

Transmigration, Ethnic Sentiment, and Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Aceh

Transmigrasi, Sentimen Etnik, dan Konflik Inter-Etnik di Aceh

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ABSTRACT

The discovery of natural gas and oil resources in the 1970s caused the Indonesian government to establish various industries in Aceh. In order to implement this new project, the government started a transmigration program by sending ethnic Javanese to work in factories in Aceh. Since then, the Javanese in Aceh have been given privileges by the Indonesian government (which is also dominated by the Javanese). This situation creates ethnic sentiments because the Acehnese lost their homes and did not have jobs. This study aims to find out the forms of ethnic sentiments that arise due to the transmigration of Javanese to Aceh, thus giving implications to the inter-ethnic conflict that has existed for a long time in Aceh. Using a qualitative methodology based on descriptive analysis of case studies, this study found two forms of ethnic sentiment. First, ethnic prejudice and discrimination, which have formed a relationship of reciprocal reactions. Discrimination, rooted in the Indonesian government's discrimination towards the Acehnese, led to the establishment of The Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The aim was to counter Javanese domination, resulting in prolonged interethnic conflict. Second, Differences in ethnic identity, such as Aceh prioritizing Islamism and Javanese prioritizing Javanism, further exacerbated ethnic disparities in ethnocentrism. These two forms of ethnic sentiment have significantly contributed to interethnic conflict in Aceh.

Keywords: The Acehnese; Transmigration; Ethnic Sentiment; Ethnic Conflict; Inter-Ethnic Conflict

ABSTRAK

Penemuan sumber gas asli dan minyak pada tahun 1970-an menyebabkan kerajaan Indonesia menubuhkan pelbagai industri di Aceh. Bagi melaksanakan projek baharu ini, kerajaan memulakan program transmigrasi dengan menghantar etnik Jawa bekerja di kilang di Aceh. Sejak itu, orang Jawa di Aceh telah diberi keistimewaan oleh kerajaan Indonesia (yang juga dikuasai oleh orang Jawa). Keadaan ini menimbulkan sentimen etnik kerana orang Aceh kehilangan tempat tinggal dan tidak mempunyai pekerjaan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk-bentuk sentimen etnik yang timbul akibat perpindahan etnik Jawa ke Aceh sehingga memberi implikasi kepada konflik inter-etnik yang telah lama wujud di Aceh. Dengan menggunakan metodologi kualitatif berdasarkan analisis deskriptif terhadap kajian kes, kajian ini mendapati dua bentuk sentimen etnik iaitu prejudis etnik dan diskriminasi yang telah membentuk hubungan tindak balas timbal balik. Diskriminasi, yang berakar umbi daripada diskriminasi kerajaan Indonesia terhadap rakyat Aceh, membawa kepada penubuhan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM). Matlamatnya adalah untuk menentang penguasaan Jawa yang mengakibatkan konflik inter-etnik berpanjangan. Kedua, Perbezaan identiti etnik, seperti Aceh mengutamakan Islamisme dan Jawa mengutamakan Jawaisme, memburukkan lagi perbezaan etnik dalam etnosentrisme. Kedua-dua bentuk sentimen etnik ini telah menjadi penyumbang utama kepada wujudnya konflik inter-etnik di Aceh.

Kata Kunci: Aceh; Transmigrasi; Sentimen Etnik; Konflik Etnik; Konflik Inter-Etnik

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1970s, the Indonesian government under President Soeharto explored natural gas and oil resources in North Aceh. This discovery caused the government to establish PT. Arun LNG, which comes from PT Exxon Mobil Oil Indonesia, to explore Aceh natural gas. In its first exports in 1978 and 1980, PT. Arun provided profits of USD 1,166,851,269.33 for Indonesia. Therefore, North Aceh is known as the Modern Petro Chemicals area. The Indonesian government then

continued establishing the fertilizer industry, namely Aceh ASEAN Fertilizer (PT. AAF Aceh). The factory began operating in 1981 with a yearly production capacity of 335,000 tons urea fertilizer. Another fertilizer factory is Pupuk Iskandar Muda (PT.PIM), which operated in 1983 and has a production capacity of 570,000 tons of urea fertilizer and 1000 tons of ammonia per year. The government also established a paper mill, Kertas Kraft Aceh (PT. KKA), which began operations in 1989 and produces 130,000 tons of cement paper per year with basic materials taken from pine forests in Central Aceh (Sulaiman, 2000).

These newly established factories require many workers. Therefore, the Indonesian government strengthened transmigration flows by sending Javanese to work in Aceh. It turns out that the arrival of the Javanese has given rise to significant ethnic sentiment throughout the 1970s to 2005. According to a report from Kontras Aceh (2006), establishing an industrial area in Aceh was very detrimental to the community in terms of land compensation. It is recorded that PT. Arun only paid around Rp. 100-180/m to replace community land. In 1980, PT. AAF provides compensation of Rp. 300-350/m and PT. PIM provides Rp. 800-1,200/m.

