016, p. 519). The second type – constraining power-sharing – is found to have a pacifying effect when associated with mechanisms of protection and prevention of conflict onset or recurrence (Gates et al., 2016, p. 516). The emphasis here is on the need to protect and empower groups or individuals subject to abuses by those who hold political power, which is accomplished by limiting the power of political office-holders (Gates et al., 2016, p. 516; Strøm et al., 2015, p. 169). Constraining power-sharing is found to correlate with electoral democracy, suggesting a greater likelihood of empowering ordinary citizens (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 180).Unlike inclusive power-sharing, constraining power-sharing is more prevalent in societies with no recent history of conflict (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 180). The third type –dispersive power sharing, which serves as the focus of this thesis, will be elaborated in detail in the next section.

2.2.1 Dispersive power-sharing: The solution to territorial conflict?

Discussing the concept of sharing, Strøm et al. (2015) likens it to how people think about sharing in ordinary life. Dispersive power-sharing is analogous to how family members share inheritance. Inherited goods are not expected to be expended jointly. Rather, goods are dispersed to be consumed separately by the respective recipients (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 169). Based on this analogy, the basic premise of dispersive power-sharing is division of authority territorially, or territorial autonomy. Its main principle resembles that of the concept of territorial power-sharing (see Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, 2007; Walter, 2002). There have been several studies that observe the effect of territorial power-sharing (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008; Walter, 2002) in relation to peace as well as democracy, where it is usually prescribed as a solution to conflicts that are territorial (e.g., where groups demand secession).

As much as territorial power-sharing is pertinent to the broader literature on power-sharing, this type of power-sharing puts less emphasis on the impact on ordinary citizens. Studies

discussing dispersive power-sharing take into account how this form of institution functions for the ordinary citizen, whether they talk about peace and or democracy. Gates et al. (2016) observes the mechanism of power allocation of three types of power-sharing to test which of the three leads to peace. They find that out of the three types (inclusive, dispersive, and constraining), constraining power-sharing limits governments' ability to repress, thereby raising the costs for rebels to mobilize, helping protect the rights and security of the population, and providing the pathway to peace (Gates et al., 2006, p. 524).

As I aim to link dispersive power-sharing and political stability, focusing on the masses (as opposed to only the elites), the conceptualization of dispersive power-sharing here is based on studies by Bormann et al., 2019; Gates et al., 2016 and Strøm et al., 2015. Dispersive power-sharing is defined broadly as a "partitioning policy process by giving control of particular territories and processes to distinct groups and generally by decentralizing decisions" (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 169). There are three dimensions of dispersive power-sharing: (1) powers allocated to subnational governments; (2) accountability of subnational governments to citizens; and (3) the representation of subnational constituencies in the central government (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 172). Most studies observing dispersive power-sharing in relation to democracy or peace focus on the first and third dimensions, and most are quantitative studies (see Bormann et al., 2019; Strøm et al., 2015). In this thesis, I will discuss all three dimensions qualitatively, however, the second dimension of dispersive power-sharing – accountability of subnational governments to ordinary citizens – will be given the primary focus. In measuring the accountability of subnational governments to citizens, Strøm et al. (2015) question whether the executive branch or legislatures are directly elected, whether at the state or provincial level or at the municipal level (Strøm et al., 2015, p. 172).

In order to analyze causal mechanisms linking dispersive power-sharing to the expected outcome, whether it be democracy or peace or political stability, it is important to be clear on which power-sharing is observed – *de jure* power-sharing or *de facto* power-sharing.[1] Departing from the lack of attention to *de facto* power-sharing, Bormann et al. (2019) examine the causal chain from power-sharing institutions through to power-sharing behavior (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 85), expecting the former to affect conflict through their effect on the latter. The

[1] As elaborated in Bormann et al. (2019), study such as Gates et al. (2016) focuses on the causal mechanism from power-sharing institution to conflict, while Cederman et al. (2015) focuses on the effect that territorial autonomy (dispersive power-sharing behavior/*de facto* dispersive power-sharing practice) towards conflict.

empirical findings suggest that particular forms of *de jure* power-sharing institutions affect particular behavioral practices (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 85). In this case, if a dispersive power-sharing institution is identified by power distribution through decentralizing policy (such as federalism), dispersive power-sharing is practiced through regional autonomy. In their study, Bormann et al. (2019) focus specifically on the effect of dispersive institutions on regional autonomy for ethnic groups. They hypothesize that, by empowering the regional governments and devolving policy authority to the subnational level, such power-sharing may benefit ethnic groups and give them regional autonomy, which will make it less likely for them to rebel against the state (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 88).

Generally, Bormann et al. (2019) find that there is only little support for the effect that formal power-sharing institutions have on conflict, except through their impact on power-sharing practices (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 96). This also applies to their findings specifically on dispersive power-sharing: dispersive power-sharing institution increases regional autonomy for ethnic groups and this decreases the risk of civil war by increasing the proportion of ethnic groups that enjoy regional autonomy (Bormann et al., 2019, p. 96).[2] Other than regional autonomy, dispersive power-sharing practices can also be seen in elite co-optation and patron-client systems (Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). By distributing power to regional elites, dispersive power-sharing seeks to build loyalty from opposition elites by granting them personal security (Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). Over time, elite co-optation and patron-client relations may attract the elites to become more invested in maintaining the status quo, as opposed to rebelling against the state (Wintrobe, 1998 see Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). However, these mechanisms fail to constrain the government from repressing the broader public (Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). Hence, dispersive power-sharing may seem attractive enough for warring parties to sign a peace agreement, as it is the case with types of power-sharing that are elite-oriented. Nonetheless, it fails to create credible commitment to peace, especially with the constantly changing levels of relative power and military capacity (Gates et al., 2016, p. 524). This then impacts on how subnational constituencies perceive the subnational government, and how it impacts the stability of post-conflict society.

[2] In the study, Bormann et al. (2019) combine two methods: regression with linear and logit model and causal mediation analysis. Their linear and logit model yield that dispersive power-sharing increase regional autonomy for ethnic groups, and causal mediation analysis reveal that dispersive institutions decrease risk of civil war indirectly through increasing proportion of ethnic groups enjoying regional autonomy.

3 Theoretical framework

A theory guides an empirical analysis of a case. The case analysis is then used to suggest refinements in the theory, which can be tested on other cases, through statistical as well as case study methods (Levy, 2008, p. 5). Most of the growing power-sharing literature discusses the concept of stability, predominantly in relation to the 'absence of return to armed conflict' (Cederman et al. 2015; Binnginsbø 2013; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003). In this thesis however, I employ a more explorative definition of stability, focusing primarily on political stability. I will begin by elaborating on the conceptualization of stability used in this thesis. The second section will elaborate in-depth on the operational concepts derived from the study by Margolis (2010). In the third section, I attempt to analyze the connections between dispersive power-sharing practices –regional autonomy and elite co-optation – to Margolis (2010) operational concepts of political stability. I theorize that dispersive power-sharing arrangements in post-conflict settings contribute to stability by consolidating the power of the local government, though potentially disempowering the civil society and civilian population in the process.

3.1 Conceptualization of stability

Stability is a concept often explored in the growing literature on power-sharing. Stability can manifest differently in different circumstances, depending on how the concept is understood. In most studies of power-sharing and stability, the concept of stability is seen in relation to the concept of violence. Indicators of stability vary depending on the study design and the choice of theoretical framework. Some notable quantitative studies of power-sharing relate the concept of instability to the occurrence or recurrence of civil war, while the concept of stability is indicated by the absence of civil war (see Hartzell, 1999; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003). This definition of stability draws on the logic of Hurwitz (1973), which understands a state as stable when there is no occurrence or recurrence of violence in a post-conflict setting.

An important critique of Hurwitz's conceptualization of stability as 'absence of violence' was raised by Margolis (2010), who maintains that this binary understanding of stability, disregards the degrees of stability one might find in a post-conflict setting (Margolis, 2010, p. 327). As argued by Margolis (2010), the inherent problem with Hurwitz' concept of stability is that an absence of something cannot serve as a basis for testing a causal relationship. A "finding" that something one might have expected is absent leaves the question of what causes the absence

unanswered. Causal hypothesis is important, as it incites testability and prediction. The failure to address causality thus disregards both the criteria of rigor and usefulness (Margolis, 2010, p. 328).

The concept of political stability employed in this thesis is broader than that of Hurwitz (1973), in the sense that it takes into account a variety of political objects, not only those of state agencies, but even more so, objectives that are crucial to the relationship between the state and society. This definition is rooted in a study by Claude Ake (1975) of political stability and political behavior. Ake (1975) elaborates on the importance of defining what he refers to as formal and informal roles, and how stability is achieved with regularity as opposed to disruption. The term "role" is defined as **"**the congeries of standardized expectations that are the basis of the predictability of behavior", and when these expectations are used to govern political behavior, Ake refers to this as political roles (Ake, 1975, p. 272). These roles are important as they guide political actions and activities, which produces predictable patterns of behavior that allows expectations of regularity, or "stability" (Ake 1975, see Margolis, 2010, p. 331). The emphasis on the regularity of the flow of political exchanges makes stability compatible with any amount of change, as long as the change occurs in accordance with established role expectations – that is, as long as an activity or exchange does not violate established expectations about whether the type in question ought to occur and, if so, how it should be brought about (Ake, 1975, p. 280). Contrary to Hurwitz's view of stability as an absence of structural change, Ake's understanding of political stability does not generalize all political change as political instability (Ake, 1975, p. 280).

This conceptualization also moves further from the usual method of measuring political stability by looking at the incidence of certain kinds of political acts – *coups d'etat,* political violence, constitutional crises, corruption in high offices, assassination of political leaders, and civil disobedience. Ake (1975) points out that these actions and activities are illegitimate, noting that they tend to be associated with the behavior of elites. Ake further maintains that it is important to pay attention to the patterns of interaction of elites, as the political system is most likely to change in the direction of their wishes and interests (Ake, 1975, p. 282). To put this in perspective, more disruption will likely occur when the weight of the problem is larger – comparing the scope of irregularity that might occur when there is a petty crime, as opposed to an assassination of a prominent governmental figure – although both are considered violations of formal rules, laws and political structures.

Adopting the understanding of political stability purely from Ake (1975), however, yields several problems, most importantly in relation to roles, as addressed by Margolis (2010). Margolis (2010) argues that firstly, Ake fails to consider informal roles or customs in his analysis, despite stating the importance of them (Margolis, 2010, p. 331). Secondly, the approach also treats formal and informal roles as if each were distinct, seeing how acts might violate each, yet fails to explore how one role might violate the other role (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). For example, Ake (1975) shows how people might break laws or customs, but not how new laws might challenge customs, and how changing customs might challenge existing laws (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). Departing from the study of Eckstein (1961), Ake (1975) and Sanders (1981), Margolis then defines political stability as the degree to which the formal and informal coincide (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). An object is considered stable when formal roles and structures match those constructed by informal social interaction (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). The causal claim of this definition is that the closer the correspondence between formal and informal within a political object, the more common is its regularity and the more rarely it tends to be disrupted. Margolis maintains that acts violating formal, informal, or pattern-based roles or structures are disruptive. However, Margolis treats those acts as symptoms of instability, rather than elements constituting instability as such. Margolis thus understands political instability as a trait that describes the potential for violating acts. Thus, if the potential for role violations increases, popular confidence in others' adherence to these roles decreases, causing a fall in expectations, which leads to uncertainty, or instability (Margolis, 2010, p. 333).

The objective of this thesis is to explore the dynamic between civil society and local government – here defined as rules, institutions, and processes forming the nexus state-society relations where government and citizens interact (Brinkerhoff, 2007, p. 2) – mechanisms based on a dispersive power-sharing institution. Margolis' conceptualization of formal roles is quite broad, including any role that holds formal authority. In this thesis however, the focus will be limited to the relationship between formal roles in local government institutions, the executive and legislative in the local government, and informal roles in society. The question that remains is how to operationalize this understanding of political stability and instability.

3.2 Operational concepts of political stability

The definition of "political stability" employed in this thesis is derived from the study by Margolis (2010), with emphasis on the gap between the formal – the local government – and the informal – the civilian population. Stability is a situation when the gap between the formal and informal is closing, while instability occurs when the gap is widening (Margolis, 2010, p. 332). The definition itself seems concrete, but the question that remains here, is what is needed in order to close the gap between the formal roles and informal roles. Margolis offered four operational concepts – authority, resilience, legitimacy, replacement, which I will be applying as operational concepts of political stability in this thesis. In explaining each operational concept, Margolis divides its application into two settings – within the state, and outside of the state. In this thesis however, I choose to focus on its application within the state. Margolis (2010) understands formal roles as roles defined by authorities, codified into standards, and enforced by officers, while informal roles are known as customs, and are defined, performed and enforced by social interaction. Operationalized, Margolis (2010) then re-defines political stability into the health of authority, resilience, legitimacy, and replacement in a political object (Margolis, 2010, p. 336).

3.2.1 Authority

The first operational concept introduced by Margolis is authority. In understanding authority, Coyne (2016) divided the term into two categories – authority as an office (or status) and authority as an exercise. Authority as an office (or status) here refers to an office or status someone holds. In other words, authority is something that can be possessed or attributed to the individual, entailing the possession of the right to rule (Coyne, 2016, p. 578). The actions of whoever occupies the office, which are performed under the guise of that authority, reflect authority as an exercise (Coyne, 2016, p. 578). Huemer (2013) hypothesizes that political authority is the moral property in virtue of which only governments may coerce people in certain ways, not permitted to anyone else, and in virtue of which citizens must obey the authority in situations in which people would not be obligated to obey anyone else (Huemer, 2013, p. 5). Hence, authority here requires political legitimacy – the right to rule – and political obligation – citizens' obligation to obey the enforced rules (Huemer, 2013, p. 6). Huemer (2013) further suggests that authority is not absolute or unconditional, in the sense that not all governments have legitimate authority. Rather, this depends on how citizens perceive the authority of the state. Huemer (2013) gives the example of citizens who hold a state's authority

based on its respect for basic human rights, and whether it allows citizens a certain level of political participation, in which tyrannical governments lack authority (Huemer, 2013, p. 6). The take from this is that a state's authority is also dependent on how the society perceives the laws, rules – normative standards in Margolis' words – that are enacted through the performance of formal roles.

Margolis (2010) introduces authority as an operational concept that is generated from the path of one of coercion. A government as a set of formal roles is in itself a coercive institution, as when the government implements a law, and carries out punishment to be imposed upon violators. Violence plays a crucial role in this dynamic, as it aids in extending commands to reach an end, where the system must be anchored by a non-voluntary intervention, a harm that the state can impose regardless of the individual's choice (Huemer, 2013, p. 9). A role can be said to have authority when those in power manage to react by enforcing a clear normative standard, when faced with a gap, bringing the informal 'way things are' toward the formal or the 'way things should be' (Margolis, 2010, p. 333). Authority here will then be measured by those who hold the position in the government and have the right to enact laws, rules and policies for the people.

