Zulfa Sakhiyya
Teguh Wijaya Mulya *Editors*

Education in Indonesia

Critical Perspectives on Equity and Social Justice

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Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects

Volume 70

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Editors

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Justice

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Foreword

Indonesia has the fourth-largest education system in the world. For that reason alone, a volume about Indonesian education commands international attention. Importantly, the critical sociology of education approach taken by the contributors takes the reader beyond description alone to an analysis of the complex forces which make up the system's policies and practices. The authors draw on their respective studies to illustrate the overall theme that education is a key institution in democracy's ideals of equality and justice. By interrogating the tensions involved in providing equal access to education for such a huge and diverse population, the studies explore how ideological and political tensions are experienced in the various policies and practices of the Indonesian education system.

It is in a country's national education that people create and transmit their collective representations—the peoples' understanding of themselves. These collective representations are not only symbols of the nation's ideals but the ideals themselves, democratic principles such as equality and justice serve to construct that reality. However, collective representations can also conceal the ideologies which separate ideals from reality and prevent a nation achieving those ideals. The hope of education systems in the modern world is the creation of a reality where equality and justice are possible for all people.

The introduction provides the theme of equality and social justice by identifying the overarching problem addressed in each of the chapters—that of unequal access to quality education. It is most clearly revealed in Indonesia's poor performance as measured by international rankings, particularly the ongoing low rankings in science, reading, and mathematics. In different ways, each chapter investigates the link between education performance and the resources available to people. Access to the key resource of education, knowledge itself, is affected by all the complex factors which combine to keep individuals and social groups from full and fair access. By identifying marginalized people, the contributors argue for a politics of redistribution to ensure that students of all ages have access to education and that education is of a standardized quality for all.

The editors and contributors maintain ties to an older sociological tradition; one which insists on the role of criticality in throwing light on where, why, and how

an education system may achieve or fail its democratic purpose. This places them firmly within sociology's critical tradition and the democratic principles underpinning that criticality. The book's critical sociological foundations can be seen in several features. The most important is its use of the tools of sociological inquiry to, as Immanuel Kant said in 1781, identify the "causes and processes that are hidden in the phenomenon itself". But before those causes and processes can be identified, sociological studies begin by identifying the problem in the phenomenon. If there is a link from causes to effects, then we would expect to see this link uncovered by the sociological method. That method requires identifying the problem in education to form a probable hypothesis of that problem. Established disciplinary tools of inquiry are used for the investigation with sociological concepts and theories employed as the tools of analysis and explanation.

A strength of the contributions is the use of this sociological method with contributors investigating not only the effects of exclusion from fair access to education but locating the causes of such exclusion in underpinning political and economic forces. While this contributes to the book's place in the critical sociology tradition, the editors are modest, saying only that the book "offers a degree of critical awareness about various socio-historical-political forces". Yet it is a confident and competent criticality, and the aim is admirably bold—to understand the causes of social injustice in education.

I have spoken of the centrality of identifying causal connections as the key feature of critical sociology. A second, and no less important feature is the historical component. The reference to the dangers of historical inertia shows the editors' awareness that all power operates in time as well as in a particular location. This is recognized in the historical accounts found throughout the volume. They include descriptions of the *pesantren*, Islamic boarding schools from pre-colonial to today, as well as education policies and practices in the previous authoritarian regime, the post-1998 rise of new religious conservatism, and current education initiatives.

Readers will note the two different philosophical approaches—postmodernism and sociological—in the book's studies. The former can be seen in the chapters which emphasize particular group identities and explain the creation and operation of power as discursive. This approach includes the concept of "discursive constitution of the sense of the self". In contrast, the philosophy informing the Marxist sociological approach employed by several of the authors explains educational inequality as the outcome of differential access to material resources, including the material resource of knowledge itself. It includes the analysis of how power and its accompanying ideologies come from, and contributes to, differential access to material goods, including education.

A number of contributors include in their explanations accounts of the effects of global capitalism in the post-1970's decades. Neoliberal politics such as the decentralization of education following the fall of the New Order in 1998 expand the sociological context when seeking causes for what happens at the local national level. Broader sociology explanations employing concepts such as social justice and equality within the democratic, human rights tradition of modernity are used in the

chapter about the legal system and education. Here the contributors provide a fascinating study of citizen rights by looking closely at the connection between the legal system and access to education.

I congratulate the editors for bringing together so many studies into one volume. This means that the studies can receive a wide readership. The range is a strength of the book. It includes studies about homeschooling, the English language, higher education, academics and knowledge, vocational education, the curriculum, sexuality education, the *pesantren*, and the impact of COVID-19 on access to education. The chapters about early childhood education, one about the (dis-)appearance of mothers, the other about school readiness, are important contributions to the sociology of education literature given the early childhood education tends to be a neglected area in the field despite the crucial importance of the education of very young children.

Contributions such as this play an important role in building a discipline's literature. This book's quality ensures its place in the international sociology of education literature as well as in Indonesia's sociological literature. The complex matter of education's intersection with politics and the economy is of sociological interest in all countries and in developing countries in particular. National education is inherently democratic in intention but molded according to the history and circumstances of each country. For this reason, the book will find a ready readership in Indonesia and internationally. Readers will enjoy the contributors' empirical studies and theoretical explanations as they test the book's claim—that it is "contextually situated, critically provocative and progressively disruptive with the hope of advancing social justice in and through education in Indonesia".

August 2021   Professor Elizabeth Rata
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Acknowledgements

The argument of this edited book is modest yet important. By taking diverse cases of education in Indonesia, this volume proposes the use of critical perspectives in analyzing educational policies and practices. As the contributors of this volume acknowledge that critical issues such as marginalization, neoliberalization, and decentralization in education require critical perspectives and solutions.

During the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, when this volume has been written and finalized, education is in crisis, and it is one of the hardest hit sectors. Especially in Indonesia, whose education sector is the fourth largest in the world, and likewise, its covid transmission is fourth worst in the world. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of critical perspectives and alternative discourses. In a critical tone, Damien Barr eloquently captures equity issues posed by the pandemic: "we are all in the same storm, but not in the same boat", showing that the impact of COVID-19 has fallen unevenly and unequally on society, including in the education sector.

Given the struggle, we each have to bear during this pandemic, we would like to thank all the contributors of this volume. While grieving of losing their loved ones, fighting against the infection, tending to their loved ones to stay healthy, and managing a large-scale community donation, they remain committed to think academically and write. This volume stands in solidarity with those who have been struggling to recover and bounce back from the pandemic, and thus it has been an emancipating struggle to do so. We also would like to thank our dear colleague, Dr. Anindito Aditomo for his support during the conception of this volume.

Managing education in Indonesia has always been challenging due to the complex, diverse, and multifaceted nature of the sector. We hope this collection of chapters contributes to a wider understanding of Indonesia's changing education landscape and offers an alternative perspectives to education.

Series Editor's Introduction

This highly informative book, edited by Zulfa Sakhiyya and Teguh Wijaya Mulya, entitled *Education In Indonesia: Critical Perspectives on Equity and Social Justice*, is the latest book to be published in the long-standing Springer Book Series *Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*. The first volume in this Springer series was published in 2002, this book by Sakhiyya and Mulya being the 70th volume to be published to date.

Indonesia is a fascinating and complex country, an archipelago of 17,000 islands with a population of almost 274 million inhabitants. Located in South East Asia and Oceania, it is the second biggest economy in the region and part of the G20 group of the worlds richest countries. Indonesia is projected to be the 4th largest economy in the world by 2045. Although Indonesia has a diverse economy, including a large agricultural sector, manufacturing is the largest component of the country's economy.

The enormous size, geographical diversity and multi cultural nature of Indonesia presents major challenges for the design, content and management of the education and schooling system.

This book provides a fascinating portrait of education and schooling in Indonesia. The manuscript is divided into four parts, and contains 12 chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. The twenty one contributors provide a holistic portrait of education in Indonesia and between them cover a wide range of important topics including: equality and inclusiveness in Indonesian education; the neoliberalisation of the Indonesian education system; education and the state apparatus with regard to religion, law and local politics; and, critical alternatives to strengthen democratic practices. The contributors examine many important aspects of education including higher education, vocational education, early childhood education, home school education, education and decentralisation, the right to education, sexuality education, the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on education and schooling, and the roles of international development organisations in Indonesia.

In terms of the Springer Book Series in which this volume is published the various topics dealt with in the series are wide ranging and varied in coverage, with

an emphasis on cutting edge developments, best practices and education innovations for development. Topics examined in the series include: environmental education and education for sustainable development; the interaction between technology and education; the reform of primary, secondary and teacher education; innovative approaches to education assessment; alternative education; most effective ways to achieve quality and highly relevant education for all; active ageing through active learning; case studies of education and schooling in various countries in the region; cross country and cross cultural studies of education and schooling; and the sociology of teachers as an occupational group, to mention just a few. The series also includes volumes, such as this one, which provide case studies of education and schooling in individual countries. More information about the book series is available at http://www.springer.com/series/5888.

All volumes in this series aim to meet the interests and priorities of a diverse education audience including researchers, policy makers and practitioners; tertiary students; teachers at all levels within education systems; and members of the public who are interested in better understanding cutting edge developments in education and schooling in Asia-Pacific.

The main reason why this series has been devoted exclusively to examining various aspects of education and schooling in the Asia-pacific region is that this is a particularly challenging region. It is renowned for its size, diversity and complexity, whether it be geographical, socio-economic, cultural, political or developmental. Education and schooling in countries throughout the region impact on every aspect of people's lives, including employment, labour force considerations, education and training, cultural orientation, and attitudes and values. Asia and the Pacific is home to some 63% of the world's population of 7 Billion. Countries with the largest populations (China, 1.4 Billion; India, 1.3 Billion) and the most rapidly growing mega-cities are to be found in the region, as are countries with relatively small populations (Bhutan, 755,000; the island of Niue, 1,600).

Levels of economic and socio-political development vary widely, with some of the richest countries (such as Japan) and some of the poorest countries on earth (such as Bangladesh). Asia contains the largest number of poor of any region in the world, the incidence of those living below the poverty line remaining as high as 40 percent in some countries in Asia. At the same time many countries in Asia are experiencing a period of great economic growth and social development. However, inclusive growth remains elusive, as does growth that is sustainable and does not destroy the quality of the environment. The growing prominence of Asian economies and corporations, together with globalisation and technological innovation, are leading to long term changes in trade, business and labour markets, to the sociology of populations within (and between) countries. There is a rebalancing of power, centred on Asia and the Pacific region, with the Asian Development Bank in Manila declaring that the 21st Century will be 'the Century of Asia Pacific'.

We believe this book series makes a useful contribution to knowledge sharing about education and schooling in Asia Pacific.

Any readers of this or other volumes in the series who have an idea for writing their own book (or editing a book) on any aspect of education and/or schooling,

that is relevant to the region, are enthusiastically encouraged to approach the series editors either direct or through Springer to publish their own volume in the series, since we are always willing to assist perspective authors shape their manuscripts in ways that make them suitable for publication.

March 2022   Professor Rupert Maclean
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About the Editors

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Teguh Wijaya Mulya is Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Surabaya. He has a doctorate in education from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Informed by feminism and poststructuralist theories, his research has been centered around the identification and destabilization of dominant discourses in various domains, including higher education, gender, sexuality, and religion. His work has been published in journals such as *Gender and Education*, *International Journal for Academic Development*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, *Asian Studies Review*, and *Psychology and Sexuality*. In 2023 he was a visiting researcher at the School of Education and Sociology, University of Portsmouth, UK.

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Abbreviations

4C	Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APRINESIA	*Aliansi Pendidikan Rumah Independen Indonesia*
ASPIRASI	*Asosiasi Praktisi Pendidikan Rumah Seluruh Indonesia*
BAN	Board of National Accreditation
BAPPENAS	*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional* (National Development Planning Agency/Ministry)
BHMN	*Badan Hukum Milik Negara* (State-Owned Higher Education Legal Entities)
BHP	*Badan Hukum Pendidikan* (Education Legal Entity)
biMBA	*Bimbingan Minat Baca dan Belajar Anak*
BKB	*Bina Keluarga Balita*
BKKBN	*Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional* (National Board of Family Planning)
BOS	*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*
BSNP	*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (Board of the National Standards of Education)
BTS	Base Transceiver Station
CALISTUNG	*Baca, Tulis dan Hitung* (Reading, Writing, and Counting)
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practices
DKI	*Daerah Khusus Ibukota*
EC	Education Council
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EFA	Education For All
ELE	English Language Education
ELT	English Language Teaching
FTA	Full-Time Academic

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOTS	Higher-Order Thinking Skills
HPS	High Poverty School
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Intersex Association
ISS	International Standard School
IT	Information and Technology
J-PAL SEA	The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab Southeast Asia
KB	*Kelompok Bermain*
KBK	*Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (Competency-based Curriculum)
KJP	*Kartu Jakarta Pintar* (Smart Jakarta Card)
KKG	*Kelompok Kerja Guru* (Teacher Working Group)
KKM	*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (Minimum Criteria of Mastery Learning)
KKNI	*Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Qualification Framework)
LfH	Learning from Home
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LIPI	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia
LLA	Language Learner Agency
LLH	Language Learning History
LPS	Low Poverty School
MDG	Millennium Development Goals'
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MER	Minister of Education Regulation
MHREC	Medical and Health Research Ethics Committee
MK	*Mahkamah Konstitusi* (Constitutional Court)
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MoRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
MRTHE	Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NIDK	*Nomor Induk Dosen Khusus*
NIDN	*Nomor Induk Dosen Nasional*
NST	Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test
NU	*Nahdlatul Ulama*
NUP	*Nomor Urut Pendidik* (Educator Registration Number)
OBE	Outcome-based Education
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAUD	*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*

PGRI	*Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* (Indonesian Teachers Union)
PHI	*Perkumpulan Homeschooler Indonesia* (Indonesia Homeschoolers Association)
PISA	*Program for International Student Assessment*
PJJ	*Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh*
PKK	*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*
PKM	*Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* (Community Engagement)
Posyandu	*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu* (Integrated Health Service Post)
PPG	*Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru* (Teacher Professionalism Education Program)
PPIM UIN	*Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat Universitas Islam Negeri*
PPT	Power Point
PSBB	*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* (Large-Scale Social Restriction)
PTAs	Part-Time Academics
R2E	Right to Education
RMI	Rabitah Ma'ahid al Islamiyah
RSBI	*Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional*
SBI	*Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional*
SBM	School-Based Management
SC	School Committee
SCU	Semester Credit Unit
SI	*Standar Internasional*
SMA	*Sekolah Menengah Atas* (Senior High School)
SMP	*Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (Junior High School)
SNP	*Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (National Education Standard)
SPM	*Standar Pelayanan Minimal* (Minimum Service Standards)
SRI	School Readiness Instrument
SSLMs	Support Structures for Legal Mobilization
SSN	*Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (National Standard School)
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TaRL	Teaching at The Right Level
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TPA	*Tempat Penitipan Anak*
UAN	*Ujian Akhir Nasional* (National Final Examination)
UKG	*Uji Kompetensi Guru* (Teacher Competency Assessment)
UKSW	*Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana*
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
VUCA	Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Education in Indonesia—A Critical Introduction

Zulfa Sakhiyya and Teguh Wijaya Mulya

1.1 The Landscape of Education in Indonesia

Indonesia's education system is immensely huge, diverse, and complex. It is the fourth largest in the world after China, India, and the United States. Indonesia has more than 50 million students, 2.6 million teachers in more than 250,000 schools, and more than 3,700 higher education institutions. This large educational infrastructure is, however, unevenly distributed in more than 17,000 islands as they are concentrated in the heavily urbanized and industrialized Java and Sumatra islands. Teachers, books, laboratories, and equipment are critical elements in creating a conducive learning environment as they facilitate better instruction and engage students in the learning process. In addition to this structural and infrastructure inequality, given Indonesia's super diverse linguistic ecology, the dominance of Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction has impacted on the great majority of Indonesians who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Zein, 2020). Not only that it poses threats to the survival of more than 300 local languages, but also it poses challenges to ensuring educational institutions to maintain the country's linguistic ecology. This linguistic complexity has created another form of inequalities and tensions between the use of Indonesian as the medium of instruction and the official language with local languages and English as an international language in the classroom (Zein, 2020). Therefore,—as also in other Southeast Asian countries (Symaco, 2013)—the uneven distribution of academic resources in Indonesia highlights the issue of educational inequality that may lead to differences in educational achievement and social mobility.

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Indonesia's strong economic growth over the last decade as a middle-income country does not seem to have significant impacts on the development of human resources as a result of the educational process. Indicated by the Human Development Index (HDI), Indonesia is ranked 116th out of 189 making it equal to Vietnam and the Philippines (UNDP, 2018). HDI is an overall assessment of a country's development, and therefore reflects a longitudinal effect of educational impacts on human resources. The poor HDI score is correlated with Indonesia's low educational achievement as measured by the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Schleicher, 2019). It is a repeating pattern in PISA triennial reports that Indonesia has been ranked the lowest in science, reading, and mathematics as compared to other participating countries, including Southeast Asian countries. This low educational achievement and human development in general accentuates the roles of education in fostering human potential to contribute to wider social change.

While discussions on the relationship between educational achievement and economic development are not new, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates the already existing education inequalities. School closure, a non-pharmaceutical intervention to flatten the pandemic, has shifted education from the classroom environment and teachers' responsibilities to home and parents (Sakhiyya et al., 2022). Elsewhere, studies have revealed that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have poorer outcomes than those of higher socioeconomic families (Doyle, 2020). Synchronous online education privileges those with stable online learning facilities and neglects those with access constraints, altered living situations at home, economic precarity of the family, and family care responsibilities (Shwartzman, 2020). Due to the pandemic and the existing socioeconomic inequalities, the average Indonesian student lost 16 points on the PISA reading scale last year (World Bank, 2020). Unequal access to learning resources and modern technology during this pandemic has become the main concern in magnifying inequalities (Irhamni & Sahadewo, Chap. 3).

These socio-educational problems have been associated with low public spending on education. The Indonesian education sector, as one of the largest public sectors, is funded at a much lower rate lagging behind its neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam (Lewin, 2014). A rapid and significant increase in public expenditure has then been made since 2003 to achieve a 20% allocation of the national budget in order to expand access and improve quality, making education the largest government expenditure after energy subsidies. This investment is important in anticipating the prediction that Indonesia will earn a demographic dividend within two decades—a condition where the productive population (15–64 years) will reach around 70% of the total population (LPDP, 2017). While an improved budget will expand the quantity of educational infrastructure, the demographic dividend would only have a positive impact on human development when critical issues in education are addressed and programs in education are significantly improved (Cuaresma et al., 2014). This is important, given that inequalities within the context of rapid demographic growth in Indonesia are increasing at an alarming rate, creating a wider socioeconomic divide (Wai-Poi et al., 2015). The World Bank

recorded in 2014, the richest Indonesians' (composed of merely 10%) overall household spending was the same as the poorest (54% of the total Indonesian population). Without high-quality, well-distributed public education, this glaring socioeconomic inequality results in unequal access to the educational infrastructure and resources, highlighting the already existing educational inequality.

While educational infrastructure might serve as an interesting discussion, they are merely located on the surface of the problems. Indonesia's poor education performance, as Rosser (2018) argues, has not been merely a matter of low public spending, infrastructure deficits, and poor management. At its root, it has been a matter of politics and power—it depends on "a shift in the balance of power between competing coalitions that have a stake" in the education sector (2018, p. 1). Power-imbalanced dynamics of educational policies are likely to affect resource distribution in everyday educational practices. In Indonesian politics more generally, multi-sector market-driven reforms required by international agencies following their rescue packages during the 1997–1998 monetary crises and the departure of Soeharto authoritarian regime have, unfortunately, evolved into what contemporary scholars described as the political economy of oligarchy (Hadiz & Robinson, 2014). The concentration of resources in the hands of a few elites has deepened social stratification and impacted on educational achievement, especially during the pandemic, where there have been inequities in technology access and utilization for learning. This pandemic has not only exposed vulnerabilities caused by free market ideologies (i.e., neoliberalism), but also evidenced the expansion of neoliberal discourses into the education sector (Giroux, 2014). In fact, as Lee (2017) noted, privatization and marketization of education have been the key strategy typical in the more industrialized Southeast Asian states, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Insights offered by theoretical critiques of neoliberalism in education gave rise to the critical awareness that social justice in education should not only be about the fair distribution of educational services in order to improve educational performance, human resource index, and, ultimately, evenly developed local economies. Beyond the fair distribution of educational resources, scholars might need to pay attention to the 'nature' of the educational service, its capitalist ideological underpinning, and its consequences for the society. Beyond OECD-defined academic performance (e.g., PISA) as the main indicators of educational quality, policymakers might need to question why the international comparison and global competitiveness are taken for granted as virtues in transforming Indonesian education. Beyond the employability of graduates, socially just education might need to also focus on strengthening democratic values, such as inclusiveness, human rights, and civil society supremacy in/through classroom and schooling practices.

The current volume addresses these issues by adopting critical approaches to investigate education in Indonesia, which enable the analyses of the underlying structures and hegemonic discourses that have become the roots of various social injustices. This volume focuses on *social justice in education* as the overarching theme in examining the contemporary Indonesian education system. It offers critical examinations of Indonesian education policies and practices by inviting contributions from critical scholars, academics, researchers, and practitioners to deepen

their understanding of education in Indonesia. Contributors are mostly Indonesian academics who bring insiders' tacit knowledge and reflective stance within the chapters which form a national network of critical education researchers. The plurality of critical approaches also means that this volume is necessarily multidisciplinary. Thus, this volume enriches the literature by bringing together different disciplinary perspectives such as education, political science, sociology, religious studies, gender studies, economics, and linguistics to critically examine important issues related to education in Indonesia.

This introductory chapter sets the scene for the studies showcased in this volume, firstly by giving a contextual overview of education in Indonesia, from its history of pre-modern Islamic education to the current structure of formal and non-formal education. Issues in quality and equity lead to the second section where we trace back to the antecedents of intellectual conformity imposed by past regimes and link those with contemporary challenges. Finally, we provide an overview of the chapters in the volume which examine various issues in the current Indonesian education through critical lenses. The chapter presents the most relentless interests of scholars in the education field in Indonesia which has many years of not only teaching and research training, but also activism.

1.2 The Indonesian Education System: Past and Present

1.2.1 Islam and Early Forms of Education

The early forms of education in Indonesia had been associated with the spread of Islam in the fourteenth century (Bruinessen, 1994; Dhofier, 1980). Education at this time was characterized by an Islamic, non-formal, and less structured system (Buchori & Malik, 2004). Education at all levels was provided by local Islamic boarding schools called *pesantren* (Nakamura & Nishino, 1995), which literally means a hut made of bamboo or other light materials. This lightness and simplicity in the past "reflected a heritage of humble origins and scholars wandering in search of knowledge" (Pringle, 2010).

Pesantren provided two ways of learning: classical lecturing for the younger students, and individual learning for the older ones (Yulaelawati, 2009). It provided basic religious knowledge about Islam and provided practice in reading sacred texts (*Qur'an* and *Hadith*), in the study of Islamic jurisprudence (*fikh*), and in foreign language studies (Arabic). It applied neither social status nor class distinction in the education system as Penders (1977) observed that most children who learned at the *pesantren* were of lower-class origin.

The tradition of *pesantren* remains active today, but with some adjustments to contemporary modern needs (Pringle, 2010; Wahid, 2001), and therefore creating a tension between traditional and modern values (Isbah & Sakhiyya, Chap. 8). For example, *pesantren* curriculum which used to focus only on Islamic teachings has

now integrated non-religious subjects such as natural science, social science, and arts. The infrastructure of course becomes more modern with permanent buildings instead of the bamboo hut of the past.

In the last two decades, *pesantren* and Islamic schooling in general have received much attention since the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 and October 2002 bombings. Islamic educational institutions have received allegations as a fertile ground to indoctrinate radicalism and extremism (Pohl, 2006). These allegations revived the old debate whether religion should be placed in the private or public sphere, or testing the so-called secularization thesis (Pohl, 2006; Tan, 2018). Although it sounds progressive that secular public space is to nurture religious diversity thus democratizing public life, secularization theory fails to describe social changes and misreads the roles of religion in countries of both developing and developed world (Heclo & McClay, 2003). Scholars believe that Islamic schooling in Indonesia has played its part in nurturing the country's democratic structure and political civility (Azra, 2004, 2018; Azra et al., 2007; Pohl, 2006). Even though Indonesia does not constitute an Islamic state, Islam plays a considerable role in the field of education where religious-based education is managed under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

1.2.2 Modern Education System

A modern secular education system was introduced when the Dutch colonized Indonesia (sixteenth–nineteenth centuries). But it was not until the early nineteenth century that the Dutch colonial government established schools as a consequence of their so-called Ethical Policy. The educational scheme was limited in numbers and could only be enjoyed by the elite (Jalal & Musthafa, 2001; van Niel, 1960). Yulaelawati (2009) argues that the purpose of schooling was to create an Indonesian elite who could fill the lower ranks of the colonial civil service. In the aggregate, there were only 106 indigenous students enrolled in the modern schools up to 1930. It was *pesantren* which provided education for the majority of local Indonesians. Penders (1977) reported that there were 1127 *pesantrens* located in Java, Madura, and Sumatra. During these decades, the modern higher education system was part of existing social stratification (Yulaelawati, 2009). The social gap was reflected in the student body from top to bottom: Europeans—native aristocracy—prominent Eurasians—Chinese businessmen—indigenous people.

Simultaneously, in the 1920s, Ki Hajar Dewantara, a progressive nationalist intelligentsia integrated modern education with Indonesian culture. He took a cultural-national approach to education and established *Taman Siswa*. In 1939, *Taman Siswa* had 207 schools, employed 650 teachers, and taught about 20,000 pupils (Hing, 1978). This was because Ki Hajar believed that Indonesia's liberation from colonialism could only happen if the nation was independent in education as a way to manage and produce knowledge (Dewantara, 1967). The anticolonial movement activists considered the significant contribution of *Taman Siswa* to nationalism by

encouraging anticolonial sentiments among its members. Unlike the modern education provided by the Dutch, *Taman Siswa* was aimed to provide education for the native population and commoners, not merely for the elites. The Indonesian ideal of public education today is rooted in this tradition. This commitment of education-for-all is written in the National Constitution which secures "the rights of every citizen to access education" (1945 Constitution, article 31, verse 1).

This modern education system degenerated when Japan took over the archipelago (1942–1945). Not only due to the closure of Dutch schools and the burning of Dutch books, but also the many compulsory military training had taken over intellectual exercises and schooling practices (Cummings & Kasenda, 1989). If the Dutch wanted cheap professionals, Japan wanted armies from Indonesia.

When Indonesia gained its Independence in 1945, Sukarno faced various educational problems related to illiteracy rates, inadequate facilities, human resource deficits, large population, low funding, and poor management (Kell & Kell, 2014). Under Soeharto's 'New Order' administration (1966–1998) advocating anti-communism and economic developmentalism, education benefitted by the oil boom to expand. New public schools were built and a large number of teachers were recruited for primary and secondary levels of education (Leigh, 1999; Rosser, 2018). The progress of education was indicated by the rising enrollment rate of elementary schools (age 7–12 years) which significantly increased from 20.7% in 1945 to 85% in 1980 (Lowenberg, 2000). Consequently, literacy continued climbing up from 56.6% in 1971 to 69.3% in 1980 and to 83.7% in 1990 (UNESCO, 1974, 1977, 1999). But education spending plummeted when the international oil price collapsed in the 1980s. During the financial crisis in 1995, education expenditure did not even reach 1% of the GDP on education (Rosser, 2018).

Soeharto's highly centralized, militaristic, and technocratic ways of managing education did not leave a room for critical thinking and freedom of expression (Guggenheim, 2012; Rakhmani, 2019). Until now, teachers in public schools and academics in public universities are civil servants and are controlled by the central government. Therefore, although the regime collapsed in 1998, the bureaucratic structure and narrow technocratic model throughout all sectors continue to impinge on the quality of Indonesian education until today.

1.2.3   Contemporary Trends in Education

The collapse of 32 years of authoritarian administration (1966–1998) in 1998 marked the birth of (neoliberal) democracy in Indonesia. With a more open and decentralized government, public services including education are expected to be more competitive, deregulated, and privatized (Parker & Raihani, 2011; Rakhmani & Siregar, 2016). Key educational policies and reforms to realize this goal were, among others, decentralizing, internationalizing, and privatizing education.

Indonesia began a nationwide decentralization policy in the early 2000s, including the education sector. Under the Law on the National Education System No. 20 the

year 2003, the primary and secondary education which was used to be centrally managed under the Ministry of Education and Culture is now devolved to local governments. Decentralizing education through School-Based Management policy was meant to accelerate democratization processes (Parker & Raihani, 2011). Not only managing the sector, even the curriculum development that used to be centrally designed and developed was also locally tailored which is called Local Content Curriculum (Bjork, 2004). Ideally, it requires greater community and parental participation in schools and therefore less direct intervention from the central government in Jakarta. While progress has been made, Bjork (2004) argues that decentralization has only diffused previously centralized power into local elites. More specifically, Hariri et al. (Chap. 10) in this volume reveal the competing interests and influences among central, provincial, and district governments in decentralizing education. While decentralization policy devolves power to local control, it demonstrates strong control of the central government in the delivery of educational services. Educational decentralization is not simply a matter of technical and administrative capacity, rather its success depends on the convergence of important elements, such as a balanced configuration of power and socially just resource distribution.

In enhancing national competitiveness, internationalization is pursued to globalize the country's educational institutions. It has been implemented both at secondary and higher education levels. At the higher education level, it is manifested in the discourses on world-class universities, the pursuit of international accreditation, and the orientation to international ranking. At the secondary education level, International Standard School (ISS) policy was introduced, and immediately encountered strong resistance from educational observers as it could potentially segregate social classes (Sakhiyya, 2011). After almost ten years of debate, the ISS policy was annulled and declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in 2013.

Similar social processes happened to the attempt at privatizing public higher education. The State-Owned Higher Education Legal Entities (BHMN law in the Indonesian acronym) was a regulation that is understood to privatize public universities and the withdrawal of state funding and responsibilities (Rakhmani & Siregar, 2016; Sakhiyya, 2022; Susanti, 2011). While ISS policy and BHMN law faced strong resistance from the public, internationalization of higher education is more welcomed as it boosts the global positioning of Indonesian universities and encourages international recognition (Sakhiyya & Rata, 2019).

At the beginning of Jokowi's 2nd presidential term in 2019, Jokowi appointed Nadiem Makarim—a Harvard graduate, businessman, and the founder of the decacorn company, Gojek—as the Minister of Education and Culture. As the youngest minister in the Jokowi's cabinet, Nadiem brought various reforms to the Indonesian education system represented through the slogan *Merdeka Belajar* (free/independent learning). Some of the key reforms include: (1) the termination of one-size-fits-all *Ujian Nasional* (National Examination) and replacing it with the PISA-like Assessment of Minimum Competency and Survey of Character consisting of literacy, numeracy, and character education; (2) the launching of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (free/independent curriculum) offering teaching and learning flexibility and improve resources for schools and universities while supposedly trimming thick bureaucracy;

(3) the relaxation of the regular renewals of university accreditation status which has been infamous for its painstaking audit regime, and replacing it with Nadiem's own new audit regime *Indikator Kinerja Universitas* (IKU/University Performance Indicators); (4) status change for hundreds thousands of casual/part-time teachers (*guru honorer*) to permanent teaching positions; and (5) the legislation of ministerial regulations against sexual violence and religious(clothing)-related discrimination—the latter was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 where the so-called 'learning loss' became the main concern, Nadiem provided free Internet data for students and teachers to enable them to continue their learning via online platforms. While Nadiem's reforms were generally applauded for attempting to reduce educational bureaucracy and top-down approaches in learning, he was also criticized for his apparent neoliberal orientation and failure to maintain good relationships with NU and Muhammadiyah, the two largest civil society organizations which traditionally had strong involvements in the Indonesian education system.

Some of these contemporary educational policies and reforms are not exclusive to Indonesia, and in fact they are part of the global trend of market-driven educational reforms. However, social dynamics at national and local levels in responding to those policies highlight the importance of critical perspectives as a social control that filters, if not determines, the orientation of Indonesian educational policies.

1.3   Indonesian Education Through Critical Lenses: Overview of the Chapters

We are cognizant that the term 'critical' is a contested notion—scholars in different fields employed the term differently. Here, we refer to 'critical' approaches broadly, that is, theoretical gestures in which social justice is a concern. It may include the application of critical theories such as post-structuralism or Marxism to analyze the operation of power. It may focus on identifying and destabilizing underlying structures, dominant discourses, and hegemonic knowledge, policies, or practices. It may also highlight data evidencing inequities, inequalities, or injustices in the Indonesian education system. As unfolded throughout the chapters in this volume, such multiplicity of critical analyses and their philosophical undertones manifests in a range of different ways of examining Indonesian education; but with a common commitment for a more socially just education system.

Drawing upon this broad understanding of critical approaches, this volume seeks to demonstrate how education is not a neutral, objective, and mechanistic process; instead, it is a battleground in which competing visions, ideologies, discourses, religious values, and political interests struggle for dominance in a given society. In this sense, critical perspectives are useful to identify and evaluate the 'blind spots' of dominant policy discourses and their social and pedagogical consequences. A better understanding of the inextricable relationship between capitalism and education, for

example, may shed light on the persistence of educational inequities across schools, regions, and socioeconomic statuses in Indonesia (Irhamni & Sahadewo, Chap. 3) or the insistence on all-pervasive, market-oriented reforms (Gaus & Tang, Chap. 5; Subkhan, Chap. 6). Politically, Indonesia's post-1998 democratization enabled new discourses to enter the educational arena including decentralization (Hariri et al., Chap. 10), human rights (Rosser & Joshi, Chap. 9), inclusiveness (Yulindrasari et al., Chap. 4), and gender and sexual justice (Pangastuti, Chap. 2; Wijaya Mulya, Chap. 12). Tensions between these recently arrived concepts and the remnants of the previous authoritarian regime still characterize educational discursive contestations in contemporary Indonesia; such historical inertia may impede the progress toward a more socially just education. The rise of new religious conservatism since the 1998 democratic reformation may also pose a different form of challenges for Indonesia's education and social justice (see Isbah & Sakhiyya, Chap. 8). More intricately, oppressive power relations gave rise to social injustices in education also operate at a personal level, that is, through identity politics. The micropolitics of subjectivation—that is, the discursive constitution of the sense of self—evidently play an important role in the power-imbalanced dynamics of everyday educational practices (e.g., Adiningrum, Chap. 7). Moving forward from the identification of the roots of socio-educational injustice, critical educational scholars also explore possibilities for advancing social justice through critical pedagogies in different fields and contextual specificities, including homeschooling (Nugroho, Chap. 13), and critical reflective praxis (Mambu & Kurniwan, Chap. 11). Not intended to be exhaustive, this volume at least offers a degree of critical awareness about various socio-historical-political forces operating underneath the Indonesian education system, policy, and practice; which would allow researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to better understand, and in turn, locate and tackle the roots of social injustice in education.

The chapters in the current volume are presented in four parts, highlighting four main key issues discussed in this volume: inclusiveness, neoliberalism, the state apparatus, and critical alternatives.

The first part—**Equality and Inclusiveness in Indonesian Education**—draws attention to the persistence of marginalization of certain groups and identities within the Indonesian education system. Injustices against poor women, for example, are scrutinized by Pangastuti in Chap. 2 where she critiques the fast-growing Indonesian Early Childhood Education (ECE) projects as reimposing women's traditional caregiving role and unpaid labor. She further points out that international donors such as the World Bank are complicit and even taking advantage of gender injustice in this case. Using large quantitative survey and interview data during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Chap. 3 Irhamni and Sahadewo unpacked the ways learning from home accentuates and exacerbates the existing educational inequality across income and across schools with different poverty levels in Indonesia. Their analysis shows how the class is still a critical factor influencing educational attainment. Irhamni and Sahadewo demanded that the Indonesian government urgently address this socioeconomic condition to reduce educational inequality. Pushing further social inclusion agenda in education, Yulindrasari, Adriany, and Kurniati in Chap. 4 criticize the discourse of school readiness underpinning ECE policies and practices in Indonesia.

Such a discourse, they argue, potentially excludes and discriminates against children and teachers of economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Alternatively, they propose school readiness to be understood as the school's and society's readiness to accept and respect the diversity of students' conditions.

The second part—**The Neoliberalization of the Indonesian Education System**—problematizes the political-economic nature of knowledge production, dissemination, and human resource management in the Indonesian education system. Chapters in this part illuminate how neoliberal ideologies have shaped the ways educational knowledges were produced, educational policies were designed, and curricula were implemented in Indonesian contexts. In Chap. 6, for example, Gaus and Tang identified the shifting orientation of teaching and research in Indonesian higher education which was previously embedded in the notions of democratic, cultural, and moral values to corporate ethos, such as efficiency, competitiveness, effectiveness, and individualism. Gaus and Tang demonstrated how such ideological reorientations from critical pedagogy to 'bare pedagogy' have been widespread among Indonesian higher education institutions. At the secondary education level, in a similar vein, Subkhan (Chap. 5) explains the trends of vocationalization of Indonesian schools where link-and-match (of education and the market) paradigm has perpetuated inequity and oversimplified the purpose of education into merely the production of skilled workers. Further highlighting neoliberalized reforms in human resource management in universities, Adiningrum in Chap. 7 draws attention to the casualization of academic jobs in Indonesian higher education where precarity and inequity characterize the nature of employment. Widely practiced in Indonesian academia, the work of casual lecturers was often associated with teaching-only responsibilities and structural disadvantages including lack of access to facilities, research funding, knowledge production, and remuneration system. Discursively constituted as second-class academics, the subject position of a casual lecturer evidently provides cheaper labor for the increasingly neoliberal Indonesian universities.

The third part—**Education and the State Apparatus**—considers the role of various state apparatuses in the transformation of contemporary Indonesian education, such as religion, justice system, and local politics. As no education system exists in a socio-political vacuum, it is crucial to understand how the structural and historical contexts of post-authoritarian Indonesia have both enabled and constrained (certain versions of) educational reform. This part begins with Chap. 8 by Isbah and Sakhiyya who scrutinize the long history of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, *pesantren*, and how such a model of education maintains its relevance, aspired visions, and marketability. Taking a critical role as an alternative education, *pesantren*s continuously contribute to the inclusion of those of lower socioeconomic status in the Indonesian schooling system. In terms of the legal and justice system, Rosser and Joshi in Chap. 9 argue that litigation has been part of broader struggles over education policy, inequality, and the capture of educational institutions by political and bureaucratic forces in Indonesia. Using evidence from recent court cases, they found that litigation has often served the interests of the poor and marginalized, although gains have largely come through better access to education while issues of improving quality

have been less prominent. In Chap. 10, Hariri, Izzati, and Sumintono examine the implementation of decentralization—as a part of Indonesia's democratization—in the education sector. They demonstrate how tensions between the central government (i.e., Ministry of Education), local education offices, and school leaders have characterized Indonesia's educational decentralization in the last two decades.

The fourth and the final part—**Strengthening Democratic Practices, Exploring Critical Alternatives**—documents and explores alternative forms of critique and resistance against the dominant educational discourses in contemporary Indonesia. It begins with Mambu and Kurniawan's analysis in Chap. 11, in which they criticize how the dominant ways of producing knowledge on literacy practices have ignored the crucial role of social class and the agency of the students. They intentionally disrupt the ostensibly neutral process of English learning in Indonesia by reflexively 'praxizing'—in a Freirean sense—with English language learners from an underdeveloped region in West Kalimantan. Another form of ideological resistance can be found in the increasingly popular practice of homeschooling as an educational choice, particularly for parents whose educational values are in opposition to those of public (mass) education. Nugroho specifically discusses this in Chap. 13, where she documents the struggles and the successes of homeschooling movements in Indonesia as a critical engagement against hegemonic educational discourses. In Chap. 12, Wijaya Mulya problematizes the absence of official sexuality education in Indonesian curricula which promotes sexual justice and inclusion of sexual minorities. Considering sexuality is a battleground for various social-political-religious ideologies, he proposes a sexuality education that focuses on opening up discursive access, space, and contestations which might enable Indonesian young people to be critical, ethical, and responsible sexual subjects.

To sum up, the current volume engages with social justice in education through critical perspectives in contemporary Indonesian contexts. While it scrutinizes various facets of the Indonesian education system through multiple critical lenses and disciplinary perspectives, the current volume does not attempt to be comprehensive, generalizable, or offering finality. Instead, it seeks to be contextually situated, critically provocative, and progressively disruptive; with the hope of advancing social justice in, and, through education in Indonesia.

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Part I
Equality and Inclusiveness in Indonesian Education: Gender, Class, and Identity Politics

Chapter 2
The (Dis-)Appearance of "(M)others": The Roles of International Development Organizations on the Discourses of Women in Indonesia's Early Childhood Education Programs

Yulida Pangastuti

2.1   Introduction

The early childhood education (ECE) program has been on the rise in Indonesia since the early 2000s. Such growth is inseparable from the role of international development organizations; these organizations, such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF, have been instrumental in fuelling the program's expansion through pilot interventions, campaigns, and policy engagements. King (2007) describes these multilateral organizations as the global force that incorporates some education programs into the global development agenda. In ECE, their roles became significantly stronger through the Education For All (EFA) movement and the alignment with Millennium Development Goals' (MDG) mission to halve the proportion of people living in poverty (Pangastuti, 2020).

In Indonesia and many developing countries, demands for ECE services were created based on the economic cost–benefit approach and monetized impacts. Financial terms, such as investments, rate of return, and the Human Capital theory, were deployed to narrate the importance of early learning programs. One of the most dominant propositions frequently used in campaigning for ECE was the World Bank's economic proposition that for every $1 spent on delivering ECE services to children from the most impoverished families, the government would yield a $7 return in the form of public funding savings (Chang et al., 2006). Based on this logic, the World Bank argued that Indonesia needed 15,000–20,000 new centres each year until 2015 to accommodate poor children and reduce the future poverty gap (Chang et al., 2006).

The community's positive response holds a significant role in Indonesia's success in extending the ECE coverage. In a matter of 30 years, the number of Indonesia's

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ECE centres rapidly increased. The national participation of preschool-aged children grew from barely 4% in 1985 to 74.28% in 2017 (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* [Kemdikbud], 2020). Unlike other education institutions at the higher level, 98% of ECE centres are privately owned, which means most operational activities rely on private foundations, individuals, or associations (Kemdikbud, 2020). Behind the spectacular statistical success lies the massive support from women. Throughout the years, women constitute 94–99% of ECE workers. The percentage of women who lead playgroups, nurseries, and community-based ECE reached 90% (Kemdikbud, 2020). I have estimated that more than 500,000 women have joined the workforce in the past two decades (Pangastuti, 2020). In many cases, these women have been working in challenging work conditions with minimal incentives, including working in remote communities with a lack of infrastructure facilities.

Progress of the ECE program has been too frequently pivoted on the reproduction and exploitation of unacknowledged women's informal care labour (Andrew & Newman, 2012; Goldstein, 1994; Osgood, 2012). The participation of women in ECE in Indonesia is led by the reproduction of governmentalizing norms rather than the mission of increasing women's economic income based on their labour participation. As educators, women's dyadic relationship with young children has been commodified, exploitative, and frequently at the expense of women's empowerment (Newberry, 2014; Staab & Gerhard, 2011).

The narratives on women's disadvantages in ECE continue to be overpowered by the rhetoric on children. Consequently, feminist enunciations become a critical necessity to interrupt the perpetuation of exploitative practices in ECE and the dominant perspective that constructs women as selfless beings. As highlighted by Goldstein (1993): "the separation of education feminism and early childhood education feels artificial, awkward. The two fields seem like logical and natural partners" (Goldstein, 1993, p. 4). By placing childcare at the centre, the question of ECE on women's empowerment can be silenced, enabling an efficient promotion with much less disruption. Historically, both women and children hold profound roles that the importance of one should not obscure another. However, amidst the expansion's achievement, there has been no significant discussion and efforts to improve the recognition of women.

This article provides a space for alternative arguments on the intersectionality between early childhood, ECE, and women, specifically mothers and teachers. Considering the World Bank's influence on Indonesia, two reports published by the World Bank on ECE (Chang et al., 2006; Hasan et al., 2013) were used as analysis materials. Foucault's (1980, 1989) theories on discourses were employed, especially on tensions and decentring, to locate children not as stand-alone subjects but as constantly being in relational contexts with others, including their mothers (Moss et al., 2013, p. 43). Indonesia's policy landscape, between the early 2000s to around 2015, was used as a specific context to capture the peak of international organizations' involvement in the ECE program. In the following, I consider how the international donors have re-traditionalized women's unpaid care labour and essentialized particular caring practices that disenfranchise poor women's empowerment and their rights to escape from their poor conditions.

2.2 Tracing the Silence

Michel Foucault (1980) distinctly argued on the disciplinary functions of discourse as conditions and means that regulate knowledge. In his view, discourse is not static. Instead, discourse enables and delimits our statements and practices, although not all discourses have the same power. A superior discourse produces normalized knowledge, often coming in as what we perceive as "truth" (Henriques et al., 2005).

Discourse analysis in Foucault's opinion must be:

> ...orientated in a quite different way; we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statement it excludes. We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was, in what respect it is exclusive of any other, how it assumes, in the midst of others and in relation to them, a place that no other could occupy. (Foucault, 1989, pp. 30–31)

In this theorization, international organizations are in a role that circulates and re-circulates discourses on ECE in interactions with other discourses, such as economics, poverty, family, and productivity. These processes shape the boundaries, thinking, and technology deployments. A boundary in this sense marks a specific process of including and excluding, which results in domination of a certain discourse over others. In the interest of this article, the focus is on the control over the discourses of women, led primarily by the question: "where are women in these narratives?" The question enables the tracing of "appeared" discourses and the silenced ones.

The capacity of superior discourse in producing truth can weaken and silence others. Thiesmeyer (2003) attests that silencing can be done when "another discourse is used to designate and enforce the area of silenced material and eventually to fill it in" (Thiesmeyer, 2003, pp. 1–2). Following this theory, discourses on women are present but muted. Their existences are traced through statements on childcare practices as the most potent vector that connects women and children despite the growing equal parenting aspirations.

Discourse analysis also provides resistance to the reduction of dispersing knowledge into a single system of knowing. One way to enable different narratives to emerge is through decentring "that leaves privilege to any centre" (Foucault, 1989, p. 221). Decentring enables feminist explication that produces alternative ways of reading ECE. Children, in this regard, are viewed as no more than a part of a social network and "existing through their relationship with others in a particular context" (Moss et al., 2013, p. 43).

In dealing with texts, the main principle is to assume that language is never gender-neutral. Common-sense articulations of childcare and early learning always "include an emphasis on particular socially defined feminine and masculine qualities" (Weedon, 1987, p. 73). A policy could potentially disempower women when it fails to recognize how labour supply is created and unequally impacts women, men, or others (Kabeer, 2005). In ECE, a non-gender term such as "parents" or "teachers" in a text always permeates gendered meanings and implications (Langford, 2010; Penn, 2005).

In the current article, World Bank's reports were chosen to illustrate mainstream donors' positioning towards ECE. Two key reports (Chang et al., 2006; Hasan et al., 2013) were used as textual materials. These two publications are also marked as milestones for the two phases of the World Bank's Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Projects. The first publication, *Early Childhood Education and Development in Indonesia: An Investment for A Better Life*, was published in 2006 as the first phase of the ECED project was coming to an end. Meanwhile, the second, *Early Childhood Education and Development in Poor Villages of Indonesia: Strong Foundations, Later Success*, was published at the end of the second phase. It is important to highlight that not all donors fully or permanently agree with the World Bank's views. UNICEF and UNESCO, for example, are driven by a rights-based approach. The World Bank becomes very relevant, which will be elaborated later, mainly due to its funding and policy influences on Indonesia's ECE.

2.3 Overview of Early Childhood Education in Indonesia

2.3.1 The Role of the World Bank

Although preschools have been part of the education system even before Indonesia's independence, access to preschool learning has always been low. Kindergartens, as the mainstream preschool, were only concentrated in a few urban areas to serve the needs of children from upper and middle-class families. Statistics collected in 1985 showed that only 1.2 million children had access to preschool (Thomas, 1992). The learning facilities were barely available in some provinces outside Java. Irian Jaya (currently Papua and Papua Barat), Sulawesi Tenggara, and Kalimantan Tengah had less than 1% of their children enrolled in preschools (Thomas, 1992).

The situation dramatically shifted after international organizations intensively promoted early learning programs in the late 1990s to mid-2010s. The global development agenda justified their involvement in ECE. EFA and MDGs, for example, turned ECE into a development imperative in many low and middle-income countries. Through World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO, ECE is promoted to be the most promising education investment that can reduce future economic and social inequities. The MDG's vision on poverty alleviation steered donors' funding for the ECE program based on the Human Capital Theory with children as the human capital.

The Human Capital Theory specifies children as the centre of human capital development. The theory measures funding on ECE against the efficiency gained from higher tax revenue and social welfare spending—the economic rate of return (Doyle et al., 2009). The theory assumes individuals to be the most important actor capable of determining their achievements and failures (Smith et al., 2016) while ignoring constraints from structural poverty (Shields, 2013).

The global agenda boosted donors' funding for ECE. Statistics of OECD countries recorded a significant increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) for early childhood programs globally, from US$ 7 million in 1999 to US$ 107 million in 2018. For ECE, Indonesia became one of the largest recipients of the funds, with total assistance reaching more than US$ 109 million between 2002 and 2018 (OECD.Stat, 2019). The most significant projects were the Early Childhood Education Development (ECED), with a funding portfolio of US$ 107 million (IEG World Bank Group, 2014). The funds played critical roles in setting up the ECE directorate within the Department of National Education and the overall architecture of ECE systems in Indonesia.

The intensive promotion of ECE resulted in the proliferation of new centres; many are located in rugged and isolated areas. New structures and policies were also introduced to guide and control the emerging wave of these new early learning facilities. The preschool program was expanded from only kindergarten (*Taman Kanak Kanak*) to include playgroups, daycare, and community facilities[1] so that access can be improved and multiplied. The whole program was rebranded as "*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*" or PAUD, campaigned as a reformed early childhood model that follows developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), child-centred focus, play-based, and the non-scholastic approach (Formen & Nuttall, 2014). As one of the biggest loan recipients (World Bank, 2017), Indonesia was easily influenced by the organization's neoliberalist values. On ECE, Adriany and Saefullah (2015) view that despite some positive outcomes, World Bank's neoliberalist principles may privilege certain practices while labelling dissimilar methods as Others.

2.4 Maternalist Norms

Either as short-term projects or as an institutionalized program, ECE is never implemented in a neutral social landscape. Women are always socially expected to perform critical roles in ECE. As mentioned earlier, as the demand for ECE began to rise, women's maternal caring roles became a convenient and normalized mechanism in the new centres. One of the leading institutions that govern women's maternal caring roles in the community is *Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, abbreviated as PKK, whose principles are built based on the belief that women's primary obligations are to be (1) a wife to her husband; (2) a housewife; (3) a child-bearer and educator; (4) an additional income-earner; and (5) a citizen and member of her community (Adriany, 2013).

The five maternalistic obligations above are rooted in *kodrat*, a dominant sociocultural discourse that governs women through a maternalistic approach and expects

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[1] Play Group in Indonesia is also known as *Kelompok Bermain* or KB or KOBER. Meanwhile, the childcare facilities are recognized as *Tempat Penitipan Anak* (TPA). The Indonesian education policy also acknowledges community-based facilities that can be repurposed to support ECE. This type of service is known as *Satuan PAUD Sejenis* or SPS.

them only to be motherly mothers (Wieringa, 1999). The norm perpetuates women's position primarily as domesticated selfless subjects who serve patriarchal interests, including the development agenda (Blackburn, 2004; Suryakusuma, 1987). *Kodrat* essentializes women as feminine and unpaid labour whose priorities are serving their husbands, raising their children, and ensuring their community welfare. The norm also obliges women to be the first and most responsible agents who introduce social norms and be in charge of their children's intellectual progress.

Indonesia's democratization in the late 1990s failed to extend women's roles beyond their caregiving roles. Instead, pressures for women to be mothers increasingly intensified in society. In big cities, the high living costs, long commuting hours, salary gap, and unavailability of affordable childcare services have discouraged many educated women from the labour market (Hayes & Setyonaluri, 2015). The growing influence of religious norms adds to the challenge in improving women's roles beyond the idealized image of motherhood. The famous Islamic adage of *Al-Ummu Madrasatul Ula* (a mother is her children's first school) expects women to prioritize their young children's education above anything else, possess excellent knowledge about their children, and be responsible for their children's intelligence and religious behaviour.