Workers from Java have dominated new job opportunities that have emerged due to the industry's opening. Meanwhile, the Acehnese have no jobs. Industrial development has also driven the Acehnese from their region. This situation led to ethnic sentiment, which Hasan Tiro organized to establish The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) on 4 December 1976. GAM doctrine often stated that the Indonesian government, which the Javanese dominated, had continued Dutch colonialism in Aceh and exploited the Indonesian—others, including Aceh. Finally, a prolonged inter-ethnic conflict occurred in Aceh.

Ethnic sentiment became the basis for GAM to uphold Aceh's autonomy and separate itself from Indonesia. To stop GAM, the Indonesian government took repressive measures by bringing Indonesian soldiers, the majority of whom were the Javanese, to Aceh. Inter-ethnic conflict also occurred with mutual attacks between the Acehnese ethnic group (which was driven by GAM) and the Indonesian government (which was dominated by the Javanese ethnic group). Unfortunately, this war targeted the innocent of Javanese and Acehnese, causing deep trauma.

Based on this background, this study aims to discover the forms of ethnic sentiment that emerged due to Javanese ethnic transmigration to Aceh. This ethnic sentiment is what caused the prolonged inter-ethnic conflict in Aceh. This research uses a qualitative descriptive research approach by integrating the theories of ethnic identity and ethnocentrism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inter-ethnic conflict is a dispute between one ethnic group and another ethnic group. It can involve two or more ethnic groups living within the exact geopolitical boundaries. Regional sentiments, religion, or even marginalization can trigger these clashes. In general, the causes of ethnic conflict are complex because they are rooted in the socio-cultural beliefs of the community. Therefore, certain disputes are complex to reconcile and have the potential to lead to the recurrence of conflict (Aapenguo, 2010; Walter, 2004).

Over the past few decades, conflicts have plagued Africa. Empirical research has been carried out in many nations. It was once thought that Ethiopia's 1991 adoption of a multiethnic federal structure would bring peace. The ethnic strife in Ethiopia is still very much alive and well, however. Ethiopia has inter-ethnic violence as a result of an unequal allocation of political and economic power, which hinders the nation's socioeconomic progress (Mollaw, 2023; Hagi, 2023;

Sebahutu, 2023). Di Ghana, the institutionalization of colonialism and postcolonialism triggered inter-ethnic conflict (Jonsson, 2009). Furthermore, conflict in Kenya arises due to the unequal distribution of national resources for each ethnicity. Ethnic conflict in Kenya ultimately created detrimental patronage (Nyamweno & Chepchieng, 2023). Juma and Simiyu (2019) analyzed the conflict between the Nyakach and Sigowet ethnic groups in a western sub-national district of Kenya. The conflict between the two is related to political incitement and revenge.

Several researchers have studied the Balkan conflict, violence between Hutu and Tutsi groups, Turks and Armenians, and Jews and Arabs (Alusala, 2005; Dunlop, 2021; Mwiza & Okinedo, 2018; Saidi & Oladimeji, 2015). Another intra-ethnic conflict can be seen in the case of the Kosovo Crisis following Serbia's persecution of Albanians (Bacevich & Cohen, 2001; Glaurdic & Lesschaeve, 2023; Negash, 2015; Perritt, 2009; Walling, 2000). In Philipine, inter-ethnic conflict was occurred between the Moro tribe and non-Muslim indigenous people in the Philippines, which gave rise to prolonged inter-ethnic conflict (Gutierrez & Borrás, Jr, 2024; Russell et al., 2004; Sen, 2024).

Among the many conflicts that have occurred in Indonesia, the conflict between Christians and Muslims that has occurred since 1998 has received the most attention from researchers (Mas'oed et al., 2001). Disputes occurred in regions such as North Maluku from 1999 to 2002 (Rahman, 2004; L Trijono, 2001). Then, the Poso conflict occurred in Sulawesi around 1998 to 2001. The main causes are economic inequality and social inequality between ethnic groups (Ecip, 2002; IPAC, 2023; Purwanto, 2007; Uksan et al., 2024). In the North Kalimantan region, inter-ethnic conflict occurred between the Dayak and Malay tribes against the Madurese (Giring, 2004; Tanasaldy, 2007; Trijono et al., 2004; Varshney et al., 2004). On the other hand, the anti-Chinese ethnic movement that occurred at the end of Suharto's government in 1998 caused an increase in criminal acts against ethnic Chinese. In the Solo-Central Java region, anti-Chinese violence occurred on 13-15 May 1998. The causes were race, ethnic differences, and socio-economic disparities (Latif & Lebang, 1998; Nurhadiantomo, 2004; Pattiradjawane, 2000).

Papua's desire for independence from Indonesia has also contributed to the list of inter-ethnic conflicts in Indonesia. Economic problems and frustration with the central government caused the conflict. This problem led to the Free Papua Organization (OPM), which mobilized the struggle to separate itself from Indonesia (Bhakti, 2005; Hernawan et al., 2001; IPAC, 2024; Pigay, 2000; Ramandey, 2004).

