



Seperatist Movement in the Process of Nation Building

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Abstract

This paper would like to discuss how the separatist movement in Chechnya and Aceh developed and grew during the process of nation-building. This paper found that the Chechen and Aceh separatism was grown out of ethno-religious sentiments and the autocratic policy of the central government. Finally, Chechnya and Aceh had different ways to solve the problem of separatism. Russian government approaches the Chechen separatism issue by "Chechenizing" the issue. However, the Indonesian government used a more holistic approach by opening political channels to all of the parties involved during the conflict to finally agreed on a new system.

Keywords

Separatism, Chechen Separatism, Free Aceh Movement, Nation-Building

Ulus İnşası Sürecinde Ayrılıkçılık Hareketi

Öz

Bu çalışma Çeçenya ve Açe'deki ayrılıkçı hareketi ulus inşası sırasında nasıl geliştiğini tartışmak istiyor. Bu makale Çeçen ve Açe ayrılıkçılığının etno-dini duygulardan ve merkezi hükümetin otokratik politikasından kaynaklandığını iddia etmiştir. Son olarak, Çeçenya ve Açe'nin ayrılıkçılık sorununu çözmenin farklı yolları olduğunu da kanıtlanmıştır. Rus hükümeti, Çeçen ayrılıkçılık konusuna konuyu "Çeçenleştirerek" yaklaşmıştır. Endonezya hükümeti, nihayetinde yeni bir sistem üzerinde anlaşmaya varmak için çatışma sırasında yer alan tüm taraflara siyasi kanallar açarak daha bütünsel bir yaklaşım kullanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Ayrılıkçılık, Özgür Açe Hareketi, Çeçen Ayrılıkçı Hareketi, Ulus İnşası

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Introduction

This paper would like to ask the question of how the case of separatism in Russia and Indonesia as two countries with multi-ethnic populations developed and how both countries responded toward the separatist movement with their nation-building policy? This paper will discuss those questions within the concept of Nation Building and Separatism. The concept of Nation Building seems suitable to explain the dynamics of nationalism and separatism in both countries because, in these countries, nationalism was constructed in a very high tense political-security context. Therefore, both countries tended to build the concept of nationalism – respective to themselves – with coercive ways, through military force and political pressures, especially toward the minority communities – in this case, Chechnya and Aceh. Besides the concept of nation-building, the concept of separatism, with particular emphasis on the reason for separatism outbreak during nation-building and national integration.

The first concept that would be elaborated here is the concept of nation-building. As a nation started to gain its sovereignty, either by proclaiming itself as an ‘independent and sovereign entity’ or gaining its independence through a ‘national struggle,’ a nation would eventually start the process of nation-building as a process which would allow the unification of societies and communities from different backgrounds which existed before the formation of a nation. According to Birch, in the process of nation-building, the sovereign or governing administration which ruled the nation will enact a series of political propaganda and socialization targeting its diverse population (Birch, 2003: 9). The political propaganda and socialization generally contained the message of unity and loyalty toward a single identity – a national identity. This message of unity is usually accompanied by a call to leave behind the loyalty and bond toward local societies and communities (Birch, 2003: 37). This process of fostering a sense of common-ness is usually done by creating the national symbols – i.e., flag, national leader, national anthem – which will increase citizens’ pride toward their nation. After national symbols were established, the sovereign or governing administration should construct a system that would allow people and communities within a nation to represent their aspirations (Birch, 2003, 41-42).

from various communities and societies within a single frame of mind to ease the unification of different societies (Birch, 2003: 9). Education reminds citizens of its glorious past, national vision, and rights and responsibilities toward the government. Consequently, a citizen will recognize its existence within a nation as something meaningful and proud of.

Eventually, the process of nation-building will lead to one ultimate vision: the achievement of national integration. The achievement of national integration is a phase in which all of the existing diverse communities will eventually be integrated and united as a single nation with a collective identity. This phase could be realized through frequent social interaction, cultural exchange, and political communication among citizens and governments in the respective nation (Birch, 2003: 36 - 37). Nevertheless, as we have seen in many countries, the nation-building process did not go as ideally as it envisioned. Why could separatism emerge as an inhibitor toward the nation-building process?

Separatism as a Test for Nation Building

In order to explain separatism, Henry Hale argued that separatism theories could be categorized into two different theories (Hale, 2008: 58). These two different theories departed from an argument that separatism is mainly an ethnic-related problem. The first theory is called Ethnicity-as-Conflictual Theory, and the second theory is called as Ethnicity-as-Epiphenomenal Theory. The first theory, or notably called as Ethnicity-as-Conflictual Theory of Separatism, argues that ethnicity is the leading cause for the rise of separatism.

There are at least three arguments that support this approach. The first one is the issue of how a particular ethnic could develop the feeling of national consciousness among its population, which could result in the political mobilization and movement against authority. The second argument is related to the issue of capability, whether a particular ethno-political movement would be able to rise and sustain its resistance against the existing authority within a particular time-space context. The third argument concerns how specific causes aside the ethnic discrimination or national consciousness causes, such as principal differences in ideological perspective with authority and political-economy injustice between a particular ethnic and authority. These causes are interrelated with ethnic problems and thus entangled to be a factor that could drive further political movement (Hale, 2008: 58-59). The second theory addressed the case differently from the first theory because it did not see ethnic factors played an essential role in shaping conflict and separatist movement. Thus, the first theory would be used to analyze the case in this paper.