3.2.2 Resilience

Margolis (2010) suggests that a second path to political stability is one of reform. When those in power opt not to use force, but instead introduce reforms to re-shape the formal to match the evolving informal, those in power show willingness to adapt to change (Margolis, 2010, p. 334). When reform is operationalized, it fosters resilience, or as Margolis (2010) explains, the formal's ability to adapt to change. Generally, resilience relies on ideas of self-organization, adaptation, transformation and survival in the face of adversity of crisis (Humbert & Joseph, 2019, p. 215).

Besley, Persson and Reynal-Querol (2016) underscores that resilience can take various forms – having hard-to-measure individual characteristics, having the right connection – or it could also be the result of matching, where the leader has the right characteristics required to meet the salient policy challenges in a particular country and time. Showing how a leader that has guided a country through difficult times tends to be viewed favourably by citizens, (Besley et al., 2016, p. 2) studied resilience as inherent in individuals, especially in leaders, dividing

resilience into two categories – leader's resilience based on whether a leader survives to leave office only due to natural death (or serious illness) – and leader's resilience on circumstances of the leader's tenure due to unforeseen events (Besley et al., 2016, p. 15). In their study, Besley et al. (2016) specifically chose recent natural disasters. However, these "events" can also generally be translated into any changes that may occur, whether informally or externally driven. In this thesis, resilience is measured exclusively by the government's ability to adapt to change.

3.2.3 Legitimacy

According to Kjaer (2004), there are two basic ways to generate legitimacy – output-oriented legitimacy and input-oriented legitimacy. Both forms of legitimacy have a symbiotic relationship with difference on the source. Output-oriented legitimacy derives from the ability of government to produce concrete and tangible results, input-oriented legitimacy on the other hand is derived from the path of consent (Inbal & Lerner, 2007, p. 46). The source of both forms of legitimacy is generated from the informal, or society. Output-oriented legitimacy is a by-product of the outputs of the formal role, where people are more likely to support the government's right to govern when the government provides needed and desired services (Inbal & Lerner, 2007, p. 46). Input-oriented legitimacy lies in the "hearts and minds" of the broader public, or the *a priori* consent to being governed (Inbal & Lerner, 2007, p. 46). Consent itself must come from those who are asked – or obligated – to comply with the rule of law, and not only acknowledge, but also submit to the government's authority. Thus, legitimacy as an operational concept is tangible to the first operational concept – authority.

This is in line with Margolis' third path. Margolis stated that consent can be seen from how patterns set by informal interaction can adjust and accept new roles when there is a gap caused by the change in the formal, where its resolution is voluntary (Margolis, 2010, p. 335). The formal manifestation of such consent can be seen in democratic procedures such as participation, deliberation, and representation (Inbal & Lerner, 2007, p. 46). Legitimacy can be measured by various measurements, such as government's satisfactory performance (Wong, 2016, p. 772). It can also be measured by government's ability to expand participation and inclusiveness, reducing inequities, creating accountability to human rights issues (based on what the civil society inquire), combating corruption, and introducing contestability through election (Brinkerhoff, 2007, p. 7). The measurement of legitimacy here, however is focused on

government's willingness and capacity to respond to citizens' needs and demands (Brinkerhoff, 2007, p. 7).

3.2.4 Replacement

The fourth operational concept extends from the concept of authority. It departs from the path of change in authority, which when operationalized, it becomes replacement. In response to a gap –especially occurring due to the inability of the formal role in fulfilling its duty – people may hold onto informal roles (e.g., customs) and opt to replace the power behind the formal. Instead of authority enforcing the formal, those subject to authority force upon it the informal (Margolis, 2010, p. 336). In the context of the state, Margolis provides several examples where this dynamic can take place, such as elections, revolutionary processes, and in extreme cases, secession from the state. In this thesis, replacement will be exclusively measured by elections.

As stated earlier, political stability is defined as the health of authority, resilience, legitimacy, and replacement in a political object (Margolis, 2010, p. 336). This means that an object will potentially be stable when an authority enforces its rule and adapts to change, and a body gives legitimacy upon it and retains the ability to replace it. These operational concepts will then be linked to the two *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices in the next section.

3.3 Linking dispersive power-sharing and political stability

As previously discussed, Bormann et al. (2019) finds that dispersive power-sharing institution affects conflict through the effect it has on dispersive power-sharing practice, defined as regional autonomy. Incorporating the study by Gates et al. (2016), in this thesis, I analyze how regional autonomy as well as elite co-optation influence post-conflict stability. I argue that regional autonomy and elite co-optation contribute to post-conflict political stability by increasing the authority of local government, but it has adverse effect on how the ordinary citizens perceive the government, affecting subnational government accountability towards their constituents. In this section, I attempt to link the effects to the expected outcome, analyzing the causal mechanism between dispersive power-sharing practice to each operational concepts of political stability –authority, resilience, legitimacy, replacement

In a political and legal context, autonomy refers to the power of social institutions to "regulate their own affairs by enacting legal rules", while in an international law context, autonomy can

be defined as situations where "parts of the state's territory are authorized to govern themselves in certain matters by enacting laws and statuses, but without constituting a state of their own" (Cornell, 2002, pp. 248–249). Certain ethnic group has *de facto* regional autonomy when "meaningful and active regional executive organ operates below the state level but above the local administration, and groups representatives exert actual influence on the decisions of this entity, acting in line with the group's local interest" (Vogt et al.,2015 see Bormann et al., 2019, p. 89). Depending on the governance arrangements (e.g., decentralization, devolution, confederation, federation, etc.) the extent of autonomy that one region has differs. Nonetheless, it can simply be understood as the authority of local government to govern themselves still within the same state, where they enact legal rules, laws, or statuses, and act in line with the group's local interest.

By decentralizing decision-making power, territorial autonomy can restrict authority at the central government, protecting the region from the exercise of arbitrary central authority (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007, pp. 33–34). This helps in increasing the authority of the local government, making it possible for them to occupy the office and enact policies based on local concerns. In a post-conflict society, this is of particular importance, especially having control over funds and policies, as the closer the government to the local needs, the more possible for them to properly meet local needs and aspirations (Tendler 2000; Mehler 2002; Hadenius 2003 see Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 7). Decentralizing power and decision-making also increase opportunities to participate in the government, as well as promoting greater voice and participation, empowering under-represented groups in society (Brancati, 2006, p. 655; Tselios & Tompkins, 2017, p. 232). The greater the participation of the people in the government or to elect the government the healthier the election system – a measure of the health of replacement. Hence, it is expected that autonomy will not only strengthens authority of the local government to govern themselves but also the participation of the citizens in election.

Other than authority and replacement, legitimacy is another important concept for political stability. In theory, locally elected governments that are better placed geographically and politically tend to be better in responding to local needs (Tselios & Tompkins, 2017, p. 231). When the authority of the local government is strengthened, it is expected that they will have an improved performance in service delivery (Bland, 2007, p. 209) in line with the needs and interest of the people. The better able the local government in meeting the needs of the people, the more legitimate they are. Legitimacy of the government can also be seen in how the election

system function, when it is free and fair, the people will deem the government elected to be legitimate. Another important point of autonomy is the ability of the local government to enact policies and passing legislation protecting their various interests and concerns at the regional level of government (Brancati, 2006, p. 656). One of the critiques of power-sharing institutions is its inflexibility and inability to adapt to rapidly changing social conditions in post-conflict societies (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005, p. 40). This is because, as Rothchild & Roeder notes that power-sharing institutions freeze status quo making political change difficult. This may hinder the adaptability of local government to the constant change that post-conflict society demands. Nevertheless, so long as the local government able to exert its authority by enacting policies and passing legislation catering to the needs and concerns of the people, the health of resilience will be assured.

Other than partitioning power and decision-making by giving autonomy to the specific region, dispersive power-sharing institutions also guarantees the "security of the person" of the regional elites, through elite co-optation (Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). Co-optation in broad term can be defined as "the capacity to tie strategically-relevant actors (or a groups of actors) to the regime elite" (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 22). It is usually implemented in order to persuade the "strategic" elite to use their resources in line with the ruling elite's demands instead of exercising their power to obstruct and go against the ruling elites (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 22). This is why elite co-optation is considered an attractive tool, it safeguards the regional elites to not rebel against the state and builds their loyalty to the regime instead. Co-opting elites can manifest into different institutions, the study by Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) find that offering legislative seats to groups who threaten to rebel can be valuable as they translate into policy influence (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006 see Magaloni, 2008, p. 716). Magaloni (2008) argues however that this does not solve the dilemma of ruling elites' credible commitment not to abuse the co-opted elite and the co-opted elites incentives to rebel regardless of whether or not they hold political position (Magaloni, 2008, p. 716). She then offers another solution: delegating control to the access-to-power position and state privileges to political parties (Magaloni, 2008, p. 716).

There are several reasons as to why political parties are attractive institution for co-optation. For the strategic elites, it serves as a platform with incentives, where they are promised nomination to various political offices –governorship, cabinet positions, and legislatures (Magaloni, 2008, pp. 722–723). For the ruling elites, as long as they are able to maintain

monopoly of the power positions and remains what Magaloni refers as the "only game in town", this will serve as incentives for rank-and-file to join, perform their services and remain loyal to the ruling elites in the long run (Magaloni, 2008, p. 724). In a post-conflict setting, increasing the number of political parties – for example by giving regional elites opportunity to establish their own political party – may enhance vertical legitimacy (Jarstad, 2008, p. 125). For the civilian population, political party serves as a platform providing critical avenues for public participation and dialogue (Bjornlund et al., 2007, p. 64). Local political parties, particularly, collect and represent local concerns and other interest in the political system, which provide a structure for political participation (Bjornlund et al., 2007, p. 65). This is of particular importance in post-conflict societies, as local political party is expected to create bigger opportunity for the local citizen to participate politically. In addition to that, the autonomy that comes with the establishment of local political party allows for local concerns and interests to be represented either as party ideology or as campaigning tools.

As discussed by Gates et al. (2016), dispersive power-sharing institution is considered to be primarily elite-oriented. Its main purpose is to offer regional elites' sense of security by giving "a piece of the pie" in order for them not to rebel against the state. This can be translated in, for example, the establishment of local political party under national constitution. This may not seem to be an example of direct co-optation; however, the local political party has several limitations. In choosing the ideologies of the party, regional elites cannot contradict the national ideologies. For some post-conflict regions, this may be perceived as a limitation to the representation of their identity. Furthermore, a local political party has narrow support, as they are concentrated on the region, they represent. This is a double-edged sword: it may increase participation and legitimacy of the candidates to be elected in the region. However, support is limited when aiming for seats in the national assembly, whether it be executive or legislative. Thus, regional elites have to either abandon their local party and join the national party or seek a coalition with the national party. Either way, compromises must be made, which oftentimes include concessions on the very purpose of the local political party that is representing local concerns and interest. The question remains: How does this impact on the civilian population? How does the dynamic of local political parties relate to each operational concept of power-sharing?

In theory, elite-oriented power-sharing agreements activate the vertical dilemma – elites vs. masses (Jarstad & Sisk, 2008, p. 11). Peace agreements often include specific groups of people,

most often elites. The sharing of power as decided in the negotiation stage is usually also reflected in the implementation stage. Hence, with only the involvement of certain elites, it is most likely that power will only be enjoyed by the elites involved in the negotiation. This is a dilemma, as oftentimes, including only elites is required for the sake of efficacy. The involvement of various groups of people risks prolonging the negotiation process, and even ending up without any peace agreement at all (Jarstad & Sisk, 2008, p. 11). In terms of authority, as the negotiation only involves regional elites, it is expected that they will be on the forefront of the newly elected government. This means that former rebels are more likely to occupy key governmental positions as well as having their party as the ruling party of the post-conflict society. In the implementation stage, however, this comes at the expense of legitimacy, as it prompts the possibility of weak support for the system among the civilian population (Jarstad, 2008, p. 107). Taking an example of local political parties, it is expected that the regional elites will have a greater opportunity of organizing and establishing a local party that exclusively includes them. They have a bigger chance of dominating the campaign as well as the election. If this system does not reflect the needs of the masses, or the civilian population, they risk having weak support.

Furthermore, the issue of elites vs. masses depends on representation. Jarstad (2008) argues that it is difficult to know how representative elites are when they have been elected to governmental positions (Jarstad, 2008, p. 125). Representation is important to determine legitimacy. If the elected candidate from the local political party fails to represent the concerns and needs of the masses, they risk losing support from the people. Even if the individual is sincere with their intention of representing the concerns and needs of the people, if the political party they represent has different interests and agendas, the individual would not be able to do much. The second operational concept – resilience – can be deduced from the adaptability of the government to change. For the regime, elite co-optation is beneficial as the incentives given, such as promise of nomination to governmental positions in political parties, may improve their loyalty towards the regime or the ruling elites over time (Wintrobe, 1998 see Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). This also leads to the co-opted elites becoming more invested in maintaining the status quo (Gates et al., 2016, p. 518). However, this can come at a cost of maintaining government resilience. If the co-opted elite in the local political party prefers to be loyal to the regime or the ruling party – either by forming a coalition with the ruling party or by engaging in a patron-client system with the party elected to form the government, there will be no guarantee that they will perform based on the concerns and needs of the people.

When the people of authority fail to perform based on what the people expect, the people have the power and the right to replace them through election. Repeated patterns that result as an effect of elite co-optation, however, may discourage people's participation in the democratic election. As elite co-optation in its definition aims to curb opposition, it may create a homogenous agenda within political elites. When the incumbents fail to represent local needs, it is possible that through elite co-optation, the next candidate will perform just the same, thus, rendering election meaningless.

4 Research design and method

This chapter elaborates in detail on the research design and methodological approach applied in this thesis. In order to answer the research question, this thesis is constructed on the basis of explanatory case study research design. Data collection was done through semi-structured interview during fieldwork. First, I start by explaining explanatory case study as my choice of research design. In this section, I will also discuss on why case study was particularly appropriate for this thesis. Second, the process of data collection will be discussed in detail. Lastly, the quality assessment of the chosen methods – reliability and validity is discussed.

4.1 Case study as research design

Research design is a prominent part of the research, as it functions as a blueprint for the research. The research design covers which questions to study, what data are considered relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results (Philliber, Schwab, & Samsloss, 1980 see Yin, 2018, p. 66). By having a clear research design, researchers could avoid a situation in which the evidence presented fails to address the initial research question, which is considered detrimental to the study. According to Yin (2018), there are five components that research design should include: first, the definition of a study's questions; second, a clear theoretical proposition; and third, definition of the case(s) (Yin, 2018, p. 74). The last two components are to define the logic linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings, leading the design to the case study analysis (Yin, 2018, p. 74).