In the ECE, *kodrat* has also been used to govern children and teachers alike. The discourse justifies differential treatment to boys and girls and shapes gender socialization (Adriany, 2013). The norm sustains the maternalistic belief that being a teacher for children in an ECE centre is natural and ideal for a woman. The most frequently cited early childhood principle of *asah*, *asih*, *asuh,* or to sharpen, love, and care (see Dewantara, 1961) necessitates women's feminine caring based on their motherly instincts. This condition has hindered male participation and social acceptance as preschool teachers (Yulindrasari, 2017). The maternalist perspective prevails in ECE policy, shown mainly by the creation of *Bunda PAUD* or ECE Mothers positions for the wives of heads of government. As ECE mothers, these elite women are tasked with symbolic, non-formal, and unpaid tasks to improve ECE in the region.

2.5   Discourses of Women in Early Childhood Education

Childcare services can help women have broader, more active economic and meaningful social and political participation outside their homes. In this manner, women can contribute positively to the overall family relationships (Razavi, 2011). However, in Indonesia, these potential positive relationships are pushed to the margin to give space to the necessity and urgency to prioritize children's development. Women in the practice of ECE expansion are positioned primarily and only based on their instrumental values to children—as mothers, caregivers, or teachers who perform functional roles and, yet whose rights need not be discussed. Unfortunately, this view is also reflected in the World Bank's publications.

The two reports (Chang et al., 2006; Hasan et al., 2013) used women and mothers as texts that highlight their instrumental value in improving children. In

some instances, women's education and health are counted as necessary only when contributing to children's well-being. For example, in Chang et al. (2006), women with nutritional problems and lack of education (p. 7) can negatively affect their children's future due to delayed physical growth, lack of brain development, and preventable death. Meanwhile, in Hasan et al. (2013), mothers are positioned as key informants and subjects of evaluation mainly due to their caring roles, while very little information is provided on the fathers or other caregivers. There is no discussion on family socio-cultural settings about labour division in the family.

As women are recognized based on their instrumental value, the potential benefits of childcare for women also tend to be incautiously conceptualized. In the two reports, the benefit of ECE for women's labour participation, either as mothers or as ECE teachers, is barely examined. The report by Chang et al. (2006) only has a single sentence mentioning mothers who can make an earlier return to the workforce (p. 14). Women's empowerment is only uncritically used to describe the *Bina Keluarga Balita* (BKB), a parenting class initiated by the national family planning board (*Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional* or BKKBN, see Chang et al., 2006, p. 21).

Suppose the child becomes the only recognized "human" within the framework of Human Development Theory, then what should we call the mothers, teachers, and caregivers whose capacities are judged, measured, and modified as consequences of their close relationality with the children at the centres? An elaboration of women as parents and teachers is provided in the section below.

2.6 The "Problems" with Poor Mothers

As mentioned before, ECE has been widely campaigned as a poverty alleviation strategy. However, it is unclear whose poverty and how ECE can practically address structural poverty. One of the most consistent messages in the report is that being a poor child is considered an ill fate as the child would be less likely to succeed in school and achieve good health and nutrition. The report states: "the poor get the worst of all of these inequities" (Chang et al., 2006, p. vi). Following Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecology theory, family is perceived to be the locus of poverty, education, and parenting practices (Hasan et al., 2013, p. 22). Yet, the three theoretical factors, intriguingly, are not described as interconnected. Instead, children are viewed as individual targets who, provided with the "right" education and childcare practices, can overcome the possibility of falling into poverty as they become adults.

While the child is seen as a strategic empowerment subject, their parents are considered to be hopeless. Uplifting parents from their current low-income conditions is deemed to be more strenuous than giving their children an educational opportunity. The report states:

> It is difficult to make poor parents wealthy. Two potential important factors that are more amenable to change through targeted interventions are the kinds of parenting practices used by families and children's participation in ECED services. (Hasan et al., 2013, pp. 87–88)

Of particular note, parents remain an essential subject in ECE parenting interventions. Yet, the basic tenet is that low-income families always have deficit parenting skills compared to wealthy ones. This deficiency is important as it enables an entrance for donor and policy interventions.

Comparisons are possible when particular standards are being used. However, the standards are never neutral; instead, they tend to have Western middle-class biases. In measuring "good" parenting, the low-income families are judged based on indicators that include storytelling, book reading, giving opportunities to play with toys and to have an outdoor play, promoting healthy eating habits, breastfeeding, and providing a warm, stable, and non-hostile parenting style (Hasan et al., 2013). These requirements may sound like common sense; nevertheless, the prescribed conditions require parents to have financial stability, family-friendly working hours, and access to toys, books, and safe environments—things that are frequently unavailable among poor communities. These values also idealize Western middle-class parenting, where bonds between parents and their children are often illustrated through "warm" moments of book reading and storytelling within the walls of small-size households.

The indicators result in the texts depicting children with low-income backgrounds as lacking "timely" cognitive development. The mothers are also described to be lacking the initiative to nurture their children in encouraging play activities, whether it is to play outside, with toys or musical instruments and to sing. Poor mothers are also represented as having questionable beliefs on nutritional values and healthy feeding habits. Data trends that show how poor women stop breastfeeding their babies a few months earlier than the recommended length of time and give their children more snacks than vegetables or milk are used. The World Bank's project proposes that to solve the problem, the parents, or specifically, the mothers, should spend more time on directing their children's speech, reading books or telling stories, and encouraging their children to draw or scribble. Beyond these pressures, mothers are expected to keep being warm, engage their children through positive discipline, and protect their children from hostilities that can put their children's developing skills at risk (Hasan et al., 2013). The representations of poor women in the report are sanitized from the realities of being a woman in a poor household, which in turn perceived them to be deficit mothers.

For the best of their child's development, poor parents are expected to compartmentalize their caring practices from social and economic precarity. Instead of looking at parental childcare due to social and financial hardship, the report ignores the impacts of family economies on child-rearing activities. The assumption of this isolation is to keep the child untainted by his or her parent's financial struggles. By isolating parenting practices from the overall family conditions, certain rationality is introduced. Instead of addressing unequal economic distribution, inadequate parenting is highlighted as an underlying problem that can be "corrected" through specific interventions (Penn & Kjørholt, 2019).

In this way, decontextualizing a child's development from the family enables the operationalization of the ECE program through the neoliberal rules or what Li coins as "rendering technical" (Li, 2011, p. 57). Li (2011) argues that to justify an intervention, a set of practices should be turned into an intelligible and calculable domain

with boundaries of the problems and how to fix them. Rather than acknowledging parenting as a part of a socio-economic or cultural phenomenon, the practice becomes an issue that can be technically fixed. In broader development practices, parenting provides a critical passage for intervening and reconfiguring family relationships.

The trend of using childcare as a solution to alleviate poverty ultimately and unequally increases parental pressures on women's shoulders. An example is shown in the statement below:

> The research is clear: the things that parents—rich or poor—do with their young children every day can affect all aspects of children's health, development, and learning. Whether or not children are enrolled in some kind of ECED program, most children spend a substantial portion of their day at home with their mother or other family caregiver. (Hasan et al., 2013, p. 53)

An important piece of information missing from the report is how women from low-income families navigate their lives. My fieldwork experiences showed that limited resources, pressures of time, stress levels, and community cultural influences affect women's mothering strategies (Pangastuti, 2020). Their limited economic resources mean they could not afford to access childcare services or buy household items that might be considered "normal" among middle-class families; these items include children's books, toys, or milk. The lack of economic capacity also forced them to rely on a more pragmatic parenting approach. Minding a child was not carried out exclusively in a specific mother–child time and space but in doing other work. Women also tend to play a more significant economic role when their families are poor (Eddyono, 2018; Papanek & Schwede, 1988).

While there is no substantial or specific emphasis on the paternal roles, the insistence on parenting in the ECE program can exacerbate women's caring burden. Molyneux (2006) argues that women's increased engagement in poverty programs only deepens the gendered household roles, where "…women being made to do more to ensure household survival when men are increasingly doing less" (Molyneux, 2006, p. 440). However, in reality, the way parenting programs affect women is oftentimes more complex and not as straightforward as Molyneux's argument. A study by Afiyanti and Solberg (2015) demonstrates that Indonesian women perceive motherhood more as a destiny that women should normatively respond with happiness. The emotion of happiness should provide women with a base to endure the discomfort arising from the demanding tasks, which obscures the burden. Without any feminist disruption, parenting charges and assimilates women into the feminization of poverty management.

2.7 The Unspoken and Unpaid Teachers

Specifically, in the context of Indonesia, the creation of ECE is inseparable from the large-scale mobilization of women as unpaid labour. From the texts, the use of women as volunteers is established by promoting community-based development, comprehensive service, cost-efficient services, and the human capital theory. In general, two

pre-existing programs model the practice of not paying women for their demanding community work; these programs are Posyandu (*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu*—Integrated Health Service Post) and BKB. The authoritarian New Order government (1966–1998) harnessed the two community programs to governmentalize women as volunteers (Newberry, 2014).

Both Posyandu and BKB were officially used as one of the strategies for ECE development due to their focus on nutrition, children's health, and parenting practices (National EFA Forum, 2003). Apart from the comprehensive guide, in the beginning of the expansion, there was pressure on the affordability of the ECE program, considering Indonesia's fiscal space, shrunk by the Asian Financial Crisis (UNESCO, 2005). As legacies of the authoritarian regime, Posyandu and BKB have a significant presence in the community supported by a legion of volunteers owing to their top–down approach (Hull & Mosley, 2009). Posyandu and BKB as community-based initiatives were also considered a solution to suppress the cost of the ECE program lower than building kindergartens. The cost-efficient emphasis provided the World Bank with a reason to promote the ECE program, as reflected in the statement below:

> Centre-based interventions are costly and are not necessarily the most appropriate alternatives. The investment cost of all ECED pilot centres was about $30,000 each. The investment/capital cost of an intervention like the *Taman Posyandu*, which is based on an existing facility, is half that amount. Average annual recurrent costs of the *Taman Posyandu* centers are $900 compared with $1,627 for the child centers. Yet, when compared with the costs of other international programs, $82 per child per year is relatively inexpensive. (Chang et al., 2006, p. 24)

The efficiency of Posyandu and BKB is primarily due to practices that consider women's labour an unbudgeted item, despite some small transportation incentives. The approach also provides a model for ECE to operate without adequately paying the teachers for their work. Apart from perpetuating the norm of women as unpaid labour, reliance on female volunteers also sustains the dominance of heteronormative values embedded within the volunteering ideology of women as mothers and wives.

2.8   Maternal Caring in Neoliberal Times

The development of the ECE program in Indonesia has been undertaken on a political and socio-economic landscape marked by the disempowering-empowering discourses on women (Newberry, 2012). Ignoring the production and the reproduction of ECE labour, international donors have facilitated the deeper intrusion of neoliberalist agenda into family reconfiguration. In this study, the pattern is shown based on the excessive prioritization of children as the future productive labour above all else, including their carers, mothers, and teachers. This article has demonstrated that the coalescence of neoliberal ideas and the maternalistic social landscape through which the program operates has turned ECE into a site for women to realize their maternal calling, either as parents or educators, keeping the boundary of their traditional roles. Meanwhile, the discourse on empowering women through ECE—to

increase their roles beyond domestic responsibilities—is not even discussed. The ignorance of these empowering-disempowering tensions has turned ECE into a gender-blind program. It also asserts the framing of donors and international organizations not necessarily as external forces that facilitate empowerment or disempowerment of women but as a limited strand within the historical fabrics of social reproduction (Rosemberg, 2003).

In this chapter, I propose to place children always in the context of relationality with others, including those in charge of their care connected by historical, emotional, and intellectual bonds. The child's right to early learning should not be enforced solely at the expense of women. Similarly, the logic of human development should recognize the interconnections and relationships of children with their families and environments. As development programs, aspiration towards ECE should always be placed in a dialogical position with local contexts and different narratives, not as a merely universal and uniform mode of governance (Moss et al., 2013).

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Chapter 3
COVID-19 Widening the Gap in Education: Evidence from Urban Jakarta

Milda Irhamni and Gumilang Aryo Sahadewo

3.1 Introduction

Studies on education production functions show that educational inputs are significant determinants of students' learning outcomes (Glewwe & Lambert, 2010; Hanushek, 2010). In recent years, the economics of education literature focuses on identifying the impact of varying education production function inputs, such as school inputs, household and neighborhood inputs, social skills, and prices, on academic achievement (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Ming Chiu & Sui Chu Ho, 2006; Fryer, 2017; McBride et al., 2005; Muralidharan, 2017; Rockoff, 2004). Studies in the literature find that parental involvement has a positive impact on learning outcomes (Avvisati et al., 2014; Davis-Kean, 2005; Jeynes, 2007; Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2017; Wilder, 2014). However, there is still mixed evidence on the impact of technology as one of the home educational resources, particularly computers, on student achievement (Beuermann et al., 2015; Cristia et al., 2017; Fairlie, 2005; Fairlie & Robinson, 2013; Fairlie et al., 2010; Malamud & Pop-Eleches, 2011; Vigdor & Ladd, 2010). A recent study shows that using computer-aided learning to improve pedagogy is effective in improving student achievement (Muralidharan et al., 2016). All of these studies examined non-pandemic situations, therefore less is known about the impact of parental involvement and technology in the time of pandemic. Furthermore,

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we also know very little about an effective online or distance-schooling pedagogy when access to technology varies across students.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an abrupt change in the learning process and significantly changed the education production function. Students are no longer interacting with teachers and their peers in classroom settings and have to adopt learning from home approach. Students have to use available technology and the internet to attend virtual classrooms and access learning materials. Teachers have to plan and create learning materials to be delivered via synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods. Despite the adaptive responses, some students and teachers are facing difficulties assessing educational inputs necessary for learning from home. Inequalities in access to educational inputs during the pandemic may have a long-term impact on learning and eventually labor market outcomes. Students—mainly from low-income households—lacking access to learning materials and in-virtual-classroom would be learning significantly less than their peers (see also Mambu & Kurniawan, this volume). Students from low-income households might also receive less parental support in various forms. This inequality can result in slower learning trajectories, lower human capital accumulation, and eventually future productivity.

Ever since the pandemic hit globally, several studies have tried to examine the impact of COVID-19 on student learning outcomes, in particular whether inequality in learning was exacerbated by the pandemic. Studies by Orlov et al. (2020) show that students performed worse in the semester after the school closures. One possible contributing factor for these is the varying degree of parental involvement and access and capabilities to work with the technology required for the online learning. Inequality in learning outcomes can be driven by inequality in inputs such as quality of online learning (Agostinelli et al., 2020), resources and parental support (Bol, 2020), digital materials (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020), and online resources (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021).

The long-term impacts of this pandemic on educational achievements are still unknown as studies examining past pandemics showing mixed long-term results (Ager et al., 2020; Guimbeau et al., 2020; Meyers & Thomasson, 2017). That being said, the potential of the long-term impact on educational achievement to be long-lasting should not be immediately dismissed. In particular, given that lower educational achievement would result in lower productivity in the labor market and eventually lower income in adulthood.

Most of these studies focused on the impacts of the pandemic on learning and the consequences of inequality on learning in developed countries. It is still unclear whether the conclusion with regard to the impacts of large-scale pandemics in these countries can be applied to developing countries' context. In this context, governments have lower fiscal resources to implement programs to improve learning; school systems in general have lower resources and quality; and parents and students have lower access to technologies and quality internet. Thus, the impact on learning and inequality could be larger in developing countries. Therefore, it is important to identify inequalities in learning opportunities specifically in the developing countries context.

This study aims to record and examine the immediate consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' learning in the context of an urban environment in a developing country. Specifically, we conducted the study in the province of DKI Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Jakarta is the hardest-hit region by the COVID-19 pandemic, as COVID-19 cases in Jakarta account for the majority number of cases in Indonesia. On March 14, 2020, the regional government through the Office of Education of DKI Jakarta issued an official letter to temporarily close learning activities in schools as a response to the large-scale social restrictions. The regional government then implemented the learning from home (LfH) policy starting on March 16, 2020, the first in Indonesia. As of the writing of this study, the regional government is planning to continue the learning from home policy in the academic year of 2021–2022.

We implemented quantitative and qualitative methods to identify the scale and scope of inequality in the learning from home process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we launched an online survey and in-depth telephone interviews with representative parents and teachers of elementary school students. The online survey and in-depth telephone interviews aim to answer two research questions. First, is there inequality in access to educational inputs by households of different income groups? Second, are challenges faced by teachers during the learning from home process differ across low-poverty and high-poverty schools?

We focus on the elementary school level of education for three reasons. First, the primary school is one of the most basic educational levels that build the foundation for future educational paths. Therefore, inequality in elementary school level can have a long-lasting impact beyond just the period of the pandemic. Second, primary school children need more adult supervision, from both teachers and parents, in their learning process due to their age range. As such, compared to students in higher education, they face the most challenges in responding and adapting to LFH. Lastly, elementary school students account for more than half of the total students in DKI Jakarta. In addition, nearly half of the total number of teachers in DKI Jakarta are primary school teachers. This indicates that the primary school level is most affected by the LFH policy.

There are concerns regarding the readiness of students, teachers, and parents in the implementation of the learning from home process. There are also concerns about challenges that students and teachers face in the implementation of the policy, particularly students from poor and vulnerable households and teachers from high-poverty schools. Despite being the wealthiest city in Indonesia, there exists income inequality across different socioeconomic statuses. This includes not only disparity in terms of parental capacity to help the children learn but also a disparity in basic infrastructure such as ownership of technology and internet access. In Indonesia, only one-fifth of elementary students from the poorest families have access to the internet while two-thirds of elementary students from the wealthiest families do (Sparrow et al., 2020). These statistics show that there is variation in access to online learning materials and parent–teacher communication portals.

Along with a study by Smeru Research Institute (Alifia et al., 2020) and Sparrow et al. (2020), our study is among the first studies in Indonesia that attempt to identify

challenges faced by the students, parents, and teachers during the learning from home process. More importantly, our study is also among the first studies in Indonesia to identify inequality in educational inputs during the learning from home process.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. The next section describes the methodology of the study, including the sampling and questionnaire design, and data collection implementation. This is followed by the results which include the results from interviews with parents and teachers. The last section of this study summarizes the conclusion of this study.

3.2   Methodology

3.2.1   Sampling Design

We implement quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the scale and scope of inequality in the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. We design an online survey and in-depth telephone interviews with representative parents of elementary school students in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta. We opt for an online survey and telephone interviews because the pandemic puts limitations on mobility and face-to-face interactions between individuals.

We conduct the study in Jakarta because it is the region that is hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Jakarta is also the only region in Indonesia that consistently implements the large-scale social restriction (*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar, PSBB*) since the beginning of the pandemic in Indonesia. We also choose Jakarta for a practical reason. Namely, internet penetration in DKI Jakarta is among the highest in Indonesia. This allows us to implement a large-scale online survey.

We established a sampling framework of schools in Jakarta to obtain samples for the online survey. We conduct stratification based on several variables to ensure that key subpopulations are represented. We depict the sampling design in Fig. 3.1.

First, we stratify schools based on the five administrative cities and a district in Jakarta. They are the administrative cities of Jakarta Utara, Jakarta Timur, Jakarta Barat, Jakarta Pusat, Jakarta Selatan, and the district of Kepulauan Seribu. Second, we then stratify schools based on public and private status. Lastly, we stratify schools based on the socioeconomic status of their students. Specifically, we divide schools into high (HPS) and low-poverty schools (LPS).

We define these schools based on the share of students in each school who receives the Smart Jakarta Card (*Kartu Jakarta Pintar, KJP*), one of the social assistance programs implemented by Jakarta to support students from poor households. We define a school to be an HPS if the share of students who receive KJP is equal to or higher than the median share of students who receive KJP across schools.

Note that all 14 schools in the district of Kepulauan Seribu are public schools and are considered HPS. We include all schools in this district in the sample. We have a total of 21 sub-strata in this sampling design. We randomly choose 5 schools in
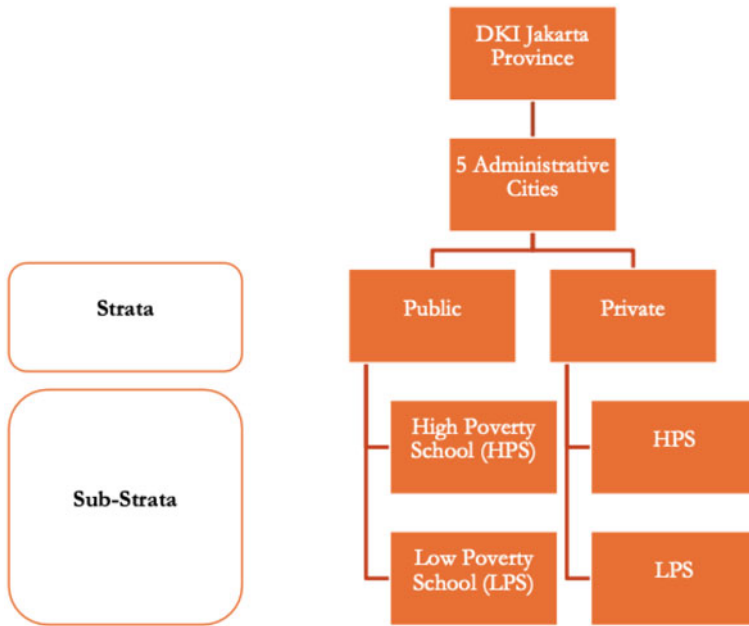
Fig. 3.1 Sampling design for the online survey

each of the 20 sub-strata of schools in the five administrative cities. We have a total of 100 schools from the five administrative cities and 14 schools from the district of Kepulauan Seribu. The estimated population of students in these schools is 34,000, while the estimated population of teachers is 1,667.

For the in-depth telephone interviews, we randomly select parents and teachers among those who responded to the online survey and gave their consent to be contacted for and participate in the in-depth telephone interview. We choose the grade of parents' children as the stratum for the random selection of parents and teachers for the in-depth interview. The duration of each interview is at most 30 min, including the reading of the informed consent. A total of 200 parents and 50 teachers participated in the in-depth telephone interview.

3.2.2   Questionnaire Design

We design the online survey questionnaire to obtain data to assess the scale and scope of inequality in the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also design the questionnaire to identify learning activities at home, challenges in the learning process, and learning innovations undertaken by parents and teachers during the

Table 3.1 Key topics of the online survey questionnaire

A: Parents	B: Teachers
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics	Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics
Learning activities and learning environment	Teaching experience and qualifications
Parental involvement	Hours spent for planning, teaching, and administrative works
Opinions and attitudes of parents	Ownership and access to ICT for online learning
Challenges faced by parents and students	Teacher's ICT proficiency
	Experience using ICT to teach
	Challenges faced by teachers during learning from home
	Opinions and attitudes of teachers toward online learning

COVID-19 pandemic. In Column A of Table 3.1, we summarize the key topics of the online survey questionnaire for parents.[1]

Key variables include socioeconomic and demographic topics, access to technology, parental involvement, perceptions on online learning, and challenges during online learning. On parental involvement, we specifically asked parents for hours spent accompanying their children during online learning on a typical day.

To complement the online survey, we conducted in-depth telephone interviews with parents. We designed the in-depth telephone interview questionnaire to obtain comprehensive information on parents' strategies in accompanying children during online learning, variation in good practices implemented by parents in adapting to the online learning, and division of roles between household members in supporting the online learning participants.[2]

We summarize key topics of the online survey questionnaire for teachers in Column B of Table 3.1. Key variables include basic demographics topics, teachers' ICT proficiency, methods of online learning, and challenges faced by teachers during online learning.

Similar to data collection for parents, we also conduct in-depth telephone interviews with teachers to obtain their strategies for conducting online learning. Specifically, we design the in-depth telephone interview questionnaire to identify variations

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[1] The online survey questionnaire can be requested through correspondence with the authors.

[2] The in-depth telephone interview questionnaire can also be requested through correspondence with the authors.

in methods of online learning, in good practices done by teachers to adapt to students' situations, and education materials related to COVID-19 prevention. Note that we limit each phone interview to 30 min to reduce respondents' fatigue and likelihood of dropping.

3.2.3 Implementation

We use Zoho Survey as the online platform to deliver the self-administered online survey. The main advantage of the Zoho Survey platform is the security protocol. The robust security protocol is important because we collect cell phone numbers of parents who consented to be contacted for the in-depth telephone interview.

We conducted a pilot of the online survey and the in-depth telephone interview between June 8 and July 3, 2020. The objectives of the pilot were to test research instruments; test data collection protocols and logistics; test the optimal method to district the online survey link; and test the optimal strategy to contact respondents for the in-depth telephone interview. For the pilot, we randomly selected a particular sub-district (*kecamatan*) in Jakarta and selected all schools within the sub-district. There was a total of 8 schools for the pilot. Note that the pilot sub-district and its schools were not selected for the large-scale online survey.

We implemented the online survey starting from July 27, 2020, which was the second week of the 2020–2021 academic year. We sent the survey link to school supervisors in Jakarta, and the school supervisors sent the survey link to school principles. Such mechanisms allow us to reach all sample schools more efficiently. On the 6th day of the online survey, we sent a reminder message to parents via school supervisors and school principles. We ended the online survey on August 4, 2020, which was the 9th day of the survey.

A total of 27,042 out of an estimated population of 34,000 parents visited the online survey site. The participation rate was 79%. We note that not all parents participated because many do not own devices to access the online survey. Thus, our sample is potentially biased to those who own devices. Given the potential bias in the sample, the statistics may underestimate challenges faced by parents and students.

Among parents who participated in the survey, 16,452 parents completed the survey. Thus, the completion rate among the participating parents was 60.84%, which is quite high for an online survey. There were 1,882 teachers who accessed the online survey, higher than the estimated population. The data shows that there were teacher respondents from schools that were not in the sample who accessed the survey. About 61.74% of teachers who accessed the survey or about 1,162 completed the survey.

Upon completion of the online survey, we randomly select respondents for the in-depth telephone interview. We started the first in-depth telephone interview on August 6, 2020 and completed the survey on August 28th.

3.2.4   Data Analysis

We use descriptive statistics and regression analysis to analyze the online survey data of parents and teachers. Our first set of analyzes focus on parents. Using descriptive statistics, we analyze access to learning materials and challenges faced by parents and teachers by household expenditure. We also conduct regression analysis and estimate average marginal effects to identify the correlation between access and challenges by household expenditure. In the regression we include covariates such as household expenditure dummies, school poverty level, gender, child grade, dummy for public school, number of children in elementary schools, marital status, father's employment status, father's educational attainment, mother's employment status, mother's educational attainment, receipt of government social program, receipt of Kartu Jakarta Pintar, school fixed effects, and survey date fixed effects. In the second set of analyzes, we focus on teachers. We specifically focus on analyzing teaching practices and challenges among teachers in low and high-poverty schools.

We use Stata version 15.1 (StataCorp LLC, College Station, Texas, USA) to conduct descriptive analyses.

3.3   Results

3.3.1   Parents

We discuss parents' characteristics by household expenditures in Table 3.2. In general, the majority of the respondents were female, accounting for almost 80% of total respondents. These parents typically have about one child who is currently enrolled in elementary school during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of parents—both fathers and mothers—have high school education. However, we can observe significant differences in parents' educational attainment across expenditure categories. Fathers and mothers from the poorest households tend to have less-than-high school education, while parents from the richest households tend to have at least a bachelor's degree.

Parent's employment status also varies significantly across expenditure categories, although the majority of fathers hold employment. The share of fathers from the richest households who are employed during the survey is quite high at about 91%. On the other hand, the share of fathers from the poorest households who are currently employed is just 67%. We can also observe the same pattern among mothers. This finding suggests that parents from the poorest households may face financial challenges to support their children's learning from home.

At the beginning of the online survey, we ask parents about their children's schools. We then categorize these schools into low or high-poverty schools based on administrative data obtained from the DKI Jakarta's Office of Education. As discussed in the previous section, the categorization is based on the share of students who receive

Table 3.2 Summary statistics of parents' characteristics by expenditures

Parents' characteristics	<Rp600K per month	Rp600K–Rp3.3 M per month	Rp3.3 M–Rp4.5 M per month	Rp4.5 M to Rp6M per month	Rp6M and above per month
1 if respondent is female	0.805	0.796	0.783	0.775	0.786
	(0.396)	(0.403)	(0.412)	(0.418)	(0.410)
# of children in SD/basic school	1.210	1.205	1.235	1.277	1.318
	(0.558)	(0.482)	(0.482)	(0.581)	(0.539)
1 if father's education is less than HS	0.508	0.309	0.189	0.101	0.0632
	(0.500)	(0.462)	(0.391)	(0.302)	(0.243)
1 if father's education is HS	0.419	0.572	0.590	0.505	0.295
	(0.494)	(0.495)	(0.492)	(0.500)	(0.456)
1 if father's education is diploma and above	0.0375	0.0897	0.201	0.375	0.624
	(0.190)	(0.286)	(0.400)	(0.484)	(0.485)
1 if mother's education is less than HS	0.578	0.384	0.263	0.136	0.0774
	(0.494)	(0.486)	(0.440)	(0.343)	(0.267)
1 if mother's education is HS	0.368	0.505	0.533	0.462	0.282
	(0.482)	(0.500)	(0.499)	(0.499)	(0.450)
1 if mother's education is diploma and above	0.0404	0.103	0.197	0.386	0.600
	(0.197)	(0.304)	(0.397)	(0.487)	(0.490)
1 if father is unemployed	0.107	0.0832	0.0609	0.0603	0.0387
	(0.310)	(0.276)	(0.239)	(0.238)	(0.193)
1 if father is employed	0.696	0.809	0.870	0.871	0.912
	(0.460)	(0.393)	(0.336)	(0.336)	(0.283)
1 if mother is unemployed	0.0131	0.0132	0.0146	0.0148	0.0104
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.120)	(0.121)	(0.102)
1 if mother is employed	0.194	0.202	0.258	0.384	0.525
	(0.396)	(0.401)	(0.438)	(0.487)	(0.500)
1 if household is poor	0.646	0.631	0.543	0.410	0.228
	(0.478)	(0.483)	(0.498)	(0.492)	(0.420)
1 if HPS	0.669	0.530	0.462	0.320	0.205
	(0.471)	(0.499)	(0.499)	(0.467)	(0.404)
Number of observations	1,759	8,039	3,286	2,024	1,344

Source Authors' calculation

Kartu Jakarta Pintar (Smart Jakarta Card) in the school. We can observe variations in the type of schools across expenditure categories. Children from the poorest households are more likely to be enrolled in high-poverty schools, while children from the richest households are more likely to be enrolled in low-poverty schools. This suggests that there is a significant gap in the type of peers and presumably school resources across students with different economic backgrounds.

We first discuss access to learning materials, which is an important learning input particularly during learning from home. In general, most households have access to various learning materials or devices, ranging from textbooks, worksheets, non-textbooks reading books, internet access, and gadgets.[3] However, we observe a subtle difference between students across expenditure groups and we depict the analyses in Fig. 3.2. We do not find a significant difference in access of textbooks across expenditure groups. However, students from poorer households have significantly less access to the internet with parental guidance. Further analyses show that students from poorer households also have significantly less access to gadgets with parental guidance. An access to the internet and gadgets—smartphones, tablets, computers, laptops, and others—is quite essential during learning from home as they are the portal to various online learning materials and virtual classes.

In addition to differences in access, the quality of internet access and gadgets as well as other challenges during learning from home also differ by economic background. In Fig. 3.3, we can observe that the poorest households are significantly more likely to face challenges in terms of learning resources. On the other hand, the richest households are significantly more likely to face challenges in terms of setting aside time to assist children's learning and in ensuring children's focus on materials.[4] Almost half of the poorest households indicate that they experienced bad internet connection, and this is particularly true among households in Kepulauan Seribu. In addition, about a third of the poorest households indicate that they face challenges in operating the device and app for learning from home.

These findings are corroborated by results from the in-depth phone interviews with randomly selected households from the poorest households. One respondent, who is a high school graduate, mentions that her parents are elementary school graduates. Both of her parents cannot read or operate smartphone applications. Therefore, she took responsibility for accompanying her younger sibling.

> "It's my responsibility to accompany my younger brother studying, my parents trust me to do it. Because my parents can't do anything, they can't read, can't use phones to reply to WhatsApp. So, among the family members the only one who has smartphones is me. My mother, during school days, does the household chores. For school days [...] I'm the one who takes care of my younger brother. Every Saturday and Sunday, together with mom, I also help her to do the household chore." Older sister aged 19 years, high school graduates, with younger brother in Grade 1

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[3] See Table A1 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on access to learning materials by household expenditures.

[4] See Table A2 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on challenges during learning from home by household expenditures.
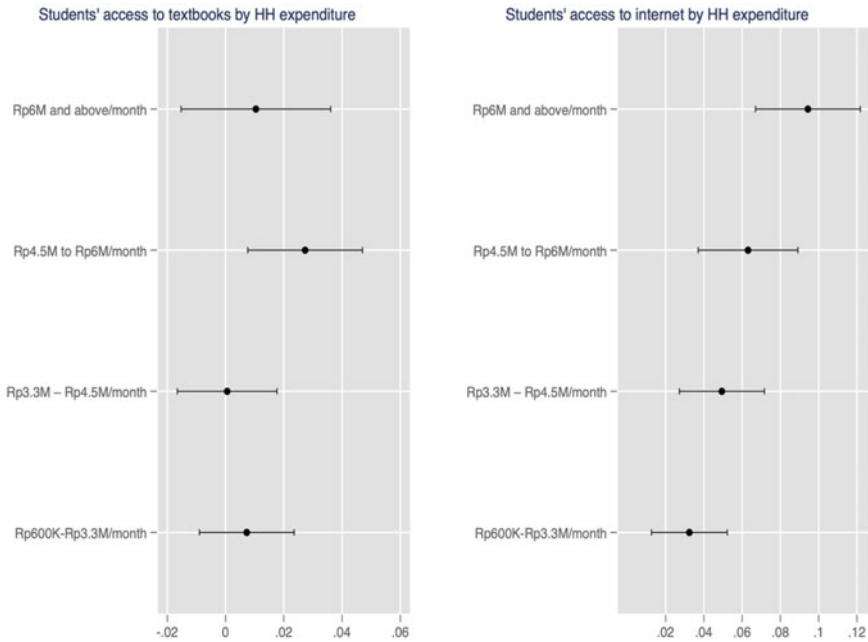
Fig. 3.2 Access to learning materials by household expenditures (*Note* We run a probit regression on household expenditure dummies and covariates which include school poverty level, gender, child grade, dummy for public school, number of children in elementary schools, marital status, father's employment status, father's educational attainment, mother's employment status, mother's educational attainment, receipt of government social program, receipt of Kartu Jakarta Pintar, and school fixed effects. We then calculate the average marginal effects for each monthly expenditure group with a base group of students from households with less than Rp600,000 of expenditure per month. Overlapping of the confidence interval on 0 implies there is no significant difference between the group of interest with the base group. Standard errors are clustered at the school and grade level. *Source* Authors' calculation)

We interviewed a housewife whose husband works as a *bajaj* driver. She mentions that her household faces financial difficulties in purchasing phone credits to support the learning from home process. She also mentions that there is a limited number of smartphones and it needs to be shared between two children. Another interviewee who never attends formal schooling and who works as a casual worker mentions that his household needs to take a credit in order to purchase a smartphone to facilitate their children learning from home.

> ".... to buy phone credit when there is money but when we don't have the money it's confusing how my child can study [respondent had a small laugh] So, we buy the IDR 5,000 phone credit [...] Because when there is no money what we can do." Mother with 2 children in Grade 6 and Grade 5
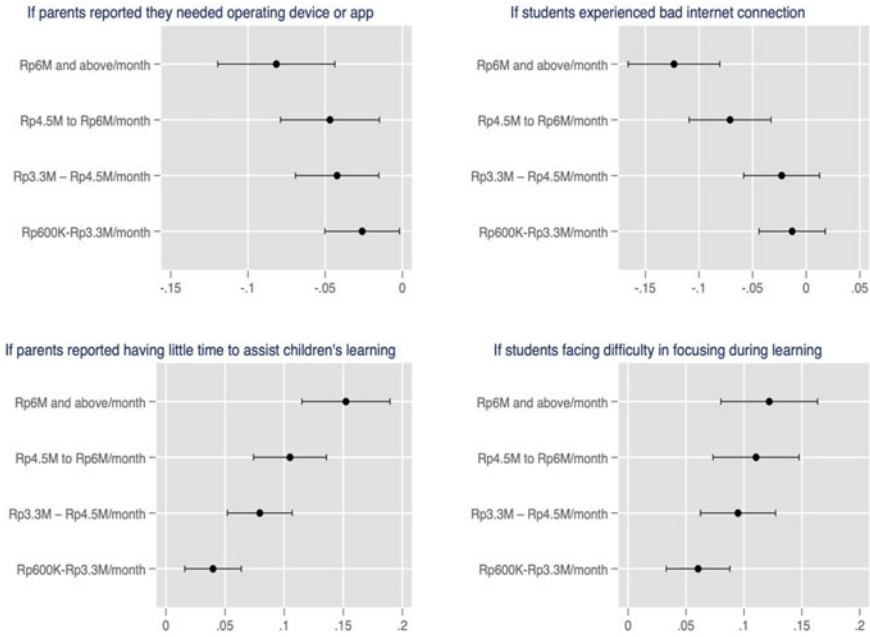
Fig. 3.3 Challenges during learning from home by household expenditure (*Note* We run a probit regression on household expenditure dummies and covariates which include school poverty level, gender, child grade, dummy for public school, number of children in elementary schools, marital status, father's employment status, father's educational attainment, mother's employment status, mother's educational attainment, receipt of government social program, receipt of Kartu Jakarta Pintar, and school fixed effects. We then calculate the average marginal effects for each monthly expenditure group with a base group of students from households with less than Rp600,000 of expenditure per month. Overlapping of the confidence interval on 0 implies there is no significant difference between the group of interest with the base group. Standard errors are clustered at the school and grade level. *Source* Authors' calculation)

"Well, what can we do other than take a credit. And it's also about when the child is only playing with the phone [...] Well, it's around 1.5 million for the credit [...] Because if I don't do this, they will need to share. [Respondent has two children; 1 in primary school and 1 in senior high school.] Father working as a casual worker

Although they face challenges in accessing the internet and operating devices, parents of the poorest households are less likely to have difficulty setting aside time to assist children's learning. A potential explanation for this finding is that the majority of mothers in the poorest households are not employed and are more likely to be at home during the day.

On the other hand, almost 45% of parents from the richest households indicate that they had difficulty in setting aside time to assist their children's learning. These parents are more likely to be working—both from home and in the office—during the day. This finding is corroborated by the hours spent by parents accompanying their children during learning from home. We find that parents from the richest households spent significantly less time accompanying their children during learning from home. On average, parents from the richest households spent 20 min less per day for their children compared to parents from the poorest households.[5] This would equal 6.7 h per month or about 1.5 schooling days, assuming 4 h per schooling day.

The pattern discussed above is mainly driven by parents, especially mothers, who are working in the office. Our analysis shows that mothers working from office spend significantly less time accompanying their children in learning from home.[6] We don't observe the same pattern based on the father's employment, which suggests that mothers take the main responsibility of accompanying their children in learning from home. There are two key takeaways from these findings. First, while these parents may have resources to provide learning materials for their children, they have lower direct involvement in children's learning process. Second, in general mothers play multiple roles in the household, including playing a key role in their children's learning, and it is supported by findings from the in-depth telephone interviews. Several mothers are responsible for domestic chores, accompanying and supervising children's learning, and, for some, work activities.

While not exclusive to the richest households, a larger share of households in the middle and upper expenditure categories indicate that they face challenges in ensuring children's focus on learning materials. As shown in Fig. 3.4, the online survey data shows that parents of children in early grades are more likely to state difficulty in ensuring children's focus. At the same time, parents tend to spend more time for children in Grade 4 to 6 than for children below Grade 4. Figure 3.5 shows the inequality. Parents spent more than 4.5 h per day for children in Grade 4 and above, but parents only spent less than 4 h per day for children in Grade 1. Results from the telephone interviews suggest that parents spend more time for children in advanced grades because these children are preparing for graduation exams and children get more assignments. Difficulty in ensuring children of early grades focus on learning and inequality in time spent by parents may affect learning outcomes of children in early grades.

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[5] See Figure A1 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on hours spent accompanying children during PJJ in the previous school day by household expenditure.

[6] See Figure A2 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on hours spent accompanying children during PJJ in the previous school day by mother's employment status.
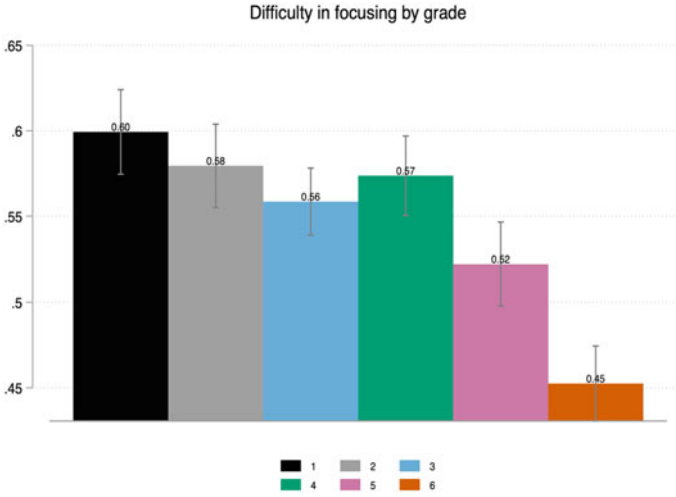
Fig. 3.4 Difficulty in focusing on learning materials by grade (*Note* The 95% confidence interval estimation is clustered at the school-classroom level. *Source* Authors' calculation)
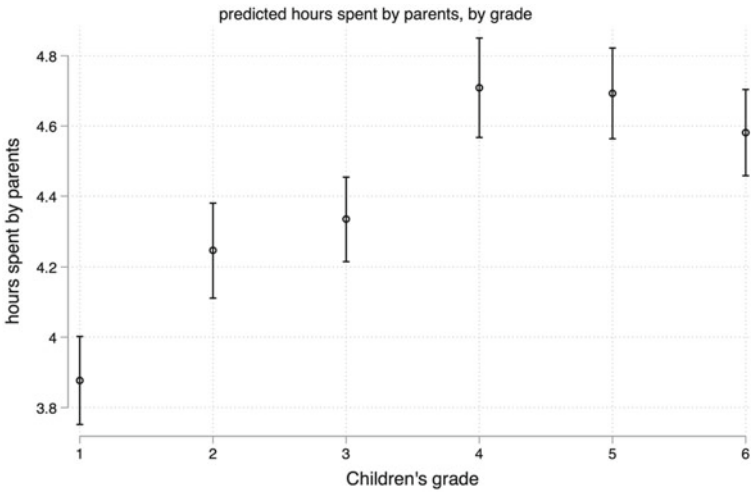
Fig. 3.5 Hours spent by parents accompanying their children in learning from home, by grade (*Note* The 95% confidence interval estimation is clustered at the school-classroom level. *Source* Authors' calculation)

Our telephone interviews reveal that the home environment easily distracts children from learning. For example, some parents confess that while waiting for teachers to mark assignments, their children use the smartphones to play. Difficulty focusing on learning materials can also be induced by boredom. The telephone interviews suggest that children's boredom is driven by limited social activities with their peers. Another potential driver of children's difficulty to focus is the association that learning is completing assignments. Some parents state that learning focuses more on completing assignments rather than interactive learning by teachers.

> "They're not focused sometimes, right, if they're at school, they would probably be more independent than how they are at home, where they play more, if we don't teach them, they won't want to do the school work, they fall asleep sometimes, so many commercial breaks [...] at home they get bored just playing in the same space, so you can't communicate with them well, even with their mother and father, if we don't understand a bit, they become less focused." Mother, junior high school graduate, child in Grade 5

> "....... sometimes it's also necessary to go out and during COVID these children really haven't been out anywhere at all. Sometimes, the children get in a bad mood, they get cranky, ahh I think that's the impact of not having enough, picnics, maybe." Mother, junior high school graduate, child in Grade 4

> ".....I will ask her to stop studying and will let her play for 2 to 3 hours, play what she wants to play, if she wants to do something that makes her happy like drawing or painting, she will do it, if she wants to play with dolls I'll let her do it too, I'll tell the teachers that my children is having a learning fatigue, so she will be a little bit late in sending her assignment, and the teachers understand that." Mother with children in Grade 6

Another challenge faced by parents from all expenditure categories is device sharing with other household members. Devices, such as smartphones or laptops, are essential in accessing learning materials, but devices could be a scarce resource as many members within a household need them. It is interesting to note that a larger share of the richest households indicate that their children have to share devices with other members. A potential explanation is that children from these households rely more on materials from the internet and require more frequent access to devices.

Summarizing, findings from the online survey with parents show that there is an inequality in educational inputs during the learning from home process. Poorer households have a lower likelihood to access learning devices, the internet, and learning materials. These households also experience lower quality access to the internet and learning materials. However, these households spend more hours accompanying their children during learning from home. On the other hand, parents of more affluent households have access to learning resources, but they spend shorter hours for their children owing to work. Parents of more affluent households—who are more likely to be highly educated—can be more effective in the shorter amount of time spent. However, the differential effect of parental involvement on students' learning outcomes is beyond the scope of the study.

Overall, we find evidence of inequality in time spent by parents as they tend to spend more hours on children in advanced grades than those in early grades, particularly Grade 1. As learning in early grades requires attention, the lower attention paid to these children may affect their learning outcomes. These outcomes are in turn fundamental to learning in later grades.

3.3.2   Teachers

We present an analysis of teachers' characteristics by schools' poverty level in Table 3.3. In general, the respondents of the online survey are middle-aged female teachers. We find no significant difference in teaching experience, participation in teacher competence improvement programs, and teacher working group (KKG) between teachers in the low and high-poverty schools. However, we find that teachers in the low-poverty schools are more likely to be civil servants or permanent teachers. On the other hand, teachers in the high-poverty schools are more likely to be temporary, supporting, contract teachers.

Table 3.3 Summary statistics of teachers' characteristics by schools' poverty level

	Low-poverty school	High-poverty school		Low-poverty school	High-poverty school
1 if male	0.249	0.230	1 if temporary, supporting, or contract teacher	0.338	0.418
	(0.433)	(0.421)		(0.473)	(0.494)
Teacher's age	40.61	39.83	1 if teacher has job other than teaching	0.0761	0.0882
	(11.35)	(10.63)		(0.265)	(0.284)
# of children in school (from PAUD/TK to college)	0.964	1.132	Participate in teacher competence improvement program	0.722	0.759
	(1.616)	(1.613)		(0.449)	(0.428)
Teaching experience (years)	13.34	12.46	Participate in Teacher Working Group (KKG)	0.665	0.647
	(11.73)	(10.68)		(0.472)	(0.478)
1 if civil servant or permanent teacher	0.662	0.582			
	(0.473)	(0.494)			
Observations	618	544	Observations	618	544

Source Authors' calculation

In the online survey, we ask teachers hours for different activities related to teaching—planning and preparing learning materials, delivery of materials in classroom, and change in hours of communication with parents—before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Fig. 3.6, we find that there is a significant decrease in hours for delivery of materials in the classroom. This is quite sensible because most learning activities are conducted online, although there are still cases where teachers conduct offline learning. The decrease in hours for delivery of materials in classrooms is significantly higher among teachers in low-poverty schools, which can be explained by higher adoption of online learning among these teachers.

We also find that teachers significantly spend more hours communicating with parents for academic matters such as to explain learning materials and assignments for the day. We do not find a significant change in hours communicating with parents for administrative matters. Lastly, we find that teachers in low-poverty schools spend more hours planning and preparing teaching materials, homework, quizzes, and exams. On the other hand, we do not find a significant change in hours for planning and preparing among teachers in the high-poverty schools. This finding indicates that teachers in low-poverty schools spent more time and resources for the learning from home processes than their counterparts in high-poverty schools. Our subsequent analyses corroborate this argument.

Teachers generally have experience using the internet to access online learning materials and using laptops to support the learning process before the pandemic.[7] However, most teachers do not have experience accessing software such as MS office, zoom, and google classroom before the pandemic. Most teachers have not integrated information and technology (IT), and online learning into in-class teaching before the pandemic. More importantly, we find that there are differences in access to teaching means between school types. Teachers from low-poverty schools are more likely to have used the internet to access online learning, software, and integrate IT and online learning into in-class learning before the pandemic.

Given differences in prior experiences accessing online learning materials and software, we can expect differences in teachers' confidence levels in using devices and software during learning from home. Teachers from high-poverty schools are more likely to perceive that they are early learners or beginners. On the other hand, teachers from low-poverty schools are more likely to perceive that they are intermediate or advanced users of devices and software.

Differences in the perceived skills in using devices and software also translate to differences in the adoption of teaching methods by teachers. Most teachers have adopted online teaching methods, particularly online asynchronous learning. However, the share of teachers who adopted online learning—both synchronous and asynchronous—is significantly higher in low-poverty than in high-poverty schools. From the in-depth telephone interviews, we find two main challenges in the implementation of synchronous online learning. First, synchronous online learning, for example through Google Meet or Zoom, uses an overwhelmingly large internet

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[7] See Figure A4 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on teacher's confidence level in using device and software during learning from home by schools' poverty level.
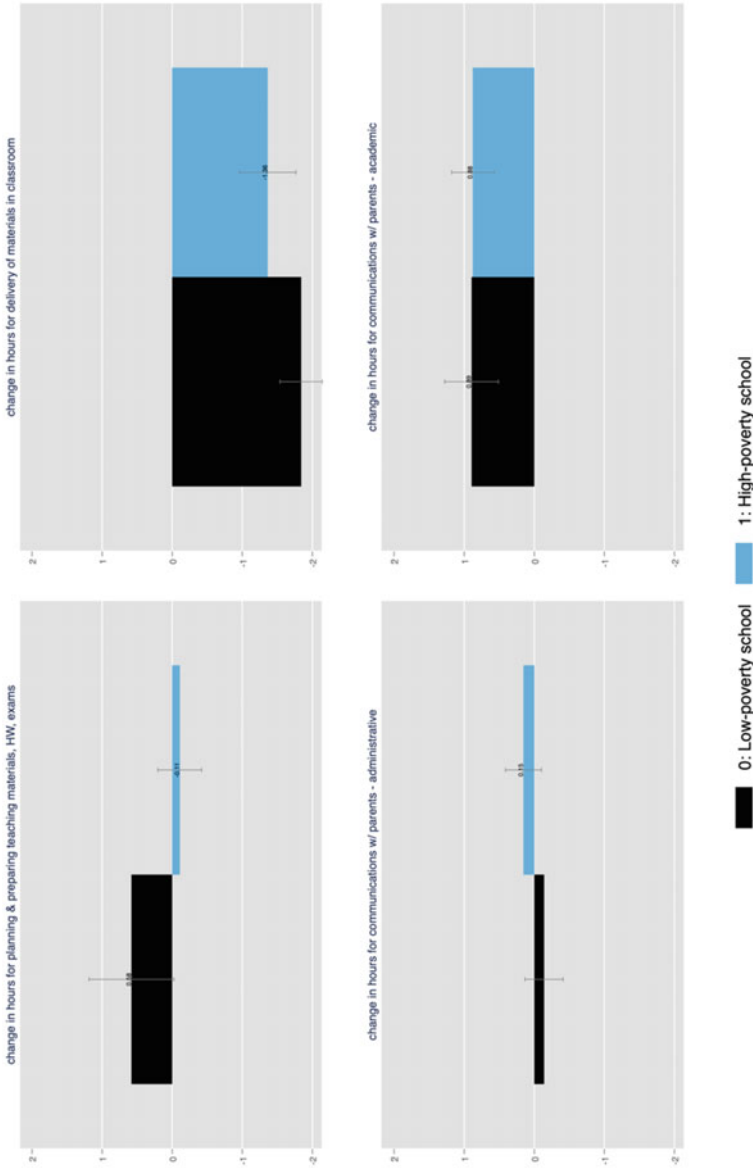
Fig. 3.6 Change in hours spent by teachers before and during PJJ by schools' poverty level (*Note* The 95% confidence interval estimation is clustered at the school level. Starting in top left and in clockwise order, the *p*-values from student *t*-tests between low and high poverty are 0.0025, 0.022, 0.932, and 0.092, respectively. *Source* Authors' calculation)

quota. Second, synchronous learning requires skills in using applications from both teachers and students. For example, teachers need to manage students during online synchronous learning so that students focus on the learning process. In many cases, students have to share devices with their siblings or even their parents. Thus, it is quite difficult to involve every student in synchronous learning.