However, among discussions about inter-ethnicity that have been studied, the Aceh inter-ethnic conflict has never been studied. Generally, studies of the Aceh conflict focus on studying disharmony between the central and regional governments. Several previous studies explained the Aceh conflict from the 1970s to 2005. Ross (2005) explained that 45% of the population in Indonesia was the Javanese, and the government of Indonesia was also the Javanese. The dominance of the Javanese ethnic group in the Indonesian government has caused various disappointments for other ethnic groups, especially Acehnese. Thaib (2005) stated that the problem of political integration and unequal distribution of wealth for the Acehnese is the main trigger for conflict.

Furthermore, Indonesia is a product of Dutch colonialism (Thaib, 2005). More than 1,300 islands in the archipelago are under a single government with different histories, civilizations, cultures, religions, and languages. Then, Dutch colonialism united the islands in Indonesia, forcing them to become one Indonesian territory. Under Indonesian rule, the Acehnese experienced economic inequality compared to other provinces in Indonesia. Therefore, Hasan Tiro founded

GAM mainly due to economic exploitation and establishing a centralized Indonesian government. This economic exploitation occurred in the 1970s (Dayan & Sjafrizal, 1989; Li & Zheng, 2023).

Massive exploration and exploitation of Aceh's natural resources occurred in 1977 under the control of the Mobil Oil Indonesia Company and Pertamina (State Oil Company). Various factories were established and accommodated 8,000 to 12,000 workers. At that time, local infrastructure was still not good, so Mobil Oil Indonesia built new roads, schools, health facilities, and 4,000 to 5,000 housing complexes. The Indonesian government has also built various industries, such as fertilizer and chemical factories. However, the workers do not come from Acehnese society but from people outside Aceh, mostly Javanese.

Al-Chaidar (1999) also wrote about this exploitative action as the reason for the founding of GAM. GAM aims to separate Aceh from Indonesia through various efforts, including sending GAM members to participate in military training in Libya. At the beginning of its founding, GAM did not receive much support from the community. However, since 1986, most of the Acehnese have sympathized with GAM and provided their support. GAM carries out its struggle as a village guerrilla and urban guerrilla. When carrying out village guerrillas, GAM displayed its Islamic image. Meanwhile, in the urban guerrilla, GAM invited the community to work together to liberate Aceh from Indonesia. Apart from that, GAM carries out provocative activities at home and abroad. GAM stated that its movement was under the law and demanded rights that the Indonesian government had ignored.

Schulze (2004) explained that from 1976 to 1979, GAM was a small organization bound by ideology and run by 70 people led by a highly educated elite of doctors, engineers, academics, and businessmen. GAM's ideology and goal is to liberate Aceh from Indonesia, which the Javanese dominate. GAM saw its struggle as a continuation of the anti-colonial rebellion that erupted in response to the Dutch invasion in 1873 and the colonization of the Sultanate of Aceh's sovereignty.

One thousand nine hundred eighty-nine hundred GAM fighters were sent to Libya for army training. Those who returned then trained other GAM soldiers in Aceh. GAM combined Aceh Besar, Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh combined command structures. An escalation of violence against human rights marked the Aceh conflict in the 1970s to 2005. GAM's existence was responded to with repressive measures by President Soeharto's government. GAM was labeled an anti-Javanese separatist movement and had to be destroyed. The most significant human rights violations in Aceh occurred from 1989 to 1998. At that time, Aceh was known as a Military Operations Area (DOM) and was marked by intense violence committed by the Indonesian military against villages believed to provide logistical assistance or protection to GAM (Sari et al., 2023; Schulze, 2004).

Brown (2005) found that the Aceh conflict was inseparable from complex economic and social inequality dynamics. The birth of the GAM movement was in line with the struggle of the Acehnese for economic, social, and political justice (Aguswandi & Zunzer, 2008). Acehnese have a reactive nature to defend their nation from any colonialism. Aceh sees Indonesia as a colonialist dominated by the Javanese. Therefore, GAM fought to use weapons for two main reasons: to defend itself against the military approach of the central government and to develop an Aceh government independent of Indonesia.

Several studies above show similarities, namely, seeing historical, economic, and political perspectives as the leading causes of the Aceh conflict. Even though sentiment between Javanese and Acehnese ethnicities is visible in the Aceh conflict, there has not been a single study that discusses in detail the relationship between transmigration, ethnic sentiment, and inter-ethnic conflict in Aceh. This gap means no adequate research is available to explain the complex

relationship between the Acehnese and Javanese ethnic groups during the Aceh conflict. Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in its importance in understanding ethnic sentiment as one of the causes of the Aceh conflict.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative methodology with descriptive analysis based on case studies. Using descriptive analysis in this study can accurately and systematically describe a situation or phenomenon. The case study described is the Aceh interethnic conflict and its relationship to the transmigration of ethnic sentiment fibers. Data collection techniques focus on secondary data from text sources containing information about the study topic. Furthermore, data analysis in this study was carried out by adapting the steps as detailed by Creswell (2013) and Taylor et al. (2016).