The first component of a research design is the core of it –the research question. In this thesis, I attempt to examine the dynamic processes of the local government and the citizens in a post-conflict society. It is constructed under the research question: *in what ways have dispersive power-sharing institutions influenced political stability in post-conflict Aceh?* The second component to consider is the theoretical proposition. Having clear theory and theoretical propositions in case studies, is useful not only in defining appropriate research design but also determining the data to be collected, furthermore, it also serves as "main vehicle for generalizing the findings from the case study" (Yin, 2018, p. 86). The theoretical framework guiding the analysis have been discussed at length in the previous chapter. In summary, the theoretical framework propose that *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices consolidate the authority of the regional elites in the local government through regional autonomy and elite co-

optation, however both dispersive power-sharing practices may bring contradictory effect to legitimacy, resilience and replacement of the people in authority. From the elaboration above, it becomes clear that this thesis is built on a case study research design.

A case study is defined as "the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed a light on a larger class of cases (a population)" (Gerring, 2007, p. 20). In order to understand a case study, it is important to understand what is meant by a case. A case can be defined as a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time, or over some period of time (Gerring, 2007, p. 19). This understanding helps in elaborating Yin's (2018) third component – defining of the case(s). Yin (2018) suggested that the tentative definition of the case can derive from the way the initial research question is defined. Relating to the research question of this thesis, the case in this thesis is a single case pertaining to post-conflict Aceh. The advantage of a single case is the ability for researcher to study it intensively (Gerring, 2007, p. 20).

Aside from defining the case, another important step is bounding the case. The case focuses on the two *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices, which are regional autonomy and elite-co-optation. Bounding the case also applies to the time period of the related case. The time frame chosen of the case for this thesis begins after the signing of the Helsinki MoU in 2005 and continues until the completion of data collection and fieldwork in 2020. The benefit of bounding the case relates to the data collection process and particularly to how data about the subject of the case study ("phenomenon") can be distinguish from the data external to the case (the "context") (Yin, 2018, p. 70).

4.1.1 Why the explanatory case study?

As suggested by Robert K. Yin (2018):

> you might favor choosing case study research, compared with the others, when (1) the main research questions are 'how' or 'why' questions, (2) one has little or no control over behavioral events, (3) the focus of study is a contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon –a 'case' (Yin, 2018, p. 33).

The first thing to look at is the nature of the research question itself, as the more the questions seek to explain some contemporary circumstance, the more that case study will be considered relevant research design (Yin, 2018, p. 35). In addition to that, if the researcher plan to understand complex social phenomena, case studies allows the researcher to focus in-depth on a "case" and to retain a holistic real-world perspective (Yin, 2018, p. 36). One of the key concerns of a case study is the issue of unit homogeneity. This is because the intensive study put on the unit(s) under focus is not representative of the population, hence there may be an issue of bias in the sample (Gerring, 2007, p. 20).

Formulating a correct research question also helps determining the type of case study that the researcher is going to do. 'What' questions usually falls under either exploratory case study, or descriptive case studies (Yin, 2018, p. 38)**.** This thesis departs from a research question seeking to explain a 'how' question, specifically on how regional autonomy and elite co-optation influence the authority, legitimacy, resilience and replacement of the local government. As elaborated in the theoretical proposition, the research question also attempts to find and explain the causal relationship between the *de facto* practices of dispersive power-sharing and political stability in post-conflict Aceh. Assessing from first the research question, this thesis does not take on exploratory case study research design, but rather an explanatory case study.

By definition, explanatory case studies do not only explore and describe phenomena but they can also be used to explain causal relationships and to develop theory (Mills et al., 2010, p. 370). It requires a pre-existing theoretical propositions as it "should consist of an accurate description of the facts of the case, considerations of alternative explanations, and a conclusion based on credible explanations that are congruent with the facts" (Mills et al., 2010, p. 370). The study on dispersive power-sharing has been done before, in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Linking power-sharing with stability has also been theorized as well. However, this thesis employs different conceptualization of stability and different operational measures contributing not only on theory testing but also theory construction and producing new explanation. The case of post-conflict Aceh is also not a particularly new case to be studied, however the temporal scope of this thesis ranges from 2006 until 2020 offers analysis on the phenomenon of contemporary events.

In terms of data, explanatory case studies has always required acquiring information from multiple sources, or in other words triangulating the data sources (Mills et al., 2010, p. 371).

Triangulation is important as it will increase the reliability of any explanation (Mills et al., 2010, p. 371). In order to ensure this, this thesis uses primary data collected from semi-structured in-depth interview during fieldwork, and secondary data from prior publications. Other secondary sources also include data from news articles as well as statistics from governmental website. Triangulation is also done during the interview, where I do not only interview ordinary citizens but also people of authority. The detail of the fieldwork is explained in the data collection section in this chapter.

4.2 Data collection

4.2.1 Semi-structured in-depth interview

In-depth interviews help the researcher collect information about social worlds. The strength of the interview lies in "its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading – to the telling of stories that allow us to understand and theorize the social world" (Miller & Glassner, 2016, p. 56). Conducting interviews makes it possible for researcher to find realities that can be seen, not only from stories that reveal 'culturally embedded normative explanations', but also events and activities that contradict the stories told (Miller & Glassner, 2016, p. 62). Studies of power-sharing rarely touch upon the perspectives of ordinary citizens, especially in the case of dispersive power-sharing. The theorized argument of power-sharing in post-conflict settings influences the ordinary citizen. Therefore, the main respondents I sought out as participants in this study were ordinary citizens. Semi-structured in-depth interview was the main method of data collection used in this thesis. Random sampling was my initial sampling plan, before I carried out the fieldwork.

The fieldwork in Aceh was carried out during six weeks from the beginning of January until mid-February 2020. During the fieldwork, I had to change my strategy of sampling. This was mainly due to the reluctance of many ordinary citizens to participate. Some perceived the topic and questions to be taboo and sensitive, while others were just reluctant for reasons of convenience. Due to this, I had to make changes to my strategy of data collection. I changed my approach from random sampling to snowball sampling, which is a method for gradually accumulating participants in a sample based on recommendations from earlier interviews (Lynch, 2013, p. 42). I also had to reduce the number of ordinary people I interviewed. Hence, in an attempt to triangulate my primary data, I decided to add what I refer to as "experts". Snowball sampling can and often is used in conjunction with other sampling strategy such as

purposive sampling, which is what I did in sampling the "experts". Purposive sampling involves selecting participants according to specific characteristics deemed relevant to the analysis (Lynch, 2013, p. 41). These "experts" comprise mainly researchers, heads of NGOs, the commissioner of Aceh's Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), a representative of Aceh's People's Representative Council (DPRA) and an advisor to the Governor. I asked these "experts" a different set of questions than the questions given to ordinary citizens. Henceforth, the ordinary citizens will be referred to as participants, and the expert respondents will be referred to as experts.

Due to snowball sampling, most of the participants belonged to the same age group. Most of them also lived in the capital city, but fortunately, they originally come from different districts of Aceh. This gives diversity to their experiences and viewpoints. I attempted to maintain equal numbers in terms of gender. Social similarities and differences between the interviewer and interviewees plays a role in how the interviewees provide answers of the phenomenon being asked (Miller & Glassner, 2016, p. 62). As I am a female, non-Acehnese, it was easier to gain trust from fellow female respondents and easier to create a safe comfortable environment for the interview. The male participants took more time to truly express their view. While the obstacles I experienced in finding participants limited my use of interviews as a primary source of data, I was still able to gain an understanding of some of the dynamics among ordinary citizen in a post-conflict setting, in terms of levels of interest in politics. Hence, these obstacles helped shed light on the situation these citizens are in, and the social worlds in which their narratives are situated, which can help the researcher capture elements of these worlds. My informal interaction with potential and actual participants also served to help me make sense of the possible 'disconnect between the claim and contradictory description' made by the interviewees (Miller & Glassner, 2016, p. 59).

4.2.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical guideline is an integral part of conducting research, particularly when one conducts fieldwork or ethnographic studies. Three main topics usually surface in research ethical guidelines – codes and consent, confidentiality, and trust (Ryen, 2016, p. 32). Codes and consent refer specifically to 'informed consent', or in other words, the required conditions for ethical research in which "subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time"

(Ryen, 2016, p. 32). The second topic – confidentiality, refers to the obligation of researchers to protect the participants' "identity, places and the location of the research" (Ryen, 2016, p. 33). This can be done by upholding anonymity in the process of writing, coding what is considered to be sensitive information – especially information that might endanger the life of the participant. Ryen (2016) argues that researchers should not automatically assume that all participants want to be treated anonymously, hence it is important to be knowledgeable of the situation in the place where one conducts the research (Ryen, 2016, p. 33). The last topic, trust, is what Ryen (2016) thinks is the classic concern. This refers to "the relationship between the researcher and the participants, and to the researcher's responsibility not to 'spoil' the field for others, where the potential research subjects become reluctant to be studied" (Ryen, 2004 see Ryen, 2016, p. 33).

The Data Protection Official at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) puts emphasis on "disseminating knowledge of the legal and ethical guidelines" that regulates research (*Data Protection Official for Research*, n.d.). By notifying the study to NSD prior to fieldwork and abiding by the recommended ethical guidelines in implementing the study, I have upheld two aspects of ethical research – codes and consent, as well as confidentiality. I anonymized all the participants categorized as ordinary citizens, in recognition of the sensitivity of a post-conflict setting and to mitigate the concerns of many of the participants.

Prior to conducting the interviews, all respondents (both experts and participants who were ordinary citizens) were given detailed information regarding the study and what the interview entails. This was described in an information letter following the format from NSD, which was approved prior to my fieldwork (see Appendix 2). I felt that providing the participants with a piece of paper containing information about the study and interview was overwhelming to some of them. Therefore, I also explained the same information to the participants verbally in an 'everyday' language. This also helped create a space of trust between the researcher and the participant. This was iterated explicitly by some participants, as some of them showed discomfort and were visibly less comfortable in the beginning of the interview. I also explained that I would be recording the interview in order to not miss important details.

I highlighted the point that their participation was voluntary, and that they would be able to retract their participation if they happened to change their mind. Their rights were also explicitly written and read out, along with the contacts of people responsible for the project –

myself, my supervisors, the University of Oslo and NSD. I explicitly offered participants the opportunity to contact any one of the people listed as responsible, in case they wanted to follow up on the research project (i.e., retracting their statements, correcting their statements, follow-up with the wanting to know how they are being rephrased/written). Then, I provide the consent form for them to sign.

In order to ensure their data protection, I opted to anonymize the participants who are ordinary citizens, whereas the experts were not anonymized. This was also agreed to by the participants. Some participants clearly stated that they did not mind having their name mentioned. However, to ensure protection as well as uniformity and so as not to cause confusion, the ordinary citizens were all anonymized and coded (see Appendix1)**.** As for the recordings, I opted for an app called *Diktafon*, which was downloaded to my phone. The app records with a maximum of 45 minutes duration, and the interviews are stored directly into *Nettskjema* and can only be accessed with my university's id. In the process of transcribing, I used f4 transkript, which is accessible through the University of Oslo server – VMWare Horizon Client.

The information letter and consent letter helped in being transparent about the project. Despite that the aim was to provide transparency and protect the respondents, I found that the formalities often created a barrier between myself as the researcher and the respondents. Most of my respondents were ordinary citizens with different social backgrounds than myself, and many tended to feel a bit intimidated by the formalities of the interview setting. This then played a part in the duration of the interviews, which usually lasted around 2-3 hours. To reduce the tension and build trust, I would let the conversation stray from the interview guide, allowing the participants to ask me casual questions. On some occasions, I had to go off the topic when the questions brought back traumatic experiences that made the participant emotional.

Ethical considerations played an important role during the data collection. In short, I accommodated my interview guide to the social and cultural environment where I conducted the research. Hence, the data collection process itself prompted me to take a different approach to my interviews than I had planned in advance. The approach I took was more locally appropriate, creating a more comfortable space for the respondents to tell their stories.

4.3 Quality assessment: validity and reliability

As stated earlier, the last two components of research design as suggested by Yin (2018) includes, the defining the logic linking the data to the propositions as well as the criteria for interpreting the findings. These logical link between the data collected to the theoretical positions supposed to represent a logical set of statements (Yin, 2018, p. 87). This can be judged by certain logical tests –internal validity, external validity as well as reliability of the design. In other words, seeing the objectivity and the credibility of the research.

4.3.1 Internal Validity

The validity of research relates to the interpretation of observations, that is "whether or not the inferences that the researcher makes are supported by the data, and sensible in relation to earlier research" (Peräkylä, 2016, p. 413). Internal validity focuses mainly to the issue of causality – whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables makes sense (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). The strength of internal validity thus can be seen in whether there is a good match between the observations I make and the theoretical framework that I develop (Bryman, 2012, p. 390) In ensuring internal validity of this thesis, I made preliminary theoretical framework from the existing literatures on both power-sharing as well as political stability prior to my fieldwork in Aceh. The formulation of interview questions was primarily guided by the measurements of these concepts.

Observations done through fieldwork also helps in refining the link between the two existing concepts. The measurements of the two concepts – dispersive power-sharing and political stability – remain objective and are based on the existing literatures. Refinement in the theory can be seen in how I construct causal mechanisms that was influenced by both existing concepts as well as real-life observations. This is done to maintain congruence between the concepts in the literatures to the observation, while remaining objective, so as to not suffer from biases.

4.3.2 External Validity

In general understanding, external validity is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). The aim is to ensure that the sample is as representative as possible, or in another word, to be able to generalize the findings beyond the cases that make up the sample (Bryman, 2012, p. 176). Representativeness here refers to the representative of the population from which it was

selected (Bryman, 2012, p. 176). This understanding of external validity has been the major issue of qualitative research, one that many quantitative researchers question, as case study research includes, only a small number of cases of some more general phenomenon (Gerring, 2007, p. 43). Compared to statistical analysis or cross-case research, case study research design is generally weaker in regard to their external validity. This is because statistical analysis is always more representative of the population of interest –that is with some sensible procedure of case selection, e.g. random sampling (Gerring, 2007, p. 43).

To decide that the findings of case study research design is unable to be generalized is however quite misleading as well. The findings of qualitative research through various data collection methods chosen, inter alia, interview, participant observation, ethnography, normally are not meant to be representative of a population, or of other social phenomena, but as a phenomenon in its own right (Bryman, 2012, p. 406; Peräkylä, 2016, p. 414). The findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to population as it is "the cogency of the theoretical reasoning" (J.C. Mitchell 1983 see Bryman, 2012, p. 406). Meaning that generalization in qualitative research – case study research design included – depends on the quality of the theoretical inferences made out of the data (Bryman, 2012, p. 406).

With regard to the general definition of external validity, the answer to the question of whether the results of this thesis can be generalized to broader population, the short answer is no. Data obtained from interview as stated before, are not meant to be representative of the broader population. However, questioning whether the results of this thesis can be generalized to the theoretical proposition, that is the aim of this thesis. The goal of this thesis is to provide in-depth understanding on social phenomenon, that is the dynamic of dispersive power-sharing arrangement in post-conflict Aceh. It is also desirable that the findings may deem useful to contribute to the testing and developing the study on power-sharing and stability in general.