> "If we use Google Meet, because we have 32 students in 1 class, it's not that effective. And sometimes the connection is also a problem. When we are enjoying our time, teaching, sometimes we get kicked out because of the connection. Not only that, if we do it every day, there will be objection from parents because it consumes very high mobile internet quota." Teacher in a public primary school, high-poverty school, in Central Jakarta

> "If we teach using Google Meet or Zoom, it will consume so much internet quota. So, in one week, I will only allocate 1 hour for it for Math." Teacher in a private primary school, low-poverty school, in Central Jakarta

We find that a non-negligible share of teachers in low and high-poverty schools adopts offline teaching methods. From our in-depth telephone interviews, we find that teachers adopt offline teaching methods to accommodate students who have difficulties in accessing online learning owing to quota and internet constraints. There is no difference in teachers' adoption of offline teaching methods across low-poverty and high-poverty schools. However, teachers in low-poverty schools are more likely to adopt offline teaching methods that reference online learning materials.[8]

Findings from our in-depth telephone interviews show that teachers implement offline learning to accommodate inequality in learning, particularly for students with constraints in obtaining quota and in accessing the internet. First, teachers meet with students in school, with health protocol, or teachers visit students' homes. Second, teachers encourage students to submit assignments and get school materials from students in the same class with better access.

> *"Nah, to take care of that [limitation in number of smartphones], we visited their house, we also asked them to study together with their peers who have smartphones, so they complete the assignments."* Religion teacher in public primary school in Central Jakarta

> "There are several students who don't own smartphones. So, right now, I think almost all the parents want the school to get back to normal, because the cost of buying mobile internet quota is too burdensome [...] But, we can do that mindlessly [...] So, I let the students go to school by following the health protocols, wearing masks, before going to school they will wash their hands. So, we prepare everything at school. There are facilities to wash hands, hand sanitizer, wearing masks is a must as well [...] At the maximum, there will be 5 students, and I ensure that there is social distancing. So, for now, this is what I can do, Mbak." Teacher in Grade 3, in public primary school, Grade 3, high poverty school, in Kepulauan Seribu

> "Not every student has the communication device. Some of them use the device that their older siblings use. For instance, the older sibling who is in Junior High School is also using the phone. The student will wait for the older sibling to finish their study first. Sometimes this happened. But, in the morning we need information, attendance report. "Nak, report your attendance please" I made an online attendance report for this." Teacher in Grade 6, public primary school, high poverty school, in Kepulauan Seribu

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[8] See Figure A5 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on teaching methods during learning from home.

In the survey, we also ask teachers about online teaching techniques that they adopt for online learning during the pandemic.[9] WhatsApp is the most used smartphone application by teachers and parents. Thus, it is logical that the majority of teachers adopt WhatsApp chat as the online teaching technique. Some teachers have adopted other teaching techniques such as giving online quiz, active online interaction, and screen sharing via PPT. Low-poverty school teachers are more likely to adopt these techniques than high-poverty school teachers. We also find that teachers in low-poverty schools are more likely to implement different approaches to tasks. Most teachers in both low-poverty and high-poverty schools create assignments based on tasks in a textbook or student worksheet. Teachers from low-poverty schools are more likely to implement different approaches to tasks such as creating tasks that can be applied with materials at home, creating tasks with guidance in textbooks, and replacing portions of online teaching with tasks.

Given that most learning processes are conducted online during the pandemic, our findings so far provide evidence of inequality in the learning process. High-poverty school students are more likely to be disadvantaged than low-poverty school peers during the process. However, it is encouraging to see that some teachers have adopted a strategy to accommodate students with difficulty in accessing the internet.

Teachers also experience challenges in the implementation of learning from home. We present the analysis of challenges in Fig. 3.7. Most teachers state that they don't have decent internet connectivity to support the online learning process. More than 60% of teachers also state that they are not accustomed to teaching via online. More than 40% of teachers, particularly those teaching in high-poverty schools, do not have sufficient training or capacity to use media for online learning. Close to 40% of teachers also state that they have difficulty choosing and preparing materials for the online learning. High-poverty school teachers are more likely to state difficulty in choosing materials for online learning. It is also important to note that many teachers state that they lack support from their peers, while some state they lack support from the government or from the school.

> "I think the challenge is, the connection is sometimes very poor, so I need to wait until the connection get back to normal. In addition, if the students share the smartphone with their sibling or the parents, I will be flexible, I still give deadline to submit the assignment. The important thing is not exceeding the day I give the assignment. It is okay if they want to send in at 21:00." Teacher in public primary school, Grade 2, in Central Jakarta

Further analyses of the online survey data suggest more than 60% of teachers receive support from schools in the form of supply of distance learning materials. However, only a small proportion of teachers receives device, expenses coverage, and training support from schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support to cover expenses is quite necessary because teachers reported a significant increase in spending on the internet during the learning from home process.

> "Uh.... Rp 25,000, for one month. During learning from home, it will be around Rp 100,000, for two weeks." Teacher in private primary school, high poverty school

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[9] See Figure A6 in the Supplementary Material for descriptive statistics on teachers' approach to tasks during learning from home by schools' poverty level.

Fig. 3.7 Teachers' Challenges During PJJ by Schools' Poverty Level (*Note* The 95% confidence interval estimation is clustered at the school level. Starting in the top left and in clockwise order, the *p*-values from student *t*-tests between low and high poverty are 0.009, 0.789, 0.015, 0.386, 0.002, 0.091, 0.013, and 0.005. *Source* Authors' calculation)

"Usually, a month, I will spend Rp 65,000, but now it is doubled." Teacher in public primary school, high poverty school

Figure 3.8 shows school supports to teachers by schools' poverty level. About a fifth of teachers receives device support from schools, while less than a fifth of teachers receives expense coverage for the internet and given a subscription to relevant software. We find significant differences in school support for these inputs across low and high-poverty schools. Therefore, we find that the proportion of teachers who receive training for distance learning is higher in low-poverty schools compared to in high-poverty schools.

Summarizing, we find evidence of inequality in teachers' capabilities in implementing online learning. Teachers in high-poverty schools are less likely to have experience and capacity using online teaching platforms and techniques in conducting online teaching. These teachers are also more likely to report having no decent internet connection. Despite these challenges, we find that teachers adopt their teaching strategies to accommodate disadvantaged students.

3.4   Conclusion

Empirical studies related to education production functions show that school inputs, peer effects, and home inputs are significant determinants of learning outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has induced a significant change in the education production function. Students can no longer learn in the usual classroom environment, losing important educational inputs such as learning from and interactions with teachers and their peers. During the pandemic, the education production relies heavily on online teaching, online materials, and parental inputs. Students learning processes are disrupted and will lead to significant learning losses. Furthermore, there is inequality in access to various learning inputs—those provided by schools or parents—during the pandemic. Inequality in educational inputs during the COVID-19 pandemic potentially induces inequality in learning outcomes and eventually labor market outcomes.

Findings in our study indeed show evidence of inequality in educational inputs during the COVID-19 pandemic in an urban setting. Students from poorer households have a lower likelihood to access gadgets, the internet, and learning materials. Our online survey and in-depth interviews indicate that these households experience lower quality internet access and learning materials. However, parents of these households spend significantly more hours accompanying their children during learning from home. Parents of more affluent households can provide access to learning resources, but they invest shorter hours in their children's learning process.

We also find evidence of inequality in time spent by parents across grades. Parents spend more hours on children in advanced grades than those in early grades. At the same time, parents of children in early grades are more likely to report difficulty in
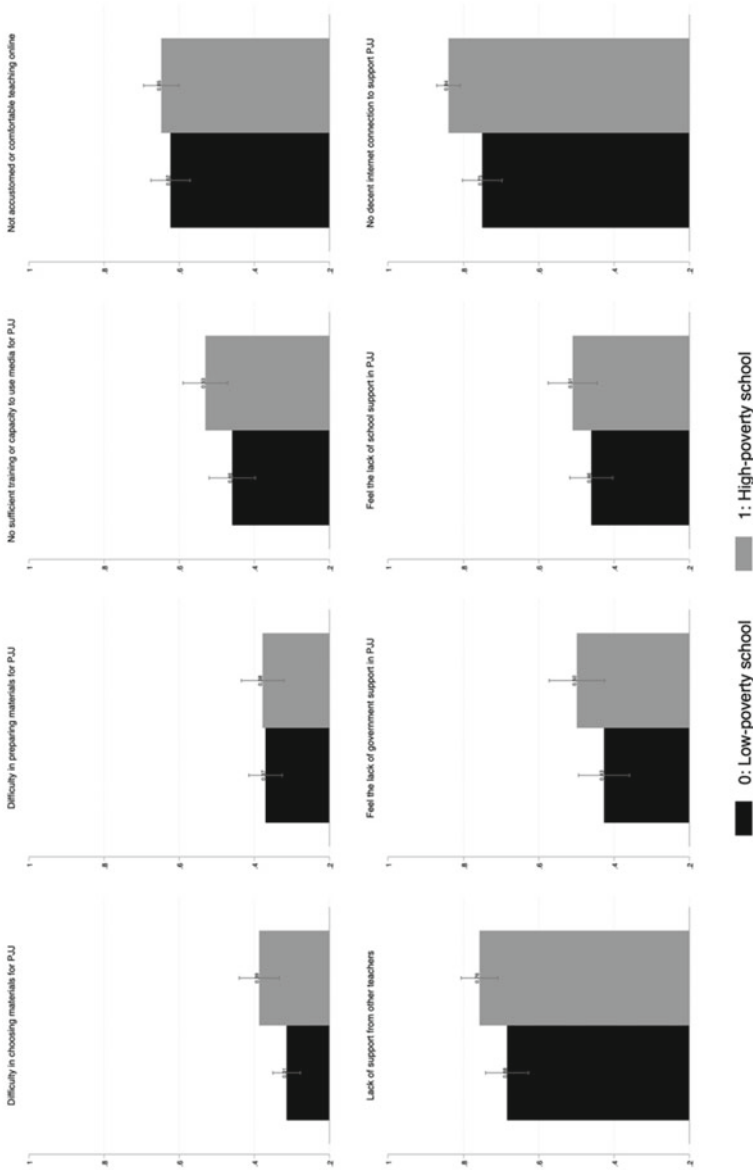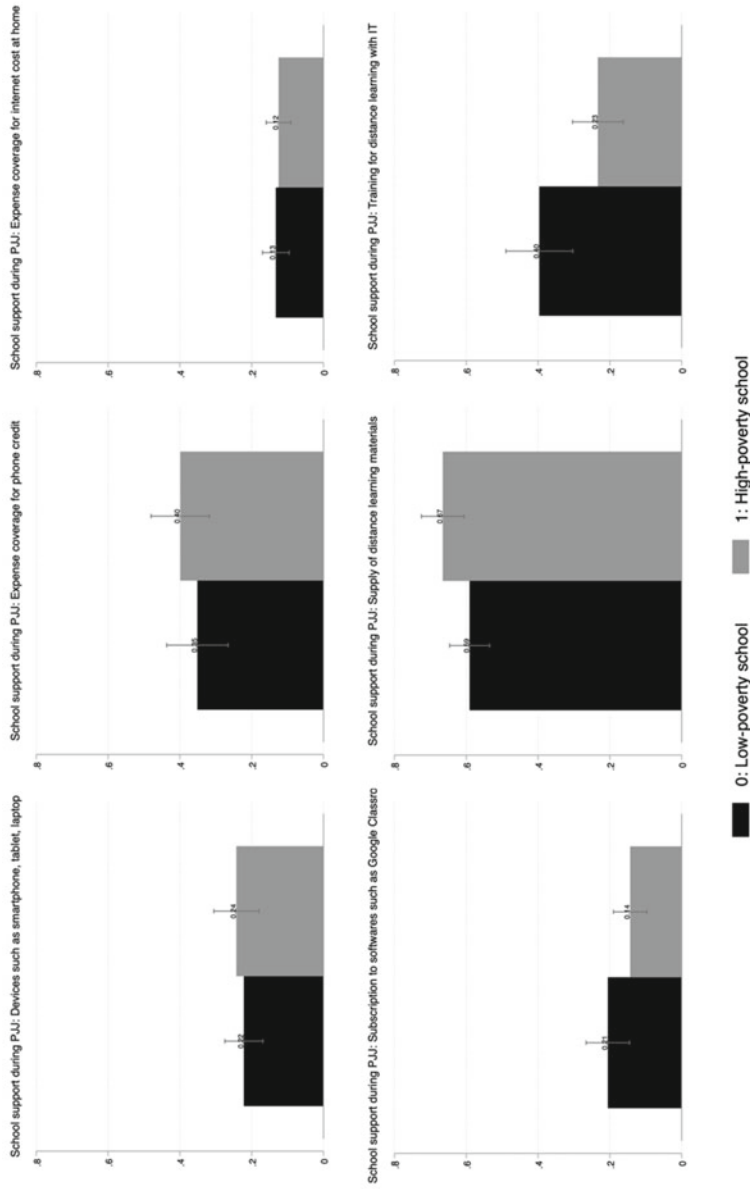
Fig. 3.8 School supports to teachers during PJJ by schools' poverty level (*Note* The 95% confidence interval estimation is clustered at the school level. Starting in the top left and in clockwise order, the *p*-values from student *t*-tests between low and high poverty are 0.398, 0.093, 0.697, 0.000, 0.008, and 0.005. *Source* Authors' calculation)

children's ability to focus during learning from home. The lower time spent with children in early grades may affect their learning of fundamentals important for learning in later grades.

Data from the online survey and in-depth interviews with teachers also show evidence of inequality in educational inputs. Teachers' capabilities in implementing online learning differ significantly between teachers in low-poverty schools and those in high-poverty schools. Teachers in high-poverty schools are less likely to have experience, training, and capacity in using online teaching platforms and techniques in conducting online teaching. Teachers from high-poverty schools are also facing internet connection issues, which would affect the quality of delivery of learning materials.

We find that teachers adopt their teaching strategies to accommodate learning from home strategy. Teachers spend more time planning and preparing teaching materials as well as communicating with parents on academic matters. We also find that teachers initiate offline learning to facilitate disadvantaged students.

There are several policy implications due to the results of this study. First, the government should continue to provide public internet and subsidies for internet connection. The government should also establish a mechanism for parents to borrow or purchase affordable gadgets and essentials for learning from home. Second, the government should establish and deliver guidance to parents on how to accompany the process of learning from home. The materials should not be based on grades, but on key competencies particularly math and literacy. This is particularly important for children from lower income households whose parents may not have the educational background needed to facilitate their children's learning. The guidance should also involve parents in evaluating students' learning of key competencies. To avoid perverse incentives, the evaluation process should not be linked to grades. The process should rather be aimed for teachers and parents to understand students' development.

Third, teachers should collaborate with parents and use results from learning evaluations to tailor materials for students. Specifically, if a Grade 2 student has not mastered competencies expected of Grade 1, teachers should provide relevant materials from Grade 1. This approach is referred to as teaching at the right level (TaRL) which ensures that students obtain competencies essential for later stages of learning. Rethinking pedagogy is particularly important for students in early grades. Lastly, the government should conduct training in using Information Technology (IT) for teachers. The training includes choosing and preparing learning materials, conducting synchronous and asynchronous learning methods, as well as designing learning evaluations.

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Chapter 4
Rethinking the Discourse of School Readiness in Indonesian Early Childhood Education

Hani Yulindrasari, Vina Adriany, and Euis Kurniati

4.1 Introduction

School readiness has been a robust underlying discourse in the development of Early Childhood Education (ECE) globally. Sustainable Development Goals set children's readiness for primary school as one of the targets in education. Preparing young children as early as possible is considered economically beneficial and has a higher investment return rate than later intervention (Heckman, 2002). School readiness has become the most claimed benefit of early childhood intervention/education. Development experts assume that school readiness will decrease the drop-out rate and increase the completion rate for basic education (The Republic of Indonesia Education for All Coordination Forum, 2014).

In the West, school readiness started to draw researchers' attention in the early 1990s following the growing encouragement of early childhood intervention programs such as Head Starts in the USA (Snow, 2006). In Indonesia, the discussion about school readiness is relatively new. Most journal articles on school readiness are published after 2010. Research on school readiness mostly investigates the contribution of early childhood education to learning in primary school. The World Bank and the United Nations sponsor research that focuses on providing evidence of early childhood education's benefit for future learning, especially in primary school (such as Irwanto et al., 2011; Jung & Hasan, 2016; Nakajima et al., 2019).

The term "school readiness," however, is not easily defined. There have been global contesting debates between the developmentalists and the critical social pedagogues about how "school readiness" should be conceptualized. The classic developmentalist or pre-primary approach of school readiness focuses on the individual child's developmental attainment and the mastery of specific skills which determine whether or not the child is ready to learn formally at school (Kagan, 1990; Shepard &

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Smith, 1989). On the contrary, the critical social pedagogues argue that school readiness should be more focused on how the parent, the society, and the school create an environment that is ready to accept diverse ways of children's learning (Evans, 2013; Taguchi, 2010).

In Indonesia, the term school readiness is rarely contested. The majority of literature on school readiness adopts the developmental approach which International agencies, such as World Bank and Save the Children, promote (see Graham, 2014; Nakajima et al., 2019). Many research concerns around measuring whether or not a child is ready for primary school (e.g., Fitri & Reza, 2018; Pangestuti et al., 2018; Seran et al., 2017; Supartini, 2006), and how to improve children's school readiness (e.g., Graham, 2014; Nakajima et al., 2019). Despite the general consensus of the developmental version of school readiness, there is discrepancy between how the public and the government understand the meaning as the finding of this chapter will later demonstrate. The dispute has created a unique and situated meaning of school readiness in Indonesia.

Critical analysis of school readiness is scant. How the discourse of school readiness has impacted the policy and the practice of early childhood education (Moss, 2013) is rarely discussed. The underlying discourses of school readiness are also underexplored. This chapter offers a critical analysis on the school readiness discourse in the Indonesian context. This chapter critically examines how the school readiness discourse operates within the policies and practices of early childhood education (ECE) and its potential implication on the exclusion and discrimination of children, teachers, and economically disadvantaged kindergartens. We will then conceptualize school readiness that is more inclusive in the context of Indonesian early childhood education. Indonesia has various forms of ECE services divided into two categories: non-formal ECE and formal ECE. In this chapter, the term ECE refers to the formal ECEs (kindergartens) for 5–6-year-old children in the context of a transition period preparing the children ready for primary school.

4.2   Conceptualizing School Readiness

As mentioned earlier, there are two contesting groups in the literature on school readiness. The first one is literature with a developmental psychology perspective, including the maturationist and the empiricist in which children are the center of the investigation. The other one is from a social-constructionist and interactionist perspective which sees children, school, and the community as interwoven in shaping children's readiness to learn.

The maturationist point of view advocates the idea that a child is ready to learn when they have reached a certain point of development which is inherent and related to age (Gessell, 1925). Indonesian compulsory education policy assumes that at the age of 7, the majority of children will reach their developmental maturity to learn. An article posted in the Ministry of Education and Culture's official website, entitled "*Mengapa usia masuk SD harus 7 tahun?*" (translated—Why do children have

to be seven years old to enter primary school?), confirms the assumption. Another supporting evidence of a strong maturity assumption is that there is no other requirement than age to enter primary school. However, it is not clear which research the policy was based on to determine the minimum age to enter primary school. The maturationist approach assumes that every child of the same age inherently has similar if not the same ability or potential. Therefore, those who do not perform, as well as others, will be categorized as inherently incapable of learning or having a developmental problem or having a genetic defect configuration (Dalton, 2005).

Contrary to the maturationist approach, the empiricist/environmentalist approach argues that a child's school readiness is a result of learning (Crain, 2000). Therefore, environmentalists/empiricists measure the quality of skills the child has to identify school readiness. Often, the skills are associated with necessary academic skills such as literacy, numeracy, and scientific thinking (Fridani & Agbenyega, 2013; OECD, 2006).

Maturationist and empiricist discourses are the most popular in Indonesia. It is consistent with the dominant developmentalism discourse in Indonesian ECE, enforced by the policy and the ECE teachers' training and professional development. Havighurst (1953) developmental stage and developmental tasks are the foundation of Indonesian policy on ECE (Formen, 2017). Indonesian literature uses the term learning maturity and school maturity (*kematangan belajar*) interchangeably with school readiness. The school readiness tests, therefore, are often called learning maturity tests. Using both terms, school readiness and learning maturity, we search the existing literature about school readiness in the Indonesian context. Most of the research accessible online focuses on measuring and improving children's readiness to enter primary school (e.g., Marwati et al., 2017; Prianto, 2011). The discussion revolves around singular versus holistic developmental aspects. The studies often combine maturationist approach with the empiricist approach which focuses not only on the minimum skills the child has to master before entering primary school but also a restriction for a child to learn skills that they are not "mature" enough to learn. We would call this approach a maturationist-empiricist approach which conceptualized school readiness as a set of skills a child acquires from learning in the corridor of the child's maturity level.

Child developmental psychology is the dominant discipline used in research about school readiness and how to measure it. Research such as Fitri and Reza (2018), Mariyati and Affandi (2016), Brinkman et al. (2017) and Nurhayati (2018) studied the adaptation or the development of the standardized measurement of school readiness for Indonesian context. They argue that the standardized test is relevant, reliable, and valid for use in Indonesia. The most popular testing instrument for school readiness in Indonesia is Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST) developed by FJ Monks in the 1970s in the Netherlands. This test consists of 10 subtests measuring the child's ability to observe and differentiate things around them, the child's fine motor skills, familiarity with sizes, volumes, and numbers, memory, concentration, understanding and knowledge about objects, communication skill, and critical thinking. Despite the age of the instrument, NST is still widely used to measure school readiness in Indonesia. Another adopted Western instrument is Early Development Instrument

(EDI) which prioritizes five domains of development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, general knowledge, emotional maturity, and cognitive development, language and communication (Janus & Offord, 2007). In addition to adopted Western instruments, some local researchers also develop tools to measure a child's school readiness, such as SRI (School Readiness Instrument) developed by Fitri and Reza (2018). Fitri and Reza (2018) claimed that the SRI is a neuroscience-based instrument measuring five aspects of child development: physical and motor development, cognitive and language development, social development, emotional maturity, and learning engagement.

Adopted Western instruments and locally developed instruments both use child developmental psychology as the scientific foundation for instrument development. Burman (2008) argues that the scientific discourse of developmental psychology has created a universalism of child development which has a discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion effect. The universalism of child development has overlooked social injustice that may cause differences in child development (Burman, 2008). Mainstream and dominant child developmental theories from the West, such as Piaget's cognitive development and Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory may not be suitable for explaining child development elsewhere (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). Children across the globe live in a social, cultural, and political environment uniquely their own as sociologist Stephen Wagg (1992, p. 10) argues that,

> Childhood is socially constructed. It is in other words, what members of societies, at particular times and in particular places, say it is. There is no single universal childhood, experienced by all. So, childhood isn't "natural" and should be distinguished from mere biological immaturity.

In line with Wagg (1992), the interactionist and socio-constructivist perspectives argue that school readiness does not come only from the developmental maturity of the child but more of a result of interaction between the child and the whole system of the community. From the interactionist's eye, the natural factors of a child neurological development, maturity, and growth interact with cultural factors such as social interactions (Carlton & Winsler, 1999). Interactionist perspective adopts both Vygotsky's (1980) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of human development. Vygotsky's theory of learning opposed the maturationist theory (Vygotsky, 1980). According to Vygotsky (1980, p. 90),

> … developmental processes do not coincide with learning processes. Rather, the developmental process lags behind the learning process …

Instead of waiting for the child to reach a certain point of developmental maturity to learn, Vygotsky suggests schools provide rich social opportunities and do scaffolding by challenging children to learn new skills, supporting them to master the skill, withdrawing the support once the child already achieves the particular skill and challenge the child again with a new skill (Carlton & Winsler, 1999). From this perspective, it is relevant to say that school readiness should be defined as the readiness of the school to provide a school's social environment that helps the children develop, instead of focusing on the child being ready or developed enough for learning.

Social constructivists argue that school readiness is socially constructed; thus, readiness should be contextual and different across communities (Eisenhart & Graue, 1990). Social constructivists argue that social, cultural, and historical context should be taken into consideration in defining school readiness (Bloch & Kim, 2015). Social-constructivist approach criticizes the universalized concept of school readiness, arguing that the dominant discourse of school readiness is more relevant to the Global North context than to countries in the Global South (Shallwani, 2009). They propose more research that could conceptualize school readiness to be more culturally and contextually significant (Britto et al., 2006).

Social constructivists and interactionists shift the discussion about school readiness from the individual child to the social context of the child. Thus, the measurement of school readiness that relies so much on the individual child's developmental achievement may not be relevant. In this chapter, we see school readiness as a dominant discourse circulated in ECE in Indonesia. Hence, this chapter aims to problematize an apparent innocent practice of school readiness by adopting the socio-constructivist approach, while advocating that there is no singular meaning of school readiness. We see school readiness as a discourse in which other "discourses of truth" (Foucault in Gordon, 1980, p. 93) operate in it. Unpacking the underlying "discourses of truth" of school readiness is essential to understand the relation of power operating within the notion of school readiness and its practices in the Indonesian context. From Burman's perspective of post-developmentalism, we will analyze the implications of the dominant discourse of school readiness to social justice. Instead of trying to measure school readiness, this chapter focuses more on the problematic issues related to school readiness in the Indonesian context.

4.3 Method

This chapter is based on two different sets of research conducted by the three authors separately. The first research was conducted by Vina Adriany and Euis Kurniati in 2018, who interviewed three kindergarten teachers about the practices of school readiness measurements. The second research is done by Yulindrasari in 2019–2020 also in Bandung, focusing on the meaning of school readiness to teachers. Yulindrasari conducted three sessions of online focus group discussion with 30 kindergarten teachers (10 teachers in each session) from various cities in West Java. The research design also involved observation in three kindergartens in Bandung. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, we only conducted the observation in one kindergarten, which we completed before the pandemic started. In Bandung, Yulindrasari was assisted by a research assistant, Musfita, in interviewing two female teachers and a female school principal of a private kindergarten in the city.

We are aware of the risk of data sharing in qualitative research due to the contextuality and situatedness of the qualitative data (McCurdy & Ross, 2018). Thus, as suggested by Wutich and Bernard (2016), we only use well-documented textual data

that each of the authors involved directly in the initial research, whether as the principal investigator or the co-researcher. We pay attention to ethical concerns related to data sharing in qualitative data (McGrath & Nilsonne, 2018) by making sure of the anonymity of the data by accessing only the interview transcripts with pseudonyms. We share the data with permission from the informants.

4.4 Findings

We found two competing discourses of school readiness: the state promoted a discourse of developmental school readiness and the market-driven academic school readiness. The state discourse of school readiness is significantly driven by developmental psychology and neuroscience assumptions that have become the regime of truth in Indonesian early childhood education. However, the "truth" is unrealistic, considering the Indonesian social context, the competition, and inequality in education.

4.4.1 The State's Version of School Readiness

Ignoring reality and its social context, where academic discourse is dominant and widely practiced in the ECE community (Fridani, 2020; Fridani & Agbenyega, 2013), the government pathologizes the discourse by promoting the developmental discourse of school readiness. This discourse focuses on age-based developmental maturity as the only basis of children's enrollment in primary school (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). In this section, we will show how the state's implementation of developmental discourse could disrupt a child's school readiness, particularly when the social context was ignored.

The academic discourse of school readiness or also called as the pre-primary approach defines school readiness based on basic academic competence or what the children should know and be able to do to enroll in primary school (Evans, 2013). In Indonesia, the discourse assumes children must know how to read, write, and count to be in primary school (Fridani, 2020; Fridani & Agbenyega, 2013). The discourse is currently being marginalized. On many occasions, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), Didik Suhardi, discourages reading, writing, and counting in ECE like the quote below,

> Are there ECE teachers here? It is forbidden to teach reading, writing, and counting in early childhood education. The children are only allowed to play and socialize with their friends so they will be ready to learn in primary school. (Didik Suhardi, the Secretary-General of the MoEC as quoted in Tanjung, 2019; para. 8)

In another media, Didik Suhardi also pointed out that the restriction is based on the Government Regulation regarding the Administration of Education established

in 2010 (Bona, 2019). In 2016, the ministry also distributed an official circular to forbid reading, writing, and counting (*calistung*) in ECE (Rahmat, 2016). There is no substantial research-based evidence behind pathologizing the academic discourse of school readiness.

The most common reason used to marginalize academic discourse is that early learning of reading, writing, and counting potentially creates a mental hectic that will produce rebellious children with fatigue brains (Rahmat, 2016). Two teachers in our research demonstrated a similar pathologizing perception of early academic learning. She said,

> Now, many children suffer from brain injury because they are forced to read and write too early. (Fitri, a teacher who were also a psychologist, 15 August 2018)

> Some children experienced trauma because of writing drills. They were traumatized and refused to go to school. (Mina, a teacher, 10 August 2018)

The teachers, however, did not explain the bases of their assumption. The damaging effect of learning to read, write, and count too early seems to have become the "discourse of truth." Fitri's comment resembles the truth constructed by neuroscientists about the impact of child neglect on the brain (Allen, 2011). The "discourse of truth" is very difficult to be scientifically confirmed but yet rarely criticized or contested (Wastell & White, 2012) and has gained the power to globally govern and control early childhood education (Penn, 2014; Vandenbroeck, 2017).

In the case of school readiness, the "discourse of truth" has decided which activity, intervention, and treatment is good or bad for the children. It marginalizes parents or schools that decided to teach reading, writing, and counting to young children. The marginalization is shown in the guilt of teachers who still teach reading, writing, and counting despite government prohibition. In an apologetic way, one of the participants said,

> My apology, to be honest, Ma'am, we still teach reading, writing, and counting, but we make sure that the children have fun. We also do not force the children to do it. (Imas, online focus group discussion, 12 September 2020)

In our professional role as instructors in the teacher professional development program, we often receive a question from teachers about whether they have done anything wrong and put children in danger by teaching reading, writing, and counting to their students. "Do I put the children in danger?" This question implies the ideology of childhood innocence (Kitzinger, 1988). The doctrine of childhood innocence assumes children are passive, fragile, and need to be protected from potentially damaging situation (Malone, 2007). According to this ideology, consulting the children about what matters to them is unnecessary because children are incompetent in critical decision-making such as education (Garlen, 2019). Post-developmentalists criticize the ideology because it has denied children access to specific knowledge and power (Jackson & Scott, 1999; Robinson, 2013). Without consulting children, the top-down restriction may take away children's opportunity to learn and to explore their aspirations and interest in early academic learning.

Without considering the social context where the children live and grow, the developmental discourse of school readiness which restricts teaching basic academic skills like reading, writing, and counting also potentially disrupts the child's ability to adjust in primary schools. Assumptions of children's readiness as a state and non-contextual construct could potentially exclude the child from a society demanding the basic academic skills to be "ready" for school (Musfita, 2020).

Below is a quote from an interview with a principal of a middle-class kindergarten that adopted the state version developmental discourse of school readiness. The quote indicates that the developmental approach did not work in preparing the child to be ready to continue their next level of education in another school, especially in a school that adopted an academic discourse of school readiness. The principal said,

> We have experiences of our kindergarten alumni coming back to us and enrolled back to our primary school after enrolling and trying other schools' system either to a state or other private primary school. They could not cope with the system and many of them were bullied because our children have different values from the majority of students there. (Kiky, 28 July 2019)

Through her story, Kiky asserted that her kindergarten follows the developmental discourse of school readiness which the government, the majority of developmental psychologists, and early childhood education experts strongly promote. Her story, however, also shows that without taking into account the context of society, the developmental perspective is not helping the children to be ready to face whatever they have to face in other schools. Thus, Kiky's version of school readiness only applies in her school and does not necessarily cater to the meaning of school readiness in another school. Without considering the broader social context, therefore Kiky's kindergarten is like a bubble where the children are prepared to be ready only in the context of the bubble. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that school readiness should be achieved by taking into account the social context where the children live and will continue their education, because school readiness has multiple meanings and is socially constructed (Graue, 1993, 1999, 2006).

4.4.2 The Market-Driven Academic School Readiness and the Issue of Inequality

An understanding of the social context in constructing school readiness is crucial. We argue that the developmental discourse-based policy has decontextualized school readiness and is problematic. On the one hand, age-based admission to primary school ensures the right of the child to basic education regardless of their academic or developmental readiness. It also potentially increases children's access to school by eliminating academic competence tests for admission to primary school which is practiced in many districts in the country (see Asiah, 2018; Istiyani, 2014; Lestari, 2019).

On the other hand, the policy has ignored the reality of the unequal quality of primary schools that makes competition to enter favorite primary schools inevitable (see Fridani & Agbenyega, 2013). What we mean by the favorite school is a school that has a good reputation for its facilities and student's achievement. Indonesian parents are known to have a high expectancy of and anxiety about their children's academic achievement (Amigó, 2017; Wahyuni & Susanti, 2018). The concern derives from school favoritism and the competitive labor market (Wahyuni & Susanti, 2018). As Indonesian parents, we understand the anxiety and sometimes experience it. Competition to enroll to favorite schools starts as early as entering primary schools. The recent zoning policy of public-school enrollment has made the competition for admission to a favorite public school tighter for those who live outside the school's zone (see Khalika, 2018). The common assumption is that most academically ready children are the ones who will get spots in their favorite schools, which is associated with better quality education.

Previous research shows that most parents associate school readiness with academic abilities such as reading, writing, and counting, locally known as *calistung*. Based on interviews with 35 mothers, Fridani (2020) found that most mothers think that *calistung* is vital for the children's academic success in primary school and that it is the key to school readiness. Similar perception is also found in numerous research about reading, writing, and counting in ECE (see Farikhah & Ariestina, 2020; Marlisa, 2016; Rachman, 2019; Won, 2019). Most parents believe that early mastery of reading, writing, and counting skills will secure their children's place in a good quality primary school which will increase the child's probability to be accepted in a favorite school for their next level of education. It is reasonable since the Indonesian education system has relied on academic competence for school and university admissions. Student's grade and ranking determined their place in presumably high-quality schools and universities. These academic competence-based competitions lead to a dominant and common assumption that being ready for school means being able to read, write, and count to get good grades and top ten rankings in primary school.

The government, however, failed to understand that the academic demand in ECE is somehow related to academic demand at a higher level of schooling. Yet, the discrepancy of quality among schools is high. Although the government prohibits selection-based admission to primary school, competitive academic-based admission in primary school and secondary school continues to exist since the gap in quality among schools is not yet addressed. Thus, parents are still preparing their children to win the competition for good quality schools and the early childhood education market is still dominated by the demand for academic teaching in ECE. The competition between ECE centers also illuminates the influence of neoliberalism where education is seen as a form of business and parents/children are simply customers that select the services (López et al., 2012). The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are already existing inequalities between schools.

The policy also omits the fact that most ECE in Indonesia is privately owned and relies heavily on the number of students and the tuition fee to sustain. Privately funded ECE comprises 97.78% of all ECCE services in Indonesia (calculated from

the statistics of ECE, MoEC, 2020). During the focus group discussion with 30 ECE teachers, we found great concern among the teachers about the restriction. The concern is related to parents' perception and expectation of academic-based school readiness and also the school's ability to retain students if they do not comply with parents' demands. Eli, a teacher with 16 years of teaching experience, said,

> We understand that reading, writing, and counting is not allowed in ECE. But not many parents understand that we are only allowed to introduce letters and numbers. They decided to prefer sending their children to *calistung* courses to kindergartens because of this. It worries us if we do not have enough students, our kindergarten will be in trouble. (Eli, focus group discussion, 12 September 2020)

Our research confirms Fridani's (2020) findings on parent's perception of learning. Ratna, a teacher who participated in this research, also said that "for parents, playing is not learning, learning is learning to read, write, and count."

Considering the high demand for preparing children to be ready for favorite schools, teaching reading, writing, and counting (*calistung*) becomes a strategy to attract parents to enroll their children in the ECE. ECE centers are not only competing with each other; they have to also contend with *calistung* private tutoring centers. The advertisement for tutoring services commonly combines academic discourse and developmental discourse. Countering the pathologization of *calistung,* tutoring centers offer fun learning to make sure that the learning process will not have any detrimental effect on child development. A parenting website for mothers, www. mommiesdaily.com, listed seven learning centers specifically to teach reading and counting to children as young as three years old. The price varies from 150,000 rupiahs (USD 10) to 800,000 rupiahs (USD 60) a month. One of the centers is biMBA AIUEO, a famous franchised brand of reading tutoring center for young children, which has been operating since 1996 and now has more than 3,000 branches in 21 provinces. The success of learning centers like biMBA AIUEO confirms the market demand for teaching reading, writing, and counting to children as part of their preparation for future learning. The competition with a commercial private tutoring center, however, is unfair since private tutoring centers are not bound to government regulations about early childhood education. As a non-compulsory education, ECE center also does not have a legal assurance that the parents would prefer the ECE center to the private tutoring center.

To survive in the ECE market, many ECE centers use a similar strategy with private tutoring services using both academic and developmental discourses. Some ECE guarantee that at the end of the school year, the children enrolled in the ECE/kindergarten will be able to read, write, and count without losing their rights to developmentally appropriate learning. As our participant, Rini, explained,

> Our kindergarten offers a reading, writing, and counting program. Of course, we still use play-based learning in the program. We need to do it to survive. We understand that now the government has the policy not to test *calistung* for the student admission (to primary school). But parents still demand it. Favorite schools always do tests though, but it is not *calistung* test. (Rini, focus group discussion, 12 September 2020)

Rini's information shows that despite the government's attempt to stop academic competence-based admission tests to primary schools, favorite schools are still practicing selection tests due to high demand but minimal seats. The government policy of age-based admission to primary school will only be fair if school favoritism does not exist. And school favoritism could only be prevented if the government guaranteed equal quality of education in every school, not by pathologizing early academic learning.

4.5 Conclusion

School readiness is a complex concept. Without considering the socio-cultural context, the state, with its governing power, defines school readiness by the global discourse of developmentally appropriate practices. This chapter shows that school readiness is not a universal concept and the state-promoted school readiness faces resistance from the parents, which is also caused by the interconnectedness of the culture of academic competition and school favoritism derived from the unequal quality of schools. The state promotes developmental discourse and then competes with the driven market discourse of academic readiness. Negotiating both discourses, thus, become necessary for ECE centers to survive.

This chapter also shows that school readiness is contextual. In a school context where academic skills are prerequisite in primary school, a child without the skills will not be "ready" for school, but they may be "ready" in another school with no basic academic demand. Therefore, there is a need to redefine what we mean by school readiness. As argued before, school readiness should not merely rely on children's readiness, but rather it should also include society's readiness, including primary schools to accept children as they are, regardless of their capabilities. Hence, the notion of school readiness should provide a space for listening, dialogue, discussion, respect, and understanding to build a shared meaning of school readiness. This approach, therefore, takes social and cultural context into the meaning-making of school readiness. Understanding children's voice about school readiness is also worth researching to conceptualize school readiness.

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Part II
The Neoliberalization of Indonesian Education System

Chapter 5
Vocationalizing Education: The Dangers of Link-And-Match Paradigm for the Students' Future

Edi Subkhan

5.1 Introduction

Ideology and politics—including the notion of political economics—have important roles in directing the aims of the national education system all over the world (Apple, 2004). In the Indonesian context, the influence of such ideologies in education can clearly be seen in two different political regimes. First, Indonesia under Soekarno's presidency where nationalism and socialism have a considerable impact on all aspects of the nation, including the education sector. The euphoria after Indonesia's independence from Dutch colonialism and Japanese occupation, and the strong leadership of President Soekarno became the backdrop of the Indonesian national education system at that time which was characterized by the spirit of nationalism and socialism. For example, *Panca Wardhana* as one of the main education policies at that time aimed at developing students to become nationalist and socialist citizens (Subkhan, 2018). Second, after the fall of Soekarno's regime, Suharto dramatically changed the aim of Indonesia's national education system, namely, education as the engine to boost economic growth under developmentalism ideology (Suradi Hp. et al., 1986; Tilaar, 1995).

In this regard, developmentalism has been identified by scholars as one of Suharto's key political ideologies which resulted in the strong and massive development of Indonesia's economic sectors at that time. Instead of economic liberalism and the spirit of modernism, developmentalism in Indonesian contexts has unique characteristics influenced by the authoritarian politics of Suharto's regime for about 30 years. Suharto named his regime the New Order which sought political stability and economic growth (see Aspinall & Fealy, 2010; Kawamura, 2008; Rock, 2003).

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Consequently, the education sector was directed towards supporting these goals by re-arranging the national education system aims and practices. One of the key moments was when the Minister of Education and Culture, Wardiman Djojonegoro introduced the link-and-match paradigm as the basis for the national education system development and implementation. This paradigm encourages education sectors to serve the demand of the industrial world in addition to serving the national interest. Although this view was relatively new at that time, the government considered the link-and-match paradigm appropriate for the more general national development programs (Asnan, 2018; Khurniawan & Haryani, 2015).

This paradigm espoused an education that is "linked and matched" with the demand of the industrial world because it considers the main role of education is to produce skilled workers for the industrial world. Different from conventional views about the relationship between education and the economy where education is the supplier for the industrial world, link-and-match paradigm promotes an education that is demand-driven. The implementation of link-and-match paradigm during Suharto's era resulted in various reforms in educational policies. These policy reforms moved in the same direction, that is, attempting to close the gap between education and the industrial world (Soesilowati, 2009). Following the basic concepts of link-and-match, this paradigm was underpinned by the notion of market-driven education where the market drives the direction of education. Here, the link-and-match paradigm resulted in the decreasing autonomy of education and the increasing role of market interests in the education system. In this way, the implementation of link-and-match paradigm evidenced the initial neoliberalization of Indonesian education system, in which education was constructed as an apparatus to support free-market ideologies (see more discussion about neoliberalism and education in Hill & Kumar, 2009).

A more obvious form of market-driven educational reform in Indonesian contexts was the emergence of what is called the vocationalization of education. This reform promotes Indonesian educators to design curricula and learning experiences that focus on equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to be skilled workers. Further, such reform encouraged all types of Indonesian educational practices to be treated and managed like vocational schools (Lauglo, 2009; Lauglo & Lillis, 1988; Pring, n.d.). It is important to note here that vocationalization of education is different from vocational schools. The latter refers to schools that aim to produce skilled workers by teaching and training students in more practical lessons, for instance, to be a mechanic, clerk, waiter, chef, programmer, etc. The former refers to the intention that all types of education, including general education, should also teach and train students with the knowledge and skills needed to be employable after they graduated. This reform was in line with the notion of link-and-match because both have the same goal, that is, to close the gap between education and the economy by equipping students with knowledge and skills needed by the labor market (see also Gaus & Tang, this volume).

In academia, such market-driven education has drawn the attention of scholars, both of whom agree and disagree with this phenomenon. Some criticism arose, for

example in an edited book by Ross and Gibson (2006), that market-driven education reduces learning into bits of information and skills and decreases the support for public education in the USA. Previously, Kearney and Arnold (1994) argued that market-driven education has little definitive empirical evidence to substantiate that it has improved a school's program flexibility, innovation, and equality. Other scholars have also demonstrated that market-driven education precluded radical advocacy movements in the USA (Scott, 2011), disadvantaged students with disabilities (Dudley-Marling & Baker, 2012), commodified higher education, and changed student's perception as a consumer who should compete to get the best services (Tomlinson, 2015), eclipsed equity (Fallon & Poole, 2014), and could not deliver excellence and equity in schools (Savage, 2014). There were also some attempts to open up spaces within market-driven education to make it more socially just by promoting democracy, equity, and respect (Kerr & Ainscow, 2022; Larkin & Staton, 2001; Veldman, 2018).

In Indonesian contexts, studies on market-driven education have been conducted using different terminologies such as liberalism, neoliberalism, and link-and-match education in addition to market-driven education and vocationalization of education. In this regard, scholars who used the terms neoliberalism, neo-liberalization, and market-driven education are inclined to criticize it, on the other side scholars who used the term link-and-match education mostly tend to support it. For instance, Adriany and Saefullah (2015) focused on early childhood education, and other scholars who are concerned with general education and higher education such as Nugroho (2002), Darmaningtyas et al. (2014), Mulya (2016), Subkhan (2016, 2022), Rakhmani (2019), and Susilo (2018) criticized such market-driven education in Indonesia. On the other hand, there were also studies that support link-and-match education; they mainly focused on vocational education with little interest in analyzing general education, for instance, Disas (2018), Johan et al. (2019), Rahayu et al. (2020), Azman et al. (2020), Prabowo et al. (2021), Yoto et al. (2022), and Asrin et al. (2022). Only a few scholars criticized and gave more attention to the relationship between link-and-match education and liberalism or neo-liberalism, among others, Precalya (2022) and Precalya and Darwan (2021).

Moreover, only a limited number of previous studies used the term vocationalization of education or vocationalizing education in the Indonesian context, both in Indonesian language and English publications. In general, vocationalization of education in Indonesia manifested in two forms, (1) the revitalization of vocational school programs and (2) competency-based curriculum for all types of formal education. Despite the oft-stated benefits of linking education and the labor market, it appears that vocationalization of education remains unable to solve the problem of unemployment and the mismatch between education and market demand. In early 2019, for example, the national survey showed that the unemployed category consists of mainly vocational school graduates (*Februari, 2020: Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka*, 2020). While empirical evidence might not be available yet, there have been some considerations that low level of Indonesian student literacy and numeracy skills (*Literacy Emergency Among Indonesian Students*, 2019) was related to the vocationalization of education. These considerations emerged because since the early 2000s

Indonesia's education system implement competency-based curriculum which overly emphasized work-related skills in preference for conceptual engagement and critical thinking. Therefore, it is important to analyze critically the notion of link-and-match education in the form of vocationalization of education in the Indonesian context, mainly because it appears to perpetuate the existing problems, and even raise more problems.

This chapter aims to expand the discussion of vocationalization of education underpinned by the link-and-match paradigm, specifically its potential dangers for students' future. Two forms of vocationalization of education are analyzed in this chapter in order to reveal what the problems are, how such problems disadvantage students, and what possible alternatives to overcome the problems are. Critical analysis is employed, that is Critical Curriculum Studies analysis which considers curriculum as always related to power, politics, and human interests. In analyzing Indonesian educational policy documents as the object of analysis, the current chapter demonstrates how the curriculum has never been a neutral site; on the contrary, it is a battlefield of various interests and ideologies. Within this understanding, curriculum produces and reproduces knowledge that may maintain certain advantages or disadvantages for students. In other words, the curriculum could perpetuate inequity, oppression, discrimination, and injustice; but it could also empower the students and change society to be more democratic and socially just (for more discussion see Apple, 2004; Au, 2012).

5.2   Vocational School in Indonesia: Technicizing Education, Perpetuating Inequity

In the Indonesian national education system, vocational education has a different purpose compared to its general education counterparts. According to the Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, vocational education is defined as secondary school aimed at preparing students to work in a certain field, while general education is primary and secondary schools aimed at expanding students' knowledge necessary to enable them to continue to higher education level (explanation of article 15). There are two categories of vocational education purposes, namely personal purposes, and social purposes (Billet, 2011, p. 145). The former is associated with (1) understanding work life, (2) developing specific capacities to perform a particular occupational role, (3) developing the capacity to engage critically in the world of work, and (4) transforming the social practice comprising paid work or specific occupations, and maintaining a capacity for lifelong employment. The latter comprises (1) developing the kind of capacities required by employers, (2) developing the capacities needed to sustain and develop further in the industry sector, (3) practicing that occupation in ways that are mindful of environmental and community concerns, (4) developing the capacity to contribute towards national economic well-being, and (5) assisting workers to resist unemployment.

According to the purposes of vocational education above, it can be seen that the emphasis of its curriculum and learning practices are more technical than theoretical as a means to train the students to become skilled workers in the world of work. In the Indonesian context, vocational education takes several forms and levels, (1) vocational high school and Islamic vocational school (*Madrasah Aliyah Kejuruan;* see also Isbah & Sakhiyya, this volume) at the upper secondary level (3 years), (2) vocational higher education or polytechnic, community colleges, etc. (1–4 years to get Diploma certificate) at tertiary level, and (3) non-formal and informal education, specifically, Community Learning Centre (*Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat*) and Vocational Learning Centre (*Balai Latihan Kerja*) (*TVET Country Profile: Indonesia*, 2020). This chapter mainly focuses on vocational high schools, which were considered more problematic compared to other types of vocational education in Indonesia.

Vocational schools in Indonesia have a long history and have gotten significant attention from the New Order government (Suharto era). During this time, the education sector had been perceived as able to overcome problems of unemployment and poverty as well as the engine to boost economic growth (Ricklefs, 2005, pp. 593–605). One of the most important decisions was when the Minister of Education and Culture, Wardiman Djojonegoro introduced link-and-match as the main educational paradigm (Asnan, 2018; Khurniawan & Haryani, 2015). Various policies for vocational schools have been issued during the New Order era, specifically, the dual-system program that involved students in certain internship programs outside of the school. This program aimed to equip students with real work experience in the real work setting. This program showed the emphasis of vocational school on practical skills for occupational purposes, and it lasts until now with several minor modifications (Haryana, 1995).

In 2005, the Indonesian government issued a policy that shifted the proportion of the number of vocational schools and senior high schools from 30:70 to 70:30 to increase the number of ready-made workers for the labor market. In order to boost local economic growth, the government also developed local-based excellence vocational schools. Some examples include the wood carving vocational school in Jepara, a town best known for its wood carving, fishing vocational school in Semarang, the maritime vocational school in Tarakan, and the farming vocational school in Magelang (*Mengangkat Potensi Lokal*, 2017; Nurtanto & Ramdani, 2016).

Moreover, within the spirit of meeting the twenty-first-century challenges and the international labor market, the government strengthened vocational schools through the revitalization of vocational school programs. "Teaching factory," a program providing hands-on manufacturing experience at schools, has become the main strategy to revitalize vocational school programs to make the students more involved in a job-setting learning experience. Through the "teaching factory" program, vocational schools establish manufacturing units within the school's learning environment like a real factory or company that produces and sells products. Through this program, students experience real tasks and situations that improve their competencies to be skilled workers in the industrial world. Unlike the dual-system program where the

learning practices are carried out in real companies outside the school environment, the teaching factory is a school-based program (Kamdi, 2017; Khurniawan et al., 2016; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2016).

After explaining key policy changes in Indonesian vocational schools above, this chapter now moves to an analysis of two main problems in this vocational curriculum and policies as follows.

5.2.1   Problem 1: Vocational School Curriculum

The structure of the vocational school curriculum heavily emphasized technical skills because the government treated vocational schools as suppliers for the job market, especially in the industrial world. These market-driven and link-and-match notions of the vocational school curriculum can be seen in the existing curriculum policy. For example, the new standards of the national school curriculum were issued by the government in 2018 as the revised version of the previous standards on the national curriculum of 2013. These new standards contain three main points, namely (1) the national standards for vocational schools and Islamic vocational schools, (2) its core and basic competencies, and (3) its curriculum structure. These policies sought to meet market demands on the aforementioned personal and social competencies as parts of the graduates' standard competencies. It is clearly stated that (1) students should have abilities to work in groups effectively, politely, and productively in carrying out their job and (2) have a good work ethic according to their profession (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2018a, 2018b; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018).

Another important point is that several international discourses on education have also influenced such direction and emphasis of vocational school policies in Indonesia. In this case, the revitalization of vocational school programs initiated in 2016 confirmed the importance of the so-called twenty-first century skills for vocational school students (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2018a, 2018b). The dominant discourse of these twenty-first-century skills came from the collaborative work of the Partnership for twenty-first-Century Skills, an organization founded in 2002 in the USA with the main mission to prepare young people to succeed as individuals, citizens, and workers in the twenty-first-century. More specifically, these twenty-first-century skills are learning and innovation skills, life and career skills, information, media, and technology skills, accompanied by key subjects and twenty-first-century themes (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In the same vein, world organizations such as the World Bank and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) encouraged a discourse of 'productivity' in the vocational school's policy direction in Indonesia. For example, at vocational schools in Indonesia, there are courses/subjects that were appeared to be designed following World Bank's "skill for productivity" discourse (Middleton et al., 2003) and from OECD's "work-based learning productivity" discourse (Kis, 2016; Sujadi et al., 2017).