First, read the collected text sources and find important information about the study topic. Second, data can be organized and categorized by finding typical theme patterns in information from text sources. Third, compress the data by considering the data that is needed. Fourth, descriptive analysis and presentation of data using predetermined theories in the form of sub-themes are carried out. This study has conducted the entire methodological process and compiled descriptive analysis into three themes: transmigration and ethnic sentiment, Reciprocal Reaction between Prejudice and Discrimination, and Differences in ethnic identity and ethnocentrism.

TRANSMIGRATION AND ETHNIC SENTIMENTS

Law No. 29 of 2009 explains that transmigration is a government program for voluntary population movement. The aim is to improve the welfare of a population. Transmigration has several positive impacts, including reducing population density and supporting development in the agricultural sector. Transmigration also supports the development of underdeveloped areas, increasing industrial growth and economic growth, expanding the workforce, equalizing income, and expanding development (Nurasiah et al., 2022).

According to Pitoyo and Triwahyudi (2017), the Javanese ethnic group is the indigenous tribe most widely distributed throughout the province. The Javanese were first placed in Aceh in 1975. Around 300 families were placed in Cot Girek District, North Aceh (Jamaluddin, 2021). However, the establishment of modern industrial factories since the 1970s has increased the flow of the Javanese transmigration to Aceh, and their numbers continue to increase. The goal was to work in the newly built factories (Stange & Patock, 2010). Most come from West Java, Central Java, East Java, Yogyakarta, DKI Jakarta, and parts of North Sumatra. Meanwhile, the Acehnese live in poverty, are alienated from their homes, and have lost their jobs.

According to a report from Kontras Aceh (2006), establishing industrial areas in Aceh is very detrimental to the community in terms of land compensation. It is recorded that PT. Arun only paid around Rp. 100-180/m to replace community land. In 1980, PT. AAF provides compensation of Rp. 300-350/m and PT. PIM provides Rp. 800-1,200/m. The Indonesian government employs immigrants from outside Aceh to operate the already-established refineries. Meanwhile, many people in Aceh do not have jobs and have even been evicted from their land.

The conflict started to occur because of the privileges given by the central government to Javanese migrants and the environment in which they lived. The central government allocates more of its budget for development in the neighborhoods where migrants live than in other regions.

The construction of roads, schools, agricultural offices, health facilities, and other facilities is usually concentrated only in transmigration destination areas, compared to other areas (Nathaniel, 2018). Apart from their large numbers, the Javanese ethnic group has always been the most dominant and influential cultural group, especially in the structure of the Indonesian government.

Bruner (1974) stated that people outside Java always considered transmigration as a process of "Javanization" or "Internal Colonization" carried out by Javanese ethnicities against other ethnicities. GAM used ethnic sentiment between Java and Aceh as a motor for its movement. Hasan Tiro made Indonesia a common enemy of the Acehnese. According to Hasan Tiro, the Acehnese have long had their philosophy of life based on rationality and reality. The philosophy of life is: "The life of the Acehnese must be noble. A noble life means a free life. Do not live as a slave/servant of another country. Freedom is the basis of success, prosperity, and progress" (Tiro, 1968).

This study found two dominant forms of ethnic sentiment: prejudice and discrimination. Second, there are differences in ethnic identity and ethnocentrism. Both are the most significant contributors to the prolonged inter-ethnic conflict in Aceh. Both are discussed separately in the following subtopics.

RECIPROCAL REACTION BETWEEN PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

The first form of ethnic sentiment is prejudice and discrimination. Ethnic conflict is one of the consequences of unequal ethnic relations and leads to pluralism. In this case, prejudice and discrimination are often tools used by certain groups to become tools of ethnic domination. The existence of prejudice and discrimination is what then forms ethnic conflict. Prejudice comes from the word "prau-dicom," which means "previous judgment," which, over time, results in a response to the judgment that has been determined and generally does not benefit the group being judged. The concept of prejudice has been used as legal terminology for centuries. However, social scientists' writings on the subject began to appear in the nineteenth century and became popular in social science in the twentieth century.

Conventionally, prejudice is hostility towards a group based on false, overly general, or unconscious beliefs. Ethnic prejudice is antipathy based on false and inflexible generalizations. It may be felt or expressed. It may be addressed to the group as a whole or to an individual because he or she is a group member (Green & Seher, 2003).

Apart from prejudice, another tool of ethnic domination is discrimination. According to Marger (2019), there are three types of discrimination: micro, macro, and structural. Micro-discrimination takes the form of actions by a limited number of individuals to harm or reject members of a particular ethnic group. *Macro discrimination* is an adverse action carried out against members of a particular group and maintained in the normative system of society. *Macro discrimination* is an institutionalized action that will limit the political, economic, social, and cultural access of the majority ethnic group. In addition, structural discrimination is more subtle, less obvious, and indirect.