4.3.3 Reliability

Reliability relates to the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). Hence, it also relates to the replicability of the research – that is when other researchers conduct the same study with the same procedures, it is expected that they will get the same results. Opportunities to replicating qualitative study however is considered to be rare (Yin, 2018, p. 93), despite that however, Yin (2018) suggested that researcher should still

position their work to ensure reliability, even if only in principle (Yin, 2018, p. 93). Replicability in qualitative research is considered to be difficult to do because, first, what the researchers tend to focus on the field is the product of what they think to be significant. Second, the characteristics and identity of the researchers most likely affect the responses of the participants. Lastly, due to the unstructured nature of qualitative data, the interpretation of what qualitative researchers choose to focus on is subjective to what they think to be significant.

However, in order to maintain objectivity, I do employ triangulation with different data sources –quantitative studies, news articles and other similar fieldwork studies. Hence, there is possibility that if another researcher attempts to do a similar study, they will be able to attain similar core findings. Full replication of the same study nevertheless will not be possible.

5 The road to the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding: Understanding conflict and peace in Aceh

Aceh history with Indonesia has always been associated with the history of conflict. Attempts at peace has also been done several times, before finally reaching mutual agreement that bring Aceh to current state through the Helsinki MoU. The implementation of the Helsinki MoU is considered as a success in many conflict literatures. There are various factors that leads to that, which are elaborated in this chapter. The first section discusses briefly on the beginning of the history of the conflict between *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh Movement/GAM). The second section present the first attempt at peace settlement, through Humanitarian Pause and Cessation of Hostilities (CoHA), which eventually failed. The last section discusses the dynamic of The Helsinki MoU elaborating briefly on its contents and why it has succeeded to be implemented.

5.1 The beginning of the conflict in Aceh: GAM and Indonesia

Aceh has had a long history of conflict with Indonesia, dating back as early as 1953. After Indonesia gained its independence, a promise was given by President Sukarno that Aceh will have greater autonomy, having the right to implement Shari'a Law. The alleged breaking of that promise was used as justification for the armed rebellion against the new national government, which was known as "Darul Islam" movement (Feener, 2013, p. 35). The conflict lasted for around 9 years, with agreements being made with most of the rebel leaders in 1959, granting autonomy in the fields of religion, *adat* (customs), and education. The movement however is not officially declared to end as Daud Bereuh[3] and his followers continued their resistance maintaining his demands for the state implementations of Islamic law in Aceh until he was granted a pardon in 1962 (Feener, 2013, p. 36).

[3] Before the independence of Indonesia, Aceh was divided into two strands of Islamic practice –traditionalist and modernist – Tgk. M. Daud Bereuh was a leader of the modernist PUSA, who was a dominant group after the independence and pursued the agenda of implementing Shari'a in the making of a modern Aceh. He stated that President Sukarno personally came and said that Aceh would be "left alone to implement Shari'a as the law of the land". It is claimed that the breaking of the promise serves as the justification to the rebellion.

Nationally, Indonesia was experiencing political turmoil with the change of administration to President Suharto, starting the era of authoritarianism. Under Suharto's administration, with the consolidation of the role of the military, Indonesia entered what is referred as New Order era (1966-1998). The 'special territory' previously given to Aceh after Darul Islam movement, gradually became undermined, due to a more dominating central government in Java. New Order era was characterized with the creation of single Indonesian identity, vast economic development and transmigration of Javanese people to remoter areas in Indonesia (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 97). Despite the applaudable economic development during the era, the alleged exploitation of natural resources was a big problem in various parts in Indonesia, including Aceh. Aceh has always had abundant natural gas fields, making the region one of the world's leading producers in the 1970s (Aspinall, 2012, p. 55). The revenues from the industry, however, were not divided proportionately by the central government, leaving Aceh with smaller percentage, making them feel exploited. In addition to that, the settlement of Javanese due to the migration policy also create a greater economic disparity. Most of the industries prefer to employ highly skilled workers who were mainly the Javanese, providing less chance for local Acehnese to be employed. Many scholars (Aspinall, 2012; Stange & Patock, 2010; Törnquist, 2011) see that these factors fueled Acehnese discontent prompting the establishment of Free Aceh Movement (GAM) under Hasan di Tiro in December 4, 1976.

Taking a different approach from Daud Bereuh with regard to the Darul Islam movement, Hasan di Tiro's agenda was focused on creating an independent state of Aceh. He made a declaration that Aceh is to be "free and independent from all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the island of Java" adding that "We (Acehnese) have no historic, political, cultural, economic or geographic with them, […] We, the people of Aceh, Sumatra would have no quarrel with the Javanese, if they had stayed in their own country, and if they had not tried to lord it over us" (di Tiro, 1976, see Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 97). The central government then responded with violence, causing di Tiro and prominent leaders of GAM to flee the country in 1979. They found refuge in Sweden, providing time to reorganize and had military training in Libya for around 800 fighters. After GAM re-organized, they returned as an armed secessionist movement and was countered with repressive measures by the central government. This period is known as *Daerah Operasi Militer* (Military Operation Zone, DOM) lasting from 1990-1998. Until now, it is infamously known as one of the greatest military abuse, as the casualties, including the civilians are estimated to be at least 1,000-3,000 killed, 900-1,400 missing and presumed dead and 500 maimed (Huber, 2004, pp. 13–14). DOM

was not the only period of military abuse in the conflict between GAM and Indonesia. In 2003, a martial law was imposed in Aceh allowing *Tentara Negara Indonesia* (Indonesian National Military/TNI) to launch a major military offensive lasting until 2004 ("Aceh's Peace Agreement," 2005). During these periods of conflict between GAM and Indonesian government (GoI), there were prior attempts of ceasefire –what is known to be Humanitarian Pause and Cessation of Hostilities (COHA).

5.2 First attempt at peace: Humanitarian Pause and Cessation of Hostilities (COHA)

The Helsinki MoU was not the only attempt exhausted to end the conflict between GAM and Indonesia. After the fall of authoritarian rule with Suharto stepping down from his position in 1998, his successor – President B.J. Habibie – was moving on the direction of a more democratic Indonesia with *Reformasi* (reform) era. He also made a promise to investigate past human rights abuses, followed by public apology by the armed forces chief General Wiranto after the withdrawal of non-organic TNI troops, which serves as strategy to give into the demands of the pro-referendum during that time (Sindre, 2009, p. 249). In 1999, under the administration of President Abdurrahman Wahid chose a shift of approach in countering the demand for independence. The representative of the then newly established Henry Dunant Centre (HDC) had met with the President hinting that they might be able to help in facilitating contact (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 10). Upon realizing that both have faced military stalemate, Hassan Wirajuda – Indonesian ambassador to the UN in Geneva – and Hasan di Tiro were positive on the possibility of holding peace talk (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 11).

The first peace talk between the government of Indonesia and GAM –Humanitarian Pause – started around March and resulted in the signing of "Joint Understanding on Humanitarian Pause for Aceh" on May 12 and came into effect on June 2 (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 15). This agreement was constructed on the basis of establishing mechanisms to implement the Humanitarian Pause, aiming, among other things, to allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the population as well as promoting "confidence-building measures toward a peaceful solution to the conflict situation in Aceh" (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 15). The agreement, nonetheless, was considered vulnerable as the foundation is considered weak in ensuring ceasefire. Violence then soon took place followed by a series of military offensives.

In 2001, under the administration of President Megawati Soekarnoputri, a Special Autonomy under the name of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) Law for which reserved the province as the regional focus of authority was proposed. It was however still insufficient to persuade GAM to give up their struggles, despite most Acehnese agreeing to it (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 26).

In 2002, negotiations with HDC as mediator reopened. The negotiation was incentivized by stalemate after the commander of GAM was killed, demonstrating government's forces ability to eliminate senior GAM leaders at will (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 28). Due to this, GAM's options became limited and within a week they eventually agreed to a new talk in Geneva. The talk led to the signing of Cessation of Hostilities (COHA) on December 9, 2002. The sequence of how peace was supposed to be attained by the COHA starts with ceasefire, followed by disarmament and demilitarization (Aspinall, 2005, p. 4). COHA aimed to first reduce hostilities thus making it possible to move on to all-inclusive dialogue, it purposefully left out the crucial issues dividing the two parties. It involved first, two major demilitarization measures, second, reactivation of the Joint Security Committee (JSC) previously established during the Humanitarian Pause, third, the implementation will be monitored with the presence of international monitors (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, pp. 32–33). After "the necessary security and freedom of movement for all participants" had been established, the next phase would be the holding of an "all-inclusive dialogue", which will seek to review elements of NAD law (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 33).

In the end, COHA also failed to sustain peace in Aceh as within a week of its signing, each party accused the other of major violations. In understanding to what leads to the failure of the agreement, Aspinall and Crouch (2003) conclude that the fundamental reason was due to the huge gap between the goals of both parties and their unwillingness to abandon its position (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 45). Huber (2004) elaborated further into five points as to why COHA failed to deliver its expectation. The first factor is attributed to the fragile bargaining zone. Both parties had differing perception on "special autonomy" for Aceh, as the government saw it as autonomy while GAM's unwillingness to give up their independence entails a provision much higher than autonomy (Huber, 2004, p. 30). The questionable representation of both parties and the lack of internal cohesion plagued both parties throughout the process serve the second factor to the failure of COHA. In case of GAM, it was questionable whether they truly represent the "voice of Aceh" while Indonesian government faced criticism by the

senior parliamentary leaders followed by attempts to dismantle the implementation of COHA by the TNI (Huber, 2004, p. 31).

Third, the dynamic of the negotiation process reduces the time to generate and reflecting on additional options for creative solutions to negotiating problems. This affects to how they could build greater support among constituencies not directly involved with the process. This was due to narrowing of the negotiations to focus on GAM under the Stockholm-based leadership and a relatively small team from the central government (Huber, 2004, p. 31). Fourth, the narrowing of constituencies also impact the implementation of COHA. In implementation phase, both sides exploited ambiguities in the COHA to advance their own objectives or undermine those of their opponent, which facilitate spoiling especially by the TNI who deliberately thwart the entire process (Huber, 2004, p. 32). The last factor contributing the failure of COHA lies on the weak structure of JSC and its inability to impose sanctions. JSC which function as the third party guarantees lack credibility, eroding the parties' confidence in the process and ruined implementation (Huber, 2004, p. 32).

5.3 The Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding: "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed"

The breakdown of COHA leads to one of the grossest military offensives in Aceh – *Darurat Militer* (Military Emergency/DM) in May 2003. The strategies applied include close monitoring among civilian population in order to cut rebel supply chain as well as establishment of civilian militias, whose tasks were to support TNI's operations including providing intelligence of GAM (Aspinall, 2005, p. 7). These strategies led to various arbitrary kidnapping and torture of civilian population by the TNI due to allegation of their association with GAM. On the GAM side, the establishment of civilian militias also led to them suspecting fellow Acehnese. In some cases, violence was directed at Acehnese civilians due to allegations of people being spies for TNI.

The Military Emergency lasted for a year until an unprecedented Indian Ocean tsunami hit Aceh on December 26, 2004. This not only caused a high number of casualties but also major destruction, disabling the normal functioning of Aceh society. The tsunami is widely believed to be the biggest determinant pushing both parties – GAM and the government of Indonesia

(GoI) – to return to the negotiating table. This is factual to an extent, as the devastation caused by the tsunami aided in de-escalating tensions and led to the discontinuation of military operations. However, relying mainly on the tsunami as the factor behind the negotiation is misleading. Negotiations actually began before the tsunami. Aspinall (2008) has identified two reasons as to why the talks began: condition similar to a mutually hurting stalemate and the change of administration. Zartman (2001) discusses two approaches to the study and practice of negotiation, one of which emphasizes on the importance of timing of efforts –the theory of "ripeness". The concept of a ripe moment centers on the parties' perception of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS). The idea behind the concept is that, when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them, it prompts them then to seek a way out (Zartman, 2000, p. 5). The condition approximating mutually hurting stalemate can also be seen in the case of Aceh, although as Aspinall (2008) argued it was only experienced on one side only – GAM members. He observed that aside from the growing sense of battle fatigue, erosion as well as international isolation, there was also a decline in trust towards GAM movements, as with the intensifying military brutality causing high number of casualties, showing that the movement had been unable to protect ordinary people (Aspinall, 2005, p. 11).

Despite not experiencing the same level of crisis of confidence on the government side, the military offensive was further from its goal of eliminating GAM (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 15). National Armed Forces Chief Endriartono Sutarto stated that "the number of GAM has declined, but so long as the basic problems are not resolved, it will be like one dies, another takes his place, two die, four take their place", which shows that the military was also experiencing a crisis of confidence to a certain extent, acknowledging their inability to completely eradicate GAM (Aspinall, 2005, p. 12). The growing fatigues among GAM supporters prompt the "ripeness" of situation for strategic retreat. Furthermore, there were also some people in Indonesian government and political elites who expressed their opinion that military victory on its own is impossible and that negotiations were. Their view was backed by the change of government strengthening the hand of those who favored talks (Aspinall, 2005, pp. 13–14).

This leads to Aspinall's argument of the second factor –change in administration. 2004 marked the start of the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) administration. SBY and his vice president –Jusuf Kalla (JK) played a big role into the opening of negotiations. Prior to holding the

presidential office, SBY had been the government's chief sponsor of the peace negotiations when he was serving as Coordinating Minister for Political Affairs and Security issue *(Menkopolhukam)* (Aspinall, 2005, p. 14). Jusuf Kalla on the other hand is known as the leading figure in negotiations that transformed communal conflicts in Maluku and Poso in Sulawesi, as he himself personally believe in the importance of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes (Aspinall, 2005, p. 15). In addition to that, Kalla being a politician from the long-standing *Partai Golongan Karya* (Party of Functional Groups or Golkar), was considered to be more likely to bring Golkar support in the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Indonesia* (House of Representative/DPR-RI) which will help overcoming the possibility of blocked legislative provisions for a settlement (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 16). Kalla also sponsored the first efforts to restart talks with GAM in early 2004 by pursuing two separate tracks: first, by endeavoring contact and win over key GAM commanders in the field and second, by making approached to the exile leaders in Sweden (Aspinall, 2005, p. 16). It can be seen that the beginning of the talk cannot be simplified to the tsunami factor, although the tsunami acts as catalyst for the peace talks, helping speeding things up with the talk.

There are several key differences between the negotiation process behind the Helsinki MoU and the negotiation during CoHA. The first is the mediator, CoHA was mediated by a relatively new NGO – HDC, the Helsinki negotiation process was mediated by CMI (Crisis Management Initiative), which was founded by the former Finnish President, Martti Ahtisaari. The difference in mediators played a fundamental role in the dynamic of the negotiation process. Aside from the factor of experience. Martti had an exemplary track record in resolving conflicts, notably Namibia and later in Kosovo (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 16)**.** CoHA, on the other hand, was HDC's first case. Second, there was a marked difference between the approaches taken by each mediator. HDC had designed an open-ended process concentrating first on ceasing hostilities, while President Ahtisaari and the CMI reversed the order and used the formula of "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed". This approach put focus on broad political settlement that had to be agreed upon before the agreement could be implemented, which fundamentally altered the negotiations (Aspinall, 2005, p. 22).