As a result of the revitalization of vocational school programs that attempted to accommodate this spirit of the twenty-first century and the need of the labor market, Indonesian vocational school curriculum emphasizes narrow or limited knowledge and technical skills more than complex and abstract thinking. It can be seen from the grand design of the vocational school curriculum in which the proportion of practical learning is more than its theoretical counterparts at around 60–70% (Arianty & Purwanto, 2018; Pendidikan Vokasi, 2019). There are several reasons for this orientation. *First*, the majority of the vocational school students in Indonesia come from lower-income families (Asian Development Bank, 2008, 2013; *Vocational and Technical Education in Indonesia*, 2012). In order to overcome their economic problems as well as decrease the number of poverties, it is important to equip them with such skills and knowledge needed by the labor market. In this case, technical skills and narrow knowledge offered by the vocational schools are appropriate to meet their needs. *Second*, vocational students also have negative stigmas that lead the government to only give such technical skills and narrow knowledge. For instance, mischievous, having bad manners, undisciplined, having low social awareness, are slow learners, and having a lack of responsibility and motivation to learn (Dardiri, 2012; *Persoalan SMK*, 2018). Consequently, they are perceived as having only low levels of ability to learn complex and abstract thinking, hence technical skills and narrow knowledge are perceived as more appropriate for them.

Unfortunately, in practice, vocational school students also face limited opportunities to learn complex and abstract thinking, including twenty-first-century skills, particularly higher order thinking skills. This happens not only because the official vocational school curriculum emphasized more on technical skills and narrow knowledge, but also the learning climate, student academic achievement, and teacher competency. In this case, one of the vocational schoolteachers that I interviewed supports the argument of this chapter stating that teachers in his school tend to teach technical skills because they are required to follow the syllabus derived from the official vocational school curriculum that emphasizes more on technical skills. Moreover, he added that teaching higher order thinking skills is more difficult because students have only a low level of literacy skills and not all teachers have a good understanding of twenty-first-century skills and other approaches introduced by the government through the revitalization of vocational school programs. They need more time to read and understand the policies before trying to translate them into their learning practices in the classrooms. His confession supports similar information from the news media related to the vocational schoolteachers' low competencies (see for example *Kualitas Guru Rendah*, 2017; *Kualitas Guru SMA dan SMK*, 2016).

Theoretically speaking, the grand design of the vocational school curriculum in Indonesia does not contain what is called by social realists "powerful knowledge." In this regard, powerful knowledge contains essential knowledge that equips the students with complex and abstract thinking ability to think beyond their daily experiences. Powerful knowledge can be found in any subjects taught at school as the result of the scientific process within epistemic communities, and it is claimed that it will empower the students to make better decisions and become action-competent in

a way that will positively influence their lives (Barret & Rata, 2014; Gericke et al., 2018). Despite the debate among scholars who agree and disagree with the idea and term of powerful knowledge (see for example White, 2018, 2019), it is important to note that students should have access to knowledge and skills through which they can empower themselves. Unfortunately, the grand design of the current vocational school curriculum in Indonesia is still far from this ideal form. Consequently, it will lead the curriculum to perpetuate inequity and reproduce social inequalities, because they have less access to powerful knowledge than their senior high school students' counterparts. Furthermore, they will have a low ability to succeed at higher levels of education, they will only get technical job positions with low salaries, and they will also be more likely to have a low ability and chance to empower themselves.

5.2.2   Problem 2: Vocational School Policies

The Indonesian government proposed a shift in the proportion between vocational schools and senior high schools to 70:30 as a strategy to produce more skilled workers and overcomes the problem of poverty among low-income families in Indonesia. This strategic plan has been released by the Department of National Education stating that this shift was planned to be achieved between 2020 and 2025 (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005). However, until the 2020–2021 academic year the government cannot meet this goal. According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it is considered that the number of vocational schools was not considerably different compared to the number of senior high school. In detail, the number of vocational schools is 14,078 consisting of 3,629 public schools and 10,449 private schools, while the number of senior high schools is 13,865 consisting of 6,899 public schools and 6,966 private schools. Thus, according to this data, the number of vocational schools is only slightly over the number of senior high schools. In other words, it is still far from the 70:30 proportion goal. In general, such a comparison also shows that the quality of vocational schools is also lower than the quality of senior high schools. For example, the number of repeaters in vocational schools is 16,431 students compared to the repeaters in senior high school students at 10,455 students (Pusat Data dan Teknologi Informasi, 2021a, 2021b).

Despite the poverty-eliminating reasons behind the plan to increase the number of vocational schools over the number of senior high schools at 70:30 and its low academic achievements toward the higher ones, the plan for the increasing number of vocational schools could be risky; especially when the curriculum and learning practices that happen in the vocational schools cannot equip the students with appropriate knowledge and skills for their further economic survival. In this case, when we look at the high amount of unemployment among vocational school graduates (*Februari, 2020: Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka*, 2020) and the low quality of vocational schools in general (see for example *Kualitas Guru Rendah*, 2017; *Kualitas Guru SMA Dan SMK*, 2016; *Kurikulum SMK Belum Sesuai*, 2017; Mukhlason et al., 2020), this shift in proportion in such a short time might bring more risks than

advantages. The more vocational schools being built without improvement in quality, the more vocational school graduates with low competencies will be produced. In other words, this policy could be dangerous because it will lead vocational schools to produce more employees that are not needed by or irrelevant to the industrial world and cannot cope with the fast-changing of twenty-first century challenges and opportunities.

Moreover, many Indonesian vocational schools still have traditional programs that do not match the current trend of skills needed by the industrial world and new learning approaches influenced by the fast-changing of the industrial revolution 4.0. For example, the Head of the West Java Provincial Education Office stated that there are 12 study programs at vocational schools considered saturated or no longer needed by the world of work, including office administration, motorcycle engineering, mechanical engineering, software engineering, nursing, pharmacy, hotel accommodation, etc. One of the causes of the saturation of these study programs is the increasing number of higher education graduates who are willing to work in these positions (*Jurusan SMK Mulai Jenuh*, 2018; *Moratorium SMK Untuk Jurusan Sudah Jenuh*, 2017). One of the possible explanations why such traditional study programs still exist at vocational schools might be related to the existing programs at higher education counterparts that produce vocational teachers and the existing teachers that teach at those study programs. In other words, closing such study programs at vocational schools will also close the same study program at higher education, and the ramifications are complex as they related to the bureaucratic management of higher education and the Ministry of Education as well as the teacher's livelihood and career path. Additionally, new ways of learning through the Internet also possibly cause the saturation of labors in jobs related to such study programs at the vocational schools. It is because many people could access educational and training services in these areas easily through the Internet.

In this section I have discussed how vocational school curriculum as well as its policies might disadvantage students, trapping them in an educational service that provides them with knowledge and skills that do not meet job market demands and cannot be used to economically empower themselves in the fast-changing twenty-first century.

5.3 Competency-Based Curriculum: Reducing the Purpose of Education

Vocationalization of education in Indonesia does not only happen in vocational education but also in general education, from elementary school to higher education (Murnomo, 2010). The curriculum plays an important role to ensure that all students at all levels of formal education meet the standard of competency derived from market demands and national interests. In order to support this goal, in the early 2000s the

government initiated a pilot project to formulate a curriculum design that could "guarantee" the students meet the standard of competency (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2003). Afterward, in 2004 the government officially released the new national curriculum called Competency-based Curriculum (CBC) and its framework became the basis of the curriculum development for the next curriculum in 2006 and 2013. In 2022 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology released a new curriculum called Freedom Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) as a response to the learning loss caused by Covid-19 outbreaks (Irhamni & Sahadewo, this volume) and the evaluation of the previous national curriculum of 2013 (*Explainer: Learning Loss*, 2022). While this new curriculum seemingly offers new ideas about how to design the appropriate curriculum (i.e., teaching at the right level, essential materials, teachers' autonomy, project-based learning, an annual target of curriculum completion, Pancasila student profile, etc.), the underlying curriculum development approach still follows a competency-based curriculum approach (see Anggraena et al., 2022).

Theoretically, a competency-based curriculum (CBC) has a different emphasis compared to a subject matter curriculum design. As the term explains itself, CBC heavily emphasizes the importance of student acquisition of competencies or skills, in contrast with subject matter curriculum that emphasizes the content knowledge derived from various disciplines. The shift from knowledge-based acquisition toward competency-based has been considered the answer to the existing problems of unskilled workers. At this point, competency has been positioned as different compared to knowledge. In general, "competency" has a synonymous meaning with "skills" that are observable, demonstrable, measurable, more technical, and evidence-based. In other words, the term competency refers to students' technical or soft skills that could be measured empirically such as in vocational school and the job market. This idea is in line with the demands of the industrial world for observable, demonstrable, and measurable competencies possessed by the workers (compared to Behar-Horenstein, 2010; see also Boahin, 2018). Central to a competency-based curriculum is the idea that competency should be derived from the market demand and the importance of assessment to substantiate the skills acquired by the students (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2003; Mulyasa, 2002, 2006).

At the higher education level, the government proposed an Outcome-based Education (OBE) approach to strengthen and extend the implementation of competency-based curriculum approach. Outcome-based Education resembles competency-based curriculum, in the ways both aim to improve students' competency based on measurable performance (Direktorat Jenderal Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan, 2018; Spady, 1994). Both are based on the link-and-match paradigm because the main purpose is to meet job market demands. Additionally, the government also requires universities to follow the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) as the national standard of competency derived from the labor market demand. Either in higher education or in primary and secondary education, education must follow the national qualification framework (Direktorat Jenderal Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan, 2018; Khurniawan et al., 2016; Manalu et al., 2017). In so doing,

both CBC and OBE imply market-driven ideologies and a link-and-match paradigm that connect market demands and students' learning at schools and higher education.

There are several problems with the concept of competency-based curriculum and its implementation in the Indonesian context, which will be explained as follows.

5.3.1 Problem 1: The Orientation of the Curriculum

As the term implies, a competency-based curriculum emphasizes the importance of skills acquisition by students at all levels of education (primary, secondary, and tertiary levels) and all types of education (general education and vocational education). The problem appears when the aims of the national education system contradict the dominant market-driven interests in the national curriculum. As mandated by the constitution, Indonesia's national education system aims to prepare students to become human beings who believe in God, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, independent, and ready to be democratic and responsible citizens (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2003). The national curriculum should be directed at this aim in more balanced ways. Currently, the directions of Indonesian curriculum structure and policies demonstrated a strong tendency toward market-driven ideologies. It can be overtly seen from the obligation of the curriculum-making process at all levels and types of education to refer to KKNI, which was basically derived from job market demands. At this point, whatever the students need at schools, and whatever the constitutionally mandated national education aims, all education policies and praxis are directed towards producing skillful workers for the industrial world.

This orientation might have neglected other aims of the national education system, especially the social, cultural, and political purposes of education. If the national curriculum is an apparatus to reach national education aims, the curriculum should also accommodate other aims besides the economic/market-driven aim. For example, the purpose of the national curriculum of 2013 is to prepare Indonesian citizens who are faithful, productive, creative, innovative, and affective so that they can contribute to the life of the nation and the world (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013). However, the existing curriculum and educational policies reduced the national education purposes to producing skillful workers. In this regard, other knowledge acquisitions are only seen as supporting competencies to pursue the main purpose to become skillful workers.

5.3.2 Problem 2: The Content of the Curriculum

Instead of refocusing the curriculum structure to equip the students to be competent to meet specific market demands, the structure of the national curriculum is still overloaded. It seems that the government still believes that more subjects will

make students smarter and more competent. Therefore, in line with the notion of a competency-based curriculum to equip the students with certain skills needed to meet market demands, in 2004 the government added at least three more subjects into the national curriculum structure, namely Information and Communication Technology (ICT), crafting, and entrepreneurship for secondary education as the response to face the growing number of ICT use at the workplace and the need for new job openings. In the 2013 national curriculum structure, there are seven subjects in elementary school, ten subjects in junior high school, and nine subjects plus four specialization subjects in senior high school level (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016a, 2016b).

Furthermore, the government often adds new content to the official curriculum depending on the socio-political agenda they considered important, whether as curricular or co-curricular activities in the schooling setting. For instance, green school programs (known as Adiwiyata), anti-corruption programs, child-friendly school programs, and healthy school programs (Zamjani et al., 2020). At least, in the last ten years, the government has also emphasized certain competencies as have been endorsed by international organizations and the government itself. For example, one of the main emphases of the national curriculum of 2013 is the importance of character building, twenty-first-century skills, specifically higher order thinking skills (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016b).

This condition shows the mismatch between the concept of competency-based curriculum and its existing curriculum structure. Competency-based curriculum aims to develop students' measurable competencies, consequently, it needs a more concise and focused curriculum structure. On the contrary, when the curriculum structure is still full of subjects and has broad contents, the learning practice becomes more focused on the acquisition of the content rather than demonstrating the acquired competencies as competency-based curriculum wanted. In this case, focusing on the content resulted in the overload of the structure of the curriculum, this condition is no longer different from the previous curriculum of 1984 and 1994 (Unesco, 2011). In order to overcome this content overload, the government proposed *Kurikulum Merdeka* (literally translates as Independent/Free Curriculum) in 2022 as an improvement from the previous national curriculum of 2013. The government claimed that this new curriculum is simpler, deeper, relevant, and interactive (*Kurikulum Merdeka*, 2022). However, this claim needs further analysis, because there is no clear explanation of which part of the curriculum is simplified.

5.3.3   Problem 3: The Implementation of the Curriculum

In order to ensure the implementation of competency-based curriculum at schools by teachers, the government establishes a control system/audit regime that emphasizes administrative documents. It is problematic and disadvantages the teachers as well as the students because when the government treats administrative documents as if it is the real evidence of the implementation of the curriculum; schools and teachers

focus their attention to produce the documents. Therefore, instead of focusing on meaningful learning processes to enhance students' competency, teachers try their best to produce administrative requirements of the curriculum, such as syllabi, lesson plans, assessment instruments, academic achievement reports, and academic schedules (*Pakar: Beban Administrasi Guru*, 2019). Consequently, teachers lose substantial amount of their time with students and have less headspace to check on students' learning progress. Since ensuring student competencies require time and attention, the focus of a competency-based curriculum should be on the learning process, not on administrative documents. Much information indicated that this administrative document-based evidence policy forced the teachers to lie for the sake of the school's reputation and survival in the market by compiling fake documents (Amin, 2013; Hamriah, 2013; Ruja & Sukamto, 2015). Similar patterns can be found in the implementation of several other education policies imposed using audit regimes or standardization of education, such as national examination (*Ujian Nasional*) and the minimum criteria of mastery learning (*kriteria ketuntasan minimal*, KKM).

Long before the government abolished the national exam in 2020 when Nadiem Makarim became the Minister of Education and Culture, Indonesia's national education system established the national exam as the only entry-exit for students, especially for senior high school students (*Nadiem's First Big Surprise: Abolish National Exam*, 2019). Since the disadvantages of the national exam were more than its potential benefits, many scholars criticized this one-size-fits-all exam. For example, the national exam turned learning practice into a daunting and frightening moment for final-year students, and therefore refracted the aims of education. The national exam also hindered meaningful learning processes, especially during the third year of senior high school when all students joined exam preparation programs. Besides, the national exam was also political since it was often considered a pseudo measurement to assess the governors, regents, mayors, and heads of education offices success in doing their job (Arifin, 2012; Darmaningtyas & Subkhan, 2012; Hardono, 2020; LaForge, 2013; Panjaitan, 2017; Subkhan, 2016). When the government replaces the national exam with the National Assessment that focuses on literacy, numeracy, student character, and school learning environment in 2020, such political tones of education assessment could decrease if schools and local governments change their mindset about the politics of educational achievement (see *Nadiem Makarim Announces*, 2019).

Similarly, KKM also resulted in other problems for both students and teachers because this policy encouraged teachers to push students to pass the minimum standard of academic achievement for each subject. The minimum standards are established by the school, and it often refers to the school's accreditation status. The higher the accreditation status of the school, the higher the minimum standard they must set. Ideally, when students cannot meet the minimum standard, they should join remedial programs. In reality, instead of giving remedial learning to those who need more guidance, most teachers simply give students another chance to retake the test to get higher scores. Teachers also tend to manipulate students' scores as if they meet the minimum standard (Albertus, 2017; Zamjani et al., 2020, pp. 9–12), which is understandable considering their heavy workload. This top-down pressure

on student academic performance put teachers in a difficult position because meeting the KKM related to school accreditation, and in so doing teachers are forced to do their best to raise their students' academic achievement according to the KKM they set. Therefore, it seems that the results of KKM are not necessarily representative of the actual competencies of students.

5.4   Conclusion and Further Discussions

This chapter has argued that vocationalization of education in the form of the revitalization of vocational schools and competency-based curriculum following a link-and-match paradigm showed several disadvantages for students and teachers as well. I have demonstrated how the grand design of and policies around vocational schools in Indonesia tend to perpetuate inequity because they only give students narrow knowledge and technical skills resulting in limited opportunities to improve student's quality of life and empower themselves economically. Moreover, a competency-based curriculum reduces Indonesian national education purposes into competency and/or skill acquisition. Overloaded curriculum content coupled with school accreditation systems and minimum standard of achievement (KKM) also worsen the implementation of the curriculum because teachers were burdened with too many administrative tasks. These advantages overtly show the dangers of link-and-match paradigm for students' future. Therefore, several important issues need to be addressed in order to overcome the problems of vocationalization of education as follows.

First, it is important to begin closing the gap between vocational schools and general schools, both need to meet market demands and the raising awareness of the importance of complex thinking acquisition. The revitalization of vocational schools should consider the importance of what is so-called Powerful Knowledge, that is, the knowledge that enables and empower students beyond their day-to-day lives. A balanced curriculum design is likely to be the best preference, equipping students with both work-related skills and complex conceptual thinking (see Bignall, 2018; Oates, 2018). Despite the fact that the new Kurikulum Merdeka is still underpinned by a competency-based framework, it is more promising than the curriculum of 2013 and previous curricula, especially if the government's claims that it is more simple, deep, flexible, contextual, and adaptable are true. Another point that needs further discussion related to the curriculum is that not everything can be labeled as competency or skills, for example, values, religious belief, character, and identity. Competency is something measurable and demonstrable, but these things might not be easily and straightforwardly measured. When the official curriculum still uses the term competency to mention these things, it causes "contradictio in terminis."

Second, the government needs to evaluate the aim and the direction of the current revitalization of vocational school programs that are strongly rooted in the idea of link-and-match paradigm, for example, the plan to shift the proportion of vocational schools and general schools to 70:30. Several new trends in the workplaces need to be considered, for instance, the possibility that more higher education graduates are

needed than vocational school graduates because they have more competencies and ability in complex thinking. On the other side, there are an increasing number of companies that only need competent workers regardless of their degree or diploma. In this regard, vocational school students get more benefits if they can take advantage of this situation. Moreover, closing the irrelevant study program at vocational schools due to its saturation is necessary as well as improving the teachers' capacities and renewing the curriculum and its implementation to equip the students with higher order thinking skills.

Third, while vocationalization of education underpinned by the link-and-match paradigm disadvantages students' future in general, it is worthwhile to note that market demands should not be the only imperative factor that directs the national education system, because the economic sector is not the only purpose of education. As has been critiqued by many Indonesian education thinkers, for example Soedijarto (2009), one of the most important purposes of Indonesia's national education system is to build Indonesia into a modern, democratic, prosperous, and socially just nation based on Pancasila. In my view, putting the market as the basis of education or sending education to the free-market mechanism are risky, because the market is unstable and always changing. Consequently, the education system that is laid on link-and-match paradigm will also be unstable, under the mechanisms of the market, and cannot be the center of excellence beyond capitalist endeavors. On the other side, while the Partnership for twenty-first Century Skills proposed several important skills needed by students to survive and thrive in the twenty-first century, we need to address this issue further because there is a rising "bringing knowledge back" movement in education that revitalize the position of knowledge in education (see for example Barret & Rata, 2014; Deng, 2017; Rata, 2019; Young, 2013).

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Chapter 6
Changing Knowledge Production in Indonesian Higher Education: Is It a Bare Pedagogy?

Nurdiana Gaus and Mahmud Tang

6.1 Introduction

As a society in which higher education resides in a dynamic sphere, the thesis of higher education and its relationship with society has always become a center of critical and endless debate. The issue of modernity prevailing in this knowledge economy or society, coupled with globalization and neoliberalism, has polarized scholars in terms of how higher education, particularly universities, conceives of its *raison d'etre.* The contestation pertinent to this has primarily been on the issues of relevance, positions, responses, and engagement of universities with modernity (Barnett, 2000; Gibbons, 2008; Giroux, 1999; Kezar, 2004). In this contestation, there is legitimacy, identity, and status of universities in terms of knowledge production and knowledge claims that are confronted with an array of perspectives from which universities and knowledge are seen. In this context of debate lies the contradiction between *power and culture,* and *capitalism and democracy* (Giroux, 2003), all of which have a disanalogous relationship with the traditional nature of universities. Therefore, indeed, examining the roles of universities, specifically in the changing knowledge production, may become a complex and multifaceted issue to discuss.

There is a significant body of literature representing divergent views on the legitimacy, identity, and status of universities as the prime producers of knowledge, and of the legitimacy of knowledge itself. Basing his argument on the *Enlightenment neo-humanist* approach, initially brought forward by Immanuel Kant (1979) [1798] in which cultural aspects are important ingredients in defining knowledge and the function of universities, Delanty (1998a) argued that there has been *the end of knowledge.* This means that there has been "the end of the concept of knowledge associated

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with the Enlightenment" (p. 5) in universities. Consequently, universities may have lost their legitimacy, identity, and status as the prime site for knowledge production, and as the protectors of "the cognitive structure of society" (Delanty, 1998a, p. 4). The contested perspectives on the roles of universities and what knowledge is, like the one argued by (Delanty, 1998a, 1998b), have upsurged in the debate regarding this issue. Representing a reflexive perspective on this issue, Barnett (2000; in Delanty, 1998a) argues for the importance of considering the dynamic contexts in which universities reside and operate. Barnett called this context a supercomplex environment, characterized by the advance of technology and information technology. Given this, universities need to be adaptive and relevant to them by changing their ways of looking at knowledge and their *raison d'etre* (Barnett, 2000; Gibbons, 2008). This environment, to some extent, has changed the way knowledge is produced and claimed, and the way universities position themselves and engage themselves with society. With this, knowledge has transformed into a corporate form in which knowledge claim is based on its performative capacity rather than on its capacity or power to enlighten (Lyotard, 1984). With this, according to Barnett, universities and the knowledge they produce remain to possess legitimacy, status, and identity.

Other critics (Giroux, 2006; Kezar, 2004), from a *liberal democratic* perspective, argue that knowledge production in higher education is historically rooted in civic and democratic values in which its social contribution to the public good is embodied. However, in this neoliberal or capitalist political and social system, those values have now been challenged. Corporate languages have now gained ascendancy in defining higher education's engagement with society. These corporate cultures, the main basis of which is serving the private good via the production and claim of knowledge that is usable for companies or enterprises, are promoted (Giroux, 2010). Giroux (2010) associated this situation with "bare pedagogy". Bare pedagogy is a neoliberal practice in the spheres of politics and society that emphasizes market or economic values as its guiding principles. Its emphasis is articulated in the lexicon of the corporate world that favors value for money, competition, hedonism, and individualism (Giroux, 2010). It is with this issue that this paper is concerned, taking Indonesian higher education as an object of analysis. In our endeavor to demonstrate this, the issues related to the legitimacy, identities, and status of universities as the prime sites of knowledge production and the legitimacy of knowledge per se, become the basis of discussion. This is in tune with what Delanty (1998a) contested that there has been little attention paid to such an issue in university settings.

Following this, in our attempt to come to understand the current condition of Indonesian higher education in relation to knowledge production and knowledge claim, we have come to overarching questions related to the roles and functions of Indonesian higher education, and how knowledge production and claim have been practiced. With these, we particularly ask to what extent the engagement of Indonesian higher education with society shapes its public good and private good mission? How does it interpret and determine its public and private mission? And what is the basic underlying principle that guides higher education in producing and claiming knowledge? Is it a bare pedagogy? With such general and specific questions, we expect to contribute to the debate over the legitimacy, identities, and

status of higher education, particularly universities, and the claim of knowledge in this global neoliberal economy. In this paper, we use higher education and universities interchangeably.

Our motivation to put forward these issues is due to our concerns with the current condition of higher education in Indonesia. Indonesia is a developing country implementing a utilitarian perspective model of higher education. While such a perspective espouses neoliberal principles underscoring the *rational-self-interest* economics assumption, it may contribute to the attrition of moral and ethical values from the roles and functions of higher education. Under these circumstances, the public good mission of higher education is being compromised by the country's economic advancement agenda. As the practice is growing intensively and rapidly, we are concerned that such an agenda would go wild and unbridled, resulting in the foregoing and impoverishment of the traditional functions and roles of higher education as a social institution. Also, the examination of these issues may serve as a reminder of academics' moral functions as engaged public intellectuals (Giroux, 2010) or as *academic-philosophers* (Gaus, 2019a).

To help our readers understand our argument in this paper, we felt it was important to explain the roles and functions of higher education, particularly those related to its relationship or engagement with society. This relationship is seen from its previous historical basis of serving the public good, and its contemporary basis of serving private good. To understand these, we used the ideas of the public good from three perspectives: (1) communitarianism; (2) neoliberalism; and (3) utilitarianism (Kezar, 2004). We also presented the concept of knowledge and its expanding concept (Barnett, 2000; Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002). These, together, are linked to the context of Indonesian higher education to see how its public good mission has been interpreted and put into practice in the process of knowledge production and knowledge claim.

6.2 Higher Education and the Public Good

Traditionally and historically speaking, the inception of higher education in universities dates back to the medieval times of Western Europe (Delanty, 1998b; Williams, 2016). In these times, universities were attached to monasteries before they broke free and became allies of secular rulers as nation-states emerged (Delanty, 1998b; Williams, 2016). These secular universities were strongly inspired by the idea of the Enlightenment, triggered by the scientific revolution and reformation in Western Europe. From here, the idea of universities continued to form the debates of scholars who were inspired by the work of Immanuel Kant, Max Weber, Wilhelm Von Humboldt, and Thorstern Veblen, to name a few. Although there had been various ideas about universities, the Enlightenment's core idea about universities viewed universities as a site of knowledge production, and the pursuit of knowledge as an end. Knowledge is defined by truth, morality, humanity, and reason (Delanty, 1998b). Therefore, knowledge has an emancipatory role that forms the public good mission

of universities. Such an idea has formed the basis for the roles, identities, and functions of universities with a democratic discourse as their underlying philosophy. The charter of higher education in terms of its relationship with society, embodied in its public good mission, is conceptualized in this philosophy (Giroux, 2010, 2006; Kezar, 2004). In this philosophy as well, higher education poses its status as a social institution, serving society through education that fosters the advancement and development of moral, ethical, and religious values. With these goals, higher education takes up the responsibility of producing graduates who have political and social awareness and the capacity to discern issues in their environment. This premise posits that higher education cannot be separated from morals and politics (Giroux, 2010; Kezar, 2004). Therefore, framed within this moral and political relationship, the academic function of higher education is constructed. Giroux (2010) asserted that in a democratic public sphere, like higher education, academics function as engaged public intellectuals, while students function as critical citizens.

These functions are imbued with the higher education public good charter, as Kezar (2004) called it. Public good is the heart of higher education symbolizes its social and political mission and poses as the core element in understanding higher education. Kezar (2004) provided a clear explanation regarding the philosophy of understanding the public good as embedded in the traditional roles and functions of higher education. She brought in three major philosophies: *communitarianism, neoliberalism, and the utilitarian approach.* These are underlying assumptions that are necessary for understanding the embedded public good roles and functions of higher education as a social institution. Below is the basic understanding of those philosophies in relation to the public good:

1. Communitarianism considers public good holding social and public charters in the traditional model of higher education.
2. The Neoliberal philosophy of public good views of an individual and economic charter, resulting in the industrial model of higher education.
3. The utilitarian model embraces the contested meaning or dichotomy of public good held by higher education by blending both traditional and industrial models of higher education (Kezar, 2004, p. 433).

These different philosophies help explain why social critics have polarized on the issues of the nature and changing nature of higher education. According to Kezar (2004), this would completely depend on the stance or the choice of which philosophy is used to make sense of the roles and functions of higher education, particularly its relationship with society.

In parallel with this, the communitarian perspective, imbued with the Enlightenment neo-humanist premises, sees and interprets the meaning of public good or collective good within the realm of society and community on which the traditional model of higher education is based. In this perspective, knowledge is defined as the public good of higher education where knowledge itself has emancipatory roles and functions. The manifestation of such roles and functions is conceptualized in the relationship between the state and the community, and society as a whole. Here, the emphasis is given to the right of the community over the individual, where the role of

the state is required to protect and support the community to meet the needs of individuals (Apple, 2006; Jessop, 1999; Kezar, 2004). From this caveat, higher education is interpreted in relation to its democratic values and norms as a social institution. As a social institution, higher education is expected to promote and foster the development of knowledge through research, which has the function of improving the lives of society by educating and inculcating democratic values and morals in younger generations. In so doing, younger generations may develop the capacity to become social agents and guardians of knowledge over the abuse of power (Giroux, 2010). This can be achieved if younger generations or students are encouraged to be aware of their own power and potential to be future leaders and to be in the front line of preserving, advancing, and disseminating knowledge for the good of society. It is, therefore, that freedom is one of the prerequisites to allowing the implementation of these goals. In doing so, it is expected that students and academic communities will become the guardians of knowledge production and dissemination to contribute to the benefit of society or the public good.

More specifically, knowledge production in higher education in this perspective is construed as the search for a scholarship as an end. Knowledge production is aligned with the long-standing mission of social development, social justice, and democratic engagement, rather than a short-term market demand (Gumport, 2000, as cited in Kezar, 2004). The consequence of giving a prominent emphasis on market values and demands is that they strip off or abstract moral, religious, and ethical values from higher education practices (Giroux, 2006, 2010). When these values become the guiding principles in higher education, the risk of viewing academics and students through the lens of the economy is unavoidable. Consequently, the meaning of public good in higher education may be juxtaposed with economic values to serve private good, leading to the emergence of bare pedagogy.

Market and economic values are espoused by the neoliberal philosophy with its economic rationality that perpetuates the lexicon of business, such as individualism, competition, effectiveness, and efficiency. Michel Foucault called this *neoliberal governmentality* in which individual and private rights and interests take precedence over those of the community. Within economic principles, the best way to meet individuals' and private needs is through maximizing the individual's capacity, in the absence of the role of the state. Consequently, taking this perspective, the meaning of public good in higher education would be juxtaposed with the economic view rather than with the political view. As a result, education, particularly higher education, is generally seen as an industry, where students are seen as customers instead of as citizens. It is not surprising then to see the pervasive development of vocationalized curriculum (see also Subkhan, this volume), commercialized research, and the privatized-closed nature of knowledge production. With these shifts came the bare pedagogy that is corporate or economic-oriented practices.

In line with these issues, many scholars and social critics have been concerned about these shifts and expressed concerns over the risks of such practices going wild and uncontrolled in their development and application in higher education institutions. This is particularly salient in developing countries, in which the long-standing social missions of higher education are redefined as private advancement

and economic attainment (Kezar, 2004). Therefore, indeed, it is not surprising to see that governments pursue neoliberal strategies in their economic, social, political, and moral order (Jessop, 1999).

Despite many social critics having expressed concerns over this practice, many others tend to be in the middle line by proposing a reflexive perspective in discerning such a practice. This perspective is subsumed under a utilitarian perspective which blends the values of communitarianism and neoliberalism in higher education. Barnett (2000) and Gibbons (1996) are examples of such scholars who pointed out the importance of higher education being relevant and adaptive to the rapidly changing environment for higher education to remain viable. The consequence of such a supposition may lead to a trade-off between the meaning of public good higher education espouses.

6.3   The Concept of Knowledge

Knowledge has been a contested issue when it is linked to universities. Delanty (1998a) provided three theories of what knowledge is in relation to universities. Those theories are the postmodernist thesis, the globalization thesis, and the modernist thesis. Despite these theses, knowledge continues to be assumed as a vague and ambiguous concept to define (Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002). With regard to this, it is important to set a criterion for defining and claiming what knowledge is (Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002). Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot (2002) proposed two criteria that can be used to help define what knowledge is. The first criterion is to set *knowledge as an outcome*. Belonging to this criterion is the type of practical knowledge, utility-oriented knowledge. Gibbons (1996) called it *Mode 2 knowledge*, while Lyotard referred to it as *performative knowledge*. The second criterion is the idea that *knowledge as a procedure*, and Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot (2002) included theoretical knowledge in this domain. This is widely in common with the *Mode 1 knowledge of* Gibbons (1996) or the contemplative and subjective knowledge of Lyotard (1984).

Knowledge as an outcome of Mode 2 knowledge production has indicated the adaptive capacity of universities to continue to become relevant in the twenty-first century. In their adaptive capacity, universities do not lose their legitimacy, identities, and status as the site of knowledge producers and knowledge claims. Instead, those features are being reconfigured into a new relevant paradigm of knowledge production. In this new paradigm, the emphasis of research, particularly on problem-solving, has been placed in the context of the application. In such a context, knowledge claim is vested in its capacity to be used and transferred to, for the most part, industries. Here, the performative power of knowledge has superseded its power to enlighten (Lyotard, 1984). In another way, Giroux (2010), borrowing the term from Giorgio Agamben (1998), has associated this with "bare pedagogy", a construct whose basic corporate principles are advocated by neoliberal ideology.

In addition, Mode 2 knowledge has eroded the traditional structure of knowledge production and knowledge claims of universities where they have previously been

based on disciplinary experts or specialization (Mode 1 knowledge production). In the former, problem-solving acts cut across disciplinary domains, and actors are regarded as eligible to conduct research and claim what knowledge is. In this context, there have been dispersed actors, organizations, and systems that are deemed to have qualifications for problem-solving. As a result, there is a new distributed knowledge system that has given way to a new lexicon for describing the relationships between actors involved in problem-solving activities, that is, *knowledge and practitioners (researchers)*. A further result of such a knowledge system is that universities are no longer the prime producers of knowledge as many other organizations produce knowledge, leading to what Barnett (2000) called *knowledge organizations.*

Those phenomena above posit a transformation in the way knowledge is conceptualized for reading the world-from previously based on reading the world as subjective, emancipatory, or autonomous, reflexive, and contemplative (Delanty, 1998a; Lyotard, 1984) to reading the world as objective and pure (Barnett, 2000). This idea of the model has raised much debate over its impact on the diminishing legitimacy, identity, and status of universities as the primary sites of knowledge production and knowledge claim, and as a site where knowledge has been conceptualized from the *Enlightenment neo-humanist perspective* (Delanty, 1998a). In this situation, then, knowledge has been defined by performativity and, thus, has caused knowledge to lose its power to enlighten (Lyotard, 1984).

As for the criterion of knowledge as procedure (Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002) or Mode 1 knowledge production, knowledge is linked with theoretical knowledge, subjective and contemplative knowledge. Here, research practice is emphasized on the structure of discipline or specialization. Consequently, research, for the most part, is associated with pure or basic research. This kind of research is intended to solve the problem via the expansion and development of theories, aiming to contribute to knowledge rather than to practical goals. Research is conducted within strict and complex scientific norms, values, methods, and theories to justify the claim of knowledge legitimacy yielded. In such research, disciplines or specializations of academics have become the context of problem-solving to produce legitimate knowledge. Within this research, the language that represents the actors involved is *science and scientists.* This suggests that knowledge is confined to universities, and they communicate with society through their social missions to promote the public good (Giroux, 2003; Kezar, 2004). Because the core of knowledge production is in the hands of disciplines, universities have possessed privileges as the prime site of knowledge production (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2000; Delanty, 1998b; Kezar, 2004).

This kind of research has long been prevailing and guiding the production of knowledge and knowledge claims in universities, reflected in their social missions to improve the quality of life. These missions are inculcated in students to foster them to understand their own lives, the environment in which they live, the social problems society is facing, and the power that comes in the way of knowledge or truth is practiced and claimed. As they become informed citizens, they will be able to become engaged citizens through their capacity to map the source and roots of the problems—and thus, offer ways to solve the problems. It is clear that knowledge produced in universities has an emancipatory role (Sakhiyya & Rata, 2019), and has become

a critical ally to the state. In short, within democratic epistemology, knowledge production in higher education is conceptualized within civic values and cultures. With civic values and cultures, knowledge has the power to enlighten public services for the public good. In this condition, the nature of knowledge is conceptualized as contemplative knowledge that is open and universal, criticizable, and peer-scrutinized (Lyotard, 1984).

However, indeed, in this increased neoliberal society, where the power and culture of corporations have become the governing principles in all spheres of life, the essence and epistemology of knowledge have been challenged and even shifted to one that promotes corporate culture (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2000; Giroux, 1999, 2013). In corporate culture, knowledge has been conceptualized within the ethos of business principles, foregrounding accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency in the production of knowledge. In these circumstances, knowledge is perceived in its performative nature, in which the applicability or in-use capability of knowledge in the form of product produced is emphasized. In this sense, knowledge is reconfigured in the form of private and closed to serve the interests of corporations.

This circumstance brought deep concerns about the legitimacy, status, and identities of universities as the prime sites for knowledge production and the claim of knowledge per se. The debate over this issue has been intensively addressed in international literature. Some scholars (e.g., Aronowitz & Giroux, 2000; Kezar, 2004) have pointed out that knowledge and higher education, particularly in universities, have lost their legitimacy, identity, and function as the main site of knowledge production. Therefore, indeed, Delanty (1998b) even argued that there had been "the end of knowledge" in higher education. In response to this claim, scholars such as Aronowitz and Giroux (2000) called for the reclaiming and retaking of the traditional roles and functions of higher education.

However, some critics, like Barnett (2000), disagreed with this supposition. He discerned that the legitimacy, status, and identity of universities and knowledge are still there, taking their new form or path to adapt to this supercomplex environment. As he put it: "In such an age of supercomplexity, the university has new knowledge functions: to add to super complexity by offering completely new frames of understanding (so compounding super complexity); to help us comprehend and make sense of the resulting knowledge mayhem, and to enable us to live purposefully amid super complexity" (p. 409).

6.4 Indonesian Higher Education and the Public Good

Indonesia is a developing country in which patrimonial values and norms were once the main guiding principles in the political, economic, and socio-cultural realms. The contemporary democratic values and systems adopted and implemented in the current political system are not inherent concepts of its culture and history. Interestingly, these democratic systems and values have co-existed with the residual influence of the patrimonial polity system (Gaus & Hall, 2017; Gaus et al., 2017). This situation

has contributed to the practice of hands-on and hands-off government, particularly in higher education institutions. It is this situation that triggers us to examine how such a developing country with its political system is adopting and implementing neoliberal values in the higher education sector, specifically issues related to knowledge production and knowledge claims, and the indication of what is called "bare pedagogy".

Indonesian higher education is a bureaucratic institution, and it has been placed under the control of the government. As a response to the rapidly changing environment in this supercomplex environment, as Barnett (2000) named it, and to the idea of the relevance of the twenty-first century, the government launched a reform of higher education by enacting a new Act of Higher Education No. 12, 2012. This Act arranges the arrangement of systems, definitions, roles, and functions of higher education in Indonesia.

In this Act, higher education has been placed on the political and economic agenda of the government and, thus, serves as the site to enhance the country's economic growth through the advancement of research and innovation. In this agenda, the roles and functions of higher education as a social institution have been interpreted as economic or market values in concert with preexisting democratic and moral values, as stated at the beginning of the Act:

> Higher education is part of the national educational system that has a strategic role in enriching the intellectual life of the nation, and in advancing the nation's knowledge and technology by considering and implementing the values of the humanities, and cultivating and empowering a sustainable Indonesia.

> To increase the competitive edge of the nation to face globalization in all spheres of life, it is needed higher education that is able to develop knowledge and technology and produce intellectuals, scientists, and/or professionals whose characters are creative, tolerant, tough, and brave to defend the truth for the nation's interest.

These concerted values suggest a utilitarian concept that combines the traditional and economic values of higher education. It seems to have indicated that the government, in its endeavor to adapt and respond to this rapidly changing environment, seeks to retain the traditional values and norms of higher education. These values, then, have to some extent formed the basis for the social mission or public good of Indonesian higher education. Interestingly, economic or market values are used to make sense of the public good that is manifested in the utilitarian perspective of knowledge production and knowledge claim. In this perspective, scholarly activities and academic performance are gauged by performative measures (Ball, 2012; Deem, 2017). These measures are advocated by a neoliberal ideology where the self-regulating market has been its predominant principle (Polanyi, 1962).

Following the above-explained situation, the social mission of Indonesian higher education has intersected with three interests. They are the market, the state, and higher education. These contribute to the forming of modes of coordination in Indonesian higher education as well. To borrow the terms proposed by Jessop (1999), we have been intrigued to describe the social mission of higher education in Indonesia as

being among the interests of *anarchy* (market), *hierarchy* (control from the government), and *heterarchy* (self-organizing or network). This shaped the reconfiguration of the social mission of universities where they are inserted into the economic market. Thus, the mission of higher education in Indonesia has taken the utilitarianism perspective as explained by Kezar (2004). This is to suggest that higher education, in this case, universities in Indonesia, has become a site where the interests of private sectors are accommodated and facilitated.

It is not surprising to see that higher education is harnessed with its new roles and tasks of developing and advancing knowledge and technology framed within the values of the humanities to increase the competitiveness of Indonesia and to increase the prosperity of the nation (HE act, chapter 1, article 4, 2012). With these tasks, academics are encouraged to become innovative, skilled, responsive, creative, competitive, and cooperative (HE act, chapter 1, article 4, 2012)-a group of words that are closely related to the lexicon of corporate or business. Here, the Indonesian government has modified the public good of higher education into a combination of emancipatory and performative knowledge to adapt to the global economy. However, although the Act says so, the second form of knowledge takes precedence over the first. Thus, the journey of higher education in Indonesia to take on its position in society has just begun marked by its utilitarian mission. With this, a new model of knowledge production and knowledge claim has taken root.

6.5 Changing Knowledge Production: Is It a Bare Pedagogy?

6.5.1 *The Corporatization of Research*

With its utilitarian mission came a policy that was sympathetic to neoliberal governmentality in which political rationality has dominated. Political rationality is a technology of the body used to discipline and seek to make use of the economic functions of corporeal functions of citizens (Foucault as cited in Gaus, 2019b). This technology has subtly been disguised in control mechanisms through rewards and punishment mechanisms to measure productivity. In higher education in Indonesia, such a technology has been enacted to enhance research and publication productivity. Rewards are given to those who can publish in highly reputable international journals. Along with this, metrics of *h*-index have also become measures to judge and evaluate academics' productivity in research. This practice imitates the practice of corporations at the expense of the principle of inwardness, where the search for knowledge is supposedly based on esoteric nature for the sake of knowledge per se (Veblen, 1919).

In order to increase the rate of publication and *h*-index, academics in Indonesia are encouraged to do interdisciplinary collaborations both nationally and internationally. Collaboratively published articles are highly valued as they indicate the width and

breadth of networks certain academics have. Besides, a primary emphasis is given to research-producing patents and the results can directly be used by industries. Therefore, applied research has been highly encouraged and valued, leaving pure or basic research under low priority.

The phenomena described above indicate that there has been a reorientation of the meaning of knowledge embraced by Indonesian higher education. The inclusion of political rationality or instrumental rationality reflected in determining criteria or objectives to be achieved has been a form of disguised control of the government. Gaus (2016) referred to it as the shadow control of the government in Indonesian universities, particularly in assessing academics' research productivity. The concealed presence of the hand of the government has undermined the autonomy of universities in knowledge production, leading to the diminishing autonomous nature of knowledge in universities or the decline of the Republic of Science. The Republic of Science, once embedded in universities, means that knowledge is autonomous and the pursuit of it is in and of itself. With the current condition of the process of scholarship in Indonesia's universities, the demarcation between the autonomy of science and the state is in question. Scholars have argued similarly that there is no "autonomy of knowledge" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2000; Delanty, 1998a, 1998b) and that universities face the danger of losing their cultural mission to enlighten society. In the political rationality of neoliberal ideology, knowledge is conceptualized as an outcome of quantifiable instruments instead of the conceptual outcome gleaned within the process of scholarship (Williams, 2016). Such a quantifiable outcome is applied in the context of the application, leading to the practice of a new model of knowledge production that follows the path of Mode 2 knowledge. In this model, knowledge production and knowledge claim have new faces. The way knowledge is communicated and justified through strict peer scrutiny, open dialogue, and debate on which the traditional characteristics of knowledge production and knowledge claim are based, has now been superseded by electronic journal publishing. This is marked with the metrics of the h-index to define the quality of articles and authors. This suggests a shift in the purpose of knowledge from seeking to enlighten to the pursuit of an outcome (metrics), and from being critical in nature to being performative. In the traditional academic functions of universities, one of their social contributions is to preserve knowledge and make it available to society. However, with journal publishing, the way knowledge is made available is restricted to the scholar communities themselves, and they subscribe to access it (Lynch, 2006). The overarching risk of this conduct may lead to the private possession of knowledge by certain organizations, and the commercialization or commodification of knowledge. As a result, knowledge has new characteristics of being closed, limited, and private.

That is not all. The fragmentation of knowledge has taken place as well, indicated by the involvement of multidisciplinary research to solve problems. The context of disciplines or specializations that once became the formal scientific benchmark in research for problem-solving has now turned into a context that cuts across disciplines. These multidisciplinary research collaborations involve a wide range of expertise and skills rather than intellectuals in finding solutions to a problem. This practice is usually undertaken with the practical goal of generating usable products that can be

directly transferred to industries. In Indonesian universities, collaborative multidisciplinary research has become a common practice that contributes to the integration of discipline as the basis for the university's structure.

In this regard, we are intrigued to look at Michael A. Peters's (2003, as cited in Gaus, 2019a) categories regarding the roles of academic intellectuals. He makes use of the construct of *philosophers-teachers* to make sense of the roles of academics as philosophers. Under this tag or label, the roles of academics are subsumed under three domains: *epistemic, political*, and *spiritual-related roles.* Epistemic roles espouse the idea that academics teach students to tell the truth about the world. An action that requires courage to refute immoral conduct and abuse of power and this is akin to the political roles of academics. The last philosopher role is the spiritual role in which academics as teachers teach students with morality, which can foster students to become good citizens. Yet, with the increase of instrumental practices brought by neoliberal ideology into the practice of research, those philosophers' roles have significantly been eroded or even forgotten. If this presupposition is true, it is surprising to see the rise of instrumental practices and motivation in the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. With this, the instrumental roles of academics at universities may take precedence over the enlightenment roles. The consequence of this may impact the process of education in that students are taught to pursue instrumental goals, putting them away from the essence of educating students to be social agents of change. This is happening in Indonesian universities through pervasive market-driven regulation in the curricula to hold entrepreneurial principles.

6.5.2   The Vocationalization of the Curriculum and the Emergence of Knowledge Organizations

The economic function of universities in Indonesia is not only confined to research practice but also to teaching and curricula. In the Higher Education Act no. 12, 2012, it is stated that one of the goals of higher education in Indonesia is to produce students who master knowledge, skills, and technology to meet national interests and the nation's competitive edge. In line with this, universities are expected to produce graduates whose skills and knowledge are compatible with industries. This expectation is strongly supported by the government through the encouragement to open new programs or universities that have a main focus on applied courses. As a result, many universities are readdressing and reorienting their curricula to ones that are sympathetic to the market and industrial needs. Besides, the permit for opening new universities is primarily given to those with a main focus on applied courses. The government also issued a moratorium on applications to open new universities with a focus on social courses (The regulation of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education [1], no. 51, 2018). The epoch of vocationalization and the path of making universities sites for job training has just begun.

Following this, the establishment of market-oriented universities with market-oriented faculties and schools has flourished in the Indonesian higher education context. The need for manpower with skills and knowledge compatible with contemporary industrial 4.0 has become the core and crucial component of Indonesian political economic policy. In response to this, the provision of such manpower tasked to universities is growing in number. Interestingly, such a provision of manpower is not only the monopoly of public universities but also private and public large companies. In Indonesia, some examples of large companies that have their own market-oriented universities are the state-owned telecommunication company (Telkom) with its Telkom University, and the state-owned Giant oil company (Pertamina) with its Pertamina University. All of these are intended to produce manpower and knowledge that are needed by those companies.

What can be learned from this is that there has been a widespread distribution of organizations that produce knowledge besides universities. To borrow the phrase of Gibbons (1996), there has been a "distributed knowledge production system" (p. 6) that led to the emergence of knowledge organization (Barnett, 2000). The danger of a knowledge organization in producing knowledge is its tendency to undertake research and keep the results to itself. Here, knowledge will be neither made available nor open to society. Knowledge becomes a private right and it is intended to be commercialized.

In the endeavor of universities to provide manpower to meet the needs of industries, the idea of entrepreneurship has become a buzzword to meet this need. The aim is certainly to cast entrepreneur students who can become entrepreneurs after graduating. Clark (1998) has identified such a practice as entrepreneurial universities or the McDonaldization of universities. With this, it is not surprising to say that the academic function of universities as civic education to educate students to become engaged citizens has been challenged.

Giroux (2010), borrowing the term from Giorgio Agamben (1998), assumed that higher education is demonstrating its "bare pedagogy". The pedagogy is akin to the values and principles of the market or corporation. Consequently, the nature of higher education as a democratic public sphere with the aim of educating and inculcating students with analytical skills to develop their moral, ethical, and religious foundations has been eroded. With its democratic values, the roles of students are framed as critical citizens to become social agents to promote justice and protect and respect the rights of others. It is with these values that they are expected to develop a sense of civic engagement embedded in their social contribution. In these circumstances, knowledge is viewed in its capacity to be critical, enlightened, and transformative for graduates.

However, with the increased values of utilitarian knowledge of corporate culture, ethical, moral, and religious values are gradually being uprooted from students as they are being trained to be workers in the industrial workplace. The critical skill has been superseded by a mechanistic skill that turns students into uncritical agents toward the abuse of power in society. In this situation, it is interesting to note that:

Not only does neoliberalism undermine civic education and public values and confuse education with training, but it also treats knowledge as a product, promoting

a neoliberal logic that makes no distinction between schools and restaurants (Gutman, 2000, as cited in Giroux, 2010, p. 186).

For such reasons, a discourse to put back the original function of higher education has been strongly echoed by scholars. Giroux (2006) argued the need to reclaim the links between education and democracy, knowledge and public service, and learning and democratic social change. Barnett (2000), on the contrary, pointed out that universities are in need of rethinking their existence, particularly their epistemology in viewing the world. A new epistemology is needed to live amid uncertainty, which is "open, bold, engaging, accessible, and conscious of their own insecurity" (p. 409). These words indicated the encouragement of the adaptive capacity of universities in this supercomplex environment where knowledge as a pure and objective reading of the world has to be abandoned. Therefore, the market values of neoliberalism are necessary to be integrated into universities. With this, according to Barnett (2000), universities and knowledge do not lose their legitimacy. Such an idea emphasizes the trade-off between the traditional purpose and the public good of higher education, allowing market-neoliberal values to co-exist, and making universities a sphere in which bare pedagogy norms and values are practiced. Given this, Delanty (2001) argued that universities are far more irrelevant to the market values of capitalism.

6.6 Conclusion

Higher education has distinctive characteristics compared with other social institutions. It has a specific democratic liberal philosophy underpinning its inception. In this philosophy, higher education is conceptualized as a democratic public sphere in which democratic-related missions are postulated and articulated. To manifest these missions, the process of education in research and teaching is projected out in a line of serving the public good. Therefore, the practice of research and teaching is undertaken in the pursuit of knowledge that fosters advances in the social and civic life of society. Here, academics serve as engaged public intellectuals and students as critical citizens. It is this democratic philosophy that generates contestation as it is encountered with market values. The values advocated by neoliberalism foreground corporate or economic benchmarks. These economic values meet with democratic values in which the former penetrate the academic function of higher education. As a result, the pursuit of knowledge through research and teaching is conceived of as having utility and performativity, leading to the diminishing power of knowledge to enlighten. Giroux (2010) concluded that higher education has been permeated by the practice of bare pedagogy.

Apart from whether bare pedagogy is relevant to or contradictory to the values of higher education, Indonesian higher education has demonstrated the norms and values of bare pedagogy in its knowledge production. In the name of relevance to the changing environment, the academic function of universities has been shifted to economic function. This suggests that the public good of Indonesian higher education has been compromised with market values. That economic function as embodied in

bare pedagogy has brought about a new configuration of the knowledge production system and a new form of knowledge claim, it is then, important to do reflexivity. The reflexivity is focused on the legitimacy, identities, and status of higher education as the site for knowledge production, and the legitimacy and status of knowledge per se. And most importantly the roles of academics as engaged public intellectuals or philosopher-teachers.

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Chapter 7
The Part-Time Academic Identity: An "Englishman in New York"?