Concerning the first theory, which considers the important role of ethnic issues as a prime cause for separatism, separatist movement usually based

their agenda on three reasons. First, separatism is justified in the forceful entry of specific regions to be an integral part of the nation (Birch, 2003: 64). The notable case for this example is the case of East Timor's forceful inclusion in Indonesia. Second, separatism could be justified as the central government does not take enough measures to maintain security and stability in the region where ethnic minorities belong. When relevant authorities could not bring up the order to the region, the separatist political and armed movement could take the role and restore order in the name of protecting fellow brothers of the same ethnics from discrimination and insecurity (Birch, 2003: 64-65). Third, and most importantly, separatism will be fully justified by separatist movements if the relevant authorities do not take responsibility for running out legitimate political order and maintaining the economic system within the society (Birch, 2003: 65). As the relevant authorities start to abandon their responsibility consciously, separatist movements will come up with new alternatives that attract people's attention more, and thus separatist movements could attain the legitimacy they wanted.

Historical Background of Chechnya's Question: From Imam Shamil toward Soviet Politics of Nationalities

The beginning of Chechnya's Question in Russian politics could be traced back as long as the 19th Century. At that time, the Chechen ethnic group lived under the dominance of Avar Khanate, a Muslim khanate that existed for almost five centuries at that time. However, as the Avar Khanate surrendered to the Russian Empire, the Chechen people were organized within a communal structure called *djamaat* (congregation) (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 17). Under the leadership of Imam, Chechen people tend to follow sharia rather than adat (customary tribal laws) (Sanders, Tucker, & Hamburg, 2009: 9). In 1829, the notables within Chechen people agreed to choose Ghazi Muhammad, one of the murids (student of Naqshabandi's notable teacher, Shaikh Jamaluddin al-Ghazi Ghumuqi) to be the leader of the Chechen resistance movement against the Russian Empire. He and his fellow friends, notably Hamzah Bek and Imam Shamil, would be the movement's leaders after Ghazi Muhammad's death in 1832 (Sanders, Tucker, & Hamburg, 2009: 10).

The Chechen resistance movement against the Russian Empire reached its golden age during the leadership of Imam Shamil. Imam Shamil started to lead the movement in 1834, after the death of Hamzah Bek (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 19). During the leadership of Imam Shamil, the Chechen resistance movement successfully suppressed collaborators within the Chechen people and contained Russian progress in the area (Sanders, Tucker, & Hamburg, 2009: 22-32). Around the 1840s, Imam Shamil had done a series of *gazavat* (battles) on small and large scales to attack the presence of the Russian military and forts around the Chechnya and Daghestan area (Jaimoukha, 2005: 46). During his struggle against Russian, he was also mainly supported by

Dagestanis. Eventually, after a long period of victory and losses, in 1859, Imam Shamil surrendered himself to the Russian Empire (Jaimoukha, 2005: 50). The legacy of Imam Shamil still left marks in the heart of Chechens and Dagestanis as well. The strong, charismatic, and spiritual-based leadership of Imam Shamil is a critical foundation for the construction of Chechen's and Dagestan's national consciousnesses (Creuzberger, 2016). Nevertheless, it is also important to note that several Chechens also disagree with the Shamil's imposition of "strict Islam" which resulted in their migration to Pankisi Gorge, thus creating an enclave of Chechen community in Georgia (Sanikidze, 2007).

As Chechnya included in the Russian Empire after Imam Shamil's surrender in 1859, there were still several movements that tried to retake Chechnya from the rule of Russia, such as the Qadiri movement, and the movement gave quite a shock for Russian forces for its stiff resistance (Jaimoukha, 2005: 52). During the 19th Century, Chechen people were given some sort of autonomy rights to protect their own tradition and educational system, due to a more moderate and inclusive approach applied by Russian Empire towards its minority subjects. Thus, a period of relative stability and peace was achieved during the 19th Century (Jaimoukha, 2005: 53; Ware & Kislev, 2009: 22). As Russia started to lose its power during World War I, Chechen nationalists realized the changes that occurred within Russia and started to organize a new movement for the independence of Chechnya. A group of politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and religious figures from the Northern Caucasus thus held a series of meeting from the early months of 1917. On May 1, 1917, the leaders of Northern Caucasus communities in the First North Caucasian Congress proclaimed secession from the Russian Empire and the independence of Northern Caucasian people (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 24). The new state called the Union of Allied Mountaineers in the Northern Caucasus (UAM) was established afterward.

The success of the 1917 Russian Revolution by Bolsheviks weakened the Russian Empire's authority within its territory, including the Caucasus region. Nevertheless, the impact of the Bolsheviks' political movement was not felt in the Caucasus region until the middle of 1918, when the conflict of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks started to spread within the region (Jaimoukha, 2005: 54). In 1919, as a way to strengthen their political influence, Bolsheviks built an alliance with religious leaders who proclaimed the establishment of Northern Caucasian Emirates to defeat the Mensheviks (Schaefer, 2010: 103; Jaimoukha, 2005: 54-55). The Bolsheviks gained influence in Moscow and Northern Caucasus after crushing Mensheviks' power in the following years. Thus, under the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) banner, Bolsheviks started their nation-building and national integration programs. At the beginning of this nation-building process, the Soviet Union considered that every ethnic group which lived within the domination of the Soviet were entitled right to maintain their culture and tradition (Ware & Kisriev, 2009:

29). The Soviet Union actively promoted affirmative action policy to strengthen its legitimacy in the newly-conquered areas (Aktürk, 2015: 226).