Discrimination can occur at three levels (Parrillo, 2014). The first level is shown by verbal expressions in the form of statements of like or dislike. The second stage is to make exceptions to access such as employment, housing, education, or particular social organizations. These exceptions may be inherent in social customs and institutions. The third stage can involve more severe actions in the form of physical violence or violent attacks against minority groups.

In various theoretical perspectives on prejudice and discrimination, it is stated that generally, prejudice is born from the dominant ethnic majority group and is manifested at the behavioral level in the form of acts of discrimination (Allport, 1954; Marger, 2019; Mason, 1970; Mullen & Leader, 2005). Typically, prejudice is an initial stage based on emotional feelings and rational assessment bias and ends in actions in the form of discrimination (Marger, 2019). However, the Aceh case shows the opposite. The initial stage that occurred was discrimination carried out by the Indonesian government (which was dominated by the Javanese) against Aceh. This discrimination has historical roots dating back to when Aceh joined Indonesia. However, in this study, discrimination carried out by the Indonesian government was visible during the exploration and exploitation of Aceh's natural resources in the 1970s. Javanese migrants work in newly built industries, while the Acehnese do not have jobs and are driven from their homes (Stange & Patock, 2010).

Contrary to theory, the Aceh case shows that discrimination is the initial stage carried out by the Indonesian government against the Acehnese. The discriminatory actions carried out by the Indonesian government have caused harm to ethnic minorities. This not only explains the self-confidence of the Acehnese but also explains their psychology (Mullen & Leader, 2005). This discrimination gave rise to prejudice from the Acehnese against the Indonesian government (which was dominated by the Javanese). This prejudice is aimed at the Javanese ethnic group by generalizing that the Javanese are "evil," "colonial," or "infidels."

Discriminatory actions from the Indonesian government were carried out at three levels at once (Parrillo, 2014). Verbally, there have been exceptions in the form of restrictions on all access and violence against the Acehnese. This gave rise to prejudice in the form of anti-Javanese views, which were developed massively in the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) led by Hasan Tiro. The exploitation of Aceh's natural wealth, discrimination, and marginalization of the Acehnese led Hasan Tiro to found GAM in 1976. The indoctrination developed for GAM members stated that Aceh was a victim of Javanese colonialism, which was a continuation of Dutch colonialism (Sari, 2020; Smith, 2002). This doctrine was realized from the ideology spread through military training for GAM. Sentiment towards the Javanese ethnic group can be seen in the proclamation of Aceh's independence, which GAM proclaimed on 4 December 1976. The quote is as follows:

"We, the people of Aceh, Sumatra, exercising our right of self-determination and protecting our historic right of eminent domain to our fatherland, do hereby declare ourselves free and independent from all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the island of Java..... The Javanese, nevertheless, are attempting to perpetuate colonialism, which all the Western colonial powers had abandoned, and all the world had condemned. During these last thirty years, the people of Aceh, Sumatra, have witnessed how our fatherland has been exploited and driven into ruinous conditions by the Javanese neo-colonialists: they have stolen our properties; they have robbed us from our livelihood; they have abused the education of our children; they have exiled our leaders; they have put our people in chains of tyranny, poverty, and neglect: the life-expectancy of our people is 34 years and is decreasing - compare this to the world's standard of 70 years and is increasing! While Aceh, Sumatra, has been producing a revenue of over 15 billion US dollars yearly for the Javanese neo-colonialists, which they used totally for the benefit of Java and the Javanese..."

(Tiro, 1980)

Acehnese ethnic hatred continued when the Soeharto government sent Indonesian troops to Aceh to arrest GAM members. This event has been known as the Military Operational Area (DOM) since 1990. The majority of soldiers sent to Aceh were the Javanese, and they committed many atrocities that deeply hurt the Acehnese. The four most popular events are *the Pusong incident*, *the Idi Cut incident*, *the Simpang KKA tragedy*, and *the Beutong Ateuh incident*. *The Pusong incident* occurred on 3 January 1999. It began with the Indonesian army surrounding the

GAM headquarters in the Kandang, Pusong, Simpang Keramat, and Buloh Blang Ara areas in Lhokseumawe, North Aceh. However, this action also injured civilians in the area. It caused dozens of people to die, dozens to be injured, and more than a hundred people to be arrested by the Indonesian army (Sulaiman, 2000).

Second, the *Idi Cut* incident in the East Aceh area on 3 February 1999. At 00.45 in the morning, there was a massacre of people who had just returned from GAM's preaching, which was carried out in Matang Ulim Village. As they passed the district military office, soldiers started stopping them, and gunshots were heard. Not long after, the community saw as many as four military trucks carrying out violent attacks on the community. An eyewitness saw the dead victim being thrown into a military truck. At around 03.00 in the morning, soldiers tied up the dead with wire. The victims who were still alive were put in sacks and thrown into the Arakundo River. As a result of this incident, seven people died, five people were shot, 56 people were arrested, and more than 20 people were declared missing (Ishak & Yakob, 2000).