Tatum S. Adiningrum

7.1   Academic Identity in a Changing Academic Profession

For a long time, from the beginning of the academy until the start of the massification trend in the 1960s, academics have enjoyed a stable and prestigious position, and we often hear the "ivory tower" terminology to describe academia which gives the universities the aura of seclusion, exclusivity, and limitation, but also prestige. An academic career used to be looked upon as stable and long term, which makes it a highly positive work identity. However, the economic, social, and political contexts in which universities operate have changed, and thus academic identities are shifting. Nixon (1996) argued that changes in higher education have taken away the autonomy and status that were granted automatically to faculty members in the past. As those are the defining characteristics of faculty members as a profession, degrading this has a major impact on the profession (Nixon, 1996).

Academic as a profession has a specific professional identity, the academic identity, which is also a social identity. It is a social identity as the construction involves a constant negotiation between the individual and the society (Carter et al., 2014) that makes it constantly changes according to the dynamic of society (Elkington & Lawrence, 2012; Smith, 2010). As a professional identity, it is identified with three main roles: teaching, research, and services. Many studies focus on the changes in academia that unbalanced the three roles, including the birth of new positions in academia which have a different mix of the roles. Elkington and Lawrence (2012) even identify the expansion of academic roles from three to eight: teacher, knowledge expert, consultant, researcher, team worker, counselor, manager/administrator (of the

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learning process), and designer/planner. With the changing balance of academic identity and the development of roles, the "traditional" academic identity is threatened and creates a gap between what is perceived as academics work and reality (Clegg, 2008). For example, Clegg's study (2008) found that the intellectual parts of the job are the most satisfying aspects of being an academic, and teaching is considered the main identifying contributor. There is unsaid pressure from the institution to do research as the higher value of research is felt by people inside the university for its position as an important indicator of "success" (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2005). Therefore, this phenomenon brings the already hierarchical structure of academics into another hierarchy of prestige. The publishing competition worldwide for tenure and ranking purposes has brought a whole new industry: the indexing institutions and predatory journals. Instead of conducting long-term research projects and publishing well-researched content that has significant contributions to knowledge development, publishing has become another item in the tick-box list for performance evaluations or promotions.

Another impact of the marketization of higher education globally is the divided academic workforce. Universities today mainly have two categories of the academic workforce: traditional academics (full-time tenured or full-time academics) and non-traditional academics (instructional staff under other working contract schemes). The "non-traditional academic" is a diverse group, covering those who are not tenure-eligible, including full-time non-tenure track, and postgraduate students working as teaching assistants. PTAs are in the second category, and they have different names in different countries such as "contingent" or "adjunct" in the US and "casual" or "sessional" academics in Australia. In the Indonesian context, it is common to refer to them as "dosen luar biasa" (non-regular) or "part-time". This group of academics faces significant challenges with identifying themselves in higher education (e.g., Levin & Montero-Hernandez, 2014; Levin & Shaker, 2011). Due to their limited roles, they are not considered as full academics. They mainly do teaching, and their employment is described as precarious.

The identity of non-traditional academics has not been studied as extensively as the traditional faculty, the full-time tenure track. Levin and Shaker's study (2011) of full-time non-tenure-track academics in a US university reveals that they have a hybrid identity as teachers and as a member of the institution. The life of a teacher gives them satisfaction, but not their identity as the university's members as it is regarded as a low class in the academic hierarchy. Levin and Montero-Hernandez (2014) studied PTAs more specifically, and found that the PTAs have a diverse and unique identity, depending on factors such as whether they aspire to be full-time but do not have the opportunity, and the engagement of the bigger academic structure. According to them, PTAs have dual identities: as experts in their interactions with students and as a part of the academic structure. More often, they feel detached from the bigger academic structure. Meanwhile, White (2012) uses the term "disposable academics" (p. 50) to refer to doctoral students and short-term contract academics. She argues that they are at the bottom of the academic hierarchy and can be considered an academic underclass. They have incomplete academic roles, either only teaching

or doing short-term research, and combined with the low rank they have a "guarded" and "careful" identity.

Uncertainty over their employment and income, followed by limited access to facilities such as a proper work area, affects the PTAs' confidence and leaves them with an ambiguous identity. These academics are structurally disadvantaged because of two factors: unequal access to facilities and a payment system that covers only teaching. The denial of roles creates a divide between full-time and part-time academics and creates a barrier for the PTAs to fulfill their academic identity. While international literature has established the problem with a changing scenario of work and shifting academic identity, similar phenomena can be detected in Indonesian higher education. Both full-time and casual employment as an academic has been affected by the local context that is both similar and unique to the global context. As such, this chapter will discuss the academic identity of part-time academics by discussing who are the part-time academics' in Indonesia and how their academic identity differs from the full-time ones.

The chapter will first give an overview of the higher education context in Indonesia and who are the part-time academics in the system. The academic identity of PTA is discussed next through the perspective of identity theory, which looks at identity based on social roles. The comparison of roles between PTAs and FTAs provides an understanding of the micro structure of the profession: the self and the peers. The chapter then goes to the roles of the institutions and the systems, especially the government's regulations and policies of the academic profession, to provide an understanding of the meso- and macro- structure of the profession. The chapter provides a discussion and conclusion before closing it with the way to go from here.

7.2   The Higher Education Context in Indonesia

Indonesia is a large country in size and population. It has 4,670 higher education institutions (Nirmala et al., 2018) consisting of universities, academies, colleges, community colleges, polytechnics, and institutes. Most institutions are managed either by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) or the Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education (MRTHE) (placed under the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019). There are 3,293 institutions under MRTHE, the majority of which (3,171) are private institutions (Nirmala et al., 2018). The majority of lecturers under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) are registered as *dosen tetap* (permanent academics) with a total of 255,301 lecturers, while 32,169 are *dosen tidak tetap* (non-permanent academics) and 207,586 have Master's Degree qualifications (Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020). The majority of lecturers (177,140) are in private institutions, while 75,892 are in public institutions (Nirmala et al., 2018). In 2018, the total number of higher education students reached 7 million with 4.5 million studying at private institutions, and 2.5 million in public ones (Jayani, 2019).

Public institutions are privileged, as up to the 1990s, they are partly subsidized by the government. The majority of the academics working in these institutions are civil

servants, a highly sought status in Indonesia due to its continuous tenure, retirement package, and social welfare. Thus, academic positions in public universities are considered as comfortable ones. The quality of students coming in is also selected through talent scouting to reputable high schools and a massive entrance test. In the last 10 years, public universities have been forced to open a more independent selection process. Therefore, public institutions enjoy the best intake quality, total funding support, and stable academic careers for decades. In addition, academics from public institutions also enjoy the privilege to be prioritized in donor-funded development projects such as scholarships from donor countries to continue their studies overseas. Tuition fees are significantly lower than private institutions because the government pays the main operational costs. For example, my tuition fees in 1996 at the University of Airlangga, Surabaya, were Rp 325,000 (around USD22) per semester. The tuition fees for a social humanities program at a well-regarded private institution in Surabaya that year were Rp 800,000 (around USD55) per semester, which is more than double those of a public institution.

The strong domination of public institutions in Indonesia contributes to the overall academic profession regulations and monitoring. Academic grades and promotions are cross-referenced to the civil servant system, and promotion approval is heavily regulated and monitored by the government. The rigid requirements, rules, and regulations are meant to maintain the quality and roles of the profession, but it also creates barriers and unwanted consequences such as low academic mobility and cost to apply for an academic job. At the same time, the rigid requirements do not make sense compared to the number of academics needed. For example, the student-staff ratio in many institutions is still above the required 1:30 (science) or 1:45 (social science), reaching 1:100 in some institutions (Liauw, 2015).

In terms of numbers, universities in Indonesia are dominated by the private sector. The growing number of private institutions means that there are more institutions with a small number of students (Moeliodihardjo, 2014). Compared to 122 public institutions which host 2.5 million students, 4.5 million students of private institutions are divided into 3,171 private institutions. This also means that they are dependent on tuition fees and in survival mode in terms of sustainability of income and quality standards (Moeliodihardjo, 2014).

7.3   Part-Time Academics in Indonesia

Little is known about part-time lecturers' participation in the Indonesian higher education system. Although the government has started the Higher Education Database (*Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi*), the reality is that it might not be captured correctly due to difficulties in data verification. Full-time public university lecturers teaching in private institutions have long been an integrated part of Indonesian education due to the need for private institutions to have qualified lecturers and the need for public institution lecturers to generate more income (Hill & Wie, 2012). At the very least, these academics will not be captured by the government database as

non-permanent academics because they have been recorded as permanent academics in other institutions. Developing a database of non-permanent, non-traditional, or part-time lecturers has always been problematic globally due to the range of variations of contracts; there also might be reasons for institutions not to reveal the data (Bryson, 2013). However, adapting the typologies of PTAs from Rajagopal and Lin (1996), this chapter uses three categories of PTAs: those who have another full-time job, those with multiple part-time jobs or significant non-professional other responsibilities (e.g., caring for family members), and those with a full-time academic job.

Higher education careers in Indonesia are still centrally managed by the government through its main apparatus: civil servant status for public institution academics, lecturer registration numbers, academic promotion points, and certification. This system discriminates against non-full-time academics by designing policies on the basis of full-time employment. Civil servant status and NIDN are only available for full-time permanent academics, while point accumulation for both academic promotions and certifications enforces the enactment of *Tri Dharma* in a very prescriptive way. One should maintain a certain proportion of teaching, research, and community service hours to be entitled to career advancements and extra incentives. These policies and rules from the government make up the macro-structure of the academic profession in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government has an ambivalent attitude toward part-time academics. Although lecturers from public institutions used to be endorsed to teach in private institutions for the transfer of knowledge, the government has been cautious about their role in higher education. Pre-2016, only those registered as full-time academics could be given tenure, receive certification incentives, and be included in the teacher–student ratio. To be a full-time tenured academic, one cannot have a civil servant status in any other public institution or be registered as a primary or secondary teacher. However, due to the high teacher–student ratio, the MRTHE published a new policy at the end of 2015 (Liauw, 2015) which has created a special scheme for part-time academics, the NIDK. Lecturers with NIDK have the same rights as those with NIDN, which makes it possible for them to be given tenure, receive academic promotions, and be included in the teacher–student ratio. However, there is no differentiation in the policy for career promotions or certification between NIDN and NIDK. Although this new policy allows institutions to legally recruit PTAs and potentially increase their number in the future, academic careers are still based on the scheme for full-time permanent employment.

The wide variations of higher education institutions in Indonesia also mean that they have unique ways to deliver teaching, learning, and research activities according to government rules. For example, the most notable difference between institutions is the public/private status, which creates different environments and local regulations in regard to salaries, incentives, facilities provided, and work status. This situation creates a meso-structure of the academic profession.

The macro- and meso- structures contribute to the individual and group dynamics inside each institution. How individual FTA or PTA adapt their roles and interact with each other is influenced by the bigger social structures around them. Through

the lens of identity theory, the individual and group interaction is discussed next. Followed by the contribution of the bigger social structures to the academic identity of PTA.

7.4   Individual Perceptions of Roles

7.4.1   The Half-Academics?

A qualitative study with FTAs and PTAs in a private university in Jakarta provides an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of their own roles and the other group's. Through interviews with 14 PTAs and 11 FTAs, we can explore their academic role enactment using the approximate times spent in each role: academic and non-academic allocation. McCall and Simmons (1978) suggest that everybody has a unique hierarchy of prominence or an ideal hierarchy of identities. According to McCall and Simmons (1978), prominence hierarchy reflects the subjective importance of identities to an individual and represents his/her ideal self (Burke & Stets, 2009). These sets of hierarchies are purely subjective and plastic, and the relations between roles inside them may be intermingling or compartmentalized (McCall & Simmons, 1978). McCall and Simmons argue that enacting behavior can be influenced by other factors, and is not only based on the importance of that particular identity to oneself (Burke & Stets, 2009). Therefore, there is a salience hierarchy, which is "the self that responds to the expectations of the situation rather than to the desires of the self" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 41). However, the more prominent an identity, the more likely it is to be enacted. It is thus argued that prominence precedes salience (Brenner et al., 2014).

As the aim of the question is not to calculate the exact time spent as a workload but merely as an indication of the prominent roles and ranking, the perceived percentage of time spent in a week is sufficient. The data is small (25 participants) and contains wide variation, therefore it is appropriate to look at the comparison based on the median instead of the average. As individuals have a hierarchy of salience and prominence, the data is provided as a comparison between actual (to indicate a hierarchy of salience) and ideal (to indicate a hierarchy of prominence). Table 7.1 displays the comparison of the perceived percentage of time spent in different roles in a week, both actual and ideal. The "ideal" time allocation for each role signifies the changes they want to make should they have the power to reallocate their time.

This exploratory study shows that the PTAs spent a little bit more than a quarter of their time doing academic work, and ideally this can be increased to 32.5%. Their time spent on non-academic work was only 17.5%, which is less than the academic work allocation. This supports the demography of PTAs from other countries, in that only half or less of PTAs are employed full-time elsewhere (e.g., Monks, 2009) and only a fraction prefers to have full-time academic employment (Brown & Gold, 2007; Junor, 2004; Monks, 2009). The compositions between both groups have similar

Table 7.1 Perceived percentage of time spent in a week

	Actual FT	Actual PT	Ideal FT	Ideal PT
Roles	Median (%)	Median (%)	Median (%)	Median (%)
Academic work	40	27.5	37	32.5
Non-Academic work	0	17.5	0	17.5
Family	25	30	30	32.5
Other	15	12.5	15	15

Table 7.2 Perceived percentage of time spent in academic work in a week

	Actual FT	Actual PT	Ideal FT	Ideal PT
Roles	Median	Median	Median	Median
Teaching	60	85	61.25	85
Research	16	0	20	10
Admin	22.5	0	17.5	0
PKM	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

patterns, with academic work as the first prominent role, followed by family. For PTAs, the third priority is non-academic work followed by the "other" category.

A second set of data describes the time spent in each academic role. The academic roles were taken from the *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* rule, which is: teaching, research, and community development. However, as insisted by the participants, the "administrative" role is added. The data is displayed in Table 7.2 and comprises actual and ideal scenarios. The faculty workload as in government regulations to report to lecturer certification is based on the 40:40:20 assumption. However, some items were ambiguous. For example, important and significant managerial positions (e.g., Head of Study Programs, Deans, Vice-Rectors, and Rector) can be exchanged with minimum teaching hour requirements.

The data in Table 7.1 shows that for many casual academics, their academic work entails a significant portion of their life and is an important part of their social identity. Over a quarter of their time is spent on academic work, and with a median of 17.5%, not many of them have full-time jobs outside academia. Although the data is small, this is also in line with the global context. With presumably more freedom in their time, they have more time allocation for other activities, which is also reflected in their time spent on family and other personal roles. As expected, the FTAs have a more defined identity as academics as they spend most of their time in an academic role, and only a few of them have non-academic work. In compensation, they seem to spend less time with family, although a little bit more time doing other activities.

Focusing on the data in Table 7.2, the differences between FTAs and PTAs are more pronounced. FTAs are involved in more academic roles than PTAs. According to the recent faculty workload rule, a minimum of 12 SCUs (credits) is needed per

semester, of which a minimum of 9 should come from a combination of teaching and research. Therefore, a combination of teaching and research should ideally comprise a minimum of 75% of their time. According to the data in Table 7.2, the combined perceived time spent in teaching and research is 76%, with 60% spent in teaching and 16% spent in research. Interestingly, more time is spent on administrative duties or managerial tasks than on research. Meanwhile, the PTAs are only involved in one role, with very few of them involved in research.

The role of PTAs is very prescriptive, and the contract is short-term per semester. For non-home-based PTAs, all roles are limited to teaching and administrative requirements. This model of employment pushes PTAs to be pragmatic and transactional. Not only does the contract fail to recognize long service, but it also does not support the enactment of full academic roles even on a voluntary basis. For example, contrary to the need for publication, support for PTAs to conduct research when they have the desire to do it is very limited. Louisa (PTA) experienced this when she tried to present a paper at a conference, but she did not get any support other than personal help in proofreading the paper.

This notion is also supported by another PTA who already has a home base as a former FTA. As a home-based PTA, the institution needs her to perform the complete role and report the outcomes as part of the administrative requirement to the government. The level of engagement and access to information for research and development opportunities was seen as unequal between FTAs and PTAs, creating a gap of information. There is a risk of disengagement, a lack of interest, and a career halt for academics with one foot inside the profession and the other in other roles.

7.4.2 Inter-Groups' Perception of Values

PTAs struggle with the limitations to perform the whole academic roles. They have difficulty establishing themselves as academics and as members of academia (Levin & Shaker, 2011; White, 2012). There are mainly two barriers that they meet, that is, their qualifications and expertise against what is valued in academia and the alienation in their social life facilitated by their employment scheme. Through the reported time spent on academic work, it is indicated that there are more PTAs who have more academic than non-academic work allocations. From the total of 14 PTAs interviewed, 7 are active in industries, especially consulting. All of them are self-employed. The rest mostly have resigned from their previous professional work to pursue personal goals, including teaching in academia or teaching in other institutions.

It is interesting that each group has a different perception of their own and the other group's value of students' learning. In the perception of PTAs, they are an important part of the university, because they have the industry background knowledge that they think can help in connecting theory and practice. Having a higher research degree is not a priority for them, because they do not pursue an academic career. However, this self-perception is only confirmed by the FTAs if the PTAs are still active in

their professions. If a PTA is still industry-active, the FTAs value the relevance of current industrial experience brought to the classroom. However, PTAs who are not industry-active have no added value, as explained by an FTA.

> For part-timers, they really have their industrial experience.... because we took them from the industrial world. They are not like part-time lecturers teaching in different places, no. They come from companies or have their own companies. They do bring enriched experience I guess to the classroom, that we, pure lecturers, can't satisfy. (Stephen, FTA)

The ones who have only limited industry experience, who have left the industry for a long time, and those who only teach without any industry experience seem to not add the value to students from the perspective of FTAs. FTAs realize that they have limitations in industry updates, and it can be covered by PTAs who are active in the industry. If PTAs are not industry-active, FTAs fail to see the added value and will be on the top list of not being hired. However, PTAs believe that although they have left the industry, their significant experiences are sufficient and valuable to students.

FTAs–PTAs discrepancy of value is indirectly related to the regulatory requirements. By system, PTAs are not calculated in the student–lecturer ratio in the accreditation. Therefore, employing PTAs does not bring benefits for the institution other than having someone to teach the students in class. From the perspective of the institution, PTAs will be more valuable if they are willing to be a formal part of the university through the NIDN or NIDK scheme. However, once a PTA accepts the offer to register, they are committed to performing the full academic roles. They need to get at least a senior lecturer status to ensure that the accreditation is good. This scheme does not seem fair for the PTAs who do not aim to make teaching a career. "Teaching is just like a hobby. I keep recharging myself, keep reading and finding things, so I also need a channel to let it out rather than let it vaporize" (Paul, PTA). Therefore, for some PTAs, teaching is not the career aspiration. As in the case of Paul, it is a personal self-learning strategy. Thus, the value of PTAs is different in the perception of their full-time peers who have to deal also with government requirements. The conflict of interest between the self-satisfaction of PTAs and the demand from their peers does not put PTAs at their best position in academia, especially if the PTA is not industry-active.

7.4.3 Alienation in Social Life

Not only that the value of their contribution is subjectively judged, their attachment to the social life in academia is not always firm. Indeed, a PTA's life can be lonely. As they do not invest too much time in academia, their social network inside the department can be slim. In addition, they have limited availability to interact with students as it only revolves around specific teaching time or dedicated supervisory time. Therefore, PTAs generally have less opportunity to build close relationships with students and peers as expressed by a PTA.

> Full-timers spend more time on campus, so students can easily come to them to ask questions about academic matters. One thing that they can do more [than us] is they can build closer relationships with students; they know each student's problems. While me, I only come once a week; that's it. (Paul, PTA)

Social alienation is also felt through limited collegiality. Most of the PTA respondents admitted that they were offered an opportunity to teach because of a close relationship with one or more FTAs. However, due to the transactional nature of the employment scheme, the communication between PTAs and FTAs is not well established. This reduces direct conflict but also results in less engagement. Adding to the gap in communication between PTAs and FTAs, Josephine commented on the superficial nature of the relationship between them.

> So far, what I've seen is that there is very little communication between part-timers and full-timers in my program. Part-timers come only for teaching, then they'll leave. So, there is no interaction; it only happens in the big meeting before the semester starts. And for those who have taught here for a long time, that meeting has become no more than a formality. (Josephine, FTA)

This situation is also facilitated by the institutional setting. As already widely published in other contexts, it is common not to give similar facilities to PTAs. Descriptions of lacking a space to simply store personal belongings while teaching, the humiliation of not being able to supervise students in a proper place, and the lack of social space are common. Similar descriptions were also told by the PTA respondents. "As part-timers, we are not given a workstation, which actually could make us feel more like a part of the university" (Arianna, PTA). There is no setting that facilitates better engagement and collaboration between PTAs and the bigger institutional context. Therefore, the underlying message that the relation is transactional is strong.

Feeling depressed or ashamed because of the lack of facilities is common (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Rajagopal, 2000). Although this might be reasonable and a common method in other part-time employment, academics are arguably a different profession. Academics are more similar to a consulting profession, in which expertise and legitimacy play an important role in building up trust from clients, or in this case, students. Although regular students do not usually know the difference between PTAs and FTAs, their self-esteem is impacted by the way they are treated (Levin & Shaker, 2011). Alienation and a lack of facilities signal the hierarchy inside the institution (White, 2012). The lack of facilities and engagement puts PTAs in a position that seems to be half-existing or "disposable" (White, 2012).

7.5   The Institution and the System: Creating Legal Aliens

Part-time academic employment is shaped by the employment condition and institutional support, which form an information gap that leads to an abuse of the system. In addition, the confusing bureaucracy and requirements from the government may

put further pressure on PTAs. An exploratory study of conversations in a Facebook group dedicated for lecturers reveals the potential abuse of the system in the academic employment. The study used keywords to explore the working conditions of non-full-time academics in Indonesia: NIDN, status, *gaji* (salary), *sertifikasi dosen* (lecturer certification), and *jafung* (academic position). The group has over 80,000 members, and for the purpose of this study, the data was limited from 2015 to 2020. The result of the study provides a deeper understanding of the macro- and meso- structure to the academics' identity.

7.5.1 Abusing the System: Easy to Come, Not Easy to Go

Government regulations play an important role in defining the PTAs' identity. As higher education in Indonesia is very prescriptive and heavily regulated in that every aspect of the profession is monitored, regulations are a key factor in the profession. The aspects that are found to be important to PTAs' academic identity are the formal categorization of PTAs, the home base bind, *Tridharma*, and certification. But it is not only about the instruments; it is also about stakeholders' understanding of the complicated rules and the lack of rules of a minimum wage for lecturers.

The formal categorization of academics in Indonesia is reflected in the monitoring instruments provided, especially the registration number, according to the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Rule No. 26/2015 on educators' registration in higher education. The PTAs, who used to be called *dosen tidak tetap* (non-permanent lecturers), are the ones who come to teach and get paid based on their teaching hours. Their pay is determined by their credits taught and the administrative requirements of teaching such as monitoring exams, marking, and transportation. For these academics, they should be given an NUP (*Nomor Urut Pendidik*/Educator Registration Number), and they are not calculated in the ratio of students–lecturers. Their role is limited to teaching.

The permanent part-time lecturers are those who are active in non-academic professions but also teach as permanent part-time faculty members. They can be those who are active in industries, civil servants from other ministries, or retirees. They should be given an NIDK (*Nomor Induk Dosen Khusus*/special lecturer registration number) that allows them to be counted into the student–lecturer ratio and enables them to have an academic career and get nominated for lecturer certification. Therefore, they are also obliged to do the full academic roles. The full-time academics are given an NIDN, which means that the institutions employ them full-time and give them a basic salary and involve them in the academia regularly. They must do the full academic load equal to a minimum of 12 credits and do all the academic roles as determined in the *Tridharma* of a higher education institution.

Although the definition is already clear, is rigid, and should enable the government to monitor the quality of learning in the institutions, we have seen that this system is still susceptible to abuse. There are individuals who have an NIDN, get a functional title, and receive a certification incentive but are not full-time staff in the institutions.

They become aliens in this system and are susceptible to abuse. As expressed by a group member: "You get an NIDN [with] no functional title plus no (stable teaching) hours, eeee when (the accreditation) assessors coming (you) are praised to the sky, and then banned again" (Peter, 9/3/2019).

One important factor found is the relation of the academics with the higher education system via the institution. The public chat in the group repeatedly captured institutions' abusive behavior toward PTAs. This phenomenon happens mainly in small private institutions, especially new institutions or new programs. The modus operandi usually asks the PTAs to submit documents to be registered for an NIDN, which will put them as full-time academics in the system, but in the end they are treated as non-permanent and get paid only based on the credits assigned.

> …. in my institution, lecturers do not get any salary, payment is only based on teaching hour and based on credits, and it is bundled (if we get 10 credits x Rp 50,000) so we will get 500 thousand a month only for five months. (James, October 2020)

On paper, for an academic to be given an NIDN, it means that they have a contract with the institution as a full-time lecturer, proven by a formal letter from the education foundation and submitted to the government by the institution along with salary slips, as explained by a member:

> Officially, if the HEI wants to apply the NIDN [for their lecturer] they have to attach salary slips of the last 6 months, if I'm not mistaken. [The slips] should be submitted by the institution. (David, March 2019)

The problem of disguising casuals into FTAs was mentioned repeatedly in different posts. It seems that the practice is already common as it is referred to as a "classic problem" (Henry, May 2015). This practice is mainly rampant among small private universities that rely on obtaining their incomes from tuition fees. They need to maintain the student–lecturer ratio to fulfill the accreditation requirement, but they are either unwilling to recruit FTAs or do not have enough funding to maintain the required FTAs. As a result of this practice, the non-permanent academics are at risk for the following: uncertain teaching load, uncertain and small income (below the minimum wage), difficulty in teaching, and obstacles in applying to other institutions that have better conditions.

The trap of the home base, which starts from having an NIDN, has made PTAs' lives difficult. Having an NIDN might give a false hope of gaining full-time or permanent employment. To gain an opportunity like that, many are willing to sacrifice themselves as having an academic position is considered as valuable and getting more difficult to gain. It is hoped that after getting the NIDN, they will be able to start the process of academic tenure (functional title/*jabatan fungsional/jafung*) after two years of service. After getting the first functional title, it is a matter of time before they are offered the lecturer certification, which will compensate for their low income for the first few years of service. This false hope has made people live under a depressing condition. Not only that, they have to live with an insufficient income that makes them have to supplement their income, but institutions are also reluctant to release these people to other employment opportunities.

The problem of "*surat lolos butuh*" is another topic that often occurs in the public group. Literally translated as "release–need", it is a letter from the employing institution that they are willing to release the lecturer to another home base institution. There are multiple stories of lecturers who could not get their release letter, and thus were trapped in the institution.

> I've already started my home base move since last year. But I cannot get the release letter from the previous institution. I have tried everything…. (John, March 2020)

When a lecturer faces difficulty in resigning and moving one's home base to another institution, there is already a mediation process provided by the government. However, not everybody knows it, or it is not always successful as explained by a member: "I already did that (went to the government office), ma'am, but there was no response" (John, March 2020). In responding to this kind of case, other members of the groups will typically be advised to discuss the situation "nicely" with the leaders of the previous institution. Mediation and advocacy are seen as the next option.

This abuse of the system creates a group of academics who do not match the formal category of lecturers by the government: the full-time PTAs. They are formally full-time, but casuals in the field. This kind of employment brings uncertainties to the academics and can potentially further confuse their identity that should have been fostered by their institutions. Their existence is like a legal alien: registered on paper, but not getting the same treatment and facilities as their full-time counterparts.

7.5.2 Understanding of the Rules and Regulations

As has been discussed in the meso-level section, the home base trap and the power relations between institutions and the casuals lead them to be victims of abuse. This is amplified by the lack of understanding of the rules and regulations by the academics and also the officials. An academic experienced the difficulty of trying to move her home base institution. "Mine took a long time in taking care of the release letter and also because the operator here does not have enough experience, so I was the one who had to go here and there" (Barbara, May 2015). Her difficulty was actually only because her offer letter from the new institution did not have the phrase "the workload of 12 credits per semester", and it took her almost two years to get around the bureaucracy. In this kind of case, a suggestion to ease the process is to be proactive. "One more, you need to be PROACTIVE to take care of/find information about the process … do not simply wait or rely on the academic staff in your institution … the process is long and you need to be patieeeeeeent, upload many things, and constantly check if you have incomplete documents" (Helen, May 2016, original emphasis).

Incompetence, changing requirements, and a lack of sources of information about administrative requirements are used as a weapon against the PTAs, or the full-time casuals, by the institution. For the sake of accreditation requirements, some institutions even do not let their home base lecturers go easily. Complicated bureaucracy is even used to scare lecturers to withdraw or move their home base. "Every time there

is a lecturer who wants to resign from this private university, they will be scared off (the home base bureaucracy). They will then offer an option to leave the NIDN there if I want to resign" (Adrian, March 2020).

For many private university lecturers, salary is also a significant part of the academic profession. A lecturer's salary is generally low, which is an anecdote of *dosen = kerjanya sak **dos**, gajinya sak **sen*** (lecturer = a box-full of work, paid in a cent). The discrepancy of pay for PTAs is apparent, ranging from the basic minimum wage standard to teaching hour-based. One lecturer, who is a full-time PTA, said that he was paid about Rp 500,000 a month to teach 10 credits, and he was only paid for five months (George, October 2020). Another full-time PTA said that her institution paid a monthly salary at the level of public university lecturers, while also giving her opportunities to pursue a functional title and lecturer certification (Crystal, July 2018). The problem with pay was a point of debate between group members. There were those who thought that if someone wants to be a lecturer, then they should be ready to accept that without any complaints. The other side said that even academics need to have access to a minimum standard of living and that seeking better pay is justified.

> It seems that it is better to be a laborer with a minimum wage that increases annually. The problem is not all Master's Degree holders can work in a place that has good career opportunities and financial rewards. (Paula, January 2018)

The academic profession is considered less attractive than being a laborer, despite the high requirements. Despite their graduate degrees, PTAs do not have the bargaining power to negotiate their incomes and do not have the benchmark of a reasonable salary.

7.6 Discussion and Conclusion: Academic Identity of PTAs

The global phenomenon of an increase in part-timers or non-traditional academics is generally recognized as the implications of budget cuts in higher education and the privatization of this sector. Similar to global trends, Indonesian higher education has also experienced privatization. The privatization of higher education in Indonesia is in two forms: the privatization of public institutions and the major role of private higher education institutions. However, the Indonesian experience is different from developed countries such as the US and the UK. As a previously colonized country, Indonesia did not have the luxury of building a strong national higher education system or public institutions (Buchori & Malik, 2004).

Looking at the employment system of Indonesian HE institutions, PTAs are most likely to be found in private institutions. In his review of HEIs' funding, Welch (2011) argued that private institutions are facing more challenges and increased competition from privatized public institutions. Private HEIs charge at least 50% more than public ones; in some institutions, it can be three times higher (Welch, 2011). The competition to recruit students who can afford the tuition fees is now getting tighter, with public

institutions now able to open special entrance schemes for students unable to pass the national public university entrance test. Public institutions can compete with these schemes as they are generally perceived to be of higher quality than private HEIs which are of varied and generally lower quality (Welch, 2007).

Although private universities comprise 96% of the total HEIs and enroll more than 60% of the total higher education students, the level of support is considerably weaker than it is for public universities. Private universities were ignored before the 1990s (Toyibah, 2017). They rely on tuition fees from students to survive, with as much as 90% of their income from students (Welch, 2011). They also have to supplement their income with various grants or efficiencies, mastering the "special art to struggle for [their] survival" (Hadihardaja, 1995, p. 40). Limited incentives or grants are available for private HEIs, but typically the public funding they receive is less than 5% of their revenue (Hill & Wie, 2012), and even as low as 2% (Royono & Rahwidiati, 2013). Indeed, private institutions experience discrimination in status, a lack of funding and access to other opportunities (Lestari, 2014; Toyibah, 2017), and a systematic injustice created in the system between public and private institutions.

Combining interview data from one small and bounded context with posting data from a larger system enables us to see the diversity of PTAs. Studies of FTAs and PTAs have recognized the variation of PTA categories. Both groups are usually called traditional and non-traditional academics. The non-traditional one covers a different scheme of employment, regardless of the percentage of time spent at work, as long as it is not full-time and usually has no tenure. In this study, the non-traditional academics are the classic PTAs who work under a short-term contract, are paid based on credits taught, and perform only one role formally. However, the institutions' abuse of the system has created a group of unique individuals: full-time on paper, and part-time for payment.

Classic PTAs have a hybrid identity (Levin & Shaker, 2011): one as a teacher and another as a member of the institution. They love teaching, and teaching is the reason they come to academia. However, the way they are being treated as a member of the institution gives them a negative feeling. Their teacher role gives them satisfaction, while the other does not (Levin & Shaker, 2011). This group has their own "figured world", described as "keeping one foot inside the door and one foot outside" (Levin & Shaker, 2011, p. 1481), as their identity as a member of the institution is laden with inferiority: they mainly do teaching instead of research; their courses will usually be coordinated by a tenure-track faculty member; and the overall status of being part-time is a low class in the hierarchy. Thus, while they identify with the teaching role, the non-tenure status is looming over their consciousness, which puts them in a "constant vigilance" mode. Consequently, they manage their own figured world based on the mentioned hybrid mode and develop an identity that is arguably different from their tenure-track faculty.

White used the term "disposable academics" (White, 2012, p. 50) in referring to academics under short-term contracts. These academics are at the bottom of the academic hierarchy; thus, they develop an academic identity that is different from the mainstream academics. Their position as the academic underclass with incomplete roles in the academia—focusing only on teaching or short-term research—brings out

a different identity that is described as "other" in the institution (White, 2012, p. 51). The fact that academic identity is more and more determined by the research and publication part further impacts the formation of academic identity of the disposable academics. White does not go further into this group, as she claims that not much is known about this group. However, she argues that the identity performance of this group is "guarded" and "careful" due to their unsafe employment status and the imbalanced power relation with the tenured academics who often act as their course coordinators. White's review further connects the contemporary changes in higher education with academic identity and strengthens the argument that academic identity is more structurally managed in the current world, with the implication of significant loss of academic freedom, and that status plays a significant role in identity. Status is brought by the position in the hierarchy of academics, the university status, and the research outcome.

Similar to this notion, the academics involved in this study also feel that they are different. They relate to the teaching role well and stay in academia to teach. The constant vigilant attitude of PTAs may also explain the way some PTAs refer to themselves. There is a tendency that they refer to themselves as "teach/teaching" (*mengajar*) instead of "lecturers" (*dosen*). The use of a verb instead of a noun to refer to the profession is different from the FTAs, who identify themselves as "lecturers". Two examples are given. "A lecturer seems like what I've said before, having a doctoral degree and doing research … that's a lecturer. So I said 'teach'" (Denise, PTA). Another statement shows a clearer connection between "teach" and "university". "[I] tend to [say] teach, not a lecturer. Teaching is general, universal. [If I said] a lecturer, it shows that you are from a university. It shows that you are a clever person (laughing). I don't want to be seen like that" (Nancy, PTA).

However, Indonesia also has a unique PTA group that does not exactly match the hybrid identity. The existence of legal aliens, academics who are legally full-time but practically part-time, is a sign of a crack in the higher education employment system. Considered the weakest group in the higher education workforce, these academics have the weak bargaining power to negotiate their working conditions. They are often humiliated by working under substandard conditions, especially in salary. The gap between their working conditions and the full-time academics, especially with the civil servant lecturers in a public university, is very significant. This crack in the tight system brings an injustice to this group of academics, in which their bargaining power for better working conditions is low and their choice to move to better academic opportunities in other institutions is uncertain.

As a tenured (or tenure-eligible) academic, these legal aliens' role in academia is more than just teaching, and their employment relation involves the government through the home base instruments. They have potentially deeper engagement with the institution as a legal "full-timer". It is still not clear how they engage with other academic roles to maintain their minimum expected performance, and being legally registered does not always bring positive impacts due to the abusive behavior of some institutions. A follow-up study on this group of academics is badly needed, not only concerning their academic identity but also their basic recognition of human dignity in their potentially abused conditions.

7.7 What to Do Next?

The privatization of big and prestigious higher education institutions in Indonesia has triggered significant pressure on private universities. Being nurtured and deemed prestigious for decades in the Indonesian system provides privatized public institutions with the image of good quality at an affordable price. At the same time, private institutions that have often been branded as a second option have to spend more resources on student recruitment and in managing stricter government quality assurance requirements. The current focus on ranking, international publications, and accreditation requirements forces the institutions to employ full-time academics, although they do not have the financial resources to do it. This is where mastering the "special art to struggle for [their] survival" (Hadihardaja, 1995, p. 40) plays a role.

The choice of action is limited. One option is to unionize the academic workforce to give a voice to the repressed academics and enable the process toward a minimum wage and standardized working conditions in all institutions. However, there are three foreseen difficulties with this option. First, the government already has the standard of a minimum wage, which is equal to the academic certification incentive, although it only serves as a "soft" policy, and the motivation to support this initiative might be low. Secondly, it is debatable whether this union should be founded in all institutions or only in private ones. For public institutions which already have standard civil servant employment, this option will not be popular or taken seriously.

The third potential difficulty for this option is the mindset of teachers that mix worldly and religious values in teaching (see also, Isbah & Sakhiyya, this volume). It is common to find the idea of teaching as a deed that will be paid in the afterlife among religious academics. By religious academics, I do not mean only those who teach religious subjects, but also those who hold their religious values strongly in their daily lives. In Islam, the majority religion in Indonesia, there is a specific teaching that says all deeds of mortals stop when they die except for three matters, and one of them is the sustainable knowledge taught by the person. As long as the knowledge is applied and further taught, the deed will continue. This mindset may further divide support toward initiatives to make the teaching profession further resemble common laborers.

Another option is to move forward with the government's plan to merge small institutions to form larger and more resourceful institutions. It is already in the plan from 2017, and the target is to merge 1,000 private institutions by 2019. However, the process so far has been slow with 310 institutions being merged in 2019 (Petriella, 2019). Both parties, the government and the private institutions, need to evaluate the process and further accelerate it to better meet the target.

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Part III
Education and the State Apparatus: Religion, Law, and Local Politics

Chapter 8
Pesantren in Contemporary Indonesia: Negotiating Between Equity and the Market

M. Falikul Isbah and Zulfa Sakhiyya

8.1 Introduction

Pesantren is a significant part of Islamic education that constitutes more than 28,000 institutions across the archipelago (Isbah, 2020, p. 93). Indonesian education could be broadly categorized into two, namely, the secular-based and religious-based education. Pesantren is an institutional model of Islamic education which has developed and innovated in many ways along with the changing Indonesian education system and broader societal changes. The case of Indonesia's *pesantren* has highlighted the point that religious schooling is not antithetical to modernization (Pohl, 2006). The stereotype that *pesantren* is substandard, underfunded, and under resources and thus unable to equip students to get the benefits from science and technology has proven to be invalid (Lukens-Bull, 2000, 2001).

Today, *pesantren* is part of the broader system of Indonesian state-recognized Islamic education. Within a *pesantren*, one may find state-recognized madrasa, an Islamic university, or other forms of Islamic learning for both the residential students and general public. The recognition is reflected in the enactment of legal and regulatory decrees, the establishment of state agencies supporting *pesantren*, and the greater allocation of state funds to support them. In contrast to other schooling models, however, state support and intervention do not lessen *pesantren* managerial and financial autonomy. *Pesantren* can be led and managed by either Islamic foundation, Islamic mass organization, individual *kyai*, or other non-state entities. In *pesantren*, *santri* (*pesantren* students) learn Islamic knowledge beyond school hours, study Al Qur'an and practice the Islamic way of life through daily timetables from collective prayers, to eat, sleep, and exercise. The comprehensive education offered by

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pesantren ranges from intellectual, spiritual, to moral aspects during their residency in the dormitory (Dhofier, 1999, p. 34; Lukens-Bull, 2000, pp. 39–42).

Previous studies have explored *pesantren* in Indonesia's contemporary era (Dhofier, 1999; Isbah, 2020; Srimulyani, 2012; Steenbrink, 1986; van Bruinessen, 1994; Yunus, 1996), however, none has explicitly linked it with equity issues. For example, Isbah (2020) explores the changing background of its foundation in pre-independent Indonesia and in contemporary times. Lukens-Bull (2019) argues that in the midst of religious conservatism across the globe, *pesantren* has played its role in resisting to the sharia state and maintaining Indonesia's plural and democratic society. Zuhdi (2005, 2006) portrays the gradual recognition and integration of Indonesian Islamic educational institutions, including *pesantren*, into the national education system. In addressing equity issues in *pesantren*, Srimulyani (2007, 2012) focuses on how women negotiate their place in *pesantren* and in the public space. The fact that *pesantren* currently struggles for equity in terms of how it maintains its traditional roots in educating the public while at the same time ensuring that it has sufficient educational funding to provide services has captured our attention.

It is against this backdrop that we explore the net effects of the tension between equity and the market, and argue that *pesantren*'s goal of adapting to modernity has been going hand in hand with their efforts toward maintaining equity. In this chapter, we draw on our empirical data collected from a multi-site research from August to October 2020 ranging from different parts of Indonesia: Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, South Sulawesi, Aceh, and West Nusa Tenggara. In all provinces we covered both "expensive" and "cheap" *pesantren* as well as upper-class and lower-class students. In total, we interviewed 14 students, 7 parents, and 5 *pesantren* leaders and teachers. We selected them purposively with socio-economic and gender distribution in mind. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on constrained mobility and physical contact, we employed several research strategies, and were helped by local research assistants who are able to speak local ethnic languages and have social networks in their regions. We conducted face to face interviews with students and *pesantren* leaders in Yogyakarta, and online interviews with two *pesantren* leaders in Central Java and East Java. For informants in Aceh, we were helped by a local research assistant who conducted a phone interview with students, parents, and teachers, followed up by instant messaging chats. In South Sulawesi and West Nusa Tenggara, we were helped by local research assistants who conducted face to face interviews and field observations in *pesantren* and parents' houses.

The argument central to this chapter is that despite the increasing number of Muslim middle class in the deepening Islamization of the country, *pesantren* has maintained its consistency in providing alternative education and catering to those of lower-class origin while simultaneously adapting to modernity. To pursue the argument, we firstly overview the historical trajectories of *pesantren* from pre-independence, early independence, to contemporary development. The shift of *pesantren's* position in the national education landscape is then analyzed by looking at the social processes of mainstreaming *pesantren* in the national education system. Next, we synthesize our interview data to explain the modernized features of *pesantren* as experienced and observed by those who manage, learn in, and choose

pesantren. Finally, we conclude with a discussion regarding the struggle experienced by *pesantren* to reconcile the tension between equity principles and market orientation.

8.2 *Pesantren* in Pre-Independent Indonesia

From the early arrival of Islam and during colonial time, what today we call *pesantren* played some key roles in educating the populace. First, it was an effective instrument of religious propagation in all regions which later unified under independent Indonesia. Second, it was a further institutionalization of the teaching Islamic doctrines to the people, starting from learning to read Al Qur'an, conducting Islamic rituals (*ibadah*), understanding Islamic theology, internalizing morality, and comprehending Islamic law (Yunus, 1996, pp. 34–55). The teaching of Islamic doctrines at that time also played a role in providing references for strengthening social order during political and legal authority crises. For example, it taught about marriage, buying and selling, heredity, and forbade theft, murder, and drunkenness. Third, it became an effective social fabric of identity politics to build a new nationalism and anti-colonialism movement (Azra, 2006, pp. 72–73; Laffan, 2003).

In addition, *pesantren* has played a significant role in introducing the foundation of literacy culture when most of the population was still illiterate. For example, 94 percent of the adult population in Java was illiterate in 1930 (Jones, 1976, p. 44). Around this decade, there had been a wide distribution of Islamic books and print media using Arabic letters and Malay/Javanese language in Arabic letters known as *Arab pegon* or *Jawi*. This long-established Arabic letter-based intellectual tradition is part of the global network and circulation of canonical books on Islamic sciences in Islamic world locally called *kitab kuning*. *Pesantren* in today's Indonesia has been engaged in these canons and networks since seventeenth century. Even the study of Indonesians in some learning centers in Mecca and Cairo has also used *kitab kuning* (van Bruinessen, 1990, 1994, 1995). Nevertheless, during the colonial era the literacy rate of Muslims was far below the Christian population due to the late access to missions and Dutch schools, especially in outer Java. Meanwhile, most Muslims kept their distance from the Dutch in many ways including education. In such a situation pesantren was the forefront of learning tradition among Muslims especially those who identified themselves as practicing Muslims or locally called *santri* (cf. Jones, 1976, pp. 55–56).

8.3 *Pesantren* in Independent Indonesia

A decade or so before the birth of independent Indonesia, many notable Indonesian students returned from Mecca and initiated a more systematic learning model of Islamic knowledge. Among them were Ahmad Dahlan who started an Islamic school

in Yogyakarta and later founded a mass organization called Muhammadiyah in 1912. Around the same time, Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari established *Pesantren Tebuireng* in Jombang, East Java and later consolidated networks of traditionalist ulama into a new mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926. Afterward, there were many other intellectual figures such as Muhammad As'ad, Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid, Abdullah Ahmad and Abdul Karim Amrullah who reformed Islamic schooling beyond Java island (Halim, 2015; Isbah, 2016, pp. 21–26; Yunus, 1996).

From that period, *pesantren* has become an important milieu for nurturing new cadres of Islamic propagation and political consolidation. For example, the strong support to the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) especially in Java was based on the network of ulama who were the students of Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari. The case was similar to other mass organizations like the reformist Muhammadiyah which was based on the network of reformist ulama in Yogyakarta and Minangkabau ethnic origins from West Sumatera. This fact shows that pesantren was part of political grouping and consolidation prior to independence and the state formation afterward.

When the newly independent Indonesia passed its early formative political and administrative structure, those ulama had a considerably strong political base vis-a-vis the so-called nationalist camp. One of their important political gains was the state recognition of Islamic schooling. When the government demanded a more structured curricula and formalized schooling model, many *pesantren* tried to establish a more structured schooling model called *madrasa* within their complex and incorporated non-religious subject as requested by the state (Isbah, 2020, pp. 82–87; Zuhdi, 2006).

Politically speaking, *pesantren* underwent its own historical continuation in independent Indonesia, while public and private secular schools were a continuation of Dutch schooling system. This double-track historical origin was later reflected in the formation of government ministries to manage and supervise educational affairs in Indonesia. The Ministry of Education and Culture supervises secular schools from early education to tertiary level, while the Ministry of Religious Affairs supervises Islamic schools from the lowest to the highest level (Azra et al., 2007; Hefner, 2009; Subhan, 2015).

It is important to note that today's *pesantren* education is a learning model used by a wide array of Islamic groups in Indonesia, from the traditionalist, the modernist, to the purist stream or *wahabi-salafi*. Likewise, the existence of those kinds of *pesantren* is generally in conjunction with the demographic strongholds of those Islamic groups. For example, *pesantren* which resemble the characteristics and learning content of traditional Islam are generally affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama and are found mostly throughout Java and Lampung. The traditionalists Islam with their *pesantren* tradition are also found in outer Java, such as Al Khairaat in Central Sulawesi, As'adiyah and Darut Dakwah wal Irsyad in South Sulawesi, Nahdlatul Wathan in West Nusatenggara, and Al Washliyah in North Sumatera. The modernist like Muhammadiyah has *pesantren* in a number of places but the popular ones are found in Yogyakarta, Persatuan Islam in Garut, West Java, and Al Irsyad in Surakarta, Central Java. The most recent development is the mushrooming of *wahabi-salafi pesantren* in various places throughout Indonesia, though its size is relatively small. Nonetheless, the number of *pesantren* affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama exceeds sharply those of other

Islamic groups. Therefore, most policy and public discussion of pesantren refer to Nahdlatul Ulama's model of *pesantren*.

8.4 Mainstreaming *Pesantren* in National Education

Four significant factors contributed to the efforts of mainstreaming *pesantren* in national education in Indonesia: the deepening Islamization especially among the emerging Muslim middle class, the centering of Islam in post-*reformasi* political configuration, "ayo mondok" movement, stronger state accommodation and endorsement, and the more intense circulation of information about *pesantren* and its living culture in online media. First, the rising trend of deepening Islamization or Islamic conservatism (Banker, 2019; Rakhmani, 2016, 2019; van Bruinessen, 2013) has impacted not only on the perception of the roles of religion in public life, including religion-based education (Pohl, 2006), but also on the growing influence of Islam upon the social, economic and political spheres of the country. *Pesantren*, which used to be considered second-class education with myriad problems such as substandard, underfunded, and low quality, has now gained popularity.

Based on a study in the 1960s, a Dutch Anthropologist B. J. Boland quoted an anecdote from one of his informants to represent the general tendency of the educational preference of Indonesian Muslim parents at that time:

> Some pious villagers still send their children to an old-fashioned *pesantren*. The head of the *pesantren* sends their children to a modern madrasa. The teachers there have their children attend a state secondary school in order to continue at an Islamic university. The professors at an Islamic university try to get a place for their children at a state university. And the professors at a state university send their children to study –abroad. (Boland, 1982, p. 123)

Such general tendencies are no longer valid today given the remarkable growth of *pesantren* numbers as well as their students today. Referring to various previous studies and statistical data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Isbah (2020, p. 93) notes an unprecedented increase after the regime change in 1998. Our interviews with some *pesantren* leaders also strengthen this argument. A female *pesantren* leader in Pati, Central Java pointed out some new developments and trends. Firstly, in the 1990s she saw many *pesantren*-educated parents, especially those who live in urban areas, not sending their children to *pesantren*. Instead, they sent them to secular schools expecting easier entry to secular universities or the urban labor market. Today, this trend has reversed. She received many students from parents who graduated from her *pesantren* some twenty years ago and most of them live in urban areas and work in middle-upper professional jobs. She viewed a changing perception among *santri* people in urban areas about *pesantren* education. Second, her pesantren received more and more students from parents who never studied in *pesantren*. Some scholars (e.g. Fealy, 2008; Hasan, 2009) have pointed out the deepening Islamization among Indonesians, and perhaps this changing educational preference is a further expression of it (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Number of pesantren and pupils (1977–2016)

Year	Number of pesantren	Number of pupils
1977	4,195	677,384
1997	9,388	1,770,760
2006–2007	17,506	3,289,141
2011–2012	27,230	3,759,198
2016	28,194	4,290,262

Source Cited from Isbah (2020, p. 93)

Secondly, there has been a systematic promotion of *pesantren* education over the last decade. Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization has a division named Rabitah Ma'ahid al Islamiyah (RMI, *pesantren* association) which demonstrated continual creative campaigns through public events and social media postings under the hashtag "Ayo Mondok", literally means "Let's Study at *Pondok* (*pesantren*)". The hashtag was initially introduced by the Central Java and East Java region of RMI before 2010. The key person behind this campaign was Abdul Ghoffar Rozin, the Central Java regional leader of RMI and Lukman Harist Dimyathi who lead a prominent *pesantren* in Pacitan, East Java. The background behind the campaign was their concern that many *pesantren* were unable to maintain their sustainability due to low student enrollment or the lack of cadres for leadership. Another trigger was the appearance of new *pesantren* which teaches and promotes exclusive, not moderate Islam. The other was the striking spread of Islamic radicalism among young people who are mostly educated in secular schools (interview with Tutik Nurul Jannah, the leader of Pesanten Maslakul Huda, Pati, 1 August 2020). The campaign was seen as successful in promoting pesantren education to wider public especially parents who do not have a background of *pesantren* education. The "Ayo Mondok" campaign was then brought to national coverage when Abdul Ghoffar Rozin was appointed as the chairman of the central leadership of RMI in 2010, and made the magnitude of the campaign broader.

The winning of Joko Widodo in the 2014 presidential election and the broader political accommodation of Nahdlatul Ulama's political interest in his administration created a more spacious opportunity and funding for the promotion and support for *pesantren* education, especially those which are affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama (Fealy, 2018). For example, in 2015 President Joko Widodo set the 22nd of October as the National Santri Day (Akuntono, 2015). This decision was a political gesture of state recognition of a historic moment in 22nd of October 1945 when pesantren leaders and their students (*santri*) fought against a military aggression of the Allies and the Dutch in Surabaya. The event was an important symbol of *kyai* and *santri's* contribution to the defending of the country's independence. Today, this recognition provides a symbolic political capital for Nahdlatul Ulama and the pesantren world for playing their roles in the Indonesian public life. Then, from 2016 onward RMI was given funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sport to organize Liga Santri Nusantara, a national soccer championship for *pesantren* students. The event was widely covered by mass media and the final game was broadcasted by national TV.