Along with the affirmative action policy applied by the Soviet Union, there was also a project of “unification” among all ethnicities in the Soviet Union. The “unification” project was significantly rose during the era of Khrushchev after the death of the Soviet Union. This “unification project” consisted of three essential steps: *rastsvet* (blossoming or growth of multiple ethnicities within Soviet), *sblizheniye* (converging different ethnicities), *slyaniye* (integrating the converged ethnicities into one union) (Aktürk, 2015: 226).

Coming back to the Chechen problem, in the first years of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union adopted a tolerant and moderate position toward the local communities’ traditions and values. This was shown clearly during the assistance of the Soviet Union towards the leaders of North Caucasus communities, Shaikh Uzun-Hadji and Imam Nazhmutdin Gotsinsky, in their struggle against Mensheviks (Jaimoukha, 2005: 55). After the victory over Mensheviks, the Soviet Union gave rights toward the Muslim communities in Daghestan and Chechnya to keep the enactment of sharia and *adat* as a source of law and to preserve their madrasa educational system, culture, religion, and language as they wished (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 29-30). The Soviet Union gave such freedom until the end of the 1920s, when Stalin started the program of collectivization and massive industrialization under the New Economy Program (Ware. & Kisriev, 2009: 30). In the 1930s, many of these given freedoms and rights were taken back by the Soviet and Chechen people was ruled under heavy pressure from the Soviets (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 30-31; Schaefer, 2010: 99).

During this period, the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Stalin, created autonomous republics and oblasts within the Caucasus area. The creation of these autonomous republics and oblasts was intended to line up the ethno-territorial border among the Northern Caucasus communities, thus avoiding any possibilities for collective resistance toward Soviet authority (Ware & Kisriev, 2009: 32). In the 1940s, as the potential of separatist movements grew within the Soviet Union, Stalin’s administration once again purged the Northern Caucasus communities and expelled them to far-away lands in Kazakhstan Central Asian regions (Schaefer, 2010: 100-107). The deportation and repressive policy enacted by the Soviet Union toward Northern Caucasus communities had served as fuel that would burn the emotions of Chechen people toward the central Russian authority.

After Nikita Khrushchev gained his power in 1953 after the death of Stalin, Khrushchev tried to strengthen the concept of Sovietsky narod (Soviet nation) to ensure the full integration of ethnicities in the Soviet Union (Aktürk, 2015: 229-230). In this step, Khrushchev intended to homogenize the differences into one collective identity, and all ethnic groups should only be allowed to

develop if they wished to adopt the *Sovietsky narod* identity as their primary identity (Aktürk, 2015: 236-237).

Khrushchev applied this policy of national integration together with rehabilitation toward the deported ethnics (including the Chechen populations) and the involvement of ethnic population into the bureaucratic system of the Soviet Union (Jaimoukha, 2005: 61-62), thus allowing a better unity and strengthening the *bratskaya druzhba* (brotherly friendship) among diverse Soviet citizens (Aktürk, 2015: 237). The process of ethnic inclusion in the Soviet bureaucracy system also occurred in the Northern Caucasus, and several Chechen political leaders arose as leaders of autonomous republics (Jaimoukha, 2005: 62-63). The life of the Chechen population was relatively good, and people enjoyed stability at that time under an autonomy system applied by the Soviet government – but it is more correctly termed as “living turned inward” (Schaefer, 2010: 105-107). In the context of the Chechen question, as Soviet socialism became more mature in the era of Brezhnev, so did the conception of *Sovietsky narod*, which eventually hegemonized as a primary identity among Soviet people (Aktürk, 2015: 241-242). During the maturation of *Sovietsky narod* concept, Soviet historiographers tend to analyze the relations between Russia and Chechen as an “unequal relation” between Russian ethnic as “big brother” and Chechen ethnic as “little brother” which was saved from savagery (Jaimoukha, 2005: 63).

The political transformation that occurred during Gorbachev’s era shook the political foundation of the Soviet Union. The *perestroika* and *glasnost* programs, which Gorbachev declared, brought an enormous wave of freedom toward the Soviet Union population. Various nationalist movements within the Soviet Union also grew within this era. With the creation of an ethno-territorial area during the Stalin era, the feeling of ethno-nationalism grew most influential during the Gorbachev era. The first movement in the Northern Caucasus region to fight for Chechen independence was the Popular Front of Chechen-Ingushetia, an environmental cause front that turned into a political movement (Jaimoukha, 2005: 63).

The Chechen independence movement took a more robust and more definite shape during the downfall of the Soviet Union when a Chechen-origin Soviet general Dzhokhar Dudayev led the Chechen National Congress and demanded the Soviet authority to change the status of Chechen-Ingushetia into a full republic status (Jaimoukha, 2005: 64). Nevertheless, in December 1990, the Supreme Soviets of Chechen-Ingushetia proclaimed the state sovereignty of Chechen-Ingushetia from the central Moscow authority, and the new period of Chechen’s question began ever since (Jaimoukha, 2005: 64).