Third, the KKA intersection tragedy occurred at the Aceh Kraft Paper (KKA) refinery intersection in the Dewantara sub-district, North Aceh, on 3 May 1999. The military carried out a cruel shooting and shouted, "I will kill all the people of Aceh." After carrying out the massacre, they returned to their base while singing, "... I am coming home from the battlefield; I am coming home with victory..." Due to this incident, 46 people died, 156 were injured, and ten others were missing (Ishak & Yakob, 2000).

Fourth, the *Beutong Ateuh* conflict case was marked by the death of the owner of an Islamic school in the Beutong Ateuh area, West Aceh, named Teungku Bantaqiah, on Friday, 23 July 1999. He was accused of owning a marijuana plantation and being involved in GAM. Due to this, hundreds of Indonesian soldiers came to the Islamic school and checked identity cards. Not long afterward, they threw stones at people's houses, causing people to panic and worry. The community was ordered to leave their homes and gather in front of Teungku Bantaqiah's house. In a loud voice, the soldiers threatened that Teungku Bantaqiah would hand over his firearms. Even though he did not keep a weapon and only had a machete to take to the fields. The army then found an antenna installed on the roof of the Islamic boarding school, which they thought was GAM communication equipment. Even though it is just an ordinary radio antenna, the disbelieving soldiers then shot Teungku Bantaqiah twice. His wife and children, who ran, were killed to death. As many as 32 people in the house were shot at for no reason. They were then buried en masse in two separate locations (Ishak & Yakob, 2000).

Prejudice from the Acehnese towards the Javanese then turned into a reciprocal reaction. The Acehnese ethnic group took revenge against the Javanese ethnic group in Aceh around the 1970s. Referring to the typology of minority response outlined by (Wirth, 1945), the response shown by the Acehnese took the form of secessionist actions. The Acehnese ethnic group responded negatively to every act of subordination and domination by the Indonesian government. GAM does not want assimilation or cultural autonomy but wants Aceh to separate from Indonesia. They aim to maintain regional integrity through an ethnonationalism struggle based on Acehnese ethnic identity.

According to Parrillo (2014), prejudice can exist on three levels. The first cognitive stage includes a person's beliefs and perceptions of groups. The second is the emotional stage, which includes the feelings that a minority group causes in an individual. These feelings are usually stereotyped from cognitive ratings and produce negative emotions such as fear, envy, and other feelings that are based on beliefs about the group and may be triggered by interactions. The third is the orientation stage, with a positive/negative tendency to engage in discriminatory actions.

Acehnese prejudice against the Javanese has existed at three levels at once. First, at the cognitive level, the Javanese ethnic group is believed to be an ethnic group that threatens the existence of the Acehnese ethnic group. Second, the emotional level, namely the stereotype that emerged, was that the Javanese were seen as Jews, liars, and cruel by the Acehnese (Tiro, 1968). Prejudice at this emotional level has channelled negative emotions towards the Javanese, which is known as ethnic sentiment. They experience fear and feel threatened if they continue to live in the Aceh area. Third, the prejudice that emerged was at the orientation stage, namely in the form of discriminatory actions in the form of expulsion or murder.

It can be understood that both the Acehnese and the Javanese experienced the same discrimination and fear caused by members of GAM and the Indonesian Army. On the one hand, the majority of Indonesian troops sent to Aceh were the Javanese. They received direct orders from the Indonesian government to eliminate GAM and anyone deemed to have ties to GAM. On the other hand, this action threatens not only GAM members but also the civilian. Therefore, anti-Javanese prejudice was formed and discriminated against Javanese living in Aceh even though they were not members of the Indonesian military.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (2002) reported that the transmigration of large numbers of Javanese resulted in increasing ethnic imbalances, land disputes, and, ultimately, tensions that were beyond the government's control. However, in the context of Aceh, the roots are the poverty of the Acehnese ethnic group and exploitation carried out by the central government. However, the transmigration program also played a role in the conflict in Aceh. Tensions between residents and non-Aceh residents (especially the Javanese) resulted. Until the end of 2001, around 79,902 the Javanese were evacuated and left Aceh. They scattered, and most fled to North Sumatra province or returned to Java (Czaika & Kis-Katos, 2009; Jamaluddin, 2021; Schulze, 2004; UNOCHA, 2003).

Various media reported this incident of fear among Javanese living in Aceh. Karyanto, for example, is an the Javanese born in Aceh. His family from Java followed him to Aceh in the 1980s, where he lived in the Gayo district. They came through the transmigration program under President Soeharto's government. Karyanto and his family were the targets of GAM attacks. He and other the Javanese have been victims since 2001. Their houses were burned, and they were driven from Aceh (Abonita, 2022).