Another important difference concerns the positions of negotiators who were directly involved in the peace talks. In the first round, the Indonesian delegation was of the highest ranking, informally headed by then Coordinating Minister of Politics and Security (*Menkopolhukam)*, Admiral (retired) Widodo Adi Sucipto with Minister for Justice and Human Rights

(Menkumham), Hamid Awaluddin as chief negotiator, and State Minister for Communication and Information Sofyan Djalil, an Acehnese. The choice of such senior personnel reflected a new seriousness of purpose. While previously, the chief negotiator had been Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, a former ambassador (Aspinall, 2005, p. 21). The negotiators on the GAM side also included senior leaders residing in Stockholm, such as "Prime Minister" Malik Mahmud and "Foreign Minister" Zainy Abdullah (Aspinall, 2005, p. 21).

The first round of talks began on January 27, 2005 in Helsinki, Damien Kingsbury, who took on the role of political advisor to GAM shared that none of the delegates had much idea of what was expected of them, he also added that there was also a lack of clarity about how the process would proceed as well as its rules (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 23). Broadly speaking, there were four main sets of issues: First were topics related to security and demilitarization, covering the basic principles and the thorny technical problems. Second, monitoring and enforcement that was considered inadequate during COHA and had contributed to its collapse. This issue was a bit harder to negotiate to Indonesian government as they were more resistant on internationalizing the effort, hence the composition, size, and powers of any monitoring team were likely to be very contested issue. Third issue revolves around amnesty and economic compensation for former GAM members. Fourth was the future political status of Aceh, which was considered to be the most difficult issue (Aspinall, 2005, p. 22).

Applying the principle "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" was deemed effective in facilitating the opening of the issues that were seen to be pertinent. The approach was also seen to help keep the talks alive while GAM could be persuaded to examine the autonomy (Aspinall, 2005, p. 23). Starting off with the talk, both parties had contradicting offers. GoI offers to grant special autonomy, while GAM was prioritizing on ceasefire, which was immediately rejected by GoI. This was GoI's strategy of pressuring GAM to make greater concession by immediately accepting special autonomy provision and to prevent GAM from using ceasefire to consolidate their power (Aspinall, 2005, p. 24).

In the second round of talks, starting on 19 February 2005, GAM made a major breakthrough by making a concession of accepting an arrangement less than independence. Despite that, GAM was hesitant about the offer of special autonomy, as it reflected the status quo, meaning a violent military rule (Aspinall, 2005, p. 26; Kingsbury, 2006, p. 33). Seeing that special autonomy was on the table, some wanted GAM to pull out rather than be trapped, which then

prompted the alternative of "self-government" within the territorial structure of the Republic of Indonesia (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 33). Self-government here refers to the necessity of local elections, discussion on who could vote in Acehnese elections, the establishment of a local and independent legislature and a local and independent judiciary. Security issues would be stressed as a precondition of any political settlement (Kingsbury, 2006, pp. 33–34). It is important to note however, that with the offer of self-government does not mean that GAM had completely abandoned independence, it was merely not being brought "to the table" (Aspinall, 2005, p. 28).

Although reluctant at first, the GoI's delegation made concessions to their offer of special autonomy and agreed to take the term of "self-government" to Jakarta for consideration (Kingsbury, 2006, p. 44). Aspinall argues that chief points of self-government as envisioned by GAM, that includes power to grant passports to residents, setting separate interest rates, different political system and one that may include political parties, among others, is considered to have a very far-reaching powers beyond what is allowed in the existing constitutional arrangements (Aspinall, 2005, p. 31). Despite the rough start between the two parties due to contradicting offers, the concessions made by both parties by agreeing on the term "self-government" help in keeping the talk running smoothly**.** That is, however until another deadlock was met during the fifth round, when the discussion on security issues and local political parties were on the table. M. Nur Djuli and Nurdin Abdul Rahman who participated as GAM negotiators personally shared that the talk hit a deadlock touching upon the security issues, particularly over the number of the troops to remain in Aceh (Djuli & Rahman, 2008, p. 30). GAM negotiators initially proposed 4000 while Jakarta proposed 25,000, they finally agreed on 14,700 organic military forces and 9100 organic police forces to remain in Aceh (article 4.7).

Another stumbling block was the demand for recognition of local political parties. The proposition of allowing local political parties first arose as a major point of contention in January 2001 during HDC-mediated talks, after the two sides had agreed to explore "democratic processes" in which "GAM and supporters of independence may participate fully in the political process" and "conditions under which GAM would transform their means of achieving their political objectives in a democratic way" (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 20). According to the existing law on national parties, in order for political parties to run for elections in national and regional legislative bodies, a political party had to show that is has

functioning branches in at least 50 percent of provinces and 50 percent of the districts in those provinces (Aspinall, 2005, p. 38). The purpose of this law is initially aimed to prevent the emergence of parties with purely local agendas and preventing disintegrative forces from establishing a foothold in the political system. However, several amendments have been made to the law, such as in 2004 on regional governments allowing for direct popular election of heads of regional governments.

The government of Indonesia, however, was resolute that recognition of local parties and new elections were to be ruled out from the beginning of the talks. This was mainly due to concerns about a "domino effect" that would spread through the diverse Indonesia, which would undermine national unity (Aspinall, 2005, p. 40). Another fear was that a "GAM Party" might win local elections, which would probably strengthen separatism rather than undermine it (Aspinall, 2005, p. 40). Responding to this, the GoI offered an arrangement on the basis of co-optation, where former GAM members would be able to run for executive office, still under the existing political parties in the direct election (Aspinall, 2005, p. 40). This was then refused by GAM, as they were seeking an arrangement "not just for GAM, but putting a case for the democratization of Aceh, which will allow as many political parties as the Acehnese people want to establish and support (GAM statement, July 13, 2005 see Aspinall, 2005, p. 40). Aspinall argues that GAM's refusal of the offer "would have made GAM's leaders supplicants" to the existing national parties, which will leave no guarantee for the organization to maintain its identity (Aspinall, 2005, p. 41)

For GAM negotiators, having local parties was a "bottom line issue" (Djuli & Rahman, 2008, p. 30). There were several reasons as to why GAM perceived local political parties as essential. First, learning from the prior negotiation back in 2003, the government's decision to reject GAM's demand to become a political party and run for election seems to have led GAM toward a political dead-end (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 47). This political dead-end, then presumably drove GAM's determination to use the ceasefire agreed that year to strengthen itself militarily and hence assist in destroying the entire process (Aspinall, 2005, p. 39). Second, GAM had always been motivated by a strong sense that Acehnese identity was separate and distinct from Indonesian identity, hence they see that the establishment of Aceh-based parties would create space for the distinct identity to be manifested through political system (Aspinall, 2005, p. 39). For the negotiation process, inclusion of local political parties is considered necessary to "provide GAM with greater incentives to participate in conventional politics as an alternative

to armed struggle" (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003, p. 47). The Helsinki MoU was officially signed on 15 August 2005, ending the 30-year-long conflict between GAM and Indonesia. It was then naturalized to *Undang-Undang Pemerintahan Aceh no. 11 tahun 2006* (Law of Governing Aceh/LoGA). It can be seen that the most striking provision of the Helsinki MoU –regional autonomy reflects the *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices. The subsequent chapter thus explore how the dispersive power-sharing institution created by the peace agreement, has affected the dynamic of post-conflict political stability in Aceh.

6 Findings and analysis: Analyzing the five operational concepts of political stability

For many scholars of conflict management, successful implementation of power-sharing peace agreements is an important measure of "peaceful settlement", primarily indicating the credible commitment to an agreement by former warring parties. The implementation of the Helsinki MoU is considered a measure of success. Like most peace agreements, the Helsinki MoU and its legally-binding LoGA can also be considered an elite agreement. The question thus remains as to how the post-conflict dynamics that are a product of the peace agreement, affects not only the elites, but also the civilian population. And following this line of enquiry, in what ways have the dispersive power-sharing institutions introduced in Aceh influenced political stability?

Departing from operational concepts of political stability as defined by Margolis (2010), the first section discusses the link between regional autonomy and elite-oriented arrangement to the concept of authority, focusing on the trend of who are occupying the office from 2006 until recently and the dynamic of how they get to the office. The second section focuses on the perception of civilian population, how legitimate the people authority is in post-conflict Aceh. The third section is a discussion on the second operational concept defined by Margolis (2010) – resilience. In analyzing resilience, the three-level relationship is discussed, which is the relationship between the Aceh government and the central government, the Aceh government and the Aceh ordinary citizen, and the Aceh government and local political elites. The last operationalization discusses changes in authority, focusing on people's electoral participation in the analysis of elections, as discussed in the authority section.

6.1 Authority: From Rebels to Rulers, From Guerrilla to Government

In theory, one of the advantages of regional autonomy is greater authority of the regional elites to impose policies in the region. Local government will be able to govern themselves without having to worry of being arbitrarily constrained by the central government, which is important for post-conflict societies especially the during the transition years. Other than regional autonomy, the purpose of dispersive power-sharing institution is to provide security for the elites, which is mostly translated to former rebel elites occupying key positions in the local

government. When this is achieved, one can argue that the possibility to return to war is lessened. This can be seen in post-conflict Aceh, where many applauded as one of the examples of success. From the first *Pemilihan Kepala Daerah* or *Pilkada* (regional election) in 2006 and the *Pemilihan Legislatif* or *Pileg* (legislative election) in 2009 until recently, former GAM members have occupied most executive seats –Governor and District Head. PA, former GAM political party also managed to occupy most seats in the legislative body.

As agreed in the Helsinki MoU (Art. 1.2.3), an election for the head of the Aceh administration and other elected officials was conducted in 2006. Irwandi Yusuf, who is former spokesperson of GAM and Muhammad Nazar won the election as independent candidates gaining 38.2% of the total votes (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 34). The second *Pilkada* in 2012 was also won by former GAM members and PA candidates –Zaini Abdullah (former GAM Minister of Health and later GAM Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Muzakir Manaf (former GAM Civil/Ideological Trainer) gaining 55.77% of the votes (Warsidi, 2012). The latest *Pilkada* in 2017 was won by Irwandi Yusuf again and Nova Iriansyah gaining 898.710 votes (*Irwandi Yusuf-Nova Iriansyah Resmi Jadi Pemenang Hasil Pilkada Aceh 2017*, 2017). During this time, Irwandi and Nova was supported by various political parties, including national parties –PD (*Partai Demokrat/Democratic Party),* PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/*Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), PNA (*Partai Nasional Aceh/*Aceh National Party), PDA (*Partai Damai Aceh/*Aceh Peace Party), and PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/*National Awakening Party) (Warsidi, 2016). The last *Pilkada* marked the first-time part of the national party and non-GAM affiliated member occupied deputy governorship, which shows the dominance of local political parties in Aceh.

The legislative election in Aceh was first held in 2009. Through this election, PA dominated the seats, winning 33 out of 69 seats in Aceh's People's Representatives Council (DPRA) (Barter, 2011, p. 121). During the subsequent legislative election (in 2014 and 2019), PA showed constant decreasing seats in the DPRA although they remain as majority[4]. This shows that post-conflict Aceh political dynamic has been dominated by former rebel group, despite the existence of other local political parties and national parties. The Helsinki MoU was negotiated only between the warring parties (GAM and GoI) where they decide to share power

[4] In 2014 legislative election, PA won 29 out of 81 seats in the DPRA, and in the 2019 legislative election, PA secured 18 out of 81 seats.

territorially or disperse power and grant regional autonomy to Aceh, but at the same time, this arrangement effectively block other political movements from power, which could have an adverse effect to democracy, where other groups or any opposition groups lag behind as they lack resources (Jarstad, 2008, p. 124). Resources here does not necessarily mean financing, it can come in the form of gaining the power over the press, gathering support under the basis of pre-MoU struggle or a head start in forming a party. The uneven start for parties can have long-term effects on the prospects of multi-party democracy (Jarstad, 2008, p. 124).

Many analysts have stated that Aceh's ability to conduct elections less than one year after the peace agreement signals bright prospects for democratization in Aceh. Furthermore, with former rebels occupying executive and legislative seats, expectations were high that peace would endure, as this was a sign of successful democratic integration of the former independence movement into Aceh's local politics (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 104). Despite the arguable success, power allocation and opportunities in local politics were not shared equally. In regional autonomy arrangements through decentralization of power, opportunities to participate in the government are assumed to increase (Brancati, 2006, p. 655). However, starting from the negotiation table, only rebel elites were involved, and power allocation in post-conflict Aceh is concentrated mainly with rebels. They have a bigger opportunity and more resources to gain "votes" from the people as compared to other groups[5]. Empirically, this can be seen in how former GAM-affiliated members managed to occupy gubernatorial seats since 2006, and how PA as former GAM political party vehicle, maintain its dominance in the DPRA since 2009.

There are several factors underlying their dominance in the government over the years, related to the strategies they resort to in the lead up to the election and during the election. In the 2006 election, former GAM-affiliated candidates relied on four things as observed by Clark and Palmer (2008): the support for their pre-MoU struggle, their pro-poor and pro-Aceh image, widespread disillusionment with national parties and local bureaucrats, and a desire for change (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 33). It is important to remember the context that Aceh had just get out of 30-year-long protracted conflict, and that having election as agreed upon in the MoU

[5] After the signing of Helsinki MoU and leading up to 2009 general election (where local political party can participate), other elite groups of Aceh formed their own local political party. SIRA (Independent Voice for the Acehnese) and PRA (Aceh People's Party), formed by civil society counter-elites, PDA (Aceh Sovereignty Party) and PAAS (Prosperous and Safe Aceh Party) representing Aceh's religious elites or *ulama,* and PBA (Aceh Unity Party), another party formed by religious elite –former Muhammadiyah activist.

signaled commitment of both former warring parties, making the desire for change big. On the other hand, post-conflict transition also opens up possibilities for violence to erupt as well as misuse of supposedly democratic procedures. This can be seen in the strategies that candidates use –intimidation, money politics and patron-client relationship as iterated by several experts in the interview. Although, some observes that statistically, violent election-related incident during the first post-conflict election is considered low –only 28 incidents, as 73 violent local-level conflicts were recorded in the Aceh Conflict Monitoring Updates (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 13).

The first strategy – intimidation, fearmongering and threat, was widely used from the first election in 2006, and despite the expected decrease years later, this was still prevalent in 2009 legislative election. Afriko[6] (Interview E2) observes that:

> It [use of intimidation as a strategy] started from 2006 and escalated until 2012…they use jargon such as 'other party that is not Partai Aceh are haram[7]'or 'you [Acehnese] are un-Acehnese if you vote for the other [party].