The Chechen-Russia War after the Soviet Era

The declaration of independence proclaimed by Dzhokhar Dudayev in the name of the Chechen-Ingushetia people brings serious consequences toward the Chechen's socio-political structure and relations between central Moscow authority (now Russia) and the Chechen nation. Soon after the proclamation of sovereignty by the Supreme Soviet of Chechen-Ingushetia, the partition plan was presented to the Ingushetian people, and the separation between Chechnya and Ingushetia was agreed upon after the referendum process (Jaimoukha, 2005: 64-65). In November 1991, after taking control of essential state bodies and ensuring victory in the Chechen Republic's presidential election, Dudayev proclaimed Chechnya's independence from Russia (Schaefer, 2010: 115). Undoubtedly this started the new phase of conflict between Chechnya and Russia, which continued for at least a decade. In the first phase of the conflict, there are two critical groups that led the Chechen independence movement against Russia: the newly-independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria led by Dzhokhar Dudayev and Muslim mujahidin groups, consisting of militants coming from different parts of the World (Pokalova, 2015: 24).

The conflict began on a small scale on November 7, 1991, when Russian forces started to be deployed in the Chechnya region as a response to Chechnya's secession (Pokalova, 2015: 33). Chechnya's militias were quick enough to retaliate toward this Russian military operation, as seen in the terror attack towards the Russian plane. In the following years, as the Chechen Republic of Ingushetia solidified its power base under the leadership of Dudayev, Russia also increased its presence in Chechnya, either through military deployments and local political proxies – though this presence did not successfully bring down the Chechen Republic (Jaimoukha, 2005: 65-67). This period also observed the rise of two critical Chechen leaders, Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov (Pokalova, 2015: 36). Maskhadov was known for his notable leadership in the Chechen Army, and Basayev was infamously recognized as the master behind terrorist attacks done by Chechen militias in Russia. In 1994, as Moscow's central authority grew weary of Chechen's influence and Chechen militia's terrorist attacks, Russian Armed Forces were then given an order by Moscow to 'invade Grozny' (Pokalova, 2015: 38).

Before and during the period of invasion, Russia also tried to strengthen its territorial integrity in every corner of Russia by reconceptualizing the meaning of national identity – from "*Sovietsky narod*" to "*Rossian*" – with a powerful emphasis on the homogeneity and absoluteness of new Russian identity, thus disremembering any other ethnical identities (Aktürk, 2015: 271-273). The rigid thinking on Russian national identity, formulated during the early years of Yeltsin, angered many Chechens. The invasion was then responded by the Chechen mufti, Akhmad Kadyrov, with a call for jihad, which inspired many people from Chechnya's neighboring regions and Muslim World to come to Chechnya to assist the 'holy war' (Pokalova, 2015: 109). Religion played an

essential role in building the prevailing feeling among the Chechens and the Muslim World in this step. Although there were several differences of Chechen leaders in viewing Islamic teaching (e.g., Basayev with Wahhabi tendency and Maskhadov & Kadyrov with Sufism tendency) (Pokalova, 2015: 76), the common cause for a national struggle against Russia made them united as one. However, as the war reached its end, the Chechen's unity began to crack once more when two different groups, Basayev's and Maskhadov's, started to gain influence in the top-level leadership in the Chechen Republic (Pokalova, 2015: 78-81). The first phase of the Chechen-Russia conflict ended as both sides agreed to make peace with each other on August 25, 1996 (Zürcher, 2007: 84).

The end of the first phase of this conflict does not end the conflict between Chechnya – Russia. During 1996-1999, Chechen militias actively clashed with Russian forces within the borders of Dagestan and Chechnya (Jaimoukha, 2005: 71). The attacks on terrorism also continued to take place in Russia as the separatist movement (especially within Basayev's faction) had been radicalized since the end of the first phase of conflict (Pokalova, 2015: 98). Under the new leadership of Putin, Russia considered development in Chechnya to be answered with force as soon as possible. Russian Armed Forces were sent once again to Chechnya to suppress any resistance within the territory (Schaefer, 2010: 180). As the conflict developed in the early 2000s, Maskhadov and Basayev began to separate from each other because of their different view on several issues such as relations with Russia and usage of terror attacks on civilians (Schaefer, 2010: 180-183). When the split occurred between these two crucial figures, Akhmad Kadyrov began to gain more influence among the Chechen population. Akhmad Kadyrov, with his power as state mufti, was concerned with the continuous tragedy and suffering in Chechnya. He considered the movement done by Chechen militia groups as a radical and violent way to reach the goal of a peaceful and sovereign Chechnya. Therefore, Akhmad Kadyrov chooses to side with the Russian Federation (Schaefer, 2010: 187). The “Chechenization” of the conflict started as soon as Kadyrov was officially chosen to administer the Chechen region under Russia's control in 2000 (Pokalova, 2015: 57).