This prejudice and discrimination are one of the obstacles to the implementation of the Helsinki MoU peace process. For this reason, the Indonesian government, represented by Vice President Jusuf Kalla, did not include any representatives from the Javanese ethnic group when conducting negotiations with GAM. This is a strategy for the success of the negotiation process (Susilo, 2015).

DIFFERENCES IN ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNOCENTRISM IN JAVA AND ACEH

Differences in ethnic identity and ethnocentrism are the second form of ethnic sentiment found in this study. Ethnocentrism is a "we feeling" that exists as a characteristic of an ethnic group. It is often viewed 'negatively' because it places too much value on one's ethnic group rather than outside groups (Bizumic, 2015).

Both Acehnese and Javanese ethnocentrism are formed from their respective ethnic identities. Therefore, it becomes the basis for feeling superior and exceptional compared to other tribes. Referring to Bizumic and Duckitt (2012), Acehnese ethnic ethnocentrism is formed from

aspects of Islamism which refer to four things. First, Aceh is known as the porch of Mecca because it is the center of Islamic science and education in Southeast Asia. This has developed and continued since the 17th century during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. Second, from a historical perspective, Aceh is a government that has a political entity that is successful, prosperous, and internationally known. This political entity existed long before Indonesia was founded as a country.

Third, the heroic spirit of the Acehnese based on Islam formed the spirit of *jihad fisabilillah* war to fight colonialism. He succeeded in maintaining Aceh as a region that had never been conquered, even though it had been through decades of war. Fourth, Aceh's support for Indonesia's newly independent state is so excellent regarding human resources and materials that it is called a capital region (Sari et al., 2022). This unique feature of Aceh forms ethnocentrism, as argued by Bizumic and Duckitt (2012), which states that in ethnocentrism, there is a feeling of purity towards one's ethnicity.

On the other hand, the Javanese also recognize themselves as a unique ethnicity through "javanism". The Javanese ethnic group has a concrete, homogeneous, and constant view of power in the cosmos. For the Javanese, rulers have significant symbolic power and come from God (Anderson, 1972, 1990). Furthermore, Bizumic and Duckitt (2012) argued that ethnocentrism means prioritizing one's group rather than outside groups with efforts to maintain the ethnic purity of one's group, group unity, and intense devotion to one's group. Ethnocentrism includes six aspects, namely preference, superiority, purity, exploitativeness, group cohesion, and devotion.

The aspect of preference is the tendency to like and prioritize one's ethnic group, including individual members, compared to other ethnic groups. The Acehnese and Javanese show aspects of choice for their ethnicities. Both have subjective feelings of liking and siding with their group. This results in discrimination between groups considered no better than their group.

Furthermore, the aspect of superiority is defined as the belief that the position of one's ethnic group is higher than that of other ethnic groups. The Acehnese and Javanese ethnic groups take identity aspects such as history, Islamic religion, heroism, and way of life as the basis for their ethnic superiority. Historically, the Acehnese ethnic group is known to have had its own kingdom and political entity that was strong and successful in the past. The existence of the Aceh kingdom was recognized internationally long before Indonesia was formed. Java also has complex historical aspects. Various Javanese sultanates also existed in the archipelago, for example, the Majapahit kingdom, so the Javanese ethnic group became the earliest recognized tribe in the archipelago (Nofrima et al., 2021; Saddhono, 2016).

Ethnic identity in the form of Islamic religion, heroism, and way of life are also advantages believed by both ethnicities. Most of the Acehnese are Muslim. Their Islamic teachings are integrated into everyday life and are known as unity-politico-religious, where Islam is the basis for the life of the Acehnese. The spirit of jihad in Islam also helped ensure that the Acehnese ethnic group could not be conquered by Dutch and Japanese colonialism. However, it can be said that Islam is a great force for the heroic spirit of the Acehnese. The Acehnese identity contrasts the Javanese, where Islam is divided into the *Kejawen/abangan* and Santri schools (Geertz, 1989). Vital elements of Hinduism influence the Abangan sect. So, they believe in Allah but also worship Hindu gods/goddesses such as Batara Kala (God of death and time) and Dewi Sri (Goddess of Rice). They also believe in spirits and magical powers in banyan trees and keris and gamelan, which are considered supernatural powers. This is, of course, at odds with the Acehnese ethnic group, which is considered purely Islamic.

The frame of reference for the *abangan* Javanese ethnic way of life is the family, unlike the Santri sect, which refers to Islam (Suryadinata, 1988). Javanese ethnicity generally encompasses a harmonious way of life in society with individuals who like to seek safety and support others. They take family matters very seriously and always put them first in every aspect. Meanwhile, the Acehnese believe that their way of life is more traditional than the Javanese because Islam is the basis of their philosophy of life.