2009 legislative election marked the first time PA participated in the election. Reports of intimidation by PA during the campaign period as well as at the polls towards other local parties were circulating, as well as intimidation towards party volunteers and candidates from smaller local parties (Barter, 2011, p. 127). This kind of strategy however was not only exclusive to PA, as PA cadres and offices were subjected to political murders and arson attacks (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 110). Afriko (Interview E2) notes that this strategy was not only directed towards other political parties and its campaign teams, but also to voters who are civilian. This type of strategy may work for short-term solution; however, it potentially creates animosity towards former GAM-affiliated members and the party in long-term period, risking losing legitimacy and support for the next election. This view is shared by one of the respondents (Interview F8) who stated that "the strategy that [former] GAM-affiliated members resorted to actually amounted to deaths, which makes me hate [former] GAM and PA".

[6] Marzi Afriko is a researcher with expertise on political dynamics and peacebuilding efforts in Aceh. He worked extensively on peacebuilding efforts in Aceh with World Bank and assisted research by Edward Aspinall.
[7] Forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law (*Haram*, n.d.)

Other than intimidation and threats, PA also used jargons that especially set them apart from other political parties – local and national. As GAM was the only group directly involved in the negotiation of the Helsinki MoU, they claim themselves as the only legitimate party while other local political parties were only the products of "the grace of the central government" (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 112). Afriko (Interview E2) notes that jargons such as "other parties are *haram"* were used during the campaign period, to undermine other local political parties and asserting their dominance. PA also relied heavily on Acehnese culture as the party's identity –parading in traditional Acehnese clothes with the famous ceremonial daggers (*rencong),* and communicated in Acehnese (Barter, 2011, p. 119). Afriko (Interview E2) further notes that there were jargons going around that those who do not vote for PA are un-Acehnese, as PA embodied themselves as one with Acehnese culture and Islamic values. In regard to the program or "promises", PA focuses on the full implementation of the Helsinki MoU, one that some scholars argue was the contributing factor to their victory (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 111).

Darwin[8] (Interview E8) observes that the use of intimidation and threats, however, has lessened over the years, as it is deemed no longer effective to influence the electorates. The strategy used mainly by PA recently resembles the ones widely used by national parties – money politics and what Darwin (Interview E8) termed as social investment. Prior studies show that the use of money politics is not a relatively new strategy that candidates and political parties use in Aceh (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 29). In 2006 *Pilkada,* money politics can be seen in many forms: some directly gave out *envelopes* with cash, some provided meals and "transportation money" when villagers attended their rallies, some other made social visit or *silaturrahmi* prior to the campaign period with *buah tangan* or souvenirs in the form of donations, care packages or food stuffs (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 29). In recent years, the form of money politics usually come in a form of *sembako* (groceries/household stuffs) or veils and sarong or *buah jaro*. Money politics on its own however is not an effective strategy to ensure votes, people may take the form of money politics, but they could still vote their preference or even not vote at all. In regard to this, Darwin (Interview E8) observes the second factor that candidates use to gather support–social investment.

[8] Rizkika Darwin is a lecturer in Political Science at Ar-Raniry Islamic State University (UIN Ar-Raniry). Her research topic interest includes political parties and election, gender studies and public policy.

Social investment here can be seen in a form of forming alliance with or seeking endorsement from a respected figure among the people, making use of populism and the charismatic appeal of the figure, usually Islamic cleric as observed by Darwin (Interview E8). This can be seen in how Irwandi and Nova use the support of Abu Tumin –an *Ulama Besar Karismatik* (a top and charismatic Islamic cleric) in Aceh. The campaign for 2017 Election was the first time Abu Tumin involved himself in politics and endorsed any candidates (*Abu Tumin Meminta Rakyat Aceh Memilih Irwandi-Nova*, 2017; Umar, 2017b). This eventually leads to Irwandi and Nova winning the election in 2017. Although this is also accompanied by the changing character of Acehnese people compared to earlier years after the signing of the Helsinki MoU, as Acehnese have become more pragmatic in weighing the pros and cons of each candidate as noted by Darwin (Interview E8).

The third characteristic as Mahdi[9] (Interview E3) notes is one of patron-client system. He observes that:

> With independent candidate winning in 2006, local elites started to look for patron for long-term, which meant that they have to follow national political parties… during the presidential election, local parties couldn't participate, and each parties have shown their preference to certain national political party that are in hope will help consolidate their position during *Pilkada*… [in 2014 presidential election] how can Muzakir Manaf, as a former Supreme Commander of GAM supports Gerindra Party and Prabowo[10], [this] is an evidence enough that it is based on interest.

Despite an exemplary beginning –independent candidate winning election in 2006 – and high hopes of a less elitist arrangement with the mechanism of local party, in 2009 the characteristics went back to the patten of patron-client system that resembles that of Indonesian as noted by Mahdi (Interview E3). This is motivated by several factors: local parties not being able to meet the parliamentary threshold and compete to enter national legislatures, local parties seeking to consolidate their support for regional election, local parties seeking financial support and furthering the parties' individual interest. The form of patron-client relationship can be seen in

[9] Saiful Mahdi is a survey and policy analyst. He was also the executive director at the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS) from 2009 until 2016.
[10] Prabowo Subianto is currently the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. He was 2014 and 2019 Presidential Candidate and a former Lieutenant General serving in the Special Forces *(Kopassus),* who was at the forefront during Indonesian military operations in Aceh.

how PA that is exclusive to former GAM members –mostly former GAM combatants – endorsed Prabowo who is a former Lieutenant General of *Kopassus* in the lead up to 2014 Presidential Election (Warsidi, 2014). In turn, Prabowo also explicitly state his full support towards Muzakir Manaf in 2017 *Pilkada* and urging Acehnese to vote for him as "he is very fitting as the leader of Aceh in the near future" (Umar, 2017a). This is considered very concerning as this may erode the local political parties supposedly pro-Acehnese people agendas and interest and in turn, transform it as a platform for elites to seek further power with the national parties.

These dynamics on how elites achieve seats in the government help shedding a light on how arrangements that aim primarily on elites, and negotiation phase that is not inclusive to all parts of the society risk undermining democracy in its implementation. Many argues that Aceh post-conflict election and how former rebels are integrated into bureaucracy is a success story and that it kept them away from the possibility of rebelling against the state. This is factual to some extent; however, the arrangement also erases the main reason why local political parties were made in the beginning – as a step of Aceh's democratization by allowing as many political parties as the Acehnese want to establish and support. In the implementation, some uses it as an arena for elites to further their interest and undermine others. Authority is closely related to how the informal perceive or judge the formal, which relates to the concept of legitimacy. The next section discusses on whether integration of former rebels to governmental positions is deem legitimate, and what reasons underlying that.

6.2 Legitimacy: Acehnese perspective of the local government

The concept of legitimacy is closely related to the concept of authority. If authority is measured by the ability to enact policies, legitimacy is measured by the ability of the authority in meeting as well as representing the needs and concerns of the civilian population. The legitimacy of the formal is strong when these needs and concerns are then turned into policies to be enacted for the informal. Regional autonomy is theorized to generate strong legitimacy, as geographically, the government is closer to the people, increasing government's ability to enact policies based on local concerns and reducing concerns of having them arbitrarily constrained by the central government. This is of particular importance for post-conflict societies, to have leaders that represent their needs and are sensitive to their needs.

As previously discussed, post-conflict Aceh's government insofar has been dominated by former GAM. As much as this is an evidence of successful integration of former rebels to bureaucracy, where elites are provided with enough security not to return to war, this dynamic might not be as much of a success for the civilian population. As there is a risk that the actors will continue to use violent tactics to affect the outcome of future elections (Jarstad, 2008, p. 125). The strategies that elites resorted to win emphasizes less on the policy priorities, exhibiting that candidates were not responsive to the needs and priorities of civilian populations (Clark & Palmer, 2008, p. 21). This is particularly sensitive in a post-conflict society, especially with former rebels occupying the government. Despite the seemingly effective solution to prevent a return to war, their approach to political campaign affect legitimacy in several aspects.

First, the history of conflict plays an important role in understanding how most respondents perceive the post-conflict local government. Some of them, especially those who have clear memories of the conflict, tend to show strong disagreement towards former GAM (mainly combatants) presiding the executive and legislative seats. This was exacerbated by the strategies former GAM and PA used to gain votes, as they are not as peaceful or as democratic as they initially expected. There is a growing concern among some of the respondents that the use of intimidation and threats will continue on even when they preside the executive or the legislative, one respondent (Interview F7) stated that "most of [former] GAM have strong personality, what I'm afraid of is that they will bring their habits when they are in the government". Some of them (Interview F8 and Interview M2) believe that former GAM will not change their habits only because they are not fighting on the ground, and their track record up until recently has not shown that they are able to perform their duties based on Acehnese concerns. One respondent (Interview M2) clearly expresses his "antipathy towards [former] GAM" as he sees that GAM track record contributes to how "Aceh is more closed as a society".

Level of education that candidates have also plays a part to determine their ability to govern. Some of the respondents (Interview F2 and Interview F4) think that level of education influence how the person will respond to the people's concerns and demands as "people who are not educated are like that [don't know how to lead and take important position]". The better educated they are the better they are in formulating policies that are accommodative to people's concerns. Most of former GAM (especially combatants) have low level of education, and they were still able to preside seats at the executive (mostly as district head or *keuchik).* This then

translates to how they are not deemed able to lead and do not know the duties they have to fulfill once they are in the position. The incapability of governing seen from the incapability of managing district finances and implementing bottom-up processes in formulating policies opens up the possibility of abuse of power by "acting out of their personal interest" as noted by F6 (Interview F6).

History of conflict, the use of intimidation as well as the incapability of performing based on what they promised during their administration contributes to the low trust or even distrust towards the government. One respondent (Interview M5) who has a very clear, first-hand experience of the atrocity during the conflict, perceive both GAM and TNI to be equally cruel and responsible, he clearly expresses that:

> …right now, I can't be optimistic about a better change in Aceh, *ini masih mendung* (it's still cloudy) and there hasn't been any reasons to be optimistic [about Aceh government until now] … and we haven't seen their *nawaitu* (intention) being translated [when they are already elected in the government] … also I think GAM and TNI are the same, they are both in conflict with one another, they fight one another, [so] they are both responsible. I have no sympathy towards them [GAM and TNI]… if those who sits on the government are those with military clothes, we already know how they will be… it's hard to trust all those people in the government, since most of them do not do what they promised to do.

This translate to how he has "no sympathy anymore towards GAM and TNI", it is also exacerbated by how most of them had a lot of promises and do not do as campaigned when presiding the seats. Other respondents (Interview M2 and Interview F2) agree that the primary reason why people (them included) have low trust towards the government was because of the promises that have never been delivered when they are already elected. Most of these promises have always centered around welfare, something that for most Acehnese are compelling and optimistic. Furthermore, there is also indication of abuse of power by former GAM in the government as stated by F4 (Interview F4) where "it is easier for people who are affiliated with former GAM to get into certain positions". Although, issues with abuse of power in the government is not exclusive to Aceh government, but more of a national issue, where corruption and nepotism are omnipotent, that it risks decreasing legitimacy of the national government.

Despite all, almost every respondent and some experts cited that Irwandi-Nazar's administration in 2006 until 2012 to be a benchmark of the leadership that people need. Mahdi (Interview E3) notes that "Aceh can have sustainable peace if Aceh's leadership is back to that of 2006-2008 during the first tenure of Irwandi". Zain[11] observes that this was primarily due to how "they are able to represent the interest of Aceh and *'semangat ke-Acehan'* (spirit of Aceh)". Irwandi himself was part of GAM, ones that all respondents term as *GAM sipil* (civil GAM) as opposed to GAM combatants. The positive response from respondents was attributed to his policies and programs, ones that was considered widely to be pro-Acehnese welfare, such as JKA (*Jaminan Kesehatan Aceh/Acehnese Health Insurance),* BKPG (*Bantuan Keuangan Peumakmo Gampong/*Funding Program for Villages) and scholarship targeted for orphans.

It can be observed from here that for some respondents, the lack of legitimacy is attributed to their perception of former GAM due to the history of conflict and their first-hand experience from the conflict. For some other, their track record of not keeping their promises and policies in line was the reason for the lack of legitimacy. While for the other, it was a combination of both. This is proven to how most of the respondents mention characteristics such as "person who truly cares for the people", "going directly to the people", "responsive towards the issue on the grounds, and work for the interests of the civilian population", "person who talk the talk and walk the walk" and "person who is credible". F1 (Interview F1) provide example of her hometown:

> …take an example of the government in Blang Pidie, people got a lot of monetary help, everyone gets them, the *bupati* (district head) –Akmal Ibrahim[12] truly cares for the people. He provided what people needs.

Some (Interview F3) even claim that "their background (whether the person is a former GAM or not) is not a problem for me". While some claims that education does not play a big role for them as they believe they can learn while being on the offices.

[11] Fajran Zain is a political analyst and currently holding the position as the director of Aceh Institute. He is a former commissioner of TRC Aceh until 2017. In 2019, he ran for DPRA.
[12] Akmal Ibrahim is the district head of Aceh Barat Daya. This is his second term as district head. He is a former journalist for Aceh's local paper –Harian Serambi Indonesia.

6.3 Resilience: Aceh's government ability to adapt to change

Resilience is operationalized from the path of reform – when the authority re-shapes the policies, laws and regulations to more closely match the informal in the case of encountering a gap between the formal and the informal (Margolis, 2010, p. 334). In simple words, resilience can be measured by the ability of the government to adapt to change, through reform. The local government can be considered resilient when they decide to reform their policies, laws, regulations to cater to local concerns and meet the demands of the people. The ability of local government to govern themselves through regional autonomy is expected to foster resilience. This is because, autonomy allows local government more independence in formulating policies over time. If the local government are able to formulate them in a way that represent local concerns and priorities, the health of resilience is fostered. This is, however, depends on the political will of the authority. Often, elite-oriented characteristics such as one of dispersive power-sharing institutions aiming to provide security of the elites, could potentially lead elites to opt for loyalty towards the regime, prompting them to keep the status quo. This is harmful towards resilience of the local government, as there is a clash of interests between the ruler and what the people needs.

By winning 18 out of 81 seats in the 2019 legislative elections, PA remains a majority player in the DPRA. Since their establishment back in 2007[13], PA's missions have always centered around the issue of the Helsinki MoU and LoGA, pushing for full implementation of the MoU (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 111). Other than the trademark style of identity politics, selling issues of full implementation of the Helsinki MoU was popular among the people in the first years after the signing of the Helsinki MoU. Abdurrahman[14] (Interview E6) – who is a former GAM combatant and current member of DPRA states that:

> We had mission in our fight with GAM before. If we are independent, the welfare of the people has to increase. How to build an independent state, the privilege of

[13] PA was previously named as *Partai GAM* (GAM Party), officially opening the office in July 2007. Despite the difference acronym –*Gerakan Aceh Mandiri* (Autonomous Aceh Movement) instead of *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh Movement), authorities in Jakarta consider it to be a violation of the MoU and LoGA, attributes to the resemblance in GAM's old flag (Stange & Patock, 2010, p. 105). They eventually change it to *Partai Aceh* (Aceh Party) in late April 2008.

[14] Azhar Abdurrahman is a former GAM combatant who is currently presiding as the secretary of Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA). He is also former district head *(bupati)* of Aceh Jaya for two periods –2006 as independent candidate and later in 2012 as member of PA.

> independence has to be felt by everyone. [To compare] we have visited other countries to see their level of welfare *(tingkat kesejahteraan)*. This can be seen from their allowance/fringe benefits *(tunjangan)* that is subsidized by the government.

Warsidi (Interview E10) adds that "people had high hopes towards the former GAM combatants" especially when the agreement was often announced with promising words such as "independence" and "self-governing". While for some other groups, they follow along, mainly because most of them are "tired from the protracted conflict" as noted by M5 (Interview M5), settling that undemocratic an unstable peace is still better than no peace at all. Until recently, Afriko (Interview E2) and Zain (Interview E4) state that currently PA still push for issues in the Helsinki MoU of symbolic nature –hymn, flag, and titles.

Many former GAM members, human rights activists as well as political experts consider the translation of the agreed-upon Helsinki MoU in the LoGA to be incomplete. Many of the provisions weakened the power of local government, contradicting the purpose of the law itself. Abdurrahman (Interview E6) claims that:

> There is a lot that was lacking in LoGA, the discussion has already entered prolegnas [and it] needs to be looked into… there's a lot [of points in The Helsinki MoU], around 8 points in The Helsinki MoU that is not accommodated in the LoGA

These eight provisions in the Helsinki MoU that were not correctly translate into the LoGA, includes the integration of ex-combatants, programs that empower ex-combatants, and "other crucial things such as the name of Aceh, it was supposed to be different, and then the issue of the flag, and the title for the leaders are supposed to be different" as noted by Abdurrahman (Interview E6). Zain (Interview E4) further cites that:

> It is stated in the Helsinki MoU, and [it is] supposedly richer in contents than the special autonomy that's been implemented since 2001. But when it is translated into the LoGA, it becomes a grey area… There are also biases in regard to election provision in the LoGA, when the UU (Law) regarding election was made, it didn't take any consideration of articles in the LoGA regarding election… These days, there is a demand to revise the LoGA, objectively we want to say that there are articles in LoGA

> that don't apply anymore. The perception of betrayal is deep within the people, they think Jakarta is a traitor.

He (Interview E4) adds that there are several other provisions such as the change of wording from "in consultation with and with consent from *(dengan persetujuan dari)*"[15] to "in consultation with and with consideration of (*dengan pertimbangan oleh)"*[16] that weaken the authority of Aceh local government. Another problematic point is Art. 1.3.4 of the Helsinki MoU, which was translated to Art. 181.3, regarding the revenues from hydrocarbon deposits and other natural resources in the territory of Aceh adds Zain (Interview E4). The Helsinki MoU clearly stated that the division between the Aceh and national should be 70:30, where Aceh is entitled to receive 70% of the revenues, however in the LoGA, this was translated into a detailed wordings that seem confusing and complicated.

Marhaban (Interview E9), who was part of the GAM negotiator in Helsinki, share the same views. She (Interview E9) elaborates around eight points in which the agreed-upon provisions in the Helsinki MoU were watered down by the Government of Indonesia in the LoGA. Among these eight points, autonomy was the biggest issue as:

> It is still symbolic. The essence of autonomy that we initially mean does not exist yet, it is still far from the perspective that [we, as] Helsinki negotiators prefer. The implementation is really weak… Only because the central government has provided [autonomy] does not mean that it is as what the Acehnese expected… ask the people in the ground, do you enjoy the autonomy [being given]? Because we as negotiators do not feel that autonomy is implemented… What we envisioned of Aceh was more of self-governing, such as Åland Island, with different tile for governor and provinces, those are Indonesian naming

Marhaban (Interview E9) further express that the choice of formulating MoU at that time was due to the reason of practicality, as "it is flexible and we need to translate it to law, because what does it mean to have peace accord when it cannot be translated into law", however its

[15] Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Art. 1.1.2 (b)
[16] Law of Governing Aceh Art. 8.1, Art. 8.2, Art. 8.3, Art. 8.4

flexibility also poses the risk of having it watered down, especially since GAM had no role in formulating the LoGA. Marhaban (Interview E9) states that:

> We negotiators were foreigners, not Indonesians, we didn't understand Indonesian Constitution or Indonesian Law. For 30 years, Hasan di Tiro was in the U.S and in Sweden. Indonesian political party, we didn't understand. Stance of nationalism that most Indonesian felt, we didn't feel, it translates to the decisions we made. [It has to be understood that] The decisions we make is influenced by where we are coming from.

The discussion regarding the revision of LoGA was brought forth by DPRA and has now entered *Program Legilasi Nasional* (*Prolegnas/*National Legislative Program) that is prioritized (*DPRA Minta Pusat Tak Pangkas Kewenangan Aceh, Saat Rancang Produk Undang-Undang Nasional*, 2021). The discussion will focus on revising parts that are weakening the negotiated Helsinki MoU, however Abdurrahman state that possibilities to add more provisions based on his research (or exploration according to his word) of what are people's concerns is open:

> This [adding more provisions] is part of the mission. There's a room to add more things that are considered crucial in contemporary society… important issue such as technology and science. It depends on the capacity of the individual. If the individual's capacity is on the issue of religion, then religion is the only issue that will be included and discusses. For now, the talk will revolve around the Helsinki MoU, we will add more in the future.

Zain (Interview E4) notes that for Acehnese, the Helsinki MoU is the law, and not the LoGA, as it was the provisions in the Helsinki MoU that were agreed-upon together, not the LoGA (F. Zain, personal communication, February 14, 2020). However, for most of the respondents, they are not familiar with the Helsinki MoU, nor the LoGA, although many understand the Helsinki MoU as the "reason why Aceh has peace" (Interview F4 and Interview F2). Afrida (Interview E7) states that "from its conception, the Helsinki MoU only touch upon the elites and GAM" that there was no education to the people as to its meaning. Even after the MoU was signed, there was no information regarding the contents of the agreed instruments. Informally, however, discussion about the Helsinki MoU has taken place in *warung kopi* (coffee shops), although it was without the presence of any experts. Some other respondents including F8

(Interview F8) states that they heard some parts of the Helsinki MoU, associated with "independence", "federal state", "having an Acehnese flag and currency." However, this was only from rumors going around. One other respondent (Interview M6) states that:

> I remember that the discussion came up during the civic education class during high school, but it was not discussed in detail, [because] the teacher would like to know… I did not read in detail about the content of the Helsinki MoU. I am however familiar with the government's discussion in 2018 regarding Aceh hymn… there wasn't any socialization on the Helsinki MoU and the LoGA. In regards of the the Helsinki MoU's points in detail, I'm not that knowledgeable either, I only understand small parts of it.

Out of all respondents interviewed, M4[17] (Interview M4) is the only one who is familiar with the points in the Helsinki MoU and shares the same views as Abdurrahman, Zain and Marhaban. Other than the economic provision as described above, he (Interview M4) stated that "flags, hymn and regional symbols already had their own *Qanun,* hence Acehnese were already supposed to be able to have those".

Thamren Ananda was a part of the '98 activists' group – a group of students who demonstrated against the authoritarian regime under Soeharto, demanding his resignation. He has extensive experience with local party politics in Aceh, being one of the founders of *Partai Rakyat Aceh* (PRA). He was the spokesperson for *Partai Nasional Aceh* (PNA) and is currently the advisor to the Governor. Ananda (Interview E5) observes that selling the Helsinki MoU to the voters with words such as "independence" has continued since 2006, although in his view, the elites understand that this is a lie. He (Interview E5) states that:

> They [former GAM] tend to think that if everything that is written in The Helsinki MoU is implemented, then Aceh can be considered independent, but it has already been implemented in UUPA… this issue however is not supported by the majority of the people anymore, the indicator is based on the decrease of seats… [despite being a majority] statistically, the trend decreases, this is because people don't believe the issue brought by PA. With the era of digitalization, they have more access to read more.

[17] M4 is former GAM, although he did not specify whether he was a GAM combatant or civilian GAM member.

The reason why the issue of the Helsinki MoU still work for some people is due to sentiments of independence is still ingrained among constituents, after years of conflict. Ananda (Interview E5) adds that "although Acehnese might dislike things inside Aceh, Acehnese hate Jakarta even more. Hence issues that are anti-Jakarta will always work". In the eyes of most respondents, including M2 (Interview M2), the Helsinki MoU and the advocacy to revise the LoGA is "only in the interest of the elites". This is mainly due to the lack of knowledge of the Helsinki MoU, as it was negotiated by GAM leadership in Sweden. The information that most respondents hear, when discussions concerning the Helsinki MoU surface, are mainly related to the symbolic issues, which most of the respondents do not see as something of a priority.

Respondents also explained that many of the current policies and rules fail to take the opinions of the younger generation into account. F5 (Interview F5) cites *Qanun* and its implementation, such as rules preventing women from spreading their legs when riding on the back of a motorcycle, as dehumanizing methods of "punishing" people. Other respondents state that their concerns are of economic nature, such as the fulfillment of basic needs – clothing, food and housing, free healthcare, scholarship for students. Others emphasize issues of corruption and nepotism, perceived as omnipotent in Aceh.

In a post-conflict society, another important issue that must not be neglected is the protection of human rights. One of the most difficult issue and the ones with arguably least progress as Aspinall argued, is the provisions for a Human Rights Court and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as it was left in general terms (Aspinall, 2008, p. 27). Further explanation regarding both institutions were left in the hands of the national parliament and the Indonesian existing legal framework (Aspinall, 2008, p. 27). Six months after the LoGA came into force, however, the Supreme Court revoked Law no. 27 of 2004 regarding a National TRC. With the inexistence of a national legal framework and a national TRC, the authority of the Aceh TRC was weakened, especially as they only function under the LoGA. Darmi (Interview E1), who is the current head commissioner of Aceh TRC states that:

> The main problem that weakens the authority of Aceh's TRC lies on the inexistence of Law (UU) on National TRC. This means that we operate based on the political will of the local incumbents… In 2006, the Supreme Court revoked the law, six months after LoGA came into force.

As a consequence, the authority of Aceh TRC fluctuates with each administration, and many believe that the TRC is the responsibility of the national government, rather than the local government.

Darmi[18] (Interview E1) elaborates on two issues in regard to each mandate. Firstly, the issue of immunity: In uncovering the truth of what happened, there is no immunity for the victims when they decide to testify, hence they usually only say state apparatus or just apparatus (*aparat)* when referring to the perpetrator, despite knowing exactly which law enforcement unit they belonged to. Immunity is also the issue for reconciliation. When both sides have come forward with the truth, there are no guarantees that these statements will not be used as evidence to criminalize them. This is regulated under *Qanun TRC.* However, *Qanun* does not have power over the *Polri* (Indonesian National Police). The second issue is financing, relating to the mandate of reparation. Before moving to reparation, the status as victim needs to be validated in court, where the authority rests on the National Commission on Human Rights (*Komnas HAM).* However, *Komnas HAM* cannot assess and decide the status of victim, as they function under national law. As it can be seen that the issue hindering the mandate of the Aceh TRC rests on non-existing national legal instruments. In late 2019, there was a debate about re-establishing the National TRC. This has since been included in the 2020 *Prolegnas* (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

In many power-sharing studies, especially those that focus on peace settlements, implementation equates peace. The case of Aceh, however, shows that it does not stop there, especially where the peace agreement must be naturalized into national law. One of the critiques of power-sharing holds that its rigidity creates a tendency for regional elites to become more invested in maintaining the status quo (Gates et al., 2006, p. 518; Rothchild & Roeder, 2005, p. 40). Other factors may also contribute to this, such as persistent dissatisfaction towards the central government, as the agreed-upon provisions are not fully implemented, prompting actors to be stuck in the same fight. Some experts think that if the government fails to implement an agreement in a proper manner, the "peace" that was put in place by the agreement cannot be guaranteed. Such dissatisfaction may also be an explanation for the prolongation of GAM's struggle.

[18] Afridal Darmi is the Head of Commissioner of Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He is also the former Director of LBH (Legal Aid Institute) Banda Aceh in 2003.

In the advocacy for the Helsinki MoU and the LoGA, a key issue is its elitist nature. While the Helsinki MoU and the LoGA were always debated in the context of "independence" and "self-governance", participants in this study consider this to be a top-down approach towards the people. Respondents claim that most people do not care about the symbolic issue that always seems so vital to the regional elites. Issues that are considered important by the respondents revolve around welfare, good governance, and of utmost importance – the rights of the victims of conflict. Despite having the opportunity to revise the LoGA, politicians still focus on the initial content of the Helsinki MoU. This reveals a lack of adaptability to the changing concerns of the people.

Since its first conception, the Helsinki MoU lacked public participation. The Aceh government, especially DPRA, had the opportunity to be more inclusive of people's concerns. However, their idea of good governance did not go beyond the complete and impartial translation of the Helsinki MoU in the LoGA.

6.4 Replacement: Assessment of electoral participation

In cases where the formal is not deemed legitimate and resilient by the informal representatives of society, they resort to mechanisms that allow a change in authority or a replacement. Replacement can be done in various ways, as explained by Margolis (2010). One way is to call an election. Concerning elections, autonomy is expected to increase political participation, including voter's participation. As discussed above, in a post-conflict society such as Aceh, there are several dynamics influencing voter's preferences, which changes over time. It is expected that when incumbents fail to consider people's concerns and enact policies directed to improve people's livelihood, they will be less likely to be re-elected. Election provides the opportunity for the informal to decide who they deem able to represent their concerns, in an arguably democratic manner.

As previously discussed, elites resorted to various campaigning strategies to gain votes, ranging from the use of intimidation, threat, fearmongering, to identity politics and to money politics. In the first years after the signing of Helsinki MoU, there are various factors that permits such strategies to be effective – the euphoria, the jargon of independence, and the idea of "they

deserve it as this is their reward for fighting so long for us". Over time, the popular sentiment has started to change, many voters have become more pragmatic in deciding who to vote for, although not completely consistent with their stated interests, as traces of old strategies still work for some people. Nevertheless, Darwin (Interview E8) observes that:

> If I were to characterize Acehnese, it would be that they are more of a pragmatic society, believing in the need for political investment supported by money politics compared to superficial things such as what PA's strategy used to rely on.

She (Interview E8) further adds that people have started to "take into account the track records of politicians and pay more attention to the realization of their 'promises'". In regard to this, Ananda (Interview E5) also adds that:

> …their [elected PA who are former GAM] attitudes that doesn't reflect what they promised when leading, [there are] no changes, and the people started to find out more by reading newspaper and other news sources. The conclusion is that the trend of people believing their lies is decreasing… People have started to counter-attack. It isn't dominated anymore in terms of issue. Back then, when we [PNA] went to the villages to socialize, no one wanted to come, because they were scared of GAM combatants.

This trend also contributes to how people have disabled the culture of intimidation to work among them, as sources to vast information is also available to them, helping them to become more critical, as noted by Ananda (Interview E5).

As compared to average electoral participation in Indonesia, Aceh's electoral participation is high. In the 2019 general election, in which the presidential election and legislative election were held together, Aceh had a very high electoral participation, reaching up to 79,7% (*Pemilu 2019, Partisipasi Masyarakat Aceh Sangat Tinggi*, 2020). In 2017 *Pilkada,* electoral participation reaches up to around 72,28% (*Partisipasi Pemilih Pilkada 2017*, 2017), while the 2014 legislative election yielded around 77,58% (SA, 2014). Ananda (Interview E5) shares the view that this represents a democratic achievement, though he clarifies that: "conflict [post-conflict] areas tend to have high electoral participation, arguably due to the urge to change the situation, although I personally think the more dominant factor is the feeling of fear and intimidation.". Other respondents observe that qualitatively, participation in elections is not

uniformly high among the young generation. Some cast their votes, while some chose not to, for various reasons attributed to the political dynamics as explained earlier. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that PA does have a popular basis in the northern and eastern parts of Aceh, as noted by M5 (Interview M5), although their sentiments are not shared by most of my respondents.

Despite the average high percentage of electoral participation, most of the respondents I interviewed claim that they chose to refrain from participating. Only two out of fourteen respondents[19] stated that they had voted in the recent elections. F5 (Interview F5) cites that it was primarily due to "good track record of the previous administration". M6 (Interview M6) cites "charismatic appeal, trust and historical factors" as the reason why he voted. He (Interview M6) also adds that his decision was firmer as he is familiar with one of the candidates through his family affiliation as former GAM. The remaining ten respondents mainly referred to the track record of the government as the reason why they did not participate. Some respondents refrained from voting due to personal circumstances, such as being away from Aceh (Interview F4). Factors such as lack of trust and the incumbents' poor track record were cited as the key factor explaining why most chose to refrain from voting, F8 (Interview F8) states that she chose abstention because "I'm disappointed in the government, I also don't trust them". It is a common assumption that, when voters are disappointed with incumbents, they will vote them out and choose candidates that will hopefully formulate better and more accommodating policies. The key underlying issue in Aceh, however, is lack of trust, not only in the government, but in the system that is supposed to facilitate a democratic form of governance that is responsive to the needs and concerns of the voters. This can be seen in statements such as: "they are all the same [they will not do as mandated]", "even if I voted, the ones who will win will always be GAM or PA", "nothing will change even if I vote, it will remain the same (*akan gini-gini aja)"*.

Many of the respondents claim that their vote will not bring much change to the system. Once the people are elected, they will only serve the interest of the elites. One of the disadvantages of elite-oriented power-sharing institution, such as dispersive power-sharing is that the greater political mandates and resources given to elites open up new possibilities for the abuse of

[19] Out of fourteen respondents interviewed, two explicitly stated they voted and participate in election, ten did not vote (for various reasons) and the other two did not specify.

power. Despite the expected pacifying effect of autonomy, most elites in post-conflict Aceh only use it to enact laws and policies that serve their interests, while engaging in patron-client relationships with national parties. Election was also used as a battleground for non-democratic strategies, with intimidation, violence, money politics and identity politics to grant votes. The use of these strategies also contributes to the decision of voters not to cast their vote, and their loss of trust in the government. When such a situation continues over time, this prompts some respondents to lose trust in the system itself.

For some elites, autonomy is used as a leverage to ask for further devolution (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005, p. 37). Although the reasons remain arguable, it can be seen that Aceh government, particularly DPRA, retained its focus on the revision of the LoGA to fully cover the Helsinki MoU over the years. It is arguable that the LoGA has biases and only translated the Helsinki MoU partially, as can be seen in the comparison of the original provisions of the Helsinki MoU and their translation in the LoGA. The key issue, however, might also be whether the Helsinki MoU met the needs of the common people. Many former GAM members saw the Helsinki MoU as the starting point for true "independence", whereas most respondents claimed to be unfamiliar with the contents of the Helsinki MoU. The provisions that elites claim to be important are understood by many respondents as symbolic provisions that do not reflect the needs of the people. Most of my respondents do not care about these issues. Their primary concern is the lack of good governance and the lack of attention to the fulfillment of the common people's basic needs.

7 Conclusions

The objective of this thesis has been to examine the dynamic processes on the nexus of state-society, where local government and citizens interact in Aceh. The findings suggest that there are several factors that are distinct to post-conflict societies. The integration of former rebels into governmental seats has been applauded as a successful implementation of the Helsinki MoU, signaling positive prospects for peace as well as democratization. The findings of this study, however, suggest that the strategies chosen by former rebels may not be very democratic after all. My respondents spoke of the use of intimidation and "money politics". This creates polarization on the key issue of whether former rebels should still occupy governmental seats. A variety of factors influence people's perception of the local government. For some people, their personal history of conflict plays a prominent role in determining their relationship with the government. For others, the virtue of "giving back to the people" is the most important factor. On the other hand, some also cite the track record and works of people in power as the basis for trusting the former rebels in the government.

In analyzing the empirical data, I refer to the theoretical literature that links dispersive power-sharing to political stability. Bormann et al. (2019) find that dispersive power-sharing arrangements have a positive effect on peace through their effect on *de facto* dispersive power-sharing. Hence, two *de facto* dispersive power-sharing practices are examined in this study: regional autonomy and elite co-optation. These two practices are then connected to each operational definition of political stability derived from the study by Margolis (2010): authority, resilience, legitimacy and replacement. Regional autonomy is generally expected to increase the authority of the local government, increasing their legitimacy, making them more resilient and increasing political participation through election. Elite co-optation, on the other hand, risks undermining the legitimacy of the local government, prompting elites to prefer the status quo, rendering election meaningless when elites continue to dominate. So, in what ways do these aspects of dispersive power-sharing influence political stability in Aceh?

Regional autonomy under dispersive power-sharing increases the opportunities for former rebels to occupy government offices. In Aceh, it is important to note that GAM was the only group involved in the negotiation processes, and as supporters of (and supported by) the Helsinki MoU, they were able to proclaim themselves as the only legitimate group to occupy

governmental seats. At the beginning of the election, many of them were engaged in strategies that came at the expense of the majority of voters. This was noticed by the voters, which then gave the civilian population a certain perception of the new government. The findings of this study suggest that lack of trust due to the use of strategies that are undemocratic, sentiments towards former rebels, personal histories of conflict, and less than marvelous track records in government have contributed to the lack of legitimacy of the Aceh local government.

In terms of resilience, the inherently elitist nature of Aceh's form of power-sharing has led to a disconnection of policy concerns between the local government and the people. Most of the former rebel elites and some experts state their discontentment with the implementation of the LoGA, as they feel that most of its provisions are discounted from the Helsinki MoU. This discontentment has led to a fifteen-year long battle for LoGA revision. The issue at stake here is the disconnect between what the local government is focusing on and what the majority of people actually need.

Most of the respondents to this study have shown their unfamiliarity with the contents of the Helsinki MoU, fifteen years after its signing. Nor did I find any current efforts to inform the people about the contents of the Helsinki MoU, which is a clear indication of the local government's inability to adapt to the changes towards popular participation demanded by the post-conflict society. In terms of elections, the numbers have shown that Aceh has a relatively high electoral participation as compared to other parts of Indonesia. However, these numbers do not reflect the personal views of most participants in this study. Most of my respondents revealed a lack of interest in elections, citing the same reasons as to why the current local government lacks legitimacy: An election is rendered meaningless when the political figures elected to occupy government seats are always the same or similar.

It is evident that elite co-optation was not an important consideration of those who formulated the provisions of the Helsinki MoU. The provisions were proposed to GAM by the Indonesian government but rejected on the basis that they should not only benefit GAM members, but the entire people of Aceh. In the implementation, however, it is clear that other competing groups were actively blocked by the ruling GAM. Over time, local politicians also sought patronage from national parties, compromising the distinct ideology behind the establishment of local political parties in the first place: the need for self-rule. Other than seeking patronage with the national parties, some of the members of local political parties, mainly PA, have decided to

join national parties to further their position in the national assembly. It is then difficult to know how representative of the local concerns these politicians will be moving forward, as the dynamics of their political parties might dominate their decisions more than their personal convictions or the interests of their constituencies.

The aim of this thesis is not to call for fair representation for the entire population of Aceh. It merely offers a closer and more personal look on how an elitist arrangement aiming to provide security for elites may unintentionally have a negative impact on the democratic empowerment of the people. In the short-term, power-sharing was attractive enough to incentivize warring parties to lay down their arms. In the long-term effort of stability, democratization, and peace, however, a dispersive power-sharing agreement created a subnational government that lacks accountability to their constituents. This thesis hence contributes to the literature in several aspects: first, it offers a variation within the study of dispersive power-sharing; second, it introduces a potential link between dispersive power-sharing and an inclusive definition of political stability; and lastly, it offers a perspective on what many consider an example of successful peacebuilding, fifteen years into the post-conflict Aceh society.

7.1 Implications for future research

The scope of this thesis is limited to the dynamic processes between the local government and citizens. The findings of this thesis, however, yield several important and interesting questions to be further explored. First, the implications for the relationship between the local government and the central government, particularly concerning the ongoing debate on the implementation of the LoGA, which many consider as an incomplete translation of provisions in the Helsinki MoU. It would be interesting to explore how this might impact on the prospects for peace in the future. Second, this thesis is focused on the former rebel elites, with very little mention of other elites. Dispersive power-sharing arrangements also impact on the interaction between different kinds of elites, for instance by potentially increasing the popularity of religious elites. Third, the definition of political stability as introduced by Margolis (2010) covers a broad definition of the formal and the informal. For the sake of limiting the scope of this study, I have focused on the formal with regard to the local government and the informal with regard to a sample of the civilian population. However, a more in-depth study of formal actors and a broader and more detailed studied of a variety of informal actors would allow an interesting analysis of the finer dynamics of post-conflict stability in Aceh.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: List of Participants

Interview code	Name	Date of Interview	Profession
F1	Anonymous	9 February 2020	Anonymous
F2	Anonymous	9 February 2020	Anonymous
F3	Anonymous	9 February 2020	Anonymous
F4	Anonymous	9 February 2020	Anonymous
F5	Anonymous	19 February 2020	Anonymous
F6	Anonymous	1 March 2020	Anonymous
F7	Anonymous	2 March 2020	Anonymous
F8	Anonymous	20 February 2020	Anonymous
M1	Anonymous	13 February 2020	Anonymous
M2	Anonymous	15 February 2020	Anonymous
M3	Anonymous	15 February 2020	Anonymous
M4	Anonymous	6 February 2020	Anonymous
M5	Anonymous	15 February 2020	Anonymous
M6	Anonymous	19 February 2020	Anonymous
E1	Afridal Darmi	31 January 2020	Head Commissioner of Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission
E2	Marzi Afriko	24 January 2020	Researcher
E3	Saiful Mahdi	2 February 2020	Lecturer and Researcher
E4	Fajran Zain	14 February 2020	Political Analyst and the Director of Aceh Institute
E5	Thamren Ananda	17 February 2020	Advisor to the Governor 2019-2020
E6	Azhar Abdurrahman	17 February 2020	Member of Aceh's People's Representative Council (DPRA) from *Partai Aceh*
E7	Nani Afrida	9 January 2020	Chief Correspondent Anadolu Agency

E8	Rizkika Darwin	14 February 2020	Lecturer
E9	Shadia Marhaban	16 April 2020 (Virtual Interview)	Mediator and Peace Consultant. Member of GAM's negotiators in the Helsinki MoU
E10	Adi Warsidi	1 February 2020	Journalist and the founder of *Acehkini*

Appendix 2: Information Letter and Consent Form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project,
"Stability and Power-sharing Arrangement in Post-Peace Agreement Aceh"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to assess the current implementation of power-sharing arrangement in post-peace agreement Aceh, Indonesia. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to see the implementation of power-sharing arrangement in Aceh after the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (the Helsinki MoU). I would like to see how the current government established from the power-sharing arrangement contributes to the stability in Aceh 14 years after the end of separatism conflict in the province.

This project will be constructed under the question of:
"In what ways does the current power-sharing arrangement influence the stability in post-peace agreement Aceh?"

The final product of this project will be in a form of master's thesis. The data collected from the interviews during the fieldwork will be used exclusively for the purpose of constructing this master's thesis.

Who is responsible for the research project?

University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

The sample is random. The participants will be ordinary citizens of Aceh, Indonesia and will be anonymised in the master's thesis.

What does participation involve for you?

Data collection will primarily be done through personal interview. Interviews will include audio-recording in order to avoid mistranslation of the statements given. The sample will try to ensure equality in gender representation and will only cover adults (over 18 years old).

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- Your name will be replaced with a numerical code. The list of names and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end on the 31st of January 2022. The data will only be for the purpose of publishing the master's thesis accessible only by me and my supervisors and will be anonymised/deleted at the end of the project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the University of Oslo, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- University of Oslo via; Nabilah Nur Abiyanti (student) by email: (nabilaha@student.sv.uio.no) or by telephone: +47 4125 1720, Scott Gates (Supervisor) by email: (scott.gates@stv.uio.no) and Åshild Kolås (Supervisor) by email: (ashild@prio.org)
- Our Data Protection Officer: personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Nabilah Nur Abiyanti

(Scott Gates and Åshild Kolås as supervisors)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in personal interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. January 2022.

(,)

name , *date*

Appendix 3: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Thesis: Stability and Power-sharing Arrangement in Aceh, Indonesia

The interview will consist of open-ended questions. The questions below will only serve as pointers. Follow-up questions will be asked depending on the particular knowledge and experience of the interviewee.

A. General Questions (mainly regarding the peace agreement)

1. How were you affected by the conflict (before the peace agreement)?
2. What was your view on the idea of reaching a peace agreement back in 2004-2005?
3. Can you describe the peace agreement based on what you know?
4. Did you feel that your voice was represented during the peace process?
5. Is there anything lacking that should have been included in the peace agreement?
6. Can you explain the change that you experienced after the peace agreement?
7. Did you feel more secure or more insecure after the peace agreement?

B. Questions regarding power-sharing

1. Can you describe the current political system in Aceh based on what you know?
2. What is your opinion on the establishment of the Aceh Party?
3. What is your opinion on the need for political representation for all?
4. Do you feel that the current political system benefits you?
5. Do you feel represented in the current system?
    a. If you have complaints, do you know where to go?

C. Question regarding reconciliation

1. What is your view on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Aceh?
2. Do you think it is important to build the Aceh Human Rights Court?
3. Can you describe what the Aceh government (post-conflict) has done in terms of reparations for the victims of conflict?
4. Can you describe what the Aceh government (post-conflict) has done in terms of ensuring justice for the victims and their families?