Kadyrov's Era: A New Phase of Chechen-Russian Relations

Kadyrov's rule over Chechnya indeed marked a new era in the relations between Chechnya-Russia, because the coalition between Kadyrov's Chechnya and Russia indeed brought stability and peace toward the region. However, on the other side, Kadyrov's leadership worsen the power struggle and internal conflicts among different interest groups in Chechnya. Kadyrov's leading cause for his rise to dominance in post-conflict Chechnya is his cooperation with the Russian administration under Putin. At the time, Vladimir Putin was concerned with limiting the autonomy of the ethnicity regime in the federal

republics and centralized the ethnic policy-making issues toward Moscow as a way to prevent the same “Chechnya case” from being born again (Aktürk, 2015: 289). The leaders of the federal republics with significant ethnic populations were appointed directly by the President of the Russian Federation to ensure control towards ethnic populations (Aktürk, 2015: 292). This policy was deemed authoritarian and attracted criticism, but Putin’s focus on bringing stability and development to Russia made Putin

ignore such criticism easily. This policy also became a way for Putin to approach the Chechen problem by seeking a powerful man in the local area, which can be controlled, in this case, Akhmad Kadyrov.

Akhmad Kadyrov was elected as President of the Chechen Republic in 2003. During his presidency, Kadyrov also formed a security unit dedicated to protecting Kadyrov and becoming a force of Chechnya against the threat from Maskhadov’s Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and Basayev’s Islamist militia. This force was notably known as Kadyrovtsy, which consisted of different rebel groups’ members who been apologized to by Akhmad Kadyrov. The status of Kadyrovtsy is unofficial, but it enjoyed a range of privileges as it was put under the direct command from Akhmad Kadyrov (Bibermann, 2016: 147). In 2004, when a suicide bomb killed Akhmad Kadyrov, Ramazan Kadyrov eventually took charge of the Chechen administration and Kadyrovtsky, which was eventually disbanded during Ramazan’s regime (Bibermann, 2016: 147). Putin and Kadyrov seemed to have good relations with each other, as Putin let Kadyrov rule over Chechnya with his version of Sufi Islamic governance, and Kadyrov keeps its total loyalty toward Putin. In the rise of ISIS, both actors have the same interests to tackle the influence of ISIS in Russia and to avoid another significant conflict from occurring again in the Northern Caucasus (The Week Staffs, 2016).

Historical Background of Aceh Question: From Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam toward Daud Beureueuh’s Movement

Before analyzing the Question of Aceh in Indonesia thoroughly, it is essential to look back toward how the Acehnese nation was constructed as a nation in its history. One of the most crucial parts of the history of the Acehnese nation that would impact its construction of national consciousness is the foundation of Sultanate Aceh Darussalam. Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam is a sultanate that was founded in 1514 by Sultan Ali Mughayat Shah (Ricklefs, 2001: 37). The Sultanate was a combination of the existing kingdoms spread through Aceh’s peninsula, which united because of the Portuguese threat along Malacca Strait (Hasjmy, 1977: 13). Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam had several battles with the Portuguese Naval Forces, gained several victories and losses during the battles. By building alliances with Javanese Muslim power under the Sultanate of Demak and the Ottoman Empire, the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam successfully protected its coastline from the dominance of Portuguese forces.

Such achievement was gained during the era of Sultan Iskandar Muda Meukuta Alam, a young Acehnese sultan who was known for his effort of unifying Northern Sumatra (Ricklefs, 2001: 38-39). The Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam became institutionalized during the era of Iskandar Muda (Ricklefs, 2001: 39). In its system of governance, Aceh Darussalam could be categorized Islamic state, but it considered both adat and sharia as equal and vital sources of law for its government. This is clearly expressed in one of the essential maxims in Acehnese tradition: *Adat bak po Teumeurohom, Hukum bak Syiah Kuala, Qanun bak Putroe Phang, Reusam bak Laksamana* (Customary law is referred to Sultan, Sharia or Islamic law is referred to 'Ulama, Constitution is referred to Queen consort, and Strategy is referred to the Admiral) (Salim, 2015: 38). Many Acehnese still memorize this maxim and currently apply it, but with a different context. Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam also adopted a special and unique understanding of Islam, which respects the different interpretations of Islam and encourages the role of women in public affairs, as shown in the leadership of Malahayati and Ratu Safiatuddin during the 16th - 17th century Aceh (Hasjmy, 1977: 21).

Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam enjoyed internal peace and independence from the 17th Century towards the 19th Century. The Sultanate conducted relations with many countries around the World, especially with the Ottoman Empire, as the central government of the Islamic World. Nevertheless, in 1873, the Dutch invasion of Aceh disrupted the Acehnese period of peace and independence (Ricklefs, 2001: 187). The reason for the invasion of Aceh was that the Dutch's worry about Sultanate's strength in the pepper market would influence the Dutch profits in the global market (Ricklefs, 2001: 186-187). As Aceh would like to open new relations with the United States of America at that time, Dutch powers decided to put military pressure on Aceh and declared Aceh as an enemy (Ricklefs, 2001: 186). The Dutch invasion of Aceh was responded to heroically by the Acehnese people, who called this period as *Perang Sabil* or War on God's Way. Acehnese remembered the heroic and tragic stories during the war with *Hikayah Perang Sabil*, which told stories about the bravery of Acehnese men and women in their struggle to protect their homeland against *kaphe Belanda* (infidel Dutch) (Alfian, 1992: 19). *Hikayah Perang Sabil* played an essential role in shaping the national consciousness among Acehnese people, and this *hikayah* or story proved to be influential in the formation of the Acehnese nationalist movement later on.

During the 1880s-1890s, the Dutch experienced serious defeats in Aceh. However, along with the 1900s, Dutch was quick enough to turn the defeats into victories by changing their strategies to send marsose (quick-response force) and splitting Aceh people from their source of power, which is the ulama, by crushing the ulama (Ricklefs, 2001: 188). Thus, Aceh was included in the Dutch East Indies colonial administration, and the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam was dissolved in 1903 (Ricklefs, 2001: 188). The inclusion of Aceh into

the Dutch East Indies was the beginning of the new chapter in Aceh history, as Aceh people began to have more frequent interaction with fellow colonized people from another part of Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Bali, et cetera. Aceh people started to get involved in the Indonesian political and independence movement because they felt that they shared a common destiny with other Indonesian people. Several Acehnese joined *Jong Sumatranen Bond* (Association of Sumatrans Youth) as active members, who also actively contributed to the formulation of Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge) (Reid, 2005: 30-33). Other influential Acehnese, such as Teuku Nyak Arief and Tengku Daud di Bereueuh were involved in *Volksraad* (Netherland East Indies Colonial Parliament) and the educational sector, respectively (Safwan, 1992: 27).

After World War II, Indonesia proclaimed its independence during the vacuum of power on August 17, 1945. The proclamation of independence was made without any consent from Dutch and Japan. As soon as the political situation stabilized, Dutch started sending their soldiers back to Indonesia with the assistance of Allied forces and Japan as the defeated party was forced to leave Indonesia. Many Indonesians considered the Allied Forces' act to bring Dutch forces back into Indonesia as an insult, and Indonesians started to rise again the Dutch-Allied force coalition. During this time, the Indonesian government experienced a lack of money in its national treasurer to support the popular struggles against colonial Dutch. As a way to assist the national struggle, the Acehnese people donate gold and money to the Indonesian government. The collected donation was used to buy a plane for official use, which was named "RI 001 Seulawah" (named after a mount's name in Aceh) (Toer & Kamil, 2003: 689). Soekarno, First President of Indonesia, was so grateful to Acehnese people for this donation, and he promised to Aceh Governor at that time, Tengku Daud di Beureueuh, that Aceh will be given a special status that would allow Aceh to apply Islamic law within their region (Sinambela, 2003: 59-60).

In 1948, a man named SM Kartosuwirjo declared the establishment of Negara Islam Indonesia or the Islamic State of Indonesia (Ricklefs, 2001: 278). The declaration of this state attracted responses from many people, as Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country. The same movement was thus spread all over Indonesia, including to the Province of Aceh. At that time, Daud Beureueuh was also propagating the similar idea of Islamic State: Darul Islam or Abode of Islam (Chaidar, 1999) and proclaimed that Aceh included itself toward Kartosuwirjo's movement in 1953. Daud envisioned an Islamic state in which Islamic law could become an essential law alongside adat, not the secular one. He criticized the secular law applied by the government of Indonesia, as it did not match with Acehnese and the Indonesian moral system – thus, Daud considered the Indonesian government as "non-Muslim" (Barter, 2008: 41). In sum, Daud thought that the Islamic system is the best political system to be applied in Aceh and Indonesia because of its majority Muslim population.

Daud did not think that the idea of an Islamic state would harm the existence of non-Muslims in Indonesia; in fact, the Islamic system would protect their existence (Chaidar, 1999). Daud's idea was popular enough in Aceh to revive the Darul Islam movement in Aceh, which consisted of political and armed wings against the Government of Indonesia. As Soekarno did not fulfill the promise of autonomy toward the Acehnese people, the movement grew even more popular in Aceh.

Soekarno as a secular president, rejected the idea of applying an Islamic political system based on sharia in Aceh and Indonesia because he considered that such law would be incompatible with Indonesia's diversity and Indonesia would be divided if such law was to be applied across Indonesia (Abuza, 2003: 62). Therefore, during the 1950s-1960s, Soekarno took harsh measures toward the Islamic State of Indonesia and the *Darul Islam* movement around the country. Many of the movements' ringleaders were captured and sentenced with the death penalty, but Soekarno forgave Daud Beureueuh for his role in Indonesian independence and his essential position in Acehnese society (Ricklefs, 2001: 322).

The Beginning and Rise of the Free Aceh Movement

In 1968, Soeharto was chosen by the Parliament of Indonesia to be the President of Indonesia, replacing Soekarno. Soeharto was known for his authoritarian style of leadership that favored stability. To ensure stability, Soeharto actively involved the army and network of intelligence to control the people in all segments of life, from politics to the economy. Soeharto also concerned with strengthening the unity of Indonesia through the propagation of Pancasila (Five Principles) ideology teaching all around the country and conceptualization of the *Wawasan Nusantara* concept, which proposed the integrity of Indonesian territory in geographical, political, social and cultural term (Kabir & Muin, 2015: 88-89). In this concept, Indonesia is considered as one union, regardless of the differences owned by its population (Kabir & Muin, 2015: 89). People have the right to continue their tradition and culture, but three elements would unite Indonesia: language, nationality, and country (Kusumoprojo, 2009: 78).