The aspect of purity is also practiced by both ethnic groups, who reject mixing with outside groups who want to dominate. The concept of Javanese power, which is based on "javanism," is demonstrated through their superiority and dominance over the Indonesian government. Javanese views, of course, influenced their way of ruling. Efforts to carry out Javanism in the Indonesian government are among the most apparent forms of ethnocentrism. Javanese purity is maintained through political dynasties, which are passed down to members of their families. This means that sometimes, "you no longer pay attention to aspects of your ability to lead." Anyone recognized as the Javanese or a family member of the government may continue their power (Anderson, 1972; Wijayanto, 2013). The king as a leader has absolute power, equated with the power of God, and holds supreme power throughout the country (Nofrima et al., 2021). Meanwhile, aspects of Acehnese ethnic purity continue to refer to the Islamic religion as the basis of the king's power. He does not recognize absolute power and believes all laws come from the Koran.

The aspect of exploitation (exploitativeness), namely the selfish attitude of ethnic groups through the belief that one's ethnic group is the most important. It is acceptable to rob, exploit, kill, and exploit outside groups as long as it is in the group's interests. The last aspect is devotion, which represents loyalty, attachment, enthusiasm, and strong dedication to one's group. In this context, there is a view that the group is of primary importance. Therefore, group members will be willing to do anything and offer blind and uncritical support to the group. They were even willing to sacrifice their lives for him. In this context, the Acehnese ethnic group, which has its political entity, feels that the process of "Javanism" is an attempt by the Javanese ethnic group to "Javanize" other ethnic groups in Indonesia. "Javanism" can be categorized as a form of exploitation that will gradually eliminate the Acehnese ethnic identity in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the Acehnese ethnic group, with the characteristics of its society that rejects efforts to dominate foreign ethnic groups, strongly opposes this, causing the two to clash and should not be united. Aceh's ethnic mix increasingly increased when the Javanese threatened its existence. Devotion is the path they choose to maintain their respective ethnicities. Therefore, belief in the superiority of one's group compared to other groups has implications for the emergence of great ethnocentrism for both ethnic groups. Government elites use Javanese ethnic identity and ethnocentrism to discriminate against the Acehnese from various economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

On the other hand, Aceh's ethnic identity and ethnocentrism have been instrumentally used as a driving force and political weapon, especially by GAM. Anti-Javanese views became a strategy to build support from the Acehnese. The Javanese immigrants were accused of being peeps and collaborating with the Indonesian military and were viciously attacked. Attempts to eliminate GAM in the DOM era received strong reactions from the Acehnese, with the response being the elimination of the Javanese (Bertrand, 2004; Schröter, 2011).

The analysis above shows that the differences in Acehnese and Javanese ethnic identities form ethnocentrism for both groups. This difference is always contested, resulting in the terminology "us" and "them." Therefore, in general, the Acehnese ethnic identity is considered incompatible with the Javanese ethnic identity manifested in the Indonesian government.

Therefore, "Unity in Diversity" (unity in diversity) has been rejected. The development of Acehese ethnic identity and its differences from Javanese ethnicity has become a principle and strategy for mobilizing society, so the two are difficult to unite.

CONCLUSION

The transmigration program implemented during the era of President Soeharto's government in the 1970s brought the Javanese migrants to Aceh. This phenomenon aligns with the discovery of Aceh's natural gas and oil resources. Newly established modern factories employ the Javanese migrants from the transmigration program. Transmigration has contributed to the occurrence of inter-ethnic conflict in Aceh due to widespread ethnic sentiment towards the Javanese ethnic group. During the conflict, the presence of the Javanese in Aceh was considered to have injured the rights of the Acehese. The Indonesian government (which is dominated by the Javanese) has given more privileges to Javanese migrants than the Acehese, especially in terms of employment and the construction of public facilities.

This study has found two forms of ethnic sentiment: prejudice and discrimination, and differences in ethnic identity and ethnocentrism. First, prejudice and discrimination were found to have formed a reciprocal reaction relationship. Discrimination is the initial stage in the formation of sentiment carried out by the Indonesian government towards the Acehese. This discrimination can be seen from the process of transmigration of the Javanese to Aceh and the marginalization of the Acehese in the industrialization process that was taking place at that time. Therefore, this discriminatory attitude has led to the emergence of prejudice between the Acehese ethnic group and the Javanese ethnic group.

The Acehese ethnic group generalizes by considering that the Javanese are "invaders," "evil," or "infidels." Thus, reciprocal action began to be carried out by establishing the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). This movement targeted the Javanese domination and fought with them. As a result, there was a prolonged interethnic conflict.

The second form of ethnic sentiment is differences in ethnic identity and ethnocentrism. This study found that the inter-ethnic conflict between Java and Aceh occurred because of differences in ethnic identity. These differences have given rise to a sense of ethnocentrism in each ethnicity. Aceh prioritizes Islamism in its ethnic identity; on the other hand, Javanese ethnic groups prioritize themselves through the concept of "Javanism." Therefore, Aceh contrasted its ethnic identity with that of the Javanese ethnicity. These differences create ethnic disparities in the form of ethnocentrism.

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