Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia

Jacques Bertrand offers a comparative-historical analysis of five nationalist conflicts over several decades in Southeast Asia. Using a theoretical framework to explain variance over time and across cases, he challenges and refines existing debates on democracy's impact and shows that, while democratization significantly reduces violent insurgency over time, it often introduces pernicious effects that fail to resolve conflict and contribute to maintaining deep nationalist grievances. Drawing on years of detailed fieldwork, Bertrand analyses the paths that led from secessionist mobilization to a range of outcomes. These include persistent state repression for Malay Muslims in Thailand, low-level violence under a top-down "special autonomy" for Papuans, reframing of mobilizing from nationalist to indigenous peoples in the Cordillera, a long and broken path to an untested broad autonomy for Moros and relatively successful broad autonomy for Acehnese.

JACQUES BERTRAND is Professor and Associate Chair of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia

From Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution

Jacques Bertrand
University of Toronto

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À Ariane, Liam et Lisa

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book has its roots in a set of reservations that I had with debates about ethnic conflict, in particular from the vantage point of my long-standing engagement with Southeast Asia. Among others, I shared other scholars' concern about the conceptual vagueness of "ethnic conflict." At its origins, its study responded to expectations from modernization and Marxist theories that class interests and socio-economic grievances would largely supersede identity-based conflicts. But their persistence, of course, fed a whole multi-disciplinary field of study that retained the overarching conceptual focus on "ethnicity," without always refining its definition. Some scholars rejected its use and favoured instead "identity" based conflicts, yet the latter's scope became even broader and not analytically clearer. Others made strong cases that conflicts involving particular characteristics required different analyses; for instance, "race" or "religion" represented particular ways in which groups were identified (or self-identified) that required separate analysis.

In brief, there were challenges in the literature even at the level of defining the main attributes of groups to be analysed, and how best to call them. This was compounded by the near-consensus around constructivist approaches that viewed many forms of ethnic attributes as essentially malleable or, at the very least, politicized and manipulated.

I became uneasy, predominantly in large-N data, which to identify ethnic groups more broadly, particularly when using static and crude measurements such as the broadly used ethno-linguistic fractionalization measure, failed to capture some important distinctions in group characteristics with ramifications for our understanding of conflict. The rationale for the comparison between some groups was weak, at best, particularly when sacrificing some of the insights from debates on group formation for the sake of measurability.

Three developments in the literature further stimulated my reflection. First, there were promising areas of cross-fertilization between the literatures on nationalism and ethnic conflict. The parallel debate on the origins and causes of nationalism raised important questions regarding the ethnic basis of nationalism, and many of its expressions that resembled what others analysed as ethnic mobilization and "secessionist" movements. Second, as a review by

Brubaker and Laitin emphasized, our analyses required greater distinction and refinement to disentangle the causes of violence from those of conflict more broadly. While much of the research, particularly large-N studies, pivoted toward explaining ethnic violence with more precision, other forms of conflict or long-standing ethnic tension with relatively low levels of violence fell off the radar of academic attention, even though they often disguised deep grievances that could potentially develop into larger scale, sometimes renewed, violent mobilization. Third, a growing debate about the impact of democratization largely sounded alarms regarding its violence-producing effects but prevailing explanations did not resonate with the Southeast Asian context. It certainly raised interesting propositions regarding the need for more dynamic analyses and to account for structural and institutional change to better understand their impact on ethnic groups and potential conflict. Moreover, I had found a long-standing debate comparing static institutional effects on ethnic "stability" or conflict to be somewhat problematic, as it became apparent to me, particularly in cases I observed, that any specific set of institutional solutions, such as autonomy or federalism, required a better analysis of the historical path and constraints leading up to their consideration, or adoption, in order to assess their impact on conflict and violence.

My experience working on these issues in Southeast Asia suggested that there were important differences between groups that sought some form of self-determination and other "ethnic" groups facing different types of grievances and related demands. While my own work on Indonesia had shown the importance of understanding the effects of a transition to democracy on a broad rise in ethnic violence in the country, involving different types of groups and conflicts, nevertheless I was left with the strong analytical sense that Papuans and Acehnese required separate analyses, as they held very unique sets of grievances and sources of mobilization as they confronted the state directly, and the latter was particularly defensive about their demands. The strong Indonesian nationalism that had partly inspired Benedict Anderson to argue that imagined communities created strong new bonds around a shared national consciousness clashed strongly and deeply with groups that challenged such national imaginaries and struck at their core. I started to think that we were missing some important aspects of understanding these conflicts by folding nationalist ones into broader analyses of ethnic conflict. While I agree with Brubaker and others that the fluidity of group boundaries can sometimes make such distinctions difficult, nevertheless the political project involved in claiming a territorial homeland and powers to govern are sufficiently different from other types to justify more explicit analytical attention. Within Indonesia, it was also striking to me that Papuan grievances, although in some ways much deeper than those of the Acehnese, nevertheless were much less noticed and would not appear in many of the larger data sets on ethnic civil

wars or conflict, as levels of deaths or intensity of violent incidents remained low. It made clear to me that our measures of conflict based on intensity or frequency of violence (or deaths) not only skewed our understanding of such conflicts but also assumed that the absence of violence was somehow indicative of a resolved conflict, or one that would be counted as non-existent in large-N data sets.

These concerns guided my analysis and combined with my interest to address the question of democratization's impact on nationalist mobilization in the region. Southeast Asia has had a particularly large number of secessionist movements, which makes it an excellent source of comparative data that can inform broader debates. This book, therefore, is designed to address the question of how democratization has impacted secessionist conflict in Southeast Asia, with the aim to engage and add to larger comparative debates.

The study draws on years of cumulative fieldwork. For the Indonesian cases, I partially drew not only on fieldwork conducted in Aceh and Papua for a previous book but also on three subsequent trips to both regions. In the Philippines, some of my material from interviews conducted in the mid-1990s in Mindanao were also useful for parts of the chapter on the Moros, but I returned later to Cotabato city and surrounding areas a decade later for the most significant interviews for this book. I also conducted fieldwork in Baguio city (Cordillera) and surrounding areas, as well as in Pattani and Yala. I was fortunate to gain access to Pattani at a time when the region's militarization was on the rise and foreigners were not particularly welcomed by the authorities, but interviews were still possible. Other trips included interviews in Manila, Jakarta, and Bangkok.

In comparative work, and particularly when studying five different regions with varying accessibility to interview subjects, there is always a trade-off between the fine-grained, in-depth work that goes into knowing a particular region and spreading one's time and resources to cover more regions in a comparative effort. While I delved into the particularities of each region and immersed myself into each case to understand its unique aspects, ultimately my objective was to draw from in-depth inductive analysis some comparative points across regions and across time. Fieldwork constituted a core part of the data gathering but also allowed me to contextualize and understand local conditions. There is no replacement for the immense value that fieldwork provides to question one's assumptions when working on a case, and being open and ready to reframe, reinterpret, and abandon prior leads when face-to-face engagement challenges our expected findings. While there is a trade-off between inductive, detailed immersion into a case and more deductive hypothesis or theory-testing exercises, I strongly adhere to the view that engaging the on-the-ground empirical reality comes with a certain modesty of interpretation and a need to be sensitive to local understandings of their own problems. To

build analysis from the ground up creates its own challenges for comparative analysis but strikes a balance between avoiding overly distorted rendering of empirical realities to fit preconceived hypotheses while attempting to seek patterns across cases and time, based on informed engagement with comparative theories. Furthermore, in building the empirical data for each case, drawing on local newspapers and oftentimes excellent locally based reports from civil society organizations can be not only a source of invaluable data but also an important way of triangulating information from interviews. I used a large number of such sources to complement interview data. Finally, I am very grateful to the large number of colleagues who are deeply knowledgeable of each case and whose work was necessary to gain another level of analytical understanding, and sometimes to supplement empirical information, particularly for more historical data.

There are a large number of people who contributed knowingly or not to this manuscript. Over the years, presentations and exchanges with a large number of colleagues helped me to refine and rethink several aspects of the analysis. I am most grateful to all of my interviewees who provided generous time to answer my questions. I have attempted as much as possible to retain some of their voices and convey some of their concerns, even though the data-gathering exercise and subsequent analysis often blurs the message they wanted to deliver. For many of my respondents, the issues discussed were profoundly emotional and several dedicated their professional lives, sometimes at great risk, to advance their cause and seek redress for many grievances that members of their group held. Others were dedicated to protecting the human rights of several who suffered at the hands of repressive regimes. Many interviewees hoped that contributing to the project would help the world better understand their perspective and their hopes. While I am grateful and sensitive to those requests, the need for analytical distance and interpretation often masked what might have been their expectations, but hopefully the book does help to better explain the sources of their mobilization and the conditions that have sometimes led to better outcomes.

I visited five regions in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, with varying interview conditions and help. There would be too many people to acknowledge but a few I would like to mention in particular. In Aceh, I was repeatedly impressed with the skill and initiative of several people I met after the region had been devastated by war and a deadly tsunami. Many thanks to the Aceh Institute for providing me with help on one of my trips, particularly Saiful Akmal who made every effort with great energy and dedication to ensure that I could meet as many respondents as possible. In Papua, I could only thank all of my respondents for opening their doors on short notice, and without reserve. I was impressed every time with the ability to rapidly connect to people

in Jayapura. There is a particular skill at conducting fieldwork "under the radar," when researchers are not welcomed by local authorities, as was my case. I appreciate interviewees' willingness to meet, even though we had to all be aware of surveillance. I am particularly grateful to Anum Siregar for her advice and to staff at the Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua (ALDP), who offered some workspace as well as access to their incredible resource bank of local newspaper articles. In Cotabato city (Mindanao), I am very grateful for the exceptional welcome and help from the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (Notre-Dame U.), especially Attny Benny Bacani, who provided office space, helped with contacts, but most importantly offered generosity with his time and hospitality. I very much enjoyed our long discussions, and those brief but intense ones with "Bong" Montesa. I appreciated as well the support from several other staff at the IAG, including Jacque Fernandez, who provided assistance in setting up a few meetings. In Baguio city, I would like to thank Delfin Tolentino and Ray Rovillos for their help in making my brief research visit productive. They were not only helpful but also very welcoming. The staff of the Cordillera Studies Centre were also very helpful and, in particular, Alice Follosco was incredibly kind in helping to arrange a few interviews. In Pattani, the fieldwork proved particularly challenging when escalating tensions and recent deployment of additional military troops made foreigners such as myself particularly unwelcomed. Nevertheless, I am grateful to those informants who were willing to meet with me, in spite of the fact that discretion had to be exercised at a much higher level than what is expected even with standard ethical procedures to protect human subjects. In particular, I am grateful to one local Muslim leader who must remain anonymous and who braved the troops that disembarked at his home to "protect" me as he managed to wave them away dismissively and without hesitation. Many thanks to Warathida Chaiyapah, who accompanied me and helped with translation and local logistical communication. There were numerous colleagues, informants, and organizations in Jakarta, Manila, and Bangkok who also provided enormous support, useful insight, and assistance throughout the years. I cannot name them all but would like to acknowledge, in no particular order, Steve Rood from the Asia Foundation; Rizal Sukma, Kristiadi, Christine Tjhin, and other staff at CSIS; Ruth Lusterio-Rico from UP Diliman; Chaiwat Satha-Anand at Chulalongkorn University.

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with whom I enjoyed engaging on themes related to my book. I embarked on that five-year project to exchange ideas and undertake collaborative work with colleagues who worked on similar issues across different regions and subfields. They were a tremendous source of inspiration and feedback. I particularly benefitted from work with my co-editors, André Laliberté and Oded Haklai, on two separate volumes. These edited volumes greatly informed my work, and the workshops leading to them were tremendously useful to bounce off ideas in this book and gain comparative insight from colleagues who participated. I am also grateful for feedback from numerous colleagues over the years at conferences, workshops, and invited lectures. At the University of Toronto, I greatly benefited from the incisive but constructive criticism from colleagues who participated in the informal Comparative Politics workshops. Finally, the two anonymous reviewers of this manuscript were more than generous with their detailed reading and suggestions, for which I am grateful. Although I felt that I had reached the limit of my patience to edit the manuscript after numerous iterations, their comments were really helpful to refine and solidify some of the looser ends.

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Abbreviations

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BBL	Bangsamoro Basic Law
BBMP	United Mujahideen Front of Patani/*Barisan Bersatu Mujahidin Patani*
BJE	Bangsamoro Juridical Entity
BKPG	Financial Assistance for Village Development/*Bantuan Keuangan Pemakmur Gampong*
BNPP	Patani National Liberation Front/*Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani*
BRA	Aceh Peace Reintegration Agency/*Badan Reintegrasi-Damai Aceh*
Brimob	Mobile Brigade Corps (Police)/*Korps Brigade Mobil*
BRN	National Revolutionary Front/*Barisan Revolusi Nasional*
BPK	Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia/*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan*
BTC	Bangsamoro Transition Committee
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CBA	Cordillera Bodong Association
CBAd	Cordillera Bodong Administration
Con-Com	Constitutional Commission
CPA	Cordillera People's Alliance
CPLA	Cordillera People's Liberation Army
CPM	Civilian-Police-Military Command
CRCC	Cordillera Regional Consultative Commission
DAP	Papua Customary Council/*Dewan Adat Papua*
DAO	Department Administrative Order
DAU	General Allotment Funds/*Danah Alokasi Umum*
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOM	Military Operations Zone/*Daerah Operasi Militer*
DPR	People's Representative Assembly/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*

DPRD	Local People's Representative Council/*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*
FORERI	Forum for the Reconciliation of Irian Jaya People/*Forum Rekonsiliasi Rakyat Irian Jaya*
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
Fretilin	Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor/*Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente*
GAM	Free Aceh Movement/*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
IMT	International Monitoring Team
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command
JDP	Papua Peace Network/*Jaringan Damai Papua*
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KNPB	National Committee for West Papua/*Komite Nasional Papua Barat*
KPA	Aceh Transition Committee/*Komite Peralihan Aceh*
Lakas-NUCD	*Lakas Ng Tao*-National Union of Christian Democrats
LGU	local government units
LIPI	Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Jakarta)
LoGA	Law on Governing Aceh
LNG	liquefied natural gas
MARA Patani	Patani Consultative Council/*Majlis Syura Patani*
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MoA-AD	Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPR	People's Consultative Assembly/*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*
MRP	Papuan People's Assembly/*Majelis Rakyat Papua*
MUBES	Congress/*Musyarawah Besar*
NAD	Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam
NAP	New Aspiration Party
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPA	New People's Army
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
NUC	National Unification Commission
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Advisor for the Peace Process
OPM	Free Papua Movement/*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*
Otsus	special autonomy

PA	Aceh Party/*Partai Aceh*
PDI-P	Democratic Party of Indonesia for the Struggle/*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*
PDP	Papua Presidium Council/*Presidium Dewan Papua*
Perdasi	provincial regulations/*Peraturan Daerah Provinsi*
Perdasus	regulations/*Peraturan Daerah Khusus*
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organization
RDC	Regional Development Council of the CAR
RUU	draft law/*Rancangan Undang Undang*
SAF	Special Action Force (Police)
SBPAC	Southern Border Provincial Administration Center
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
SIRA	Aceh Referendum Information Centre/*Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh*
SPCPD	Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development
SRA	Social Reform Agenda
TAO	Tambon Administrative Organization
TNI	Indonesian National Army/*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*
UN WGIP	United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations
UP4B	Accelerated Development Unit for Papua and West Papua Provinces/*Unit Percepatan Pembangunan Provinsi Papua dan Papua Barat*