How is Aceh positioned within the *Wawasan Nusantara* concept? Aceh was given a special regional zone on May 26, 1959. Nevertheless, at that time, the Government of Indonesia applied a very centralistic administration system that made progress, and development was challenging to be achieved in Aceh. Most Acehnese people were also living humbly at that time, without gaining any profit from the newly-discovered gas and oil sources in their land (Barter, 2008:41-47). The attitude and policy of the Indonesian central authority in Jakarta toward Aceh, especially in the case of the government's reluctance to give gas profit to Acehnese people, made many Acehnese angry. In 1976, an Acehnese businessman and also the great-grandson of Acehnese notable hero

Teuku Chik di Tiro, Hasan Tiro, was disappointed with what he called Javanese imperialism in Aceh (Tiro, 1979: 57). He recalled the glorious history of Aceh, *Hikayah Perang Sabil*, and proclaimed the independence of Aceh from Javanese imperialism in the drama script that he made (Tiro, 1979: 56-57), "The Drama of the Acehnese History 1873-1978".

Hasan Tiro considered that Aceh, which has a rich cultural and historical legacy, should stand up with its own feet to make a country that would make its citizens prosperous and experience a renaissance once more (Tiro, 1979: 52-53). The movement set up by Hasan Tiro was called the Free Aceh Movement. The movement was not successful in the early years, but it revived again in the 1980s as the Indonesian government took a more repressive approach toward any kind of separatist potentials in Indonesia. The armed forces were created within Free Aceh Movement, and it was mainly based within the forest and village area, where the influence of the Indonesian government was not as strong as in cities (Davies, 2006: 28-29). In the 1990s, the Indonesian government applied the Military Operation Territory in Aceh, and Aceh was ruled with martial law at that time (Davies, 2006: 19). Many Acehnese people were kidnapped and lost during this military operation (Davies, 2006: 166). As the conflicts between Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian army intensified, many Acehnese – especially those who lived in villages – sympathized with the movement rather than the Indonesian army (Davies, 2006: 28-29).

Aceh Question in the Era of Democratization: Between Militarization and Political Openness

In 1998, after Soeharto resigned from his position as Indonesia's President during the democratization process, the Free Aceh Movement gained more public support, and the movement was ever stronger than before. As the Free Aceh Movement intensified its armed struggle against the Indonesian movement, a significant part of the Acehnese population proposed that the referendum would ensure Aceh's future: either staying with Indonesia or gaining its independence from Indonesia. The referendum proposal was initiated by SIRA or the Information Center of Aceh Referendum. This organization was joined by networks of Aceh students and intelligentsia all across Indonesia and the World, and they advocated a peaceful approach and dialogue to resolve the Aceh conflict with the Indonesian government (Miller, 2009: 32-33).

Seeing the rise of political movement and military activity in Aceh after Soeharto's presidency, the army once again put the status of Military Operation Territory in Aceh with the consent of President Megawati Soekarnoputri, Soekarno's daughter who was becoming Indonesian President at that time (Davies, 2006: 102-103). The Military Operation Territory status was disbanded in 1998, but it was put back again in 2003 due to the rise of the Free Aceh Movement. Many gross human rights violations occurred during this period, as shown in an investigation conducted by KONTRAS (Kontras, 2006).

Alongside the military operation, several countries such as the USA, Japan, and the EU asked Indonesia to negotiate with Acehese leaders in Sweden. Among them, there was Hasan Tiro. In May 2004, the military operation status was lifted, and the condition started to stabilize in Aceh (Pemerintah Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2008: 363). Many of Acehese militias were returning to their families from guerilla in forests and submitting themselves to the Indonesian government. In December 2004, the tsunami disaster transformed the conflict in Aceh completely. The tsunami disaster was considered the ultimate suffering of the Acehese people after years of conflict and ignorance. Acehese people were brought together by a tsunami, which cost the lives of approximately 230.000 people.

In 2005, the government and Free Aceh Movement leaders met to negotiate the future of Aceh after the tsunami. It was agreed that Free Aceh Movement would disband its movement as long as the Indonesian government agreed to apply the autonomy system in Aceh, which respects the rights of Acehese to apply *shariah* and *adat* alongside the Indonesian formal legal system (Miller, 2009: 159). The agreement also included the amnesty for movement leaders, including Hasan Tiro, who came back to Aceh in 2008 and held the position as *Wali Nanggroe* (McDonald, 2015: 83). Since the agreement was signed in 2005, Aceh was given status as a “special region” and continues to apply *shariah* and *adat* law within their region.

Policies of Nation Building and National Integration in Russia and Indonesia

The first aspect, which is essential to analyze when comparing the Chechen and Aceh question, is how Russia and Indonesia differ in their nation-building policies and national integration. Both Russia and Indonesia are countries that have a diverse populations. In order to control the diversity within its territory, they have to construct a comprehensive policy in order to create a feeling of commonality among its diverse population. Throughout the course of history, Russia tends to create a grand picture of a Russian nation. Russian nation, either through the conception of *Sovietsky narod* or *Rossian*, was heavily emphasized on the notion of the oneness of Russian identity. This is realized by underrating the local identity below the Russian identity and promoting the Russian identity through the Russian language and the promotion of Russian Orthodox religion for all ethnicities (Aktürk, 2015: 290).

The promotion of collective identity and symbol, as argued by Birch, was an essential driver in the nation-building process. However, this might also be caused otherwise, as the dominant picture of national identity might threaten the existence of certain ethnics' way of life, and thus separatist movement could be born within the process of nation-building. In this respect, the Chechnya movement was growing out because of the authoritative and non-dialogic interpretation of national identity. Chechen felt that its

distinctive way of life did not get enough space within the concept of *Sovietsky narod* and *Rossian*. As a result, they are willing to rebel against Russian authority. Eventually, as Russia decided to expand its geopolitical influence, Russia used the Eurasianist narrative, which tends to be more inclusive and more open to the diversity of ethnic and cultural background of vast Russian geopolitical area (Tolz, 1998).

In Indonesia, a similar approach to creating a grand picture of the Indonesian nation was constructed by the Indonesian government with the conception of Pancasila and *Wawasan Nusantara*. These concepts argued for unity in diversity among the Indonesian people. Indonesian people were allowed to keep their own culture, tradition, and language, as long as it would not harm Indonesian national integrity. Aceh's case was an exception since the Aceh freedom movement securitizes the issue of autonomy, Acehese national identity, and the application of the *Sharia* system within its territory. However, as Indonesia democratized itself and applied the decentralization system as opposed to the centralization system in Soeharto's era, Indonesia could accept the notion of autonomy in Aceh as long as it remains its faithfulness with the Indonesian government. In the case of Indonesia, Indonesia had chosen a way of reconciliation to resolve differences and, therefore, ensure a more united and integrated Indonesia.

The Root of Conflicts and Development of the Separatist Movement in Chechnya and Aceh

It is vital to recall back the theory explained by Hale and Birch to compare the root and development of the conflict in Chechnya and Aceh. Hale explained that ethnic politics played an important role in shaping the conflict between ethnic groups and state authority. In the case of Chechnya and Aceh, ethnic sentiments were indeed the main factor behind the conflict. By signifying the central government as an authoritarian and imperial power, the separatist movement in Chechnya and Aceh tried to justify its independence, as the authoritative and imperialistic type of leadership would threaten the existence of their ethnicities and the ethnics' religious and cultural heritage which had been built within the history. Nevertheless, within this context, it is also important to remember that Chechnya and Aceh had a different process of inclusion with the central authority.

In contrast, Chechnya was forced to accept Russian authority during the 19th Century. Aceh was included as part of the Dutch East Indies as part of colonialization. After Indonesia's independence, it submitted itself voluntarily as part of Indonesia. Nevertheless, in both Chechnya and Aceh examples, the political mobilization through remembrance of ethnics' history and heritage took part, and the separatist movement succeeded in gaining support from the general public in order to strengthen their movement against the authoritarian regime. The establishment of a state with Islamic law became a central

vision that united the heart of the Chechen and Acehese people for their struggle against the secular government.

Regarding the movement capability in starting the resistance, there were differences between Chechnya and Aceh. Within the era of the Soviet Union, which was very autocratic and militarized, the armed and political resistance of Chechen people was limited due to the extensive network of military and intelligence at that time – but as Russia (the Soviet Union, at that time) experienced the *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the movement grew up quickly and gained quick popularity.

In the case of Aceh, the armed and political struggle continued as the Indonesian government applied martial law and military operations within the Aceh province. The political openness indeed brings more massive supports for the Free Aceh Movement, but it had already strengthened its bases within rural regions in Aceh. The Chechnya and Aceh case also differed in its cause for the resource. As Barter argued, alongside ethnic sentiments, the problem of the distribution of profits from natural energy was one of the central factors that eventually led to the creation of the Acehese separatist movement. The centralized government system prevents Acehese people from profiting from the gas fields in their land. Ironically, the gas became the primary fuel to flare the feeling of Acehese nationalism towards Indonesia. These facts are compatible with Hale's argument about the accompanying causes of separatism and Birch's argument about the justification of separatism caused by the unjust policies enacted by the central government.

Conclusion

This paper would like to conclude that the conflict between Chechnya and Aceh was ethnic-based separatism. Within the formation of the separatist movement, the religious factor played an important role in helping the separatist movement gain huge influence within their territory. Together with the religious factor, the factor of injustice in the distribution of benefits from the natural resources also played an important role in sparking the separatist movement in Aceh. The case of separatism in Chechnya and Aceh was also caused by the strict and single interpretation of the national ideology, which disregards the importance of ethnic identity (in the Russian case) or could not accommodate the unique needs of the ethnics' way of life (in Indonesia case).

Both cases were ended peacefully but were resolved differently. As Russia tends to solve the problem by building an alliance with local leaders, Indonesia chose to open political channels by engaging with rebel groups and creating a sustainable peace through acknowledging local autonomy, particularly after the tsunami disaster in 2004. It is also important to emphasize the similarity between the reconstruction of the narratives of nationalism and

citizenship. In both cases, Indonesia and Russia similarly tried to make the national conception of nationalism and citizenship to be more open, plural, and accommodative of ethnic and cultural differences.

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