President Joko Widodo himself attended some public events held by RMI ("Hadiri Festival Shalawat", 2018; Pradigdo, 2017). Ultimately, in 2019 the president released Law Number 18 on *pesantren* which provides a more solid foundation for state recognition and funding support to *pesantren* (Soebahar, 2019; Ucu, 2019). However, there were some objections from some Muslim organizations other than Nahdlatul Ulama which viewed that the definition of *pesantren* in the law is too narrow, reflecting only the characteristics of *pesantren* affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama, like the use of *kitab kuning* (classic books on Islamic sciences) as a standard feature of *pesantren*. In fact, *pesantren* affiliated to modernist Islamic organization like Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, and Hidayatullah do not use *kitab kuning*, but Arabic book from a more contemporary scholarship instead (Permana, 2019). In short, during the Joko Widodo presidency, *pesantren* education, especially those which are affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama, is gaining a tremendous endorsement from the country's political structure.

The other factor contributing to the circulation of information about *pesantren*, kyai, and their living tradition in the public sphere is some online media managed by *pesantren* graduates. NU online (www.nu.or.id), *alif.id*, *bincangsyariah.com* are among the current top list of online Islamic media in Indonesia ("100 Situs Islam di Indonesia", 2020). This is a "counter attack" to the previous domination of Islamic online media by more conservative and puritan Islamic media like *eramuslim.com*, *hidayatullah.com*, and so forth from the early 2000s.

Along with the broader access to the Internet-based media, what are the impacts of this change to people's perception and attitude toward *pesantren* education? Some *pesantren* leaders admitted that they witnessed a changing mode of people deciding to send their children to *pesantren*. In the past, parents chose *pesantren* for their children based on their own experience, information from relatives and friends, or their closed social circles. Today, many parents, even from faraway places, may make the decision based on information they found on the Internet. Tutik Nurul Jannah, a *pesantren* leader in Pati, said that she received some students from Pekanbaru, Riau after the parents read her Facebook post. In contemporary Indonesia, many *pesantren* leaders are active on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube sharing their *pesantren* activities and the regular study activities there. For example, a widely respected *pesantren* leader Kyai Mushofa Bisri of Rembang broadcast his regular sermon during the month of *Ramadlan*. Thousands of people watch him on Facebook or Youtube from wherever they live. Such postings may appeal to people who do not have educational experience in *pesantren*, then intend to send their children to *pesantren*. Those who have *pesantren* experience have an opportunity to recollect and maintain the living tradition they acquired during their past study through virtual exposure.

In summary, Indonesian *pesantren* is in its emerging phase over the last decade due to a number of simultaneous factors: the increasing affluent Muslim middle class especially in urban and metropolitan area, the stronger support and endorsement by the state as a result of political engagement by NU elites and politicians from Islamic

parties, and the more intense circulation of information about *pesantren* and its living culture in public spheres especially through social media. All of those have leveled up the social standing of *pesantren* before the Indonesian public, in a stark contrast to the public perception of *pesantren* two or three decades ago.

8.5 *Pesantren* in Contemporary Indonesia

This section explores the contemporary features of *pesantren* as experienced and observed by those who manage, learn in and choose pesantren by drawing on our data. It consisted of interview data covering eight *pesantren* over four islands, from Sumatra (Aceh), West Nusa Tenggara, Java (Central and East Java), and South Sulawesi as regions with a strong tradition of *pesantren* education, as well as statistical and policy documents of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. We interviewed the heads of the *pesantren* foundation, teachers, santri, and parents who are the main stakeholders of *pesantren*. There are three main features that mark the contemporary *pesantren*, namely, schooling model, curriculum, and modernity vs. equity.

8.5.1 Schooling Model and Learning Arrangement

Soeharto's ascendance to power in 1966 marked a more systematic integration of Islamic schools into the national education system. The integration was part of the larger modernization project by the regime. From this period, discussing *pesantren* seemed to be mixed with discussing madrasa, as many madrasa were part of the *pesantrens'* educational arrangement within the *pesantren* complex. In 1975 Soeharto administration released a regulation stipulating that madrasa had to allocate 70% of its teaching hours for secular subjects, while Islamic subjects were reserved with 30% of the teaching hours. This policy provoked controversies among Islamic educators, especially from *pesantren* community. Responses from *pesantren* leaders could be summarized into two camps. First, those who kept the educational arrangement of their *pesantren* away from government's regulation and focused on teaching classic Islamic sciences. This model is called *pesantren salaf*, and some notable examples are Pesantren Lirboyo in Kediri, East Java, and Pesantren Al Anwar in Sarang, Central Java. Second, those who managed madrasa as regulated by the state and delivered a significant portion of Islamic sciences out of the school hours. Normally the students of this type of *pesantren* spend 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. in madrasa, and learn *pesantren's* Islamic subjects in the afternoon and night in mosques or dormitories. This model is called *pesantren kholaf*, and this is the most widespread model throughout Indonesia up to now.

Today, the madrasa system including those within the *pesantren* complex becomes more integrated into the national education system. The Law No. 2/1989 on the

National Education System recognized madrasa as formal schools with Islamic identity. Furthermore, Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System strengthened their position and integration by stipulating the same recognition of madrasah's graduates in both the job market and entry to higher educational levels.

This equal state recognition provides a positive standing for *pesantren* before the Indonesian Muslim public. Before getting this status, many parents were worried about sending their children to *pesantren* as it did not provide a state-recognized certificate. Further consequence of this was that *pesantren* graduates were unable to compete in the formal job market such as government and private sector employment. The common occupation they worked was in agriculture, trading, and other self-employed jobs. With the state recognition through the madrasa system, many *pesantren* graduates are able to access a diverse range of employment, from civil servant in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, teacher in madrasa or lecturer in Islamic tertiary education, to politicians and public sector officials.

Another recent significant development related to *pesantren* graduates with the madrasa system is the growing trend among them to continue their study at Islamic tertiary education. The post-*reformasi* era witnessed an unprecedented development of Islamic higher education in both institutional capacity and institutional number. There are now 24 state Islamic universities and 719 private Islamic universities, and 108 faculties of Islamic sciences in secular universities across the country (DIKTIS, 2020). Those institutions today can be found in almost every main city of all provinces.

8.5.2   Curriculum Design and Orientation

Based on our broad observation and encounters with *pesantren* communities, we found that different *pesantren* put different emphasis as their "brand" though the majority do not resemble a special feature compared to others. For example, some *pesantren* highlight their excellence in teaching Islamic law (*fiqh*) like some *pesantren* in Kajen, Pati, Central Java, while some others show their priority in Al Qur'an memorization like Pesantren Yanbu'ul Qur'an in Kudus, Central Java. The other significant number is *pesantren* with an emphasis in foreign language (Arabic and English) teaching like Pondok Modern Gontor in Ponorogo, East Java and its branches in many provinces. Those kinds of *pesantren* still exist today and have a considerable number of students. The last decade also witnessed a new phenomenon of some *pesantrens* highlighting their primacy in preparing students with academic excellence in order to get entry to top universities. That means, they provide natural science, mathematics, and social sciences like secular schooling. This tendency can be found in Pesantren Amanatul Ummah in Mojokerto, East Java.

8.5.3   Adapting to Modernity Versus Maintaining Equity

Opposed to the allegation that *pesantren* was configured as "anti modern" due to its traditional root in Indonesia, our empirical data demonstrate that *pesantren* does have the desire to modernize and to meet the modern needs, as many critical scholars have argued (Lukens-bull, 2019; Pohl, 2006). In meeting the modern demands, *pesantren* has made considerable adjustments in terms of its curriculum, educational infrastructure, as well as its market orientation.

Across the large and various types of *pesantren* in which this research is situated, there are at least three distinctive categories of *pesantren* which relate differently to socio-economic background, aspiration, and imagination. Different groups of parents and santris go to certain categories of *pesantren* and carry with them certain expectations about living in the modern world.

First, there is a category of local *pesantren*, which is relatively small in size and offers affordable tuition. This type of *pesantren* arranges its schooling model in various ways. Some manage formal madrasa with a mix of Islamic and secular sciences, while others keep a more traditional schooling focusing on Islamic sciences only. The majority of its *santris* are from lower-income families. For example, in Yogyakarta we observed a small *pesantren* with about 30 santris who are mostly coming from lower-income families. One of them is Dani, a second-year high school student. His father is a fisherman and his mother is a former migrant worker who worked in Saudi Arabia and Taiwan for 6 years when he was in primary school. To these families, sending their children to *pesantren* is a family dream. In addition, some parents even aspire to upward social mobility for their children once they graduate from *pesantren*. This issue is discussed further in the next section.

Second, there is a more cosmopolitan, high-profile, and well-maintained infrastructure with high tuition. This modernized *pesantren* uses English and Arabic as its medium of instruction and even daily languages beyond schooling processes (in the boarding houses). It is mostly the middle and upper class who can afford the high tuition to compensate for the high-tech and well-maintained educational infrastructure. Pesantren Amanatul Ummah in Mojokerto, East Java and Pesantren Al Ikhlas, Bone, South Sulawesi represent this type.

However, the boundary between the local and cosmopolitan *pesantren* is not fixed, as there are borderline *pesantren*—the third type of *pesantren*. This is a modernized *pesantren* whose students are fairly mixed, coming from various socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, they use cross-subsidy to run the daily operation of the Islamic boarding school. Students from lower-class families need to provide a letter of socio-economic assessment from the village chief to support the cross-subsidy request.

All *pesantrens* we studied are managed by private foundations, each of which operates philanthropic unit to manage *zakat, infaq,* and *shadaqah* funds. Students from lower socio-economic background are commonly supported by this fund. For example, the famous Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang, East Java has LSPT (*Lembaga Sosial Pondok Tebuireng* or Social Unit of Pesantren Tebuireng). Every month, this

unit was able to collect around IDR 200 million through a donation box located in the cemetery complex of the *Pesantren*. With the fund, LSPT has been able to sponsor around 200 out of 3,000 students studying in the *Pesantren*. A much smaller *pesantren* in Yogyakarta also operates a similar philanthropic unit, but with a much smaller amount of fund they were able to collect. The unit was able to sponsor 4 out of 150 students in the *Pesantren*.

The attempts demonstrated by those *pesantrens* in using philantrophic scholarship and cross-subsidizing their students show some concerns on equity. Those *pesantrens* which charge relatively low fees have catered to the needs of *santris* from lower socio-economic background. These *pesantrens* have sustained their intellectual tradition and concerns on access by maintaining low fees, or even free of charge. However, other *pesantrens* which charge relatively high fees and attract *santris* from middle-upper class families often waive the fees from philanthropic unit or apply the cross-subsidy mechanism to support *santris* from lower socio-economic background.

8.6   Pesantren, Life Dreams, and Aspired Social Mobility

Relating the discussion of *pesantren* to career aspirations and life dreams is a complex topic. Most literature on education and career aspiration centers upon the question whether the educational institutions provide the students with knowledge and skills that are relevant to labor markets. The output of this educational model is seen as human capital and its success is measured with employability rate (Absor & Utomo, 2017; Humburg et al., 2013; Sziraczki et al., 2004). Our findings do not fit to this logic as Indonesian Muslims who send their children to *pesantren*, and the pupils themselves, generally hold typical life dreams in which they mix between worldly success and religious spirit. For example, Rubayyah, a mother of three girls studying in a *pesantren* in Aceh dreams of a successful future for her daughters. When she was asked about the types of job she wishes for the three girls, she did not provide an exact answer but tried to convince us that if the girls are equipped with adequate religious knowledge, they will find blessed ways in their future life.

Likewise, Ibu Syukri, a mother of a *pesantren* student in West Nusa Tenggara shared her view about the future life dreams for her son:

> I want my children to learn Islamic knowledge. It's okay if they are not rich, what is most important is they have integrity and good characters. Lest them be someone but incapable of differentiating which is good or bad. My expectation is at least they can be like me, no matter how much fortune we have, we are always grateful. I hope they can be white collar workers, but if they cannot be one, that's alright as long as they have integrity and good deeds. What is the worth of becoming someone important but deceiving others. I hope my children learn Islamic knowledge well, and then they can find jobs after having sufficient religious knowledge. Job is secondary, and it is their business. (interview with Ibu Syukri, West Nusa Tenggara)

All parents we interviewed uphold religiosity and moral integrity much stronger than future career opportunities for their children. They prefer to see their children as

religious and honest people in the future, rather than expecting them to have bright careers or become rich.

A more concrete imagined career aspiration is becoming preachers. In South Sulawesi, some parents admitted that they are attracted to send their children to *pesantren* after attending religious sermons delivered by *pesantren* students or teachers conducting *da'wah* outreach in their areas. Many *pesantren* Indonesia have a regular program of sending their final year students to an Islamic propagation outreach. The students deliver sermons in village mosques or other religious gatherings. In such missions, rhetoric capability sometimes appeals to the attendants who later think of sending their children to *pesantren.*

Propagating Islam through oratory preaching has been popular among ordinary people, from lower, middle, to upper class, in both rural and urban areas. The frequency of such Islamic preaching program on TV and social media appearance has added the market value of oratory preaching (Fakhruroji, 2019; Millie, 2008; Rakhmani, 2016). Today, we found many people, mostly *pesantren* graduates, became full-time preachers with remarkable popularity, striking wealth, and even luxurious lifestyles. Many of whom are active in social media and show off their elite social network and sometimes upper-class lifestyle. The best examples of those are Gus Miftah of Yogyakarta and Ustadz Yusuf Mansur. Perhaps, the Muslim public equates their success as Islamic preacher with the success of celebrity as both are based on popularity. The story of some parents in South Sulawesi we found might represent the perception held by some Indonesian Muslim families that becoming popular *ustadz* or Islamic preachers is a worthy form of future career for their children. In fact, that is not something new. Becoming a *kyai* or Muslim scholar had been a symbol of success for *pesantren* students from long time. For example, Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari of Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang was highly respected as most of his students became *kyai* and founded their own *pesantren* throughout Java. The difference is, however, that contemporary preachers are more closely associated with public oratory preaching, not community leadership based on scholarly authority as we found in the past.

The most frequently mentioned form of aspired career among the *pesantren* students we interviewed are teachers. In Muslim community context, teachers may resemble either formal or informal occupation. It can be a professional teacher working in schools and receiving regular wages, or it can be someone who teaches how to read Al Qur'an and basic Islamic sciences to neighboring kids where they live. The last type of teacher may spend only one or two hours in the afternoon in a mosque or prayer hall *(musholla)* and does not expect to receive a regular wage. In Aceh, all three female students we interviewed said that becoming teachers is their top career aspiration. We found the same career aspiration, especially among female students, in all of our fieldwork sites. In Islam, Islamic sciences are an integral part of Islamic belief, as practical guidance to articulate the belief at the practical level. For example, to be able to pray correctly, a Muslim needs to learn how to recite Al Qur'an as the Qur'anic verses are the main source of recitation in the praying, and how to move the body parts in all pray movements. Such knowledge is transferred through Islamic learning tradition living in the community. There is a deep living

culture in the *pesantren* world that after the learning phase, students must transfer their knowledge to the wider public. Therefore, the modest form to meet this mission is by becoming teachers. This is somehow different from a secular perspective on teachers who are regarded as a professional—and paid—job.

From a sociological perspective in Indonesian context, nonetheless, aspiration to be teachers among educated people can be seen as an imaginary social mobility. Many *pesantren* students coming from families working in agriculture and petty traders hold a view that becoming teachers is better than working in the farming or traditional market. Although this view is not always valid economically, teachers are seen as community members with respected status for their education and social role in the community.

The last issue relevant to career aspiration and social mobility we found is the more widespread aspiration of *pesantren* students to continue their study at the tertiary level (cf. Nilan, 2009). This trend proliferates in both lower-class and middle-upper class *pesantren.* The difference is in their preference of universities. Students of lower-class *pesantren* tend to aspire to study Islamic disciplines at Islamic universities. Some of them prefer to go to the available universities in their *pesantren* complex. We found this tendency in lower-class *pesantren* in West Nusa Tenggara and Aceh. For them, acquiring a bachelor degree will improve their chance to get good jobs in the future. The top list of occupations in their mind is becoming a teacher of Islamic sciences.

Meanwhile, those in the middle-upper class *pesantren* dream of getting entry to Indonesian elite state universities like Bandung Institute of Technology, University of Indonesia, and Gadjah Mada University, or studying in Al Azhar University in Cairo or universities in Saudi Arabia. Pesantren Al Ikhlas in Bone, South Sulawesi is an upper-class *pesantren* with good standard facilities and infrastructure. Most students are from middle-upper-class families such as government employees, politicians, and successful entrepreneurs throughout South Sulawesi and around. Almost all students there dream of continuing their study at Indonesian top secular universities or Islamic universities in the Middle East. Moreover, Pesantren Amanatul Ummah in Mojokerto, East Java highlights their success in preparing their students to get entry in some top secular universities as their comparative advantage. Unsurprisingly, some parents from the middle-upper class are attracted to this promotion.

The discussion above highlights the tension and competing values between neoliberal and religious narratives. The aspiration to become teachers or preachers, and further study at tertiary level is built on both the worldly narratives of economic prosperity, respected social status, as well as career success but simultaneously also the narratives of sacred religious missions. While such competing values might also be at play out of the *pesantren* world (both by parents and students), we witnessed that *pesantren* has reproduced the tension in a much more intense manner through their 24-hours learning model and stronger spiritual relation between students and teachers. Therefore, the internalization of those values is arguably inculcated deeply in shaping the subjectivation of the students, probably the parents too as most of them are religious people who choose *pesantren* as the educational track for their children.

8.7 Concluding Thoughts

Bringing the arguments together, we conclude that in contemporary Indonesia, *pesantren* has been caught in the intersection between its economic orientation to survive in the increasingly neoliberal world with its commitment to maintain equity principles, that is educating the populace. Gradual but a significant transformation in its learning arrangement, teaching content, and broader modernization attempts has resulted in the diverse institutional arrangements and visions of Indonesian *pesantren*. This transformation is a result of the state's modernization project, the changing aspiration of parents due to their changing socio-economic situation, and the interpretation of *pesantren* leader over what is needed by future Muslim generation. To sum up, balancing the market orientation and equity mission is a key for the survival and continued development of this old learning tradition and model.

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Chapter 9
Courts and the Right to Education in Indonesia

Andrew Rosser and Anuradha Joshi

9.1 Introduction

Courts have become increasingly important fora for struggles over the right to educa-tion[1] in developing country democracies (Gauri & Brinks, 2008). For proponents of rights-based approaches to development, this is a positive development. Litigation, they have argued, can be an effective way for poor and marginalized citizens to promote the fulfillment of their rights because it enables them to hold governments accountable for policies or bureaucratic decisions that harm them (Khan & Petrasek, 2014). Yet several scholars have questioned whether litigation actually has this effect (Hunt, 1993; McCann, 1994). Many constraints exist for litigants: the ability to build cases, get legal representation, receive redress that is enforced, and have a broader impact on the claims of others by setting precedent. In addition, the ideological biases of legal institutions, restrictions on legal standing, conservative judges, and a lack of legal aid make going to court a strategy with remote chances of success. Such prob-lems are particularly acute in relation to the right to education because, in contrast to civil and political rights, social rights have direct implications for resource allocation within society.

This paper addresses this debate through an analysis of the Indonesian case. Like many other developing country democracies, Indonesia has experienced an increase

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[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the principal foundation of the right to education in international law, does not define the right to education. But the Right to Education Project (nd) notes that it constitutes universal, free, and compulsory primary education, universal availability of secondary education, and equal access to higher education as per capacity. The progressive introduction of free education at all levels is an aspirational goal.

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in litigation related to the right to education (hereafter R2E litigation) in recent years
(Nardi Jr., 2018). We argue that this litigation has served to promote fulfillment of
the right to education by precipitating policy changes protecting or enhancing poor
and marginalized citizens' access to education. At the same time, its impact has
been contingent on several factors: (i) the availability of accessible legal pathways
for defending and promoting education rights; (ii) the willingness and capacity of
NGOs to act as Support Structures for Legal Mobilization (SSLMs) by providing
funding and expertise; (iii) support from key sections of the judiciary; and (iv) wider
political mobilization supportive of litigants' aims. There are indications that some
of these factors no longer prevail, raising doubts about the likely future effectiveness
of R2E litigation. In terms of the aforementioned debate, we thus conclude that
while R2E litigation *can* be an effective means for promoting fulfillment of the right
to education in developing country democracies, its effectiveness will likely differ
across time and place reflecting variation in these factors.

In presenting this argument, we begin by outlining a conceptual framework for
understanding the origins, nature, and impact of human rights litigation in developing
country democracies. We then examine Indonesia's experience with R2E litigation.
In the final section, we speculate on the likely future effectiveness of R2E litigation
in Indonesia and consider the broader implications of the analysis.

9.2   Conceptual Framework

In analyzing the origins, nature, and impact of human rights litigation in developing
country democracies, scholars have emphasized the effects of four factors: (i) judicial
attitudes, ideological commitments, and strategic choices; and the way these have
shaped their and courts' propensity to engage in judicial activism or restraint (Baxi,
1985); (ii) the institutional design of legal and court systems and how this shapes
who can litigate for human rights, in what ways, and on what terms (Wilson, 2009);
(iii) the extent of citizens' access to SSLMs consisting of three types of resources:
(a) organized group support—that is, the presence of "repeat players" with extensive
experience using the court system; (b) financing—including from private sources
but especially from government sources such as legal aid; and (c) the structure of
the legal profession—particularly its ethnic diversity and the scale of legal firms,
both of which potentially influence prospective litigants' ability to find a lawyer
willing to pursue a human rights-related court case (Epp, 1998); and (iv) the wider
political and social struggles that have underlain human rights litigation (Santos &
Rodriguez-Garavito, 2005).

We believe it is important to consider the effects of all four factors because they
all, in one way or another, influence the origins, nature, and impact of human rights
litigation. For the most part, scholars writing about human rights litigation in devel-
oping country democracies have so far only focused on one or two of these factors
and given little attention to the others because their analyzes have sought to illustrate
the effects of their chosen variables rather than present a more holistic account.

By contrast, we argue for an approach that is both more holistic and more ordered. It is more holistic because it incorporates the full array of factors that have been emphasized in the literature. It also incorporates consideration of the fact that judicial decisions—even rights-friendly ones—rarely bring rights-related struggles to an end but rather simply shift them to new terrain—that is, the implementation of these decisions by government departments and agencies (Epp, 2010). It is more ordered because it proposes a hierarchical and staged analysis. Specifically, it suggests that to understand the origins, nature, and impact of human rights litigation in developing country democracies, we need to first understand the nature of struggles over relevant government policy and its implementation in particular contexts (structural factors) because these are ultimately what produce rights-based claims. We then need to understand how institutional and agential factors shape whether these claims lead to litigation and, if so, the form that such litigation takes and the scope for positive judicial and governmental responses. Our approach is summarized in Fig. 9.1.

Conceptual Framework
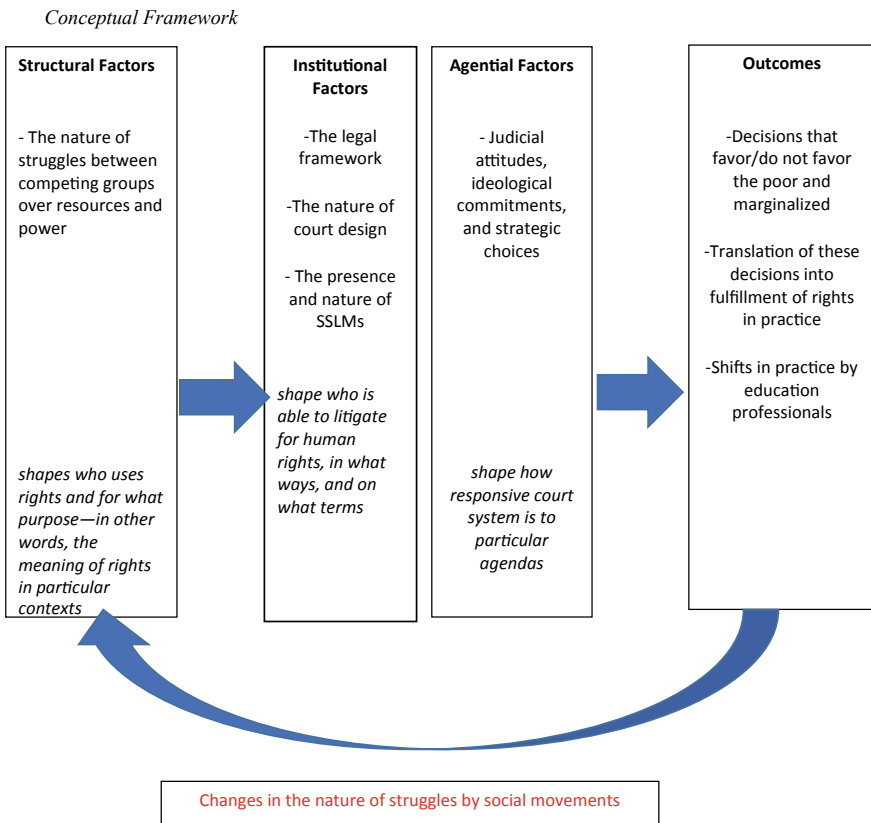
Fig. 9.1 Conceptual framework

This approach is based on the notion that human rights only become imbued with meaning when specific groups use them to achieve particular goals. Much analysis of human rights litigation assumes that human rights are natural and that their meaning is self-evident and constant across contexts. We argue, by contrast, that their meaning is only apparent when linked to specific interests and agendas and seen in the context of concrete struggles in particular places and moments in time. Human rights can be used for quite distinct, even contradictory, purposes depending on who uses them, the goals they wish to achieve, and the contexts in which they operate. Rights are thus malleable as to their political purpose and policy implications. This, in turn, indicates that the meaning of human rights is inevitably linked to struggles over access to resources and power as they play out in specific political, social, and historical contexts. Accordingly, we give analytical primacy to the final factor above: the political and social struggles that have underlain human rights litigation.

A central element of our approach is to identify the principal groups involved in struggles over education policy and its implementation in specific contexts; decipher their respective interests, agendas, and forms of leverage over policy-making and implementation; delineate how they promote or contest human rights and associated state obligations; and, finally, understand how rights-oriented litigation promotes or challenges these interests and agendas. The other factors mentioned above—that is, those related to institutional factors (such as court design and the nature of SSLMs) and agential factors (judges' attitudes, ideological commitments, and strategic choices)—enter the analysis as intervening variables influencing whether groups mobilizing rights or obligations can access the court system and on what terms, and the extent to which this system is receptive to their causes.

There is much in common between our approach and "subaltern cosmopolitan legality" (Santos & Rodriguez-Garavito, 2005). According to these scholars, the nature, use, and effect of law are primarily shaped by the interests of the transnational capitalist class and, in particular, its interest in promoting neoliberal economic and social policy reform. At the same time, though, poor and marginalized citizens can make effective use of the law—especially human rights—to advance demands for social justice. Subaltern cosmopolitan legality, they say, is a bottom-up perspective that focuses on: (i) how poor and marginalized citizens use human rights and other aspects of the law to challenge hegemonic projects such as neoliberalism; (ii) the importance of political as well as legal mobilization in these efforts; and (iii) the way that poor and marginalized groups operate across scales through alliances with transnational non-governmental actors and the use of extra-national legal mechanisms. Overall, it emphasizes the progressive potential of law—and especially human rights—at the same time that it acknowledges the effects of unequal power relationships on the nature of the law and its operation.

Our approach differs from subaltern cosmopolitan legality in that it views human rights as a tool that can be used by a range of actors, not just the poor and marginalized, to advance their interests. There are tensions between notions of human rights and neoliberalism (O'Connell, 2007). There are also tensions between notions of human rights and the predatory behavior on the part of political and bureaucratic officials that pervades many developing countries. At the same time, members of the middle

class are better placed than the poor and marginalized to seek fulfillment of their human rights in the marketplace because they can purchase the goods and services they require. We would accordingly expect the poor and marginalized to mobilize human rights more often than political, bureaucratic, and corporate elites or members of the middle class. But we are also conscious that human rights can be mobilized by such groups as they have, for instance, in health rights litigation in Latin America (Bergallo, 2011). In this respect, our approach is both bottom-up and top-down.

9.3 Education Rights Litigation in Indonesia

9.3.1 Structural Factors

R2E litigation in Indonesia has its origins in the nature of the country's education system as it evolved under the New Order (the authoritarian regime that ruled Indonesia from 1966 to 1998) and the struggles over education policy and its implementation that were unleashed by its collapse and the country's subsequent transition to democratic and decentralized rule.

The New Order dramatically expanded access to education by building thousands of public schools and recruiting hundreds of thousands of teachers to staff them, particularly between the early 1970s and the early 1980s when the country was awash with petrodollars as a result of the international oil boom. But it failed to ensure that children, having started school, completed it, and did little to improve the quality of education. Academic standards were low, teacher quality poor, teacher absenteeism rates high, learning outcomes poor, dropout rates high, and progression rates low. There were also marked regional inequalities in education access (World Bank, 1998, pp. 51, 56).

In part, these problems were a reflection of the New Order's unwillingness to invest in the education system.[2] But they also reflected the fact that the education system under the New Order functioned more as a mechanism through which officials accumulated resources, distributed patronage, mobilized political support, and exercised political control than one for enabling learning (Leigh, 1998; Rosser & Fahmi, 2016).

Public schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which dominated the education system, were part of the larger "franchise" structure that characterized the New Order's rule (McLeod, 2000). In accordance with this structure, regional government officials, who had control over teacher appointments, sold teacher and school principal positions to the highest bidders while incumbents in these positions extracted rents from parents and other sources. Alternatively, these officials appointed friends, family members, and political allies to such positions. Schools also played an important role in mobilizing voter support for Golkar, the New Order's electoral

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[2] The Indonesian government spent an average of just 2.87 percent of GDP on education each year between 1986/7 and 1996/7 (World Bank 1998, p. 148).

vehicle. As civil servants, teachers were required to vote for Golkar and campaign on its behalf (Rosser & Fahmi, 2016). Finally, public schools and HEIs played a crucial role in the exercise of political control. Civil servant teachers and lecturers were required to display "mono-loyalty" to the state as members of the state civil service corps. They were also required to take and deliver compulsory courses in the state ideology, *Pancasila* (Leigh, 1998).

After the collapse of the New Order, the country's political elite introduced a range of constitutional and legislative changes that enhanced protection for the right to education and strengthened associated state obligations—including by introducing minimum government spending requirements for the education sector (see below). Amid and following these changes, electorally attuned political leaders in various districts and municipalities newly empowered by decentralization began ramping up local education spending and introduced new programs of free basic education, a policy that had first been introduced at the national level in the 1970s but never properly implemented. Political elites at the center followed suit, with the Yudhoyono government introducing a scheme of school grants (BOS) in 2005 aimed at reducing tuition and other school fees and formally reintroducing free basic education as government policy in 2009 (Rosser & Joshi, 2013).

These moves were broadly endorsed by popular elements such as NGOs, parent groups, university student organizations, and independent teacher unions who saw them as a necessary corrective to New Order underfunding of education and the equity-related problems it had caused. They were also endorsed by the Indonesian Teachers Union (PGRI), an organization closely linked to the education bureaucracy at both the national and local levels, because of the opportunities that increased education spending presented in terms of teacher income and rent-seeking opportunities for education officials (Rosser & Joshi, 2013). Finally, they appeared to be popular with the voting public, helping—along with a variety of other new social programs—to secure Yudhoyono's reelection as President in 2009 (Mietzner, 2009).

At the same time, however, technocratic elements in the National Development Planning Agency/Ministry (Bappenas) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), working in conjunction with the World Bank and other donors, initiated a wide-ranging program of market-oriented education policy reform. This included school-based management, transformation of schools and HEIs into corporate bodies, new accreditation processes for schools and HEIs, the opening up of the higher education sector to foreign HEIs, changes to the country's national exam (see below), a new teacher certification program, and efforts to promote a more efficient and equitable distribution of teachers within and between districts. While supportive of increased public spending on education and free basic education in principle, technocratic elements and their donor supporters also pushed back against the minimum public spending requirement and free basic education program because of concerns about their fiscal implications (Rosser & Joshi, 2013).

This push for market-oriented reform encountered strong opposition from the elements that had dominated the education system under the New Order. The politico-business and bureaucratic elements that ran the New Order successfully reinvented themselves in the post-New Order period by forging new alliances and making use

of political parties (Hadiz, 2003). In this context, these elements retained control over the education system. Moves to distribute teachers more efficiently and equitably consequently foundered in the face of deliberate inaction by regional political and bureaucratic elites; the accountability components of the teacher certification program were undermined by corrupt behavior among teachers, education agency officials, and staff at teacher education institutions; the new accreditation processes secured insufficient funding to be effective; and the introduction of school-based management combined with the BOS program led to increased corruption at the school level (Rosser, 2015b; Rosser & Fahmi, 2016; Rosser & Joshi, 2013). The PGRI played a particularly crucial role in opposing teacher redistribution and the accountability components of the certification program. In the case of the latter, for instance, it successfully lobbied the national parliament to have funding for these components withdrawn while simultaneously defending the pay raises that were meant to be tied to them (Chang et al., 2014, p. 30).

More importantly for our purposes, however, the push for market-oriented reform also encountered strong opposition from popular elements such as NGOs, parent groups, university student organizations, and independent (that is, non-PGRI) teacher unions. Democratization removed key obstacles to organization by these groups and opened up opportunities for them to play a greater role in policy-making than they had under the New Order, including through the court system (see below). Though these groups supported some aspects of the reforms promoted by the technocrats and donors, they opposed aspects that they believed facilitated the "commercialization" or "privatization" of education or otherwise undermined equality. The most problematic reform initiatives in their eyes were moves to transform schools and HEIs into corporate bodies, open up the higher education sector to foreign HEIs, and amend the national exam (Rosser, 2015a, 2015b).

9.3.2 Institutional Factors

In the context of these struggles—and reflecting the shifts in power and influence that triggered them—the Supreme Deliberative Council, Indonesia's highest law-making body, amended the national constitution between 1999 and 2002 to, among other things, provide citizens with a right to education and impose obligations on the government to fund compulsory basic education and allocate at least 20 percent of its budget to education. In addition, in the midst of and following these amendments, the national parliament passed a number of subordinate laws that reaffirmed these constitutional changes including Law 39/1999 on Human Rights, Law 23/2002 on Child Protection, Law 20/2003 on a National Education System, and Law 11/2005 on Ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Collectively, these constitutional and legislative changes dramatically enhanced formal legal protection of the right to education, strengthened associated state obligations, and, in so doing, provided a stronger legal foundation for R2E litigation.

At the same time, the post-New Order period witnessed changes in the design of Indonesia's court system that widened access to the judicial system and created new forms of litigation. Most important in this respect were the establishment of a Constitutional Court with the power to strike down laws on the grounds that they conflicted with the Constitution (Mietzner, 2010) and the strengthening of the Supreme Court's powers to review government regulations (Butt & Parsons, 2014). These changes opened up greater possibilities for ordinary citizens, NGOs, trade unions, and other groups to launch policy-oriented litigation aimed at challenging laws and regulations through judicial review mechanisms. The Supreme Court's decision to permit the lodgment of "citizen lawsuits"—a type of civil action allowing citizens to challenge government action or inaction that breaches the law and causes harm to members of the public or the public interest—created another prospective pathway for policy-oriented litigation. At the same time, the absence of effective *amparo*-style mechanisms—that is, "ones which allows citizens to bring an [individually-focused—AR] action in court against the government for a violation of fundamental or constitutional rights" (Miguel-Stearns, 2015, p. 100)—in Indonesia's judicial system reduced the scope for individually oriented litigation of the type that has been widely criticized in relation to Latin America's health system.

The result was a wave of policy-oriented R2E litigation from the mid-2000s that was aimed at challenging market-oriented education policy reform or pressuring the government to meet its Constitutional obligation to increase education spending and extend its commitment to free education to higher levels in the education system. In most cases this litigation involved alliances between individual citizens asserting that their rights had been breached by the law or regulation concerned and NGOs, with the latter providing the legal and financial resources required for the former to mobilize the law. In other words, NGOs provided the SSLM. In other cases, the litigation involved alliances between individual citizens and the PGRI (Susanti, 2008).

9.3.3 Litigation

This policy-oriented R2E litigation included cases related to:

1. *The national exam.* After the fall of the New Order, the government introduced a new national exam administered at the end of primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary school in an effort to raise the quality of Indonesian education. In contrast to the preceding system, where final results were partly determined by school grades and partly by national exam results, students' final results under the new system—and hence their ability to continue with their education—became dependent entirely on national exam scores. The logic was to give students a greater incentive to do well in the exam by transforming it into a "high-stakes" test. Before long, human rights and education activists in Jakarta began receiving complaints from parents whose children had been unable to continue their education after failing the exam. This was despite widespread cheating on the exam.

In 2004, two Jakarta-based NGOs, the Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation and the Education Coalition, tried unsuccessfully to have the regulations providing for the national exam overturned through a judicial review case at the Supreme Court. But in 2006 they returned to the courts as public attention toward the issue grew in the wake of increased media reporting. This time they lodged a citizen lawsuit at the Central Jakarta District Court, a form of litigation likely to attract media and public attention. Their submission called on the government to change various aspects of the exam and issue a public apology for failing to protect the right to education (Rosser, 2015a).

2. *The size of the education budget*. Following the amendment of the Constitution, the central government slowly moved toward fulfilling the requirement to allocate at least 20 percent of its budget to education. Between 2005 and 2008 a collection of parents, teachers, and students—including, in several cases, figures from the PGRI—sought to force the central government to move more quickly by challenging various laws that permitted the government to spend less than 20 percent. These included Law 20/2003 on a National Education System and a succession of budget laws. In making a case for annulment of these laws, these actors invoked the constitutional right to education as well as provisions specifically establishing the minimum spending requirements (Susanti, 2008).

3. *The legal status of educational institutions*. In 2009 the Indonesian government enacted legislation that changed the legal status of educational institutions to "education legal entity" (BHP), something roughly equivalent to a state-owned enterprise. Before that, public schools and universities had been units within the government bureaucracy. Parent, NGO, and university student activists strongly opposed this change in legal status, arguing that it amounted to the commercialization or privatization of public education. They said that it would lead to abrogation of the state's responsibility for funding education and consequently higher school and university fees (Darmaningtyas et al., 2009). The law was also opposed by owners of private foundations for separate reasons. Following enactment of the law, all these groups challenged the law in the Constitutional Court. In their submission to the court, the activists argued that the change in the legal status breached citizens' constitutional rights to education and free basic education. After they prevailed in this case, the government responded by enacting a new law on higher education that, in effect, limited the proposed change in legal status to the country's top-ranked public universities. A subsequent Constitutional Court challenge to this law brought by university student activists was unsuccessful (Rosser, 2015a, 2015b).

4. *International standard schools*. In 2009 the Indonesian government enacted new regulations providing for "international standard" schools (SBI/RSBI), defined as schools with "certain quality superiorities that originate from OECD member countries or other developed countries" (Government of Indonesia, 2009, Article 1(8)). In contrast to "regular" schools, SBI/RSBI were permitted to use international curriculums, install high-quality facilities for information and communication technology, employ foreign teachers, and use English in the classroom,

among other means of enhancing quality. To support them in reaching international standards, the government allowed them to charge fees and furnished them with generous routine and additional funding. Such schools were meant to be academically selective and reserve 20 percent of places for students from poor backgrounds. But they generally failed to meet this target. The main beneficiaries (and supporters) of this policy were middle-class parents, for whom SBI/RSBI promised a better-quality education for their children, and elements within the education bureaucracy, for whom SBI/RSBI opened up an array of new rent-seeking opportunities. The main opponents of the policy were parents of children excluded from SBI/RSBI for financial reasons, parents who could afford SBI/RSBI but were concerned about corrupt school management undermining educational quality, and teachers at SBI/RSBI who sympathized with either or both of these groups of parents. In 2011 three parents—all from the first group above—supported by activists from Indonesia Corruption Watch and Elsam, both Jakarta-based NGOs, lodged a judicial review request at the Constitutional Court challenging Article 50 (3) of Law 20/2003 on a National Education System, the article that provided the legal foundation for the establishment of SBI/RSBI. In their submission to the court, they argued, among other things, that SBI/RSBI policy amounted to an abrogation of state responsibility to provide free basic education because it allowed such schools to charge fees (Rosser & Curnow, 2014).

5. *Textbooks.* The cost of purchasing textbooks has long been a significant financial burden for poor parents in Indonesia. This problem has been worsened by the fact that teachers have supplemented their incomes by selling textbooks to students for inflated prices. In 2008 the central government issued a new regulation on textbooks that, in the eyes of its critics, did little to resolve these problems and, in fact, made them worse by proposing that society (such as parents and students) share responsibility for ensuring that children had access to these books. In 2008 a group of NGO activists challenged this regulation by lodging a judicial review request at the Supreme Court. Among their reasons for challenging the regulation were that it breached the principle of free basic education (Kelompok Independen Untuk Advokasi Buku, n.d.).

6. *Compulsory Senior Secondary Education.* In 1984, the central government made the first six years of school compulsory and in 1994 it extended this to nine years. In 2010–2011, it then announced a policy of *universal* senior secondary education covering the remaining three years of school. It stipulated that this was not an extension of compulsory education or free education, both of which only applied to the first nine years of school (Franken, 2010; MoEC, 2012). It appears that the government backed away from such a change because of concerns among technocrats at the Ministry of Finance and Bappenas about the additional cost of free education at the senior secondary level.[3] In 2014, individuals and education organizations represented by lawyers from the Indonesian Human Rights Committee for Social Justice, an NGO, lodged a judicial review request at the

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[3] Interview with Satrio Soemantri Brojonegoro, Jakarta, November 2012.

Constitutional Court seeking an interpretation of Law 20/2003 on a National Education System that would effectively extend the government's compulsory and free education programs to the senior secondary level.[4] In so doing, they argued that the limitation of these programs to the basic education level infringed on the right to education. The court found against the petitioners, ruling that their petition lacked a legal basis. A similar case in 2018 lodged by two housewives suffered a similar fate.[5]

9.3.4 Agential Factors and Outcomes

In many of the above cases, the groups launching the litigation were successful in securing court judgments in their favor. They lost the cases related to compulsory senior secondary education (the sixth point above), textbooks (the fifth point), top-ranking state universities' legal status (part of the third point), and the first national exam case (first point). But they won all the others. In the successful cases, judgments led to changes in government policy, though in some instances only partially or after considerable delay. For instance, the government ended the "international standard" schools policy, axed the high stakes element of the national exam, limited changes to the legal status of education institutions to top-ranking state universities (as noted), and increased spending on education up to the 20 percent mark (albeit in part by incorporating expenses of tangential relevance to the education system into this amount) (Rosser, 2015a; Rosser & Joshi, 2013).

It is difficult to know for sure why the judiciary decided to back the groups that brought these cases and the government, by and large, complied with court judgments. But three factors appear to have been at work. The first is growing judicial activism on human rights issues. Though many judges have been "gormless and corrupt functionaries who do the government's bidding" (Bourchier, 1999, p. 233), the scope for judicial activism has widened during the post-New Order period as a result of judicial reforms combined with democratic politics. The second factor is growing state responsiveness to social policy concerns as a result of the incentives created by electoral politics and the disastrous social impact of the 1997–1998 Asian economic crisis. As noted already, politicians at both the national and regional levels found pro-poor education policies to be an effective way of mobilizing popular support and, especially, votes at election time.

The final factor is the citizen-NGO-union strategy of blending legal and political mobilization. In successful cases litigation was accompanied by wider political mobilization that drew media attention to the issue at hand and put public pressure on the government and judiciary to support change. This political mobilization took a variety of forms including demonstrations and protests (generally held outside courts, parliament, and other government buildings), press conferences, statements to the media, workshops, and the publication of opinion pieces in the media and books.

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[4] Case Number 92/PUU-XII/2014.

[5] Case Number 97/PUU-XVI/2018.

Interviews with NGO activists indicate that this was a deliberate strategy based on a calculation that courts would be unlikely to find in their favor unless public pressure was applied. In some cases—such as those related to the change in the legal status of educational institutions—political mobilization was on a mass scale reflecting the involvement of university student organizations in the campaign. In most cases, however, the *modus operandi* was small-scale demonstrations combined with media engagement. This strategy ensured that the case for change went beyond mere legal claims to also entail a political case.

9.4 Conclusion

More than 80 percent of the world's constitutions recognize the right to education, and courts have become an increasingly important arena to hold governments accountable for education policies and practices. Indonesia has been no different in this respect experiencing a wave of R2E litigation since the country's transition to a more democratic polity. We have advanced three main arguments in relation to this litigation. First, it has been part of broader struggles over education policy, inequality, and the capture of education institutions by political and bureaucratic forces, being oriented toward policy issues rather than individual concerns. Second, the extent to which it has served to promote fulfillment of the right to education in Indonesia has depended significantly on the nature of, and access to, the court system; the presence of SSLMs; the attitudes, ideologies, and strategic choices of courts and judges; and the extent to which litigation has been accompanied by political mobilization. Third, this litigation has mainly served the interests of the poor and marginalized even though sections of the middle class have been centrally involved in many cases. Gains have largely come through better access to education; issues of improving quality have been less prominent.

There are good reasons to believe that this record of impactful R2E litigation may not continue into the future. First, in recent years, the Constitutional Court has been rocked by a series of corruption scandals and has become more conservative in its outlook. It is consequently unlikely to continue to take a progressive stance on issues of social rights. Second, progressive NGOs may shift their priorities in the future, giving renewed attention to struggles over civil and political rights as the country goes through a period of democratic decline, the push for neoliberal reform of the country's education sector abates, and questions of education quality come to the fore.

What, then, are the wider lessons of the Indonesian case with regards to the effectiveness of R2E litigation in promoting fulfillment of the right to education in developing country democracies? Litigation as a strategy for promoting the right to education has clear limitations given the constraints that litigants face in taking matters to court. Nevertheless, the Indonesian experience suggests that R2E litigation can play a positive role in promoting fulfillment of this right, particularly with regards to issues of access, so long as particular institutional and agential conditions prevail.

In policy terms, the implication is that activists seeking to promote the right to education through the courts in developing country democracies need to be mindful of the potential for these conditions to influence outcomes and the prospects for them to change in determining when, where, and how to proceed with R2E litigation.

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Chapter 10
Attraction of Authority: The Indonesian Experience of Educational Decentralization

Bambang Sumintono, Hasan Hariri, and Umi Anugerah Izzati

10.1 Introduction

The Asian financial crisis that started in Thailand in June 1997 has severely impacted Indonesia; the country experienced negative economic growth, increased poverty, and decreased employment opportunities. These eventually led to a major political crisis in Indonesia that brought the downfall of Suharto's New Order regime in May 1998 after 32 years in office (Diprose et al., 2019). Along with the regime change, came a fundamental change in the way Indonesia, the largest country in Southeast Asia spanning three time zones, was ruled. Specifically, the country moved from centralization to decentralization for education democratization, which was referred to as the Reform era. This change ended the prior governance model of centralization which had descended through several centuries from the Dutch colonial era and even from the kingdoms in Indonesia, including the Majapahit Kingdom. The great change in terms of size, speed, and scope of governance came to be known as the "big bang" decentralization model (Bennet, 2010), marking the beginning of democracy. New policies were initiated through two laws (the Law on Local Government and the Law on Fiscal Balance), made effective from 1 January 2001 (Lindsey, 2018). The developments associated with these policies were described as "one of the most radical decentralization programs attempted anywhere in the world" (Aspinall &

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Fealy, 2003, p. 3). As a result, education and other public sectors in Indonesia became the responsibility of more than 307 district governments (Sumintono, 2010).

Decentralizing public services was aimed to provide local citizens easy access to public services and thus increase their welfare (Mahi, 2016). This was triggered particularly by the emergence of a separatist agenda among three provinces (10% of the total) that staged minor rebellions in the 1990s. Since the three provinces were rich in natural resources (Tadjoeddin, 2007), their movements were a challenge to the central government (Usman, 2002). With the new offer of decentralization, locals in these provinces and throughout the country could enjoy democracy and efficiency, something that they were deprived of under the previous New Order regime. Except for five sectors (i.e., religion, justice, monetary and fiscal, defence, and foreign policy), other public sectors, including education, fell in the hands of each district government (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006). The Indonesian education system is one of the largest in the world, catering to the educational needs of over 50 million students taught by four million teachers from more than 200,000 primary and secondary schools and *madrasahs* across the archipelago (Rosser, 2018). Evidently, changing the country's education system in a very short time can be both dangerous and chaotic.

The questions that remain unanswered are: (1) How has Indonesia managed education in the decentralization era? and (2) How has the country managed the changes so far? In the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC)[1] transferred some authority pertaining to curriculum content (Bjork, 2005). However, the result was not encouraging, mainly due to limited available experience and expertise as well as the fact that schools were closely inspected by their superiors (Bjork, 2005). Nonetheless, funding agencies like the World Bank have shown interest in shaping the Indonesian education sector (Mappiasse, 2014). During the economic crisis of 1998, the World Bank published a report entitled "Education in Indonesia: From Crisis to Recovery", which, among other things, supported the role of educational decentralization in reducing the central government's bureaucracy layers to make delivery more efficient to the school level (World Bank, 1998). However, the truth is that the structure and the arrangement of educational decentralization were not clear even after the stipulation of the Autonomy Law in 1999.

This makes sense because, as Karmel (2017) asserts, "There is no one-size-fits-all approach for decentralization" (p. 8). In other words, there are a variety of ways to manage decentralization, including in education, and any country that chooses to decentralize should do it in a manner that suits its needs. Sumintono (2006), for instance, offers four dimensions to expound the concept of decentralization: degree of transfer, breadth of transfer, location of transfer, and functions transferred. The Autonomy Law suggests that the degree of transfer was devolution (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983), which once given cannot be rolled-back easily. The breadth of transfer encompassed all public sector bodies except for five, while the location of

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[1] The ministry's name changed from MoEC to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), then back to MoEC and now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. This chapter used the name MoEC, since it is the same institution.

transfer was from the central government to the district government (Sumintono, 2010), not to the provincial or school level. Only the functions transferred were neither provided in much detail nor operationalized, as in this case the government and parliament decided that the MoEC had the expertise and information to do that better (Zamjani, 2016).

Indonesia has had experience with educational decentralization for more than 18 years, involving change dynamics from the national to the school level. To understand the changes, we need to look into the progress made so far, including institutional responses and contextual interpretations. We argue that Indonesian educational decentralization has mostly been about legitimacy and authority dialectics between local and central institutions (Mappiasse, 2014; Scott, 2013; Sumintono, 2006) which this chapter offers a new understanding of the issue. Moving from a highly centralized system to a more locally oriented one contests the legitimacy of each actor involved, resulting in competition for resources. The regulations and policies that make educational decentralization a reality are somewhat contradictory, as we elaborate further in this chapter. Similarly, attempts to roll it back with different approaches and strategies have resulted in more contradictions. Although there are changes in the bureaucratic structure, local educational practices are the same and, thus, maintaining the centralized power as long as legitimacy remains (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1978).

10.2   Early Development: Exercising Power and Authority at the District Level

The dawn of the year 2001 became a historic moment for Indonesia as a country which drastically changed its government system (Aspinall & Fealy, 2003; Bennet, 2010) via two laws (the Law on Local Government and the Law on Fiscal Balance) made effective from 1 January 2001. Prior to these laws, the education sector was managed by three ministries: the secular stream under both MoEC and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), and the religious stream under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). However, schools under MoRA, which is still in the centralized system to date, are beyond the scope of our discussion in this chapter. For a long time before the Reformation era, the MoEC and MoHA had provincial as well as district offices across Indonesia to represent the central government's chain of command via policy and instruction. The MoHA was mostly responsible for the 3Ms (man[sic], money, and material) in primary schools (year 1–6) and junior secondary schools (year 7–9), whereas curriculum was handled by the MoEC, which was also responsible for senior secondary schools (year 10–12). Following the Law on Local Government and the Law on Fiscal Balance in 2001, responsibilities, personnel, and department organizational structures in these ministries were dissolved and transferred overnight to 307 district governments (in 2020, the number of districts is 514).

This legal process and its accompanying emergence of local governments are powerful in managing post-1998 Indonesian public sectors. In the education sector, besides district mayors and local parliaments, district education officers (especially teachers) are the real game changers responsible for carrying out government affairs in education. This is because teachers do not just comprise the largest proportion of government servants (roughly above 60%), but are located in all district areas. Moreover, in the Indonesian context, teachers have an immense social influence on the community as social change agents (Bourn, 2016). Sumintono (2006) called this situation "decentralized centralism". For instance, the district education offices demonstrated that under the new landscape, they tend to refuse instructions from provincial and central offices, which was an unimaginable act under the previous centralized regime (Amirrachman, 2004; Zamjani, 2016). Disagreements also appeared when provincial offices thought they could choose new public school principals to replace those whose time expired, when in fact their choice clashed with the person appointed by the district offices (Sumintono, 2006).

However, exercising power and authority also presents a different story in the sense that, in managing the education sector, district governments actually do nearly the same as the management before decentralization. Sumintono's (2006) study found that such similarities are mostly related to technical matters. To illustrate, one participant in Sumintono's study (2006) said: "In terms of technical matters, such as how teaching and learning is practiced in school, how examinations are conducted, or how supervision is undertaken, most have remained the same. We are not brave enough to change all that" (p. 134). This was mentioned by the MoEC when talking about district readiness, because sufficient expertise, experience, and resources are generally not available at the district level. The reason for this is because under the previous centralized system, the central government was strong and full of experts, which left district education offices as well as MoEC's remaining local offices to play only the role of local registrars (Sumintono, 2010; Zamjani, 2016). Further, Nielsen (2003) analyzed that the New Order regime was a bureaucratic authoritarian state, where its distinctive features emphasized rapid growth and expansion as indicators of quality improvement, excessive power and control at the central office level, and the promotion of inter-agency fragmentation and competition. As a result, the learning curve and stability of educational decentralization took longer at the district level to channel efforts toward efficient and effective education services (Jónasson, 2016).

One of the high-profile debates featured in national mass media around that time was the discussion on School-Based Management (SBM). The Minister of Education and Culture commented positively on SBM in the media, stating that "the implementation of the school-based management policy is to support school autonomy in order to increase education quality in accordance with national and international standards" (Sumintono, 2006, p. 93). Stakeholders such as principals, teachers, parents, and community members viewed SBM as an interesting concept, since it involves all school stakeholders in the country having more control over school activities for better student learning. Special policy about SBM leaked from MoEC officers, and was written in an official report by Jalal and Musthafa (2001). The policy indicated that various functions were to be transferred to the school level (Sumintono,

2006), including budget, staff, and curriculum, which are practices implemented in most developed countries (see Fullan & Watson, 2000; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Murphy & Beck, 1995). What was actually transferred turned out to be different.

Sumintono's (2006, 2010) studies revealed that the regulation about SBM (MoEC decree number 044/U/2002) was not just extremely brief but also failed to deliver on promises previously made to the public. The national policy decree appeared to be unclear, vague, centrally conceived, politically inspired, promoting a "one-size-fits-all" SBM model, and not based on research and public consultation (Sumintono, 2006, 2010). This indicates that the MoEC was confused about their position in the educational decentralization landscape. By applying a uniform model of SBM regardless of the vast diversity and variety of Indonesian schools in terms of size, location, community, and public–private distinction, the Indonesian education system had evidently, to some extent, made itself out of context.

Creating new organizations at the school level (called the school committee) and district level (called the education council) was another legitimacy game that came from the MoEC's bureaucratic outlook. Several studies on the School Committee (SC) and Education Council (EC) pertaining to the implementation of this decree revealed interesting findings. For instance, Bandur (2012), Sumintono (2006), and Fitriah et al. (2013) showed that the SC was established in different ways, from shoulder-tapping to continuing previous institutions under the new name of SC. One thing in common was that under this decree, principals in Indonesian schools have a stronger decision-making role in the decentralization era compared to the pre-decentralization era. The EC situation was not so different (Amirrachman, 2004; Sumintono, 2006, 2010), where education districts seek EC candidates who can get along with them, such as retired officials. Several districts have stipulated their own regulation about SBM; however, its content and structure are nearly identical to that of the MoEC decree, asserting the unquestionable influence of the central government in terms of regulation (Sumintono, 2006).

The regulation about SBM showed that the MoEC was not sure how to fully grasp their role and correctly gain legitimacy. Possibly, MoEC officials did not have trust in local capacity and commitment at both district and school levels, thereby publishing the decree with the intention of slowing the pace of decentralization (Sumintono, 2006; World Bank, 2004). It seems that by being brief and unclear in the decree's content, a minimum impact was preferred along with a slower decentralization process. By writing an unchallenged rule for other education stakeholders using a new law, what the MoEC actually aimed for was a much bigger prize that helps it survive with firm legitimacy. Ultimately, the early experience of Indonesia's educational decentralization was an indication of a power game (Daun, 2002), notably involving massive interplay among parties at the expense of interest in education or students' learning.

10.3 Regaining the Missing Legitimacy and Its Local Responses

The changes in the governance system from centralization to decentralization opened up opportunities to rearrange the country's social contract, including its basic constitution and education law. The Indonesian National Constitution 1945 had four sessions of amendment, one of which has a verse that specifically designates at least 20% state's annual budget for the education sector (Sumintono, 2006). The MoEC also informed the parliament that previous education law (Law 2/1989) was not relevant anymore because of its basis in the paradigm of centralized governance, which was not in accordance with the new tenets of the Reform era, namely, democratization and educational decentralization (Asikin-Garmager, 2017). At the same time, even without sufficient experience and technical expertise, district governments enjoyed exercising their power and authority in the education sector without having to consult with or be influenced by the MoEC. This situation was worrying and could affect the MoEC's survival in the near future; thus, preparing an education bill gave the MoEC an opportunity to rewrite the rules of the game about education governance and management based on the interest of the central government.

The new education bill was drafted by the MoEC and tabled to the parliament. After heated debates inside as well as outside the parliament, it was passed into a law called the National Education System Law (Law 20/2003). It is interesting to note that the most debated topics in parliament discussions at the time surrounded the age of schooling (age limit for compulsory education and preschool education), higher education (authority of universities in honorary degree provision, and university funding and management of their independence and progress), and religious education (the teaching of religious education in public and most private secular schools) (Musa, 2009). Debates on religious teaching also took place under the previous education law, but street demonstrations this time forced public attention to be limited to only those topics. The main course of the bill, which was about managing education in a decentralized Indonesia with the governance framework initiated by the MoEC, was agreed upon by all factions inside the parliament.

One of the famous jargons during that period referred to the changing role of the central government, which instead of "rowing" the country's educational development had turned to "steering" it. The new law introduced standards to be followed by educational institutions (both public and private) and their superiors (i.e., district governments). Similar to regulations about the SC and EC, bureaucratic perspectives were used to create new institutions and even activate remaining central government institutions in provinces to support the new law.

The following sections discuss and elaborate the changing situations brought by this law, as well as local reactions against it. New realities outside the central government showed that locals enjoyed autonomy and were capable of deciding on their preferences, even though they were perceived to have insufficient technical expertise and experience in managing education. The key points discussed here included a new regime of standards, school operational cost, teachers and principals, and National Examination.

10.3.1 New Regime of Standardization

Political decentralization is the reality of the Reformation era, and its laws have been enacted by district governments across Indonesia. An available tool for the MoEC to regain its legitimacy was the new education law; using justifications of efficiency and competence, it offered to establish a new system called standardization. This sounds logical and in accordance with the ideals of national prosperity, especially in the last 50 years, disparity has been a major and unsolvable problem under the New Order regime, wherein developments were predominantly focused only on Java island (Mappiasse, 2014).

Using this standardization policy, the MoEC received its desired solution, which provided it with professional legitimacy to easily be adhered to by other education stakeholders from central, district, and school levels. Education in the country, with its long history of centralization, now depends heavily on the central government as the ultimate source of funding, recognition, and confirmation under the standardization regime. This way, the central government catered to locals' needs so as to improve its own image and strengthen its symbolic power.

The National Education System Law (Law 20/2003) introduced the new regime of standards, which consists of minimum service standards (called SPM or *Standar Pelayanan Minimum*), National Education Standards (SNP or *Standar Nasional Pendidikan*), and international standards (SI or *Standar Internasional*) to be complied by schools and district governments across the country (Asikin-Garmager, 2017). The unique and unavoidable nature of these three regimes of standardization led to them being characterized as hierarchical (from SPM to SNP and then to SI). SPM refers to the lowest acceptable education service for compliance across Indonesia, which is now administered by district governments directly or indirectly through schools. The application of the SPM is intended to ensure that every school meets the minimum conditions to ensure the implementation of an adequate learning process. For instance, at the primary school level, the mandated ratio is one teacher for every 32 students, at least four teachers in each school, and at least 40% of teachers with undergraduate qualifications (MoEC, 2013). This policy is targeted to make sure that district governments help private schools in rural areas where conditions vary greatly from urban areas. This would potentially solve the disparity gap between developed and developing regions via the same level of education service.

Compared to the SPM, the SNP has more criteria for schools to fulfill. It outlines eight standards of technical aspects in education: academic competence, content, process, evaluation, personnel, facilities, financing, and management. Notably, the SNP has many derivative regulations. Zamjani's (2016) study found that among SNP's 187 standards, a major proportion (i.e., 67 standards or 36%) are about management, followed by those on content (29 standards) and personnel (28 standards). This shows that "education management has been the most highly regulated, despite the massive managerial decentralization" (Zamjani, 2016, p. 148). This is an ironic fact that contradicts the spirit of regional autonomy and democratization in the Reform era. Further, the SNP reveals the eagerness of the central government

to regulate all facets of education, from school establishment, teacher recruitment, and students' school uniform to curriculum and public examination. This indicates that the central government's interference in the education sector is deeper and wider than in the previous centralization system, when it was usually limited to curriculum and assessment matters.

One of the powerful mechanisms of the SNP policy is its detailed prescription and monitoring of the eight standards' implementation in schools and district governments. As a result, additional bureaucratic agencies had to be set up in each capital city to partner with MoEC. These agencies are the Board of the National Standards of Education (BSNP) and the Board of National Accreditation (BAN). The BSNP was established in 2005 and functions to develop national standards and to organize national examinations (BSNP, 2020). Since the standards are stipulated by MoEC's official decree, the main role of BSNP from its conception is to legitimize national examination. Meanwhile, BAN started in 2012 with the main function of conducting school assessments across Indonesia using the SNP's instrument (BAN, n.d.). The division of labor under this new bureaucracy apparatus is undoubtedly clear, where BSNP manages students' evaluation in terms of public examinations, while BAN manages schools' evaluation based on the SNP. Zamjani's (2016) study found that members of BSNP and BAN are professional and mostly lecturers from state universities, but their work and functions are generally influenced by, and rely on, MoEC, despite being independent agencies. This possibly happened because their appointment is carefully executed by the minister.

A two-edged ramification of BAN is the establishment of a non-discriminate audit culture in the Indonesian school system. Previously, the targets of audits were only private schools with disparate quality (Bedi & Garg, 2000), whereas public schools were exempted because the government always supported and monitored such schools, with no one to challenge its decision (Asikin-Garmager, 2017; Mappiasse, 2014; Sumintono, 2006). With the new system, as long as schools comply with the SNP criteria, they are recognized as a National Standard School (called as SSN). On the one hand, this supposedly removes the barrier between private and public schools and closes the gap of public schools being regarded as favorites and private schools being less-favored schools, a legacy of the colonial era that has been hard to get rid of (Sumintono, Hidayatet al., 2019b). On the other hand, the real challenge faced by BAN is the scope of their work, which covers more than 200,000 schools that need to be accredited periodically across the archipelago spanning three different time zones. The accreditation process itself is a complex one which includes site visits and assessors' checking of SNP implementation using a specific instrument. Because of insufficient budget availability and resulting annual quotas, not all schools can get accredited. When a school is not accredited, it faces problems that can impact its graduates' status (Zamjani, 2016). However, not all the standards from MoEC were followed and complied with by district governments in many cases, and some are simply avoided when the standards contradict with local interests (Mappiasse, 2014; Zamjani, 2016).

Unlike SPM and SNP, whose success has become the new platform to regain the ministry's legitimacy and even to broaden its scope, the international standard (SI)

was chaotic and eventually eliminated from the new education law. According to Law 20/23, district governments have to develop at least one school that fits the SI criteria. This encouraged the MoEC to launch a pilot project to guide international standard schools (called RSBI) in 2007, which was initially participated by 200 junior and senior secondary schools (MoEC, 2007, 2008; Sumintono et al., 2014). What really went on inside the project is that the best school in a town was selected, given extra funding from the central government, and required to show "international flavor", which mostly involved teaching subjects in English (Coleman, 2009). The schools were also allowed to regularly collect substantial amounts of money from parents, which became problematic because of its transparency and accountability, since most RSBI were public schools (Sumintono et al., 2014). The difference in the treatment of RSBI led to public protests amid the realization that the incentives given to these schools did not benefit the society (Winarti, 2008), as the quality of RSBI schools failed to reflect international standards as expected (Zamjani, 2016).

A historic moment came on 8 January 2013, when following lawsuits from the community, the Indonesian Constitutional Court (MK) declared the international standard school pilot project to be unconstitutional. This outcome shows that the quality of policy development and implementation of SI at the ministry was far from satisfactory (Sakhiyya, 2011). Sumintono (2013) concluded that, "In a nutshell, the policy design of RSBI was neither carefully planned nor executed, and unfortunately it was not based on solid research and eventually led to negative impacts on society. It also mirrored the policymakers' failure to fully grasp the Indonesian school system and its capacities, casting doubts over the feasibility of the program to achieve success".

10.3.2 School Operational Cost

One of the positive developments during the Reform era relates to school operational cost. As Rosser and Fahmi (2016) noted, Indonesia has significantly increased education spending up to 20% of its budget since the beginning of the 2000s. This policy has improved children's access to basic education through the new national school grant program (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* [BOS]). However, it seems to have made little contribution to student learning improvement. For example, Indonesian children's performance in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) only showed marginal improvement and remains relatively poor compared to the performance of children from neighboring countries.

Although this is one of the standards stipulated in the SNP, it was released a bit later in 2009 with MoEC decree number 69 (BSNP, 2020). The main reason was that the SNP follows development at the national scale. BOS was a political and economic decision which has solved problems mostly at the primary school level (Fitriah et al., 2013).

Ten years after Indonesia started building and developing itself following sporadic wars defending its independence in 1945, participation in public education increased

fivefold compared to the colonial era (Poerbakawatja, 1970). This fast-growing situation called for many new schools and thousands of new teachers to accommodate six million students in the education system, exceeding routine operational costs from the government. Because new public schools did not have sufficient funds, they sought financial help from the community through organizations at each school whose members were parents. These members collected a monthly tuition fee, "paying a major share for the upkeep of schools including the allowance of teachers" (Lee, 1995, p. 171). This practice continued and became the norm for public school systems in Indonesia over the next fifty years, since regular financing from the government was insufficient for school building maintenance and non-permanent teachers' salaries. Therefore, education decentralization was followed by financial deregulation to make sure that financial support from the government was sufficient (Bray & Thomas, 1998; Yonezawa & Muta, 2001).

Several empirical studies found that parents' contributions were crucial for public school operational costs. At the primary school level, schools received more money from parents than from the government (Ghozali, 2005), reaching 89% of their non-salary budget annually (Supriadi, 2003). Even for public junior secondary and senior secondary schools, the amount of money from parents was bigger than that from the government (Sumintono, 2006; Sumintono et al., 2014). Unlike government funding that comes with tight regulation and allocation, the usage of monthly money collected from parents has limited transparency and accountability in terms of official financial reports to parents (Cohen, 2001). Despite the changing political landscape with regional autonomy after 2001, when MoEC introduced a new "governing body" at the school level called the school committee, the aforementioned usual practice did not change. Sumintono (2006) found that the arrangement of a school committee leaves parents no other choice than to follow its decisions, since committee members could be set up by the schools and principals for their own benefit.

Nevertheless, there were also some positive developments on school operational costs. UNICEF and MoEC initiated a small project to make parents' contributions more effective among primary schools in a rural area in Central Java (Mariane, 2018). This project emphasized transparency, active community involvement, and teachers' training for students' learning enjoyment, resulting in more trust in the school and higher student achievement. At the district level, several district governments introduced a free school policy and abolished tuition fees in all public schools (Musi-Banyuasin in Sumatera, Sinjai in Sulawesi, Bontang in Kalimantan, and Jembrana in Bali) (Sumintono, Hidayatet et al., 2019b). The result in Jembrana, the poorest district in Bali Province, was remarkable and became a bright spark for others to follow. Specifically, the Jembrana district government analyzed the education budget and stipulated operational costs for every school level. It provided funding for the schools and required them not to collect money from parents and to instead practice transparency and accountability in their financial reports (Nugroho, 2008). This made the public schools concentrate more on teaching and learning as well as additional welfare for educators, resulting in great learning outcomes such as the highest improvement in national examination results (Suprana, 2009).

The most significant change in school operational costs came from a non-educationally related condition in 2004 to 2005, when the world's crude oil price increased significantly and the Indonesian government adjusted petrol prices in the country. This policy led to public protests and demonstrations across the country (SMERU, 2006). In return, the government stipulated a policy to make basic education services across Indonesia (six years of primary and three years of lower secondary schooling) completely free, along with significant subsidies for the upper secondary school level. This policy was called school operational cost (BOS), and was a breakthrough for two reasons: first, school operational cost is given directly to the school based on the number of students enrolled, and second, no differentiation exists between public or private schools (Fitriah et al., 2013). Since the country's independence in 1945, the government of Indonesia has allocated money to school operational costs based on school units. This previous policy did not meet the needs of schools in general and was a problem for schools with high enrollment, and an even worse problem for private schools that did not have adequate financial support. In contrast, the current policy marked the government's new mindset to show the spirit of Reformation. In fact, one of the uses of this free school policy has been as a favorable leverage in politicians' local and national campaigns during general elections (Ahmad, 2013).

After just three years of implementing the BOS policy, the MoEC released a policy on school standard cost, restricting public primary and junior secondary schools across Indonesia from collecting money from parents, and at the same time, urging local governments (provincial and district governments) to provide additional funds to schools (Ahmad, 2013). However, students at the senior secondary school level are still charged school fees, since the government can only subsidize 50% of the total unit cost. Nevertheless, districts like Surabaya and provinces like Jakarta have abolished tuition fees completely for all secondary school levels (Zamjani, 2016). Before the closure of the international standard school policy, any school that participated in the RSBI program (i.e., public schools) would enjoy fully paid tuition fees, which became a national issue that showed the insensitivity of public schools. The extension and clarity of school operational cost is thus crucial in fulfilling social justice for Indonesians in the education sector.

10.3.3 Teachers and Principals

With the new education law, managing school educators in the autonomy era devolved to the district level, offering the opportunity to change the landscape into a more open one. One of the articles in the new law states that any matter associated with teachers is governed under the teacher law. The central government and the parliament passed the Teacher Law in 2005 (Law 14/2005) to set a new standard for the profession and as part of the SNP.

Under the new law, teachers must be competent in four areas: pedagogy, personality, professional, and social (Chang et al., 2013). Principals, meanwhile, have

to be competent in five areas: personality, managerial, entrepreneurship, social, and supervision (Sumintono et al., 2015). The idea of such competences for the teaching profession is new to the Indonesian education system, which now recognizes teaching as a professional job (Asikin-Garmager, 2017). This is an effort to change the culture and profile of Indonesian teachers via Law 14/2005 (Bjork, 2006; Jalal et al., 2009), which can be used by local governments for their own interest. To operationalize these competencies, the MoEC stipulated the requirement for all teachers, both in public and private schools, to have an undergraduate degree of four-year university education, pass extra professional training, and graduate with professional certification.

The bulk of the work started in 2007. For the first batch, 200,000 teachers (out of four million in service) were selected to join the certification program. This program was done in two ways; a majority underwent portfolio assessment while a few attended a 90-h professional training. The MoEC devolved certification programs conducted by both public education universities and the education faculties of public universities in provincial capitals. Such efforts showed that even though the district government controls teachers, recognizing their professional capability is the central government's business. This initiative was welcomed by teachers and district governments as it carried real value for them without much effort on their part beyond disseminating and facilitating the process (Jalal et al., 2009). While there were some problems in this program (Utami, 2015), the pass rate was more than 95%, and teachers received professional allowances, which doubled their monthly basic salary. Like school operational cost, the provision of professional allowance applies for both public and private school teachers. This monetary incentive changed the landscape of Indonesian education, leading all teacher education programs in Indonesian universities to be in high demand. Chang et al. (2013) noted that in the five years before and after the certification program, the increase in in-service teachers with four years of education doubled from 17 to 35%, while students who enrolled in education programs rose to one million (500%) both in public and private universities.

Teachers who are public servants have become the highest-paid profession. To avoid resentment from those who have not been certified, teachers who pass the professional qualification have to teach at least 24 h a week. Failing to do so, their professional allowance can be suspended and even stopped. This appears to make sense as a norm for district governments to follow; however, the emphasis on teaching periods is only to keep teachers busy without measuring their effectiveness in the classroom. Intensive study on teachers from 20 districts by de Ree et al. (2018) brought to light that students' achievement is no different regardless of being taught by teachers with or without professional certification. The study revealed that the unconditional increase of the teachers' salary, which is gaged only by fulfilling a certain number of teaching hours, is far from satisfying its intended purpose. The requirement of 24 h per week is also not in favor of secondary school teachers, given that there are subject teachers who work in rural or suburban areas who need to travel long distances to teach students in other schools to fulfill the requirement (Chang et al., 2013).

The MoEC's effort to manage teachers nationally continued with the establishment of a new directorate general in 2014. The directorate general of teachers and education personnel is one of the institutions in the MoEC to recentralize teacher management. The main reasons for this are to reach teachers' aspirations across Indonesia and to overcome the incapability of district governments to develop teacher professionalism (Zamjani, 2016). One of the big moves by the directorate general was a Teacher Competency Assessment (called UKG) in 2015 for all teachers across Indonesia (MoEC, 2015). The contentious nature of this assessment was evidenced by its reliance on fully online multiple-choice tests to test teachers' mastery in their subject matter and their pedagogy knowledge, followed by the combination of the results into one score to indicate individual teacher performance. The UKG shows similar ambitious efforts of the central government to regain and even extend its power in teacher management under the guise of testing capability and expertise. However, practically, such tests do not really measure the four areas of teacher competency stated in the SNP. In addition, combining two raw scores from two different variables does not reflect teachers' performance.

Regarding the public school principal position, at the beginning of educational decentralization, tensions arose mostly between education provincial offices and district governments (Sumintono, 2006). In the previous centralized system, the MoEC assigned public school principals based on the education provincial office's selection, where the candidate had typically attended a week-long training (Sumintono et al., 2015). The autonomy era, in turn, enables district governments to appoint any teacher as principal within their scope of authority. For the purpose of controlling quality, the MoEC stipulated principals' competencies as part of the SNP, and then established the Agency for School Principal Empowerment and Development (LP2KS) to provide national pre-training for principals of public and private schools (Sumintono, Hidayatet al., 2019b).

This initiative has many benefits for the education system. It provides equal opportunities for all qualified teachers, who can nominate themselves so long as they have an undergraduate degree and at least five years of teaching experience. This is democratization in practice, whereas the previous era was restrictive and secretive (Sumintono et al., 2015). Training by the LP2KS, which includes 300 h of lecture and practice on instructional leadership (regarding teaching and learning improvement) to equip candidates with relevant skills, is a breakthrough compared to the mere emphasis on general public administration (Sumintono, Hidayatet al., 2019b). Candidates who pass have a unique registration number for appointment by the district government, indicating a good school leader succession plan. However, tensions and micro-political constraints still arise about the choice of appointment at the district level (Sumintono et al., 2015). This reality shows that even though the MoEC has funded principals' training and set procedures for appointing principals, local interest prevails as the winner, proving the dialectical dynamics of Indonesian educational decentralization (Zamjani, 2016).

10.3.4   National Exam

One educational policy in the Reform era that actively involved many education stakeholders in the first six months of every year was the national public examination, which was a point of disagreement among parties. Public examinations were conducted for final year students (at year six of primary school, year nine of junior secondary school, and year twelve of senior secondary school) across the country. The implementation of this policy has always faced criticism and heavy resistance from every corner of the society, forcing the MoEC to subsequently change its content step by step and finally, abolish it completely in 2020.

Since the 1945 independence, National Exam has experienced changes in several forms and names, while remaining a high-stakes test implemented at the end of the school term in Indonesia. Until 1971, the public examination was centralized, as were pass-fail decisions of the test takers. Then, a fundamental change occurred, such that the decision to pass students was made locally at the school level. As predicted, the percentage of passes was always above 95% after this change. This situation continued from 1972 to 2002, despite modifications to the education system. For instance, several new curriculums, teacher qualifications, and promotion policies were incorporated to improve education quality; however, regardless of how low students' achievement was, most schools passed at rates even close to 100% in public examinations (Sumintono, 2006). Consequently, in 2003, the MoEC changed the arrangement of the public exam to reclaim decisions to graduate students back to the central office, naming it *Ujian Akhir Nasional* (UAN or National Final Examination).

The UAN was a significant change toward centralization because all test papers came from the central office, guarded by the police and even army personnel in some places. Moreover, students' answer sheets were collected right away after the exam and sent to education provincial offices, while the results and final decisions came from the MoEC. The main reason for this action was because the government needed an instrument to control education performance in the autonomy era, wherein tests were standardized as a common tool to identify the disparity gap between districts. Other authors (e.g., Asikin-Garmager, 2017; Mappiasse, 2014; Prasetya, 2020; Zamjani, 2016) have stated that the country is adopting a neoliberal spirit of market competition in education, influenced by multilateral institutions that impose a test-based accountability policy to improve the quality of education. This is one way to increase national workforce competitiveness in the global economy.

The first UAN in 2003 made big headlines across the country, where for the first time, the number of students who failed in public examinations were disclosed to the public by the MoEC ("Tahun 2003 ratusan ribu", 2004). In the following years, the situation became different because success in final examinations is now considered as reflecting district education's quality, and thereby forming a hierarchy of pressure across the country where district governments forced school principals to gain higher pass rates. Consequently, they passed this pressure down to teachers, from whom it finally trickled down to students and parents (Prasetya, 2020). The passage of the National Education Law provided more legitimate support for the MoEC, as the

BNSP had the right to organize national evaluations for students, though in reality the BNSP itself was under the control of the ministry's bureaucracy (Zamjani, 2016).

For students and parents, the final examination result was not only an evaluation of their performance but also a selection tool for primary school and junior secondary school graduates. Their acceptance into higher education (i.e., public and private universities) depended on that result. This and the hierarchical pressure pushed students to pursue better results without considering ethics and good practices (Asikin-Garmager, 2017; Mappiasse, 2014; Prasetya, 2020). For instance, teachers drilled their final year students with numerous examination practices after and even before regular teaching, in addition to motivational speeches and mass religious prayers to strengthen students (Arifin, 2012). However, various reports of students cheating during the national examinations, sometimes with help from their teachers, were mentioned by local press, local and international researchers, and international institutions (LaForge, 2013; OECD & ADB, 2015; Prasetya, 2020; Sembiring, 2013; Widiatmo, 2012; Zamjani, 2016).

The final examination thus came under constant criticism by the public and was the source of stress and anxiety for students and parents as well as teachers and principals. The MoEC tried to resolve the policy to make it less daunting, such as by allowing school-based exams to carry a 40% weightage of the total score in 2011 (Prasetya, 2020). The contribution of school-based examinations increased slowly, which diverted public attention. Finally, the MoEC decided that all forms of final examinations will be abolished in 2021 (Catherine, 2019). However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was abolished earlier in 2020 and all tests and decisions to pass students were again returned to schools ("Virus Corona: UN 2020", 2020). This change in final examinations from being centralized to decentralized is considered relevant to the education decentralization policy in Indonesia.

10.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, the development and experience of educational decentralization in Indonesia was presented. The efficiency and effectiveness benefits of a public governance system run by locals who know better made the country choose local autonomy under a new law to survive and avoid fragmentation (Purwanto & Pramusinto, 2018). The choice also reflects the external influence that promotes freedom and democratization (Mappiasse, 2014). As per Harris and Jones (2018), in the education sector, policy borrowing does not always work as expected without policy learning and full understanding of the context.

The transfer of power to the district level empowered districts as the new center of education for schools and teachers. This early development worried the central office (i.e., MoEC), which then attempted to keep itself relevant and gain even more legitimacy (Scott, 2013). It is interesting to know that the legal change that started with autonomy was rivaled by other laws on education (Zamjani, 2016). As a result, the functions transferred and the operationalization of the educational decentralization

context were written by ministry bureaucrats who aimed to expand their scope beyond that of the previous era.

The new set of standards was stipulated to cover several aspects of education as an institutional framework to be complied with by districts and schools in Indonesia (Asikin-Gamarger, 2017). As a result, an audit culture emerged where the central office's newly established institutions (BNSP and BAN) certified the achievement of required standards in terms of management, deliverables, and student performance. This indicates that the ministry capitalized on legitimacy as well as professional judgment to regain power (Zamjani, 2016). However, when the standards go against locals' interest, such as in principal appointment (Sumintono et al., 2015), curriculum (Asikin-Gamarger, 2017), and National Exam (Prasetya, 2020), the central office has to realize that it does not have the real power to force compliance.

The Indonesian experience of educational decentralization suggests more emphasis on a power game and less on improving students' learning and achievement. For instance, schools and districts are busy establishing school committees and educational councils to portray democratization and local participation (Amirrachman, 2004; Bandur, 2012; Fitriah et al., 2013; Sumintono, 2006). The standardization regime also makes schools eager to fulfill requirements and comply with the criteria set by the BAN (Zamjani, 2016). Consequently, teachers are occupied with certification despite its minimal impact on student achievement (de Ree et al., 2018). Even international outlooks show that the center's capacity is still developing (Sumintono et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, there have been advances in social justice and student learning support. Distinctions between public and private status have become irrelevant in this Reformation era. For instance, public and private schools must undergo the same audit process, and as long as teachers pass the certification process, they are entitled to receive professional allowance regardless of whether they serve in public or private schools. The most fundamental change is in schools' operational cost, which is now provided directly to schools based on student enrollment numbers. This shows that searching and selecting the right policy that helps and improves students' learning is always essential and strategic in Indonesia's new landscape of educational decentralization.

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Part IV
Strengthening Democratic Practices, Exploring Critical Alternatives

Chapter 11
A Critical Narrative Inquiry into the Struggles and Agency of English Language Learners from "Underdeveloped" Regions in West Kalimantan

Joseph Ernest Mambu and Ardiyarso Kurniawan

11.1 Introduction

The first author of this chapter (Jos) has been interested in critical approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning in Indonesia, including his own former classes (see e.g., Mambu, 2011, 2018, 2022). He has also aspired to reach out to wider communities to document English language learning processes, viewed through a *critical ELT* lens (Crookes, 2013), beyond his own class (i.e., the *Critical Pedagogy & Literacy* elective course he has offered since 2007). In mid-2019, Jos joined his colleagues from other departments together with the heads of English Language Education (ELE) and English Literature study programmes, plus the Faculty of Language and Arts coordinator of promotion, to conduct written university admission tests for hundreds of high school graduate applicants and interview them in a *kabupaten* (or regency) in the province of West Kalimantan. Jos was introduced to the Bengkayang regency by his colleagues outside the ELE study programme who have established cooperation with several local government officials, sealed by a Memorandum of Understanding between our university and the regency. It was not until 2019 that the ELE study programme admitted scholarship grantees from the regency for the first time.

It has been Jos' idealism that transformative and liberating processes through critical ELT aim to change the status quo of the present, which might have persisted since the past, to a better, more just, and sustainable future (Freire, 2000; Hastings & Jacob, 2016). To that end, Freire (2000) suggests that learners are involved in praxis in which they reflect on their lives and surroundings, question undesirable realities, envisage attaining a more just society, and act on what they envision. Attempts to

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achieve a just and sustainable future do not exist in a vacuum, as learners have their past histories and present practices in milieux that might constrain and enable them to realize their potential.

The Bengkayang regency in West Kalimantan has been selected as one of the eight "underdeveloped"[1] regencies in the West Kalimantan province (see more details under the Methodology section). Therefore, it can be expected that most high school graduates from the regency do not typically access and experience quality education like those in more affluent areas in Indonesia, especially in Java. Our commitment has been to serve learners from this regency to improve and empower themselves, especially by reflecting on their language learning histories, learning how to read critically, sharing their struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic (see also, Irhamni & Sahadewo, this volume), and agentively reorienting their English language learning trajectories during the pandemic.

ELT researchers have initiated many critically oriented studies to try out critical pedagogy/literacy perspectives in terms of gender, race, social class, religion, or character education deliberately in their classes in Indonesia or elsewhere (e.g., Crawford & Filback, 2022; Gustine & Insani, 2019; Hastings & Jacob, 2016; López-Gopar, 2019; Mambu, 2011, 2014, 2018). Nevertheless, how Indonesian-based English language learners from "underdeveloped" areas describe their struggles and ways to overcome obstacles in their language histories are still largely unknown. Therefore, in this chapter, Jos and Wawan explore the degree to which first-year undergraduate students from various "underdeveloped" *kecamatan*s/regions/sub-districts in the Bengkayang regency navigated their language learning journey prior to entering university and when learning English in the university, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by critical pedagogy/literacy perspectives, we aim to delve into the Bengkayang students' capacity to view their struggles in learning English in an agentive light. In the following sections, we will briefly review the notions of critical ELT and language learner agency in relation to structures surrounding it. The critical narrative inquiry will then be briefly explained in the methodological section.

11.2   Critical ELT and Learning

The notion of critical ELT and learning here encompasses different approaches to teaching and learning English, particularly those inspired by the literature on critical literacy (Janks, 2013) and critical pedagogies (López-Gopar, 2019; Norton & Toohey, 2004). Critical literacy is more linguistically oriented in that learners are encouraged to make sense of texts, read critically against taken-for-granted texts

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[1] We are aware that labelling an area as "underdeveloped" or "disadvantaged" might come across as patronising. Therefore, we use quotation marks to indicate the trickiness of this matter. On the one hand, we believe that there are areas that are less developed than others due to inequity or social injustice; on the other hand, the so-called "underdeveloped" might become "developing" or even "developed" over time.

(e.g., due to their sexist, racist, or intolerant ones), and create alternative multimodal texts that resist any marginalisation. The plurality of critical pedagogies includes (1) different real-world issues being addressed (Hastings & Jacob, 2016); (2) diverse philosophical underpinnings (Kubota & Miller, 2017; López-Gopar, 2019), (3) a variety of pedagogical approaches such as critical literacy (Janks, 2013) and critical ELT curriculum that contains critical needs analysis, critical learning objectives, critical materials development, critical teaching–learning strategies (Mambu, 2022), and critical language assessment (Crookes, 2013); and (4) various localities, which include different parts of the globe (López-Gopar, 2019).

Thus, the critical ELT and learning in this chapter resonates with the plurality of critical pedagogies in that we "describe local situations" (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p. 2) in Salatiga and Bengkayang where students have been officially enrolled as students in our university but resided in Bengkayang during the early stage of the pandemic. We also address local "problems;" that is, first-year undergraduate ELE students came from underdeveloped regions in Bengkayang and struggled to learn English during the pandemic. In line with Norton and Toohey's (2004) perspective, we refrain ourselves from "totalizing discourses about critical thinking, subjects, and strategies for progressive action" (p. 2). Although the second author of this chapter (Wawan) taught the Critical Reading course from May to August 2020, the course is distinct from the Critical Pedagogy & Literacy elective course Jos has offered over the years for third- or final-year undergraduate students. It is typical for Jos to introduce concepts of critical pedagogies in his elective class, but the Bengkayang students have been in no way acquainted with, if not indoctrinated to critical literacy/pedagogy. Nevertheless, we believe that our Bengkayang students have the capacity or agency to be critical in a sense that is congruent with principles of critical ELT and learning.

Despite the plurality, the notion of critical pedagogies revolves around similar principles. For instance, López-Gopar (2019) argues that all authors in his edited volume "work toward co-creating agency and transformation by redefining critical pedagogies in their own terms and in connections to other constructs, disciplines, and their own context" (p. 3). Furthermore, critical ELT and learning/critical pedagogies in ELT aim to achieve social transformation and social justice by "relat[ing] the classroom context to the wider social context" (Akbari, 2008, p. 276) and using critical thinking to "[counter] practices which reproduce an unequal distribution of power" (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016, p. 456). Akbari (2008) provides basic principles that make it realistic for English language teachers to introduce critical pedagogy in their classrooms: (1) "Base your teaching on students' local culture" (p. 278); (2) "Regard learners' L1 [or first language] as a resource to be utilized" (p. 279); (3) "Include more of students' real-life concerns" (p. 280); and (4) Make your learners aware of issues faced by marginalized groups" (p. 281).

A remaining question is how to introduce critical ELT and learning (especially from the perspective of critical pedagogies discussed above) without imposing it on the students (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). We argue that commitment to achieving social justice and social transformation should start as early as possible in students' learning trajectories, which in our case was initiated in the first year of our research participants' journey at the ELE study programme, not only in a course (like Wawan's

Critical Reading class) but also in our exploration of their struggles and agency beyond a specific course setting.

11.3   Language Learner Agency and Structures Surrounding It

In light of the current literature, language learner agency (LLA) can be defined as one's capability to envision changes, make decisions, and take actions, all of which are situated in, supported, or restricted by economic, sociocultural, or other kinds of structures across epochs and places (Block, 2015; Dufva & Aro, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Miller, 2012, 2016). LLA has become a salient theme in second language pedagogies, especially those oriented toward social justice like critical ELT. In particular, critical ELT aims at questioning oppressions (or *constraining structures*), which may partly account for learners' struggles in learning a second language like English and achieving social transformation made possible by what we call here *enabling* or *empowering agency*. To build a theoretical framework that sufficiently addresses the intricacy of structure-agency interplay in second language learning, we draw specifically on Block's (2015) treatment of structure from the perspective of critical realism and Larsen-Freeman's (2019) insight into LLA in view of a Complex Dynamic Systems Theory.

In exploring the interconnection between structure and agency, Block (2015) notices that the notion of structure has not been sufficiently paid attention to in the applied linguistics literature. As he observes: "… although there is some acknowledgment of structural constraints on individual actions, the general tone is what I would now call 'over-agentive'" (p. 22). He argues that the notion of structure in applied linguistics research needs to be better theorised, the failure of which will only perpetuate individualism and neoliberalism that run counter to realising social justice. Bringing insights from sociology (e.g., Marx's and Bourdieu's theories) and anthropology (e.g., the importance of place in human life), Block conceives structure as layered in five "realms," with the first layer at the bottom being "economic structure" (or "realm 1"). Marxist terms are used in this realm: the economy is the "material bases of societies," which shapes "legal, political superstructure emerging from this economic base" (p. 21). This first realm is where neoliberalism, a political economy that idolises privatisation, "free markets and free trade," resides (Harvey, as cited in Block, 2015, p. 25).

The second layer ("realm 2") is "physical structure," which includes "geographical terrain, neighbourhood, furniture and other physical objects." "Realm 3" above the second layer is the "social structure" that commonly exists in educational, professional, familial, and religious organisations. Discourses and physical materials associated with these institutions mould people's cognition and action. At the fourth layer (or "realm 4") is "psychological/embodied structure" that denotes anything already internalised in one's mind, which in turn dictates what an individual routinely does

(p. 21). These first four realms "have an existence prior to the exercise of agency," thus implying that agency does not "exist in a vacuum" (Block, 2015, p. 21). The fifth realm—"sociocultural configurations which emerge in the ongoing interactions among individuals acting collectively in social formations" (p. 21)—provides room for an individual to exercise their agency. Put another way, agency can only be exerted within or by considering multi-layered economic, physical, social, and psychological/embodied structures.

Block (2015) argues that realities are grounded in a material base (recall realm 1 or economic structure mentioned earlier), which underlies other structures. This perspective allows critical researchers to argue that in this neoliberal era, there *is* such a thing as a socio-economically underdeveloped nation/region that needs to be helped, if not empowered, preferably by local people themselves like the Bengkayang students.

Larsen-Freeman (2019) defines LLA as the capacity to "[optimise] conditions for one's own learning… and [choose] to deploy one's semiotic resources to position oneself as one would wish in a multilingual world" (p. 62). She identifies the following interconnected attributes of LLA. First, "agency is relational" (p. 65) in that it is not exclusively innate in an individual because a person ecologically interacts with his/her environment. This relationality of agency is linked to the following attribute: "agency is emergent." That is, agency occurs when people are conscious that their actions can change their surroundings. In other words, one can see their agency emerges when "detecting spatiotemporal correlations between one's actions and its effects" on their environment (p. 65).

The third attribute is that "agency is spatially and temporally situated" (Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 66). For example, when someone moves to another space or country like the United States, their relative success in mastering a new language like English and in negotiating their multilingual repertoire when interacting with others will influence the degree of their agency in the new space (Miller, 2012, 2016).

Regarding the fourth attribute—"agency can be achieved," it is suggested that "the achievement of agency depends on the availability of economic, cultural, and social resources within a particular ecology" (Biesta & Tedder, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 66). This attribute implies that one can achieve agency by drawing on resources that are accessible or constrained in multi-layered structures (Block, 2015).

That "agency changes through iteration and co-adaptation" is the fifth attribute of agency in Larsen-Freeman's (2019) conceptualisation of LLA. Pivotal in this attribute is that iteration is more compelling than repetition because even "what we say is never an exact repetition of what we or someone else has said" (p. 67). Furthermore, agents, or those who exercise agency, and structure(s) adjust to each other or co-adapt iteratively or "over and over again," with one or more structures limiting what can be done. Nonetheless, changes are possibly made by one's exercise of agency in the structure of a complex system (p. 67).

Sixth, "agency is multidimensional" as it includes "the ability to assign relevance and significance to things and events" (Lantolf & Thorne, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 67), including what matters emotionally or otherwise for multilinguals when

it comes to deciding how and in what moments their linguistic repertoire or resources are to be utilised critically.

Last, Larsen-Freeman (2019) contends that "agency is heterarchical." This concept implies that agency leading to change is not given or granted by a top-down authority hierarchically (e.g., from teachers to English language learners). It is not one-sidedly bottom-up, either. As Larsen-Freeman states: "… change is not caused by a single component, directly and linearly affecting another component, but can emerge from changes in relations within the system" (p. 68). Teachers, English language learners, and other stakeholders in a complex system with their agency might contribute to the deterioration or betterment of ELT and learning. Therefore, it is crucial to create an environment where learners can exercise agency to optimise their English language learning.

While very useful, the studies and theoretical framework of structure-agency interplay reviewed above were predominantly situated in English-speaking countries where bi-/multilinguals immigrated. Two recent studies situated in Indonesia (Lamb, 2013; Widodo, 2017) have explored LLA. The Freirean critical pedagogy also inspires Widodo's (2017) work. He has believed and found out from his data that vocational high school English language learners in East Java showed their agency in articulating their own English language learning goals, as well as negotiating, selecting, and making sense of accounting-related materials, in terms of genre and content knowledge. Contrasting adolescent urban and rural learners in Sumatra, Lamb (2013, p. 15) utilised Dörnyei's Second Language Motivational Self System (not critical pedagogy) when exploring the structure-agency interplay of the learners' English language learning. More empirical evidence of the interplay of structure and LLA looked through the lens of critical ELT and learning is still necessary for a predominantly non-English-speaking country like Indonesia, where English language learners from remote areas outside Java moved temporarily to Central Java in 2019 and had been forced to go home to Kalimantan due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 while remaining registered officially in a university like ours. More specifically, this chapter seeks to identify constraining structure(s) and empowering agency as perceived and exercised respectively by English language learners from Bengkayang in view of critical ELT and learning.

11.4   Methodology

Narrative inquiry has gained prominence not only in educational research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) but also in the field of ELT and learning (Barkhuizen et al., 2014), where the focus can be "analysis of narratives" or "narrative analysis." The former is elicited from research participants, whereas the latter is when one or more researchers construct(s) their reported/published research as narrative, interwoven with data, storylike or otherwise, from research participants (pp. 3–4). This chapter encapsulates a combination of analysis of narratives through language learning

histories from our participants and narrative analysis in that we have narrated our research (since the Introduction section above) while reflecting on it.

The current chapter is intended to be part of our ongoing, larger research project to investigate how we as teacher educators "praxize" (Sharkey, 2009) with the Bengkayang students. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have resorted to adjusting the methodology as ethnographic observations of lecturer–student interactions in physical and online classrooms were relatively unfeasible. Therefore, a critical narrative inquiry was employed in which this chapter denotes our intentional attempt to combine insights from critical ELT (e.g., Akbari, 2008) and narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Introducing *critical narrative as pedagogy* from Freirean and Deweyan perspectives, Goodson and Gill (2014) put forward that criticality "will help people uncover the economic *structure* [and] social order… that render an inhumane society…" (p. 54, emphasis added) and *agency* through their narratives.

Known as the "mini Indonesia," Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW) is located in Salatiga, quite a small town in Central Java, and is one of the largest Christian universities in Indonesia, with over 14,000 students from many parts of the Indonesian archipelago and several countries, mostly Timor Leste.

Kabupaten Bengkayang, the actual name (or the Bengkayang Regency), is approximately a four-hour drive north of Pontianak, the capital of West Kalimantan/Borneo province. Kabupaten Bengkayang was one of the *daerah tertinggal* (or underdeveloped areas) in 2015–2019 based on Presidential Decree No. 131 the Year 2015 regarding disadvantaged areas in Indonesia. According to the decree, a disadvantaged area is a regency whose area and people are less developed compared to other areas on a national scale determined by the Indonesian central government. Out of 12 regencies and two cities (administratively equivalent to regencies), eight regencies, including the Bengkayang regency, were "underdeveloped."[2] Bengkayang now has 17 *kecamatans*[3] (or "regions" in this chapter), and participants in the current study come from various regions in Bengkayang. Despite the fact that the original name "Bengkayang" is clearly stated and used in this study, the participants' names are all pseudonyms, as presented below.

As per the demographic information, 14 out of 32[4] students come from various regions in Bengkayang. The students, all of whom are on scholarship, are coded as Students 1, 2, 3, up to 14, with students 1 and 9 being the only males. Except

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[2] Please see https://setkab.go.id/122-daerah-ini-ditetapkan-pemerintah-sebagai-daerah-tertinggal-2015-2019/ (last retrieved on January 11, 2021). We started our research project in 2019 when Bengkayang was still officially considered tertinggal (or "disadvantaged"/"underdeveloped"). Based on Presidential Decree No. 63 Year 2020 regarding disadvantaged areas in Indonesia 2020-2024 (https://jdih.setkab.go.id/PUUdoc/176108/Perpres_Nomor_63_Tahun_2020.pdf), none of regencies in the entire Borneo is regarded as "disadvantaged" anymore. Official details on the West Kalimantan province can be accessed here: https://kalbarprov.go.id/beranda.

[3] See https://bengkayangkab.go.id/tentang-kami/sejarah/.

[4] A bigger number of students received the scholarship from Bengkayang Regency, but they have decided to resign. This amount was last checked on September 24, 2020.

for Student 3, a Muslim, the other 13 students are Christian[5]. Data was collected in three batches during the students' first-year undergraduate studies at UKSW. First, adopting prompts used by Deacon et al. (2006, p. 244), we elicited the Bengkayang students' Language Learning Histories (LLHs) on Google Form, with their submissions ranging from mid-September to early November 2019. LLHs allow students to reflect on their past language learning experiences before entering UKSW, tap into the present language learning situations, and envision their future(s).

Second, themes that can be related to critical ELT were identified from the works of some students who took Wawan's Critical Reading course in mid-2020. This course aimed to develop students' ability to analyse and evaluate various texts using critical reading strategies. Online activities included classroom discussions, text reading, group work, and personal response/reflective writing through different platforms like Google Chat and Padlet. In one activity, the students were required to define "culture" and provide examples based on their own knowledge. In another activity, the students shared their own opinion about a Hindi movie entitled "P.K.[6]" by responding to our main prompts (i.e., What I like the most from the movie; The movie reminds me about?; I think the producer created this movie to …). In brief, this movie highlights several issues related to religious dogmatism, which also exists in Indonesia. It was expected that the students could recognise the differences between their contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the movie.

Third, we analysed students' responses to our primary prompt (i.e., How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your English language learning process?) on the Padlet application, mainly in mid-August 2020 (see Appendix A). We specifically investigated the participants' struggles and attempted to overcome them during the pandemic. Data presented with quotation marks were copied verbatim from students' statements; otherwise, it was translated from Bahasa Indonesia to English.

This study utilised thematic analysis in examining multiple narratives produced by multiple participants. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) believe that thematic analysis opens up the possibility of the narratives, establishes shared themes, and highlights individual differences. As we read and analysed the three sets of elicited data, we attempted to recall our background reading on critical (pedagogy in) ELT (Akbari, 2008; Crookes, 2013); the interplay of structure-agency in English language learning (Block, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2019); and Goodson and Gill's (2014) view that "it is narrative that can build bridges linking a person and a community's past, present, and future" (p. 66).

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[5] Based on https://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?search-tabel=Penduduk+Menurut+Wil ayah+dan+Agama+yang+Dianut&tid=321&search-wilayah=Kabupaten+Bengkayang&wid=610 2000000&lang=id, retrieved on January 10, 2020, around 57.3% of Bengkayang people are Christian (i.e., Protestant and Catholic), and 36.39% are Muslims.

[6] See https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/PKs-Plot-Summary/articleshow/45576638.cms.

11.5   Findings

Based on our background reading of the relevant literature, the themes that have emerged from the data encompass structures and agency in the Bengkayang students' past, present, and their projected future conditions.

11.5.1   Lack of Mastery in English: Constraining Structures in the Past

Jos went to Bengkayang himself last June 2019 to interview applicants, many of whom were farmers' children. Student 1, whom Jos interviewed then and who stood out as an applicant at that time because of his fluent English with an American accent,[7] and some of his fellow Bengkayang students participating in our study thought that before entering university, they had struggled to be proficient in English. Asked in LLH about her impression of her first English language learning experience in Bengkayang, Student 3 said she was challenged because she could only understand what others said but did not know how to reply to or explain something. Student 9 said: "*Lebih banyak mempelajari rumus* to be, *menghafal dan sedikit praktek*" (I learned more about the formula "to be," memorised [something], and practised a little).

Responding to the LLH question about what negative experience they had in the past, Student 14 said she had difficulty taking the English exam because she lacked English vocabulary, had difficulty understanding the content of the questions, and got a bad grade. Concerning how students learned English in Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA), Students 2 and 3 stated in their LLHs that in SMP she was introduced to vocabulary and in SMA to "sentence" (or English structure) or "verb and tense," which implies that their high schools did not seem to provide a variety of approaches to learning English, especially in identifying text genres and comprehending texts as mandated by the national curriculum. Student 8 said the English lessons in her SMA were boring, making it difficult for her to understand her teacher's explanation. The struggle of acquiring English that these students reported may not be atypical as students in many different parts of Indonesia are very likely to be in a similar situation due to, in light of Block's (2015) critical realism, relative poverty (in terms of economic structure), geographical location distant from centres of quality education (physical structure), and relatively poor English instruction at school (constraining social structure).

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[7] He said he had never been abroad before, except to Malaysia, which is very close to Bengkayang.

11.5.2   English Perceived as Power for Oneself: Enabling
Agency in the Past

Constraining structures identified from some Bengkayang students' LLHs before they entered UKSW did not limit some students to showing their agency then. Unlike Students 2 and 3, who stated that their high schools only focused on vocabulary and grammar, Student 1 told us that in Junior High School (SMP), he learned how to write a personal biodata and make a short dialogue with peers. In SMA, his English skills were increasingly honed by learning how to write an application letter, deliver speeches, and discuss trending topics. He also practised pronunciation by singing English songs. In view of Larsen-Freeman's (2019) theory, Student 1's agency was achieved when he drew upon educational and popular culture resources to improve his English.

Three other Bengkayang students' agency is "relational" (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) in that they used English interactions with others. Student 5 joined English debating activities held by her school. Student 14 talked in English with Dutch people and understood a little of their English despite her English inaccuracies. Student 10 said that foreign journalists once interviewed her about the culture of handicrafts in her village. At first, she was terrified because of her incompetence in English, but after being interviewed, she claimed that she could answer all the questions the journalists asked her.

11.5.3   Struggles During the COVID-19 Pandemic:
Constraining Structures in the Present

All Bengkayang students who responded to the Padlet prompts (see Appendix A) indicated that the pandemic severely disrupted their English language learning process. Internet blind spots abound in Indonesia, including in the Bengkayang regency. In particular, moving back to Bengkayang during the early phase of the pandemic in 2020, eight students (Students 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 13) were deeply concerned about poor internet connection in their villages, thus indicating not only the constraining economic structure but also physical structure (Block, 2015). More affluent areas or places not geographically distant from downtowns in Java, the island of Kalimantan, or Bengkayang are less likely to have any problem with Internet access. Students 3 and 5 lamented over power outages, especially during heavy rains. To top it all, repairs to Base Transceiver Station (BTS) towers and expensive Internet data quota have made things more difficult for these students to learn well during the pandemic (Student 5). Student 2 also expressed her concern regarding physical structure: "Noisy conditions from small children or passing vehicles that really interfere with my focus in studying."

In terms of social structure (Block, 2015), ELE at UKSW has for a long time required students to be more autonomous in learning, and this has been intensified

during the early stage of the pandemic with complete off-campus online learning. However, it seems that the psychological/embodied structure in students' minds (especially those from Bengkayang) has been that they meet physically with their instructors. Student 2 said: "not face to face makes a difference in meaning in the delivery and acceptance of the material." A similar voice was raised by Student 3. Besides that, some other students (Students 4, 7, 8, 10, and 14) found online classes overwhelming due to a large number of assignments, and yet they, in particular, struggled even more to understand grammar lessons (Students 4 and 8). Some also expressed that they were lagging: Student 14 could not open the video sent by their instructor and ran out of time when working on a test due to poor Internet connection; Student 8 could not open the files provided by their instructors.

No sooner had our participants finished their first semester (from August to December 2019) and internalised the social structure of the ELE study programme at UKSW than COVID-19 hit the entire world and disrupted our Bengkayang students' psychological/embodied structure of learning English intensively (Block, 2015). Students 8, 10, and 14 were worried that their English skills had worsened in the past few months. Student 8's statement represents this concern well. She said that English had rarely been used because there was no friend or lecturer with whom she could practice the language in the classroom. She further continued: "*selama belajar dari rumah kebanyakan kami menggunakan aplikasi chat sehingga kami hanya menulis tapi tidak mengucapkan nya*" (as we learn from home, we use a chat application so we only write but do not say it).

Regardless, the pandemic has altered the "sociocultural configurations which emerge in the ongoing interactions" (Block, 2015, p. 21) on the online platform among students and instructors, including Jos and Wawan here. This fifth realm beyond economic, physical, social, and psychological structures has paved the way for some Bengkayang students, in particular, to exercise their agency despite the pandemic.

11.5.4 *Against All Odds During the Pandemic: Empowering Agency in the Present*

The students' interactions with their milieux have been crucial to showing their "relational" nature of agency (Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 65). On Padlet, the students informed us that they attempted to accomplish their online tasks during the pandemic by interacting with fellow human beings, such as relatives like an uncle or aunt, to get a Wi-Fi connection (Student 2) or an elder sibling (Student 6); tutors/older buddies from ELE UKSW (Students 4 and 8); peers (Students, 10, 13, and 14); and her lecturer (Student 13) and inanimate objects, such as lecturers' instructions (Students 2 and 10); watching YouTube or other references on the Internet (Students 10 and 13).

Student 10's statement documented on Padlet encapsulates what Larsen-Freeman (2019) conceives as the spatially and temporally situated characteristic of agency:

> The way I face Internet connection problems, I have to leave the village to the place with the smoothest Internet connection with a distance of 15 minutes using a motorbike, so that every task with fast deadlines I try to be able to complete it on time sometimes I have to go home at 10 pm.

Similar voices were raised by Students 2 and 6 who badly needed Wi-Fi connection, the former going to any of her relatives' places, and the latter to a cafe. Regarding time, Student 14 did her assignments from midnight until dawn, whereas Student 13 did them in the morning or afternoon.

Agency can be achieved when a learner uses resources within their reach (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). In our case, students achieved their agency by optimising their language learning; for example, by taking advantage of online learning apps (Students 3 and 13), including *Cake* for pronunciation (Student 3); talking to herself in front of a mirror to maintain her speaking skills (Student 10); singing and mimicking dialogues from English movies she watched (Student 3).

To exemplify Larsen-Freeman's (2019) notion that "agency changes through iteration and co-adaptation" (p. 67), we use Student 3's case. As one of the high-achieving students from Bengkayang, she interestingly thought of herself as a slow learner and so to overcome this she made a trial-and-error process:

> *awalnya saya mencoba membaca materi dari pelajaran yang akan dibahas, ternyata tidak berhasil karena pemahaman yang saya ambil dari belajar sendiri berbeda dengan yang dijelaskan dosen. Lalu saya mencoba melihat contoh pemahaman orang lain terlebih dahulu, kemudian saya gabungkan dengan apa yang saya pahami, setidaknya berhasil untuk saat ini.* [Initially I tried to read the material from the lesson to be discussed, but it did not work because the understanding I took from studying on my own was different from what the lecturer explained. Then I tried to see examples of other people's interpretations first, then combined them with what I understood; at least it worked for now.]

This excerpt denotes the iteration of Student 3's learning system in that she reactivated her attempt to understand her lecturers' explanation, but instead of relying solely on her own understanding, she also included her peers' understanding. This strategy created a sense of stability in her learning system because, as she said, "it worked for now."

11.5.5   Commitment to Maintaining One's Culture: Enabling Agency in the Present

Thus far we have analysed LLA when the students reflected on the overall language learning process during the pandemic. Now let us proceed with a closer look at the content of what was being learned in Wawan's Critical Reading online course. The students in his class were not introduced to critical pedagogy, but the course

somehow allowed a Bengkayang student, in line with Akbari's (2008) principle of critical pedagogy in ELT, to pay critical attention to her local culture. Here is Student 10's take on local culture:

> examples of traditional Dayak culture that are often performed in West Kalimantan such as the Wadian / Bulian ceremony, Naik Dango, Makai Taun Gawai ceremony, Tiwah ritual etc. carried out as a form of hereditary tradition that must not be eliminated but must be maintained. (June 25, 2020)

She not only listed examples of traditional Dayak culture but also argued for its maintenance. We certainly look forward to knowing more about how she contributes to the maintenance of her culture, but suffice to say here that even a statement of commitment like this signifies her agency, in agreement with Larsen-Freeman (2019), as being located in contemporary Dayak society.

11.5.6 Inclusion of Students' Real-Life Concerns: Empowering Agency in the Present

Wawan improvised his Critical Reading lesson by involving PK, an Indian satirical movie, to be reflected upon by his students, including those from Bengkayang (Students 2, 3, 4, 8, and 10). Student 8's reflection, quoted verbatim at length below, is the most comprehensive in terms of her understanding of the movie and her self-reflexivity (or auto-criticism; see Mambu, 2014) of people's religious practices.

> This movie tells the story of humans from other planets coming down to earth... He was called PK, PK lost his remote to return to his planet, he did various ways to be able to find his remote, he sought all of God to help find his remote again because when he searched for his remote people answered "only God who knows". What I like the most about this movie is that when the PK performs his actions to find his remote, he goes to all places of worship and worships to follow the religious beliefs to seek God so that God gives his remotes. The action is very funny... But it is not good if this really happens, God is not a place for us to look for our personal belongings... This movie reminds me of human life, most people seek God just to realize their desires...

In Student 10's phrasing, the movie reminded her of "people who still abuse religion" for their own personal goals. Slightly differently, the PK movie made Student 2 recall "a group that acts in the name of religion but deviates from that religion," with the group being intentionally concealed due to the sensitivity of this religious issue in Indonesia. In Larsen-Freeman's (2019) viewpoint, the emergence of the agency is when a learner is capable of changing the world, or in our case here, naming a real-world problem (i.e., using religion to fulfil or justify one's or a group's own desire) that needs changing.

11.5.7   English Perceived as Power for a Community: Enabling Agency for the Future

Critical narrative inquiry provides space for English language learners (e.g., using LLHs) to construct not only their past and present but also shape their hopeful future(s) agentively. First, some learners' emotions and beliefs regarding the place of English in their multilingual environment came to the fore when asked what their plan(s) was/were after graduating from UKSW. Student 3 answered that she wanted to "*menjadikan masyarakat lebih akrab dengan bahasa internasional*" (make people more familiar with English as an international language). Likewise, Student 8 aspired to open a place for people in her community in Bengkayang to learn English "*agar bahasa Inggris menjadi bahasa favorit dan menyenangkan untuk di pelajari dan terutama bagi masyarakat di daerah perbatasan dengan negara Malaysia*" (so that English becomes a favourite and fun language to learn and especially for people in areas bordering Malaysia). The students' positive feeling or strong belief in the importance of English language indicates what Larsen-Freeman (2019) categorises as the multidimensionality of agency.

Second, these Bengkayang students' agency is spatially and temporally situated, in Larsen-Freeman's (2019) view, concerning their plan(s) after graduation. Because their study at ELE UKSW has been endorsed and funded by Bengkayang local government, their responses that they would return to Bengkayang (e.g., "*membangun daerah*" [or developing their region; Student 3]; becoming English teachers there [Students 8, 10, 11, and 14]) echoed the authoritative discourse (Bakhtin, as cited in Dufva & Aro, 2015) of their local government officials' requirement that they go back to their home region after completing their undergraduate studies.

Because there is a common goal shared among the Bengkayang students, the local government, Jos, and Wawan to empower people in the "underdeveloped" regions in Bengkayang educationally through ELE graduates in the future, this is where we think that our agency is heterarchical (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). The Bengkayang government, Jos, and Wawan alike have invested our resources in upgrading the students through our ELE programme. Together we are co-constructing a system that allows sustainable empowerment for our students, future graduates, and their local communities.

11.6   Discussion

Adolescent rural Sumatran learners of English in Lamb's (2011, 2013) study remained in their locality, so they did not really improve their English over the years. In our study undergraduate students migrated, albeit temporarily, from West Kalimantan to Central Java (and back to Kalimantan again during the early phase of the pandemic). This sojourn has positioned the Bengkayang students in more

complex dynamic systems (e.g., differing educational systems between high school and university life; distinct cultures between West Kalimantan and Central Java; and life pre- as opposed to during pandemic; recall Larsen-Freeman, 2019). In such systems, our undergraduate students can exercise a broader sense of agency, which is beyond individual motivation as that in Lamb's (2013) work, because they could experience actualising various attributes of LLA (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) despite constraining structures particularly the relatively low quality of English language instruction in "underdeveloped" regions in West Kalimantan and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in Bengkayang were less intensely implicated by the "global economy," had "limited exposure to English," and encountered few opportunities that necessitated English proficiencies. However, based on their LLH response, Student 1 was able to improve his English by utilising "cultural and pedagogical resources" while in high school (Lamb, 2013, p. 26) (e.g., English songs and lessons at school). This example demonstrated his agentic response against looming structural constraints. The relational nature of agency (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) was demonstrated by Students 5, 10, and 14 when they practiced using English, however limited, with peers or foreigners before entering university. From Banegas and Villacañas de Castro's (2016) perspective, these students did not succumb to "an unequal distribution of power" (p. 456) due to relatively limited exposure to English (as a powerful foreign language) at school compared to those in more affluent areas in Java. Instead, they agentively countered constraints by findings ways to practice English alone or relationally with others. Such a relational nature of agency (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) has also occurred during the pandemic as the students in Bengkayang have initiated interaction with fellow human beings and inanimate objects that can facilitate their learning and accomplish tasks assigned by their lecturers in Central Java.

Agency as spatially and contemporarily situated (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) was shown by Student 10 who endorsed the maintenance of Dayak culture in her written response in Wawan's Critical Reading course. Student 10's agency goes beyond motivation at an autonomous or individual level, thus distinct from individual motivation in Lamb (2013). What matters to the Bengkayang society is also salient in Student 10's life. Put another way, the communal agency of Dayak culture in Bengkayang, as it were, has been internalised as Student 10's agency to sustain her local culture. Student 10's agency to preserve the Dayak culture aligns with critical pedagogy in ELT (Akbari, 2008), especially when she did not learn English solely for survival in the neoliberal global economy, such as being employable. Employability is a prevalent neoliberal goal in favourite schools in big cities, like those formerly known as International Standard Schools in Banda Aceh (Sumatera), Makassar (Sulawesi), and Bekasi (West Java), Indonesia (Coleman, 2011), among others.

Agency as emergent (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) also goes beyond what Lamb (2013) implies as individual motivation. This kind of agency is exemplified in Bengkayang students' display of ability to critically name a real-world problem, concern, or constraining structure, such as identifying individuals in power using religion to justify one's own selfish desires. This emergence of agency also occurred in the context of a media-facilitated learning activity (e.g., the use of the movie PK) to

transpire during discussions and student reflections. Furthermore, some Bengkayang students' reflections on the movie PK lend more empirical support to Widodo's (2017) framework of student agency. That is, students are "meaning makers" (p. 237) who do not simply rely on knowledge deposited by lecturers.

When there is a shared goal between the Bengkayang local government and elements of the ELE UKSW (i.e., Jos, Wawan, and the Bengkayang undergraduate students) to develop regions in Bengkayang through English language teaching and learning, we are in a better position to implement critical pedagogies that "co-creat[e] agency and transformation" (López-Gopar, 2019b, p. 3) in a heterarchical manner (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). Moreover, individual students' aspirations, collective Bengkayang voices (e.g., developing the regions; maintaining indigenous cultures), and ELE UKSW teacher educators, especially those with critical orientations, constitute complex systems. In these complex systems, constraining economic, physical, social, and psychological/embodied structures (Block, 2015), and LLA are intricately intertwined. As such, envisioning or achieving a more just society through English language teaching and learning is only possible when consistent teacher–student/student–student critical dialogues are sustained, not only in one-shot writing of LLHs, one round of responding to our prompts on Padlet, and a few Critical Reading lessons.[8]

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[8] Jos is fortunate to have taught another Bengkayang on-scholarship student last September to December 2020 in the Academic Speaking course. She is not one of the 14 students reported in this chapter, but her work is to exemplify a possible sustained critical dialogue beyond LLHs and Wawan's Critical Reading course. In her digital poster presentation on November 3, 2020, Lani (a pseudonym) presented about *How Crude Palm Trees Impact Environment* unfavourably, especially rivers, forests, and the air in West Kalimantan.

11.7   Conclusion

Attributes of agency elucidated by Larsen-Freeman (2019) are not meant to be mutually exclusive but for our analytical purpose, the examples above are to illustrate non-exhaustively the presence of LLA in different parts of the students' elicited narratives. More importantly, Larsen-Freeman's insights lay a strong foundation for us to identify nuanced characteristics of LLA in students' past and present language learning episodes, as well as their future projection. Block's (2015) theory of multi-layered structures also helps us to situate LLA within economic, physical, social, and psychological constraints and resources whom Bengkayang students have dealt with or drawn upon. The students might have experienced struggles in learning English in the past and especially at present during the pandemic. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, these struggles highlight unequal access to quality education or facilities that allow learners to learn English effectively. However, based on our critical inquiry into their narratives, some of the learners agentively survived relatively well, were able to put forward critical views of the world, and envisioned their aspiration to empower their community in Bengkayang.

This chapter can serve as a basis for further praxis—reflection and action (Freire, 2000)—organically in formal focus group discussions, informal encounters, and concrete actions with our Bengkayang students not necessarily taking a course labelled as Critical Pedagogy (like that of Jos) or others who might find the current study resonating with their local situations. With this in mind, we offer a possibility that critical ELT can be part of school/university culture when attempts to explore the structure-agency interplay by "reading the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) are introduced since the beginning of students' study period (e.g., when teachers document LLHs of students in their first year of study, snapshots of learning reflection in a course, and students' work that can be related to critical ELT). This chapter sums up our (unfinalised) story of how we have seen the interconnectedness of structures and LLA from a critical ELT perspective. Continuous efforts into dialoguing with language learners, including our Bengkayang students, are necessary to form agents of change collaboratively in our society.

Appendix: A snapshot of Bengkayang students' responses to the prompt on how the pandemic impacted English language learning
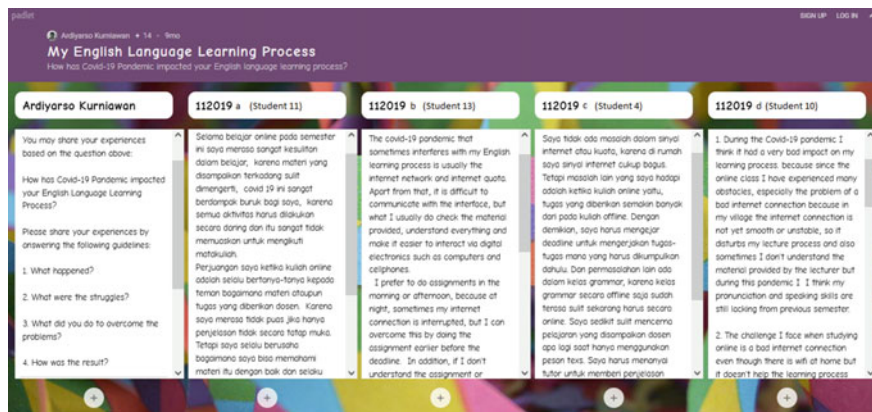
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Chapter 12
Envisaging a Critical Sexuality Education in Indonesia: A Poststructuralist Offer

Teguh Wijaya Mulya

12.1 Introduction

The current chapter engages with sexuality education in Indonesia, which currently, is virtually non-existent. Most Indonesian young people learn about sexuality from informal sources such as friends, social media, the Internet, pornography, films, comics, boy/girlfriends, religious leaders, and, sometimes, parents (Wijaya Mulya, 2017). Without undermining the valuable contributions of these informal sources, there might be some benefits in including sexuality education in the national curriculum where sexuality can be discussed openly in an educational setting. Since sexuality is a battleground of various social–political–religious ideologies, envisioning a form of sexuality education has always been a contention, including in Indonesia. Based on my research on Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivity (Wijaya Mulya, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020), this chapter proposes a sexuality education approach that might be connected with the ways contemporary Indonesian young people understand themselves as sexual being.

The chapter begins with a contextual introduction into the debates around sexuality education in contemporary Indonesia, including the wider socio-religio-political contexts from which the debates occurred. After a brief note on the theoretical framework and methodology, I highlight the findings of my study on Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivity. Reflecting on these findings, in the final part I put forward some recommendations (or, imaginings) for sexuality education in Indonesia which is critical, democratic, and, hopefully, contributing to social and sexual justice in Indonesia.

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12.2 Sexuality and Education in Contemporary Indonesia: Some Discursive Tensions

This section describes how debates around the provision of sexuality education for Indonesian young people in the last two decades have revolved around tensions between (religious) moral discourses—which silence and restrict youth sexuality into heterosexual, religiously sanctioned marriage—and other discourses such as sexual health promotion, anti-violence campaigns, and LGBT+ movements. Historically, the patterns of Indonesian young people's dating relationships have perceptibly changed. A generation ago, dating meant a man comes, sits, and talks with a woman in her parents' house. In contrast, contemporary young Indonesians' dating involves going out to the cinema, cafés, parks, or malls (Parker & Nilan, 2013; Smith-Hefner, 2005). The concern for contemporary parents is that while virginity—particularly for girls—is deemed considerably important, strict supervision of their children's dating is not possible, and talking about sex with their children is culturally inappropriate and embarrassing (Manggala, 2013; Parker, 2009). Therefore, some parents expected the school to provide sexuality education (Utomo, 2003).

Currently, there is no sexuality education in the Indonesian curricula other than Biology lessons on reproductive anatomy in year 8 (±age 13) and year 11 (±age 16) (Bennett, 2007; Parker, 2009). Current and previous Ministers of Education in Indonesian cabinets has/had either been silent or refused to include sexuality education in the national curricula, both implicitly and explicitly. An example of the explicit ones was Muhammad Nuh (2009–2014) who stated that "sex is a natural act" so that "young people should have known themselves" (Burhani, 2010). Moreover, in 2013, his ministry proposed an increase in the number of hours that schools spend teaching Religious Education in order to tackle young people's "moral problems", including premarital sex (Virdhani, 2013). Here, sexuality is not just silenced but also (religiously) moralized before it even exists in educational settings.

Although sexuality is currently not taught in schools, there are sexuality education programmes available for some Indonesian young people offered by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and the National Board of Family Planning (BKKBN, under the Ministry of Health). These programmes are generally short-term, small-scale, non-compulsory, and sexual-health-focused. Such initiatives were responses to the call by Indonesian sexual health researchers who drew attention to the risks of unprotected sex, such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, and unplanned pregnancy (Ford et al., 2007; Simonin et al., 2011). These sexual health researchers concertedly suggested provision of sexuality education to dispel young people's ignorance about the risks of sex, and condom use as protection against STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Leerlooijer et al., 2014; Widyastari et al., 2015). The importance of promoting safer sex has been persistently voiced by these researchers; however, taking up safer sex practices might not be simple and straightforward; it requires young people to negotiate various competing social–political discourses that enable/constrain their possibilities of engaging in such practices.

One possible (discursive) constraint that might have hindered Indonesian young people from adopting safer sex practices is opposition from conservative religious groups. They often condemn sexual health education as encouraging the practice of premarital sex, which they deemed immoral or against conservative beliefs. A condom awareness programme to battle HIV infections by the Ministry of Health, for example, was eventually cancelled due to objections from conservative religious groups (Natahadibrata, 2013, Dec 5). In fact, young people's possession of condoms is generally considered problematic by schools, parents, and religious authorities because this is interpreted as preparation to engage in sex outside of marriage. Accordingly, access to contraceptive services in Indonesia is legal only for married couples (Manggala, 2013). Considering this legal-political situation, Davies and Bennett (2015) noted that, although sexual health promotion by some NGOs and the Ministry of Health has achieved a degree of success, the prospect of seeing compulsory sexual health education in Indonesian national curricula remains in a distant future. These tensions indicate how some forms of (religious) moralism have competed with sexual health discourses in constituting meanings around Indonesian young people's sexuality.

Beyond educational settings, moral rejection of any sexual expression and relationships outside of marriage can also be seen in everyday Indonesian political, legal, and social practices, which sometimes involve violent acts. From time to time, there are media reports on raids carried out by community members to catch unmarried (heterosexual) couples engaging in consensual sex, either in their own homes, rented rooms, or motels (e.g., Padang, 2012). The police also conduct schoolbag inspections at Internet cafés and schools searching for pornography (e.g., Surbakti, 2012). Since the passing of Anti-Pornography Bill in 2008, every form of pornography and its production, dissemination, and consumption has been prohibited in Indonesia. The government actively censors any pornographic materials from being accessed by Internet users in Indonesia. Drawing on moralistic arguments, violent protests conducted by hard-line Islamic groups have also successfully cancelled various events deemed incompatible with "Indonesian moral values" (Parker, 2009). These include Lady Gaga's 2012 concert in Jakarta (Liu, 2012), the 2010 ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Intersex Association) Congress in Surabaya (Akbar, 2010), and a human and sexual rights seminar for transgendered people held by the National Commission on Human Rights (Astuti, 2010). As these examples indicated, another field of heated debates and violent actions is the acknowledgement and protection of sexual minorities, particularly LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and other) sexualities.

Growing significantly since the 1998 democratic reformation, Indonesian LGBT+ movements are often regarded as the oldest and largest in Southeast Asia (Laurent, 2005; Suvianita, 2013). These LGBT+ movements have successfully circulated ideas previously unfamiliar about LGBT+ sexualities in Indonesia, and have offered alternatives to the dominant heteronormative discourses. LGBT+ sexualities have been featured in mainstream Indonesian movies (Murtagh, 2013), reported in national media (e.g., Sukmana, 2016), and have been increasingly studied by researchers in Indonesian contexts (e.g., Boellstorff, 2007; Davies, 2010; Wieringa, 2015). One

significant event in these movements was the inauguration of the Yogyakarta Princi-
ples (Corrêa & Muntarbhorn, 2007) which involved international experts gathering
at the University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and discussing the appli-
cation of international human rights law in the field of sexual orientation and gender
identity. The Yogyakarta Principles are often considered a ground-breaking achieve-
ment in the international LGBT+ movement (O'Flaherty & Fisher, 2008), and have
also been utilized by LGBT+ activists in Indonesia. However, despite all these efforts,
these movements have still not achieved any legal recognition from the Indonesian
government, nor protection for LGBT-identified people.

Quite the opposite, reactionary responses against LGBT+ movements have grown
extensively in recent years. Some examples include the temporary closing down of
a transgender Islamic boarding house in Yogyakarta by the local authorities after a
complaint from Front Jihad Islam in 2016, the cancellation of a pro-LGBT+ peaceful
rally in Jakarta and Yogyakarta by the police, and the statement from the Minister
of Research, Technology, and Higher Education that LGBT+ sexualities "corrupt"
Indonesian values and norms (Amnesty International, 2016, March 18). Earlier,
in 2015, The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Muslim leaders) issued a fatwa (i.e.,
formal recommendation to the government based on an Islamic point of view) that
"sodomy, homosexuality, or gay and lesbian practices" should be punished with a
death sentence (Mutiara, 2015). This fatwa was a response to, among others, the infa-
mous case of child sexual violence in the Jakarta International School (JIS), in which
kindergarten boys were allegedly threatened and then penetrated in the toilet by male
school cleaners (Hawley & Smith, 2016). Notwithstanding the highly contested facts
around the case, the Council of Indonesian Ulama demonized same-sex sexuality by
conflating it with paedophilia and sexual violence and furthered their conservative
agenda of stronger surveillance, control, and punishment for sexual immorality. Such
views and disciplinary actions exemplify the complex interplay and tensions between
discourses of sexual orientation, sexual morality, and sexual violence in Indonesia.

The JIS case above is one example of how sexual violence cases have become
national media headlines in Indonesia. In general, sexual violence (particularly
against women and children) has gained public attention after the 1998 reforma-
tion, partly because of the awareness-building efforts by the National Commission
on Violence against Women. This commission was established in October 1998
after the systematic mass rape of hundreds of Chinese Indonesian women during
the riots that toppled president Soeharto. One of the commission's achievements has
been the passing of the Domestic Violence Law in 2004 which criminalizes various
acts of domestic violence, including sexual violence by family members. Through
this commission's advocacy and campaigns, a discourse of sexual violence previ-
ously unfamiliar in Indonesia became more widely circulated. This commission also
identified that one barrier to eliminating the increasing number of sexual violence
cases in Indonesia is the justification of violence through conservative interpreta-
tions of religious beliefs (Komnas Perempuan, 2015). Responding to this report,
religious leaders argued that increasing statistics of sexual violence documented by
the National Commission on Violence Against Women and the National Commis-
sion for Child Protection are caused by deviations from the moral standard of sexual

abstinence outside of (heterosexual) marriage (Mutiara, 2015). As a result, the Anti-Sexual Violence Bill proposed in 2017 is stalled, and officially excluded from the list of legislative priorities by the parliament at the time this chapter was written (Nurbaiti & Sutrisno, 2020). This debate around sexual violence provides another example of how competing discourses (i.e., sexual morality and sexual violence) are at play in constituting meanings around sexuality in Indonesia.

It is against this social, political, historical, and religious backdrop that contemporary Indonesian young people came to understand themselves as sexual subjects—where tensions between discourses of sexual morality, sexual health, sexual orientation, and sexual violence have characterized everyday socio-political-sexual practices. While these tensions are apparent in public discussions such as those reported in the national media (Mutiara, 2015; Padang, 2012; Sukmana, 2016), little is known about how Indonesian young people have engaged with, negotiated, and resisted these discourses in their ways of understanding themselves as sexual beings. Consequently, decisions regarding how young people should be educated about sexuality—such as the increasing of Religious Education hours to address "sexual immorality"—might have been detached from young people's own ways of being sexual. It is this gap that my research seeks to fill: where the complexities of young people's sexual subjectivities are explored from their perspectives, including their resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality in contemporary Indonesia.

12.3 Notes on the Theoretical Framework: A Poststructuralist Feminist Approach

This chapter draws upon a poststructuralist feminist reading on Foucault's theorization of power, discourse, and subjectivity. According to Foucault, pre-modern power expressed its murderous splendour by killing enemies or torturing individuals who did not comply, resulting in continuous revolts which were both costly and created social instability (Foucault, 1978). In contrast, modern power governs, administers, regulates, and transforms individuals into docile subjects who desire to conform to the norms and support the existing power relations. Central to this operation of modern power is the notion of discourse, that is, a formation of interconnected ideas which define the "nature" of certain experiences or things, constitute ways of seeing the world, and guide possibilities for action (Weedon, 1987). It is through discourse that power governs the knowledge circulated in the society and regulates which ways of thinking are deemed intelligible (Foucault, 1978). Dominant discourses appear as "natural" or commonsense, tend to reproduce existing power relations, and are often supported by state apparatuses and social institutions. Some discourses are less popular and represent marginal political interests, but they always have the potential to gain greater currency. A dominant discourse of sexual morality in Indonesia, for example, has constituted all sex outside of (heterosexual) marriage as immoral. This discourse has been supported by major religious groups and is featured in some

Indonesian laws such as the Marriage Laws and Anti-Pornography Law. It is also expressed in everyday social events such as public debates, religious sermons, and media reports. In contrast, other discourses such as the discourse of sexual rights—which constitutes sex and sexuality as individual rights that must be protected by the state—have not yet enjoyed such wide circulation in Indonesia.

Discourses circulating in a given society enable individuals to give meaning to their experiences and also their sense of self (i.e., subjectivity). Understanding oneself as lesbian, for example, involves the subject drawing upon a set of ideas which constitutes sexual identities as categorizable based on the gender of the preferred sexual partner. Since discursive constellations in any domain of knowledge are always in flux, one's subjectivity is also perpetually reconstituted. Such a continuous process of subjectivation opens up new ways of understanding oneself, which is precisely where the possibility of resistance lies. As individuals draw upon alternative discourses and take up a new subject position, modern power's agenda to govern and create docile subjects may be slightly destabilized.

Following these poststructuralist theorizations of power, discourse, and subjectivity, the education system becomes a crucial site for discursive contestation and disciplining the subjects. Since any knowledge is neither objective nor neutral but inextricably related to power, knowledge taught in schools discursively enables and limits students' ways of seeing and being. Silence on contraception or condemnation of LGBT+ sexualities by teachers, for example, may discursively (re)produce students to be sexually abstinent, heteronormative subjects, particularly when coupled with other disciplinary mechanisms such as school rules. It is within these poststructuralist understandings of the contested nature of knowledge, possibilities for resistance in the constitution of alternative subjectivity, and education as a site of disciplinary mechanisms, that this chapter discusses sexuality education in Indonesia.

12.4   Methodology

This chapter was based on qualitative data about Indonesian Christian young people's sexual subjectivity which were collected for my doctoral thesis (Wijaya Mulya, 2017). As the data came from a small, non-representative, religion-specific sample, I do not intend to make any generalizable claims. The notion of generalizability is also against my theoretical framework which positions knowledge as discursively contested, contextually situated, and always-already perspectival. Nevertheless, some narratives might resonate with the experience of other Indonesian young people and therefore may offer a degree of relevance and transferability. While parts of the thesis have been published elsewhere (Wijaya Mulya, 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020), the current chapter specifically focuses on the insights the data may offer for sexuality education practices in Indonesia.

Participants were recruited through an advertisement/invitation distributed to universities, NGOs, and relevant personal networks. As many as 22 young Indonesians aged 16–24 participated; 12 participants identified as male, 9 as female, and

1 as neither gender; 14 identified as heterosexual, 4 gay, 2 lesbian, 1 bisexual, and 1 asexual. At the time of the data collection (mid-2013), participants were college students (8 participants), high school students (6 participants), employees (5 participants), a freelance journalist (1 participant), a postgraduate student (1 participant), and an NGO activist (1 participant). All participants' names in this chapter are pseudonyms.

The participants were interviewed via Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) research methods, which included email correspondence, a session of instant messenger interview, and a short autobiographical essay. The interview questions were around their sexual learning, knowledge, experiences, and identity. Narratives quoted in this chapter were translated into English by the researcher, who is a native Indonesian speaker. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involved the researcher familiarizing himself with the data, organizing them, and then he identified, named, and discussed key themes found in the data.

12.5 Contemporary Indonesian Young People's Sexual Subjectivity

In this section, I briefly highlight some key findings of my doctoral research, upon which my visions for Indonesian critical sexuality education were built. The research identified at least four dominant discourses through which participants understand themselves as sexual being, namely, a discourse of (religious) sexual morality, a discourse of sexual orientation, a discourse of sexual health, and a discourse of sexual violence. Each of these will be discussed in the following, including possibilities for resistance demonstrated in the constitution of participants' alternative subjectivity.

A discourse of sexual morality, in which youth sexuality is mainly given meaning through a binary of "right and wrong", has permeated the ways participants in this study think about and practice sexuality. Religious rhetoric played a significant role in this regard, as the source of moralistic views on sexuality was frequently attributed by participants to (conservative) religious interpretations. This dominant discourse positions young people within a binary of being either "moral" (i.e., heterosexual, maintaining abstinence outside of marriage) or "immoral" (i.e., non-heterosexual, engaging in sex). Through various mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and punishment, Indonesian young people were disciplined to become obedient moral subjects. Consequently, the moral imposition of sexual abstinence has constrained possibilities for participants to understand and practice sex ethically; because any form of sex is deemed sinful for unmarried youth. Nevertheless, some other participants' narratives demonstrated various ways to contest this dominant discourse of (religious) sexual morality—which was often claimed as "Divine truth"—and gave meaning to their sexual self in more complex ways; from leaving the organized religion completely, reinterpreting religious morality, and living the contradictions

of being religious/sexual/moral/ethical (Wijaya Mulya, 2018a). For instance, Anto (male, 24 yr, gay) drew upon his personal spiritual experience with God (who is understood as kind and loving) to reinterpret religious condemnation of his sexual identity and practices.

Another discourse widely drawn upon by participants in understanding their sexual self is a discourse of sexual orientation, in which sexual desires are categorized based on the gender of the preferred partner. Accessing this discourse mainly through informal/non-educational sources like friends, the Internet, and religious condemnations, some young Indonesian participants have taken up subject positions offered by this discourse, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other newer categories such as asexual. However, participants' narratives also exhibited forms of resistance to this discourse, where their ways of becoming sexual subjects indicated alternative creative possibilities of understanding sexual identity, pleasure, and relationship beyond the containment of sexual desires into categorizations of LGBT+ sexualities. These include a sense of (sexual) identity in being a gay-themed comic fan, a "sexualized" engagement with skin cutting, and a new approach to intimate relationship through the label of "relationship without status" (Wijaya Mulya, 2020).

My research also unpacks how the discourse of sexual health has been dominant in the constitution of Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivities. Extensively drawn upon by previous studies particularly in the field of psychology and public health, this discourse considers health risk management as the most crucial aspect in understanding youth sexuality, most notably, unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Generally advocating reproductive health awareness and condom use, this discourse often represents young people as vulnerable and in urgent need to be saved by medical-objective-universalized information provided by sexual health educators. While some participants have evidently been informed by this discourse in giving meaning to their sexual selves, some others have resisted the positioning of young people offered by this discourse. Two specific constitutions which they have resisted are the positioning of young people as (1) hormone-driven and hyper-sexual subjects who are inevitably driven into sex when they started dating, and (2) uninformed, vulnerable, and passive recipients of sexual health knowledge. Some participants exhibited other competing versions of understanding their sexual practice, health, and well-being. For instance, participants' narratives showed that youth were not necessarily and inevitably driven into sex in their dating relationship; for some, sex had very little part in their dating experiences. Instead of being uninformed, some participants actively learned about sexuality from available informal sources and took care of their sexual selves beyond concerns with STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., emotional well-being, physical safety) in ways that are unique and relevant to the contexts of their social worlds; from non-coital, non-heterosexual, to computer-mediated sexual activities (Wijaya Mulya, 2019).

The final key discourse through which participants' subjectivity is constituted was a discourse of sexual violence, where the possibility of (and protection against) sexual violence becomes a dominant aspect of understanding youth sexuality. Tracing the root of sexual violence to unequal power relations, this discourse highlights the

positioning of men as desiring, women as (non-sexual) gatekeepers, children as innocent, and adults as exploitative, which sustains and normalizes sexual violence among Indonesian young people. While some participants have occupied these subject positions, some others resisted such discursive positionings, for example, a female participant who expressed herself as desiring, a gay male participant who refused the positioning of a survivor of child sexual abuse, and a participant who characterized himself as both exploitative and innocent during his childhood sexual experience (Wijaya Mulya, 2018b).

The study demonstrated how participants' ways of understanding their sexual selves were complex, nuanced, and involved various forms of discursive contestation. Their sexual subjectivity was not static nor unified, but multiple, fragmented, and evolving as they encountered new discourses; both discourses like human rights, feminism, and LGBT+ sexualities, and others like religious moralism. Taking these complexities into consideration, how sexuality education in Indonesia, which is relevant, critical, and acknowledging young people's agency, might look like?

12.6   Imagining a Critical Sexuality Education in Indonesia

Linking analyses of young people's sexual subjectivity discussed above with pedagogical practices in the context of sexuality education in Indonesia, my main argument here is that educators might find benefit in directing curriculum attention from teaching the "correct" sexual knowledge to accommodation, examination, and contestation of multiple sexual knowledges. For, as participants' narratives in this research have shown, Indonesian young people's ways of being sexual subjects are multiple, complex, and contradictory. A focus on one "correct" sexual knowledge might not be able to accommodate such complexities. In contrast, young people might find sexuality education practices that acknowledge and critically examine multiple sexual knowledge are more connected with their complex ways of understanding sexuality, and thus, are more likely to be practiced in their sexual relationships. Based on participants' narratives, I will elaborate on how these practices might look in sexuality education settings.

My discussion is predicated on the premise that, in order to better engage with young people's sexual subjectivities, it is important to recognize the complexities of their ways of being sexual. For instance, instead of assuming that all young people are inevitably driven into sexual activities when they start dating, sexual health education may find additional value in acknowledging that, for some Indonesian young people, sexual relationships are just one part of (or perhaps play no part in) their dating experience. Educational messages may also recognize that sex is not always heterosexual and coital, so that the risks of unplanned pregnancy might not be the only consideration for young people in deciding whether to engage/not engage in sex. Rather, there are other kinds of sexual practices that Indonesian young people engage in, such as same-sex, non-coital, or computer-mediated sexual activities. There are also other health considerations to take into account, such as their physical safety and

emotional readiness. It is these insights and complexities that this section attempts to draw together, and subsequently, employ to generate some suggestions for sexuality education practice in Indonesia.

The discussion in this section also acknowledges various agendas underpinning existing sexuality education initiatives in Indonesia and is simultaneously cognizant of my own poststructuralist position in approaching sexuality education. Some previous sexuality education initiatives in Indonesia have focused on building a healthy future generation free from STIs and unplanned pregnancy (e.g., Diarsvitri et al., 2011; Utomo, 2003), some promoted a religious–moral standard of sexual abstinence until marriage (e.g., Ihsan, 2009), and others emphasized the recognition of LGBT+ identities and rights (e.g., Mazdafiah, 2011; Suvianita, 2013). Following the poststructuralist framework employed in this study, the goal of sexuality education is to challenge dominant discourses of sexuality and encourage socio-political-sexual transformation. I am aware that this agenda might not be (politically) relevant for some researchers and practitioners in this area. Educators who emphasize a moral code of (hetero)sexual abstinence based on conservative religious interpretations, for instance, might find young people's narratives of ethical sexual relationships irrelevant. Considering that this poststructuralist approach to sexuality education is not common among Indonesian educators and policymakers, my suggestions here might not be welcomed by those who do not share a similar approach to education, knowledge, and social change. Therefore, the aim of this section is modest, that is, to provide possible resources for those who find it relevant, and hopefully draw the interest of those who do not.

One implication of acknowledging and accommodating the complexities of Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivities is that sexuality education might need to embrace the contradictory nature of knowledge as both enabling and constraining (Foucault, 1978; Weedon, 1987). As the findings of the current research indicated, some Indonesian young people have given meaning to their sexual selves through discourses around unplanned pregnancy, STIs, and condom use; which—to some extent—have enabled them to practice safer sex. However, at the same time, those discourses have also constrained participants' ways of seeing their sexual selves, such as when young people are positioned as vulnerable and passive recipients of sexual health information. Some participants in this research do not understand themselves as passive, but rather, as agentic sexual subjects. Here, a sexuality education underpinned by a discourse of sexual health might be both enabling and constraining young people's sexual subjectivity and practices. Therefore, to accommodate these complex and multiple ways of being sexual, sexuality education might need to acknowledge the importance of both learning a new set of knowledge and simultaneously contesting it (e.g., analysing its limit, unearthing its assumptions, and examining its implications).

Another example of the enabling/constraining nature of learning sexuality can be seen in participants' lack of access to formal educational messages about LGBT+ sexualities. Receiving affirming messages about LGBT+ sexualities in educational settings might have enabled them to understand, for example, their same-sex desire as legitimate. However, some participants' ways of understanding sexual desire are

much more complex, contradictory, and cannot be contained in the scientific spec-ification and categorization of LGBT+ sexualities. Engaging with knowledge on sexuality while simultaneously discussing its limits, consequences, and perspectival nature might be more accurate and appropriate. By recognizing the contradictory nature of knowledge and learning as such, Indonesian sexuality education might connect better with Indonesian young people's nuanced and multiple ways of being sexual.

A further educational implication of recognizing the complexities of young people's sexual subjectivities might be that educators could acknowledge the limi-tations of their own knowledge (and any sexual knowledge). Participants' narra-tives of resistance in this study evidenced that any existing "truth" about sexu-ality and young people is a discursive constitution of sexual realities that have been (re)produced, shared, and believed by specific communities. Religious sexual morality, for example,—which is often considered as absolute Divine truth—can be rejected, (re)interpreted, or practiced differently by Indonesian young people. To accommodate such diversity in being a sexual subject, learning sexuality might not be able to focus solely on the teachers filling students' minds with the "right" sexual knowledge, or replacing one version of sexual knowledge with another. Instead, learning sexuality might need to be a series of meaning-making activities in which different sexual knowledges are acknowledged and scrutinized—including the teachers' own knowledge.

This approach to learning sexuality might open up educational space where infor-mation from educators, religious leaders, activists, parents, and medical practitioners is treated as recommendations rather than being prescriptive. Simultaneously, young people's personal experiences as narrated by some participants (e.g., watching their pet dog copulate, finding their clitoris when using the toilet wash hose, or reading gay-themed comics) can be acknowledged as valuable sources of sexual knowl-edge. Young people can then be encouraged to reflect on and discuss these (discur-sively constituted) personal learning moments, as well as information they receive from formal sources, in order to develop their own sexual knowledge, values, and decisions. Through a recognition and examination of various sexual knowledges (including their limitations), sexuality education might engage more effectively with the complexities of Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivities, and encourage more diverse ways of being sexual.

Indonesian sexuality education might also benefit from providing students with opportunities for resistance in the continuous reworking of young people's sexual subjectivities. Participants' narratives have shown how their subjectivities have been constantly reworked and how, within this reworking, there lie opportunities for resis-tance toward the dominant discourses of sexuality. A male heterosexual participant, Daniel, for example, demonstrated how his sexual subjectivity has evolved along-side his journey of becoming a born-again Christian. In the reworking of his sexual subjectivity, he has been enabled—in a way—to resist discourses that normalize sexual violence. In educational settings, educators might facilitate students to iden-tify, question, and redefine dominant knowledges or regimes of truth taken for granted

in the classroom, in order to seek more ethical understandings of sexuality. Educators and students might already have assumptions about sex and religious morality, for instance, about categorizations of sexual desire, or about birth control and STIs prevention. While these various knowledges are acknowledged, it might also be beneficial to provide resources and invite students to exchange questions so that both educators' and students' understandings of sexuality can be enriched and contested.

A practical example of such an opportunity for resistance is bringing Indonesian young people closer to the life of certain groups in order to contest the dominant assumptions surrounding those groups, such as LGBT+ people, asexual people, polyamorous people, or survivors of sexual violence. Inviting them or bringing their narratives to the classroom through information technologies might enable educators and students to engage with the complexities of these people's lives and scrutinize dominant ways of thinking about them. In so doing, sexuality education might be more relevant to young people's diverse ways of being sexual subjects that, as the participants have shown, are always being reworked and involve resistance towards dominant discourses of sexuality.

12.7   Conclusion

This study has examined key discourses of sexuality that young Indonesian participants have drawn on and/or resisted in becoming sexual subjects, and proposed some recommendations for sexuality education which are connected with the complexities of contemporary Indonesian young people's sexual subjectivity, critical of the discursive operation of power, and therefore, may promote social and sexual justice.

In discussing the implications of this research for sexuality education in Indonesia, I recognize various structural, policy, and everyday barriers to implementing some of the educational practices suggested. The implementation of these suggestions might not be realistic in the near future, considering the religio-sexual-educational politics in contemporary Indonesia, not to mention the schools' and teachers' readiness. Underpinning such impediments are silencing, homogenizing, and moralizing discourses around sexuality, that mainly promote obedience to a moral code rather than accommodating the diversity of young people's sexual subjectivities. However, if Indonesia is committed to continue the 1998 democratic reformation in various social–political spheres, and to advance social justice including sexual justice, the diversity of (ethical) ways of seeing and ways of being in any domain including in sexuality might need to be acknowledged and respected. While such democratic advancements in the field of sexuality in Asia are evidently slow and difficult, Taiwan has managed to be the first Asian county to legalize protections for marginalized sexual identities in 2019, and Thailand is on its way during the writing of this chapter.

To conclude, I reiterate Foucault's (1997) call, which has driven this research, for the creation and proliferation of "new forms of life, relationships, friendships in society, art, culture, and so on through our sexual, ethical, and political choices"

(p. 164). It is with this radical opposition towards homogenizing discourses that I hope future research may continue to explore the extraordinary diversity of ways of seeing and ways of being sexual in Indonesia.

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Chapter 13
Swimming Against the Stream: Rationales, Challenges, and Survival Strategies of Homeschooling Families in Indonesia

Ellen Nugroho

13.1 Introduction

Following the collapse of Suharto's prolonged authoritarian regime, homeschooling emerges as an educational trend in Indonesia. Almost no family were known as homeschoolers during his New Order era, other than anecdotal cases of very few public figures,[1] but since the early 2000s, parents who homeschool their children have been increasing in number. With the help of the Internet, they got more information about homeschooling (Sumardiono, 2007), found like-minded fellows, built support groups, and later, organized themselves into advocacy groups. Twenty years later, there is still no valid data for the actual number of Indonesian families who homeschool their children, but based on my knowledge about existing homeschool communication forums and communities, I estimate their number exceeds a thousand families.[2]

International studies have documented the profile of families who homeschool their children and the reasons behind their decisions (e.g., Arai, 2000; Gaither, 2008;

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[1] The most well-known anecdote is a musician named Said Kelana (1909–1991), who chose to homeschool his children Idham Noorsaid, Iromy Noorsaid, Lydia Noorsaid, and Imaniar Noorsaid. Their home education was focused on music and the children formed a music band named The Kids which was quite popular in their era.

[2] The first online hub of Indonesian homeschoolers as far as I know of was Sekolah Rumah mailing list, created in March 6, 2007, which had 3560 members at its peak before it became totally inactive by the end of 2013. Key people and many members of the mailing list migrated to the Facebook group Indonesian Homeschoolers that has more than 18,000 members by early January 2021. There are many online and offline, big and small homeschooler communities in Indonesia. Only a small number of their members join Perkumpulan Homeschooler Indonesia (PHI). In January 2021, there are 300 + homeschool families listed as PHI members—I estimate the real number of Indonesian homeschool families is at least 4 times more than that.

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Hagen, 2011; Knowles, 1991; Mayberry, 1989; Murphy, 2012). Most of these studies, however, were conducted in Euro-American contexts, with the exception of Sheng's (2014) study in China. As parents' decisions to homeschool their children cannot be separated from the local political, historical, and educational milieu from which the decision was made, it is crucial to explore how different contexts may generate different dynamics and understandings in this regard. Religious considerations, for example, have been documented to be one of the main reasons for parents in the United States to homeschool their children (Carper, 2000; Kunzman, 2009; Lines, 1991; Mayberry, 1989; Murphy, 2012; Petrie, 2001), that is, to protect their children from knowledge that opposes their religious beliefs, such as evolutionary theory. This reason may not be applicable in the context of Indonesia where religions and religiosity are the dominant social norms including in education. Another example is the analyses of homeschooling as a social movement in the context of democratically more mature North America (Common & Macmullen, 1987; Collom & Mitchell, 2005; Crowson, 2000; Divoky, 1983; Klicka, 1988; Knowles et al., 1992; McDowell & Ray, 2000; Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2001; Riegel, 2001; Stevens, 2001; Wyatt, 1999). In contrast, homeschooling in other historical–political contexts might not be understood as a social movement in a similar way, such as in Indonesia—a country still struggling to democratize itself since two decades ago. Until now, there is still a dearth of research in this field of homeschooling from non-Western contexts.

Seeking to fill this gap, the current chapter is written to offer an understanding of who Indonesian homeschool families are, why they choose to educate their own children instead of sending their children to school, what kind of education they want, what challenges they face because of their choice, and what they must do and have done to defend it. It seeks to explore a conceptual ground of the homeschooling phenomenon in Indonesia as an embodiment of courage to question and opt out of the hegemonic schooling system.

It is important to note that this chapter is written from my perspective of an insider, namely, a homeschooling parent and homeschooling community initiator/activist. This means that my subjective knowledge of the phenomenon, my first-degree familiarity with the subjects including homeschool parents and families, and my contextual proximity to homeschooling standpoints and struggles contributed productively to how this chapter framed the issue, and enabled me to explore particular questions and analysed data into particular insights or conclusions in specific ways. I hope what I write here can be a worthy contribution for this publication, complementary to other chapters providing insights about education in Indonesia from critical perspectives.

The chapter is organized as follows. It starts by explaining the methods of the current study, followed by a brief introduction to homeschooling in Indonesia where I illuminate historical–political context of education pertinent to homeschool parents and discussing the current homeschool movement in Indonesia, including how it has organized itself into advocacy organizations, and simultaneously, has been commonly conflated with flexi schools. The findings are then presented, namely, the profiles of

Indonesian homeschool parents. The chapter ends with some critical reflections on homeschooling in Indonesia.

13.2 Methods

Homeschooling in Indonesia is still an under-researched topic. Academic papers written by Indonesian researchers are usually problematic due to a definition problem I will explain soon. Therefore, in writing this chapter I mainly tracked historical and legal trajectories, employed personal memory, displayed data from an internal survey, and presented information from some documents about homeschooling phenomenon in Indonesia since the early 2000s. The internal survey was conducted in August 2020 by Perkumpulan Homeschooler Indonesia (PHI), an organization for homeschool families in Indonesia. The survey respondents were homeschool parents, 75 couples and 1 single mother. They are local coordinators of PHI from 76 cities in 18 provinces. The survey collected demographic data of the families and information on the parents' points of view about education and why they choose to homeschool and join PHI. Demographic data were mostly asked using closed-ended questions, but questions about points of view were mostly open-ended. I do not display all data from the survey here, rather only items most relevant with the topic of this chapter.

13.3 Homeschooling in Indonesia: A Brief Overview

Historical–political–educational contexts. To begin understanding the landscape of homeschooling in Indonesia, we need to identify the political–educational contexts in which parents who choose this path for their children were brought up. Of all the homeschool parents I knew in the 2000s, a few were born in the 1960s, but most in the 1970s. They share a common experience of growing up while Suharto's New Order was in power and graduating from the regime's highly centralized and hegemonic education system. During that era, schools were under tight military control and the national education was operated within a monologic political discourse (Heryanto, 2005). Uniformity was always emphasized. All schools throughout the country taught the same nationally sanctioned curricula, which were indoctrinating in nature (Darmaningtyas, 2015), and all students were prepared to pass the national examinations, a process that gradually shaped their way of thinking, as Barbara Leigh (1999) described:

> Schools have been the sites for the expression of correctness, not for the engagement of dialogue. All learnt as either true or false, right or wrong, correct or incorrect, factual or in error. Children learn to see the world in black and white—not just the scientific world and the world of nature, but also the social world and the affairs of people. Shades of grey are not tolerated by the examination system.

Such dichotomous learning incised in students' young minds the fear of trespassing boundaries lest they would enter the "dangerous" or "subversive" area, often resulting in the numbing of their courage and creativity (Leigh, 1999). This fear was also experienced by teachers. Through many regulations and controlling mechanisms, they were conditioned to repress their independent thinking to avoid political risk of veering from the path approved by the government (Darmaningtyas, 2015). Consistently being awarded for their obedience to superiors instead of for their professional excellence or dedication, many Indonesian teachers lost their initiatives and intuition for leadership (Bjork, 2002, 2004).

The younger generation of homeschool parents I know belong to the Reform Era. Suharto has stepped down from power, but the education system he left behind has not undergone any fundamental change (Darmaningtyas, 2005; Darmaningtyas & Subkhan, 2012; Heryanto & Hadiz, 2005). The current system is still beset by many critical problems: mentalities that take corruption for granted, discriminative regulations, poorly trained teachers, high rates of teacher absenteeism, an emphasis on rote learning, insufficient textbooks, and poor-quality buildings (Darmaningtyas, 2005, 2015; Suryadarma & Jones, 2013). Compared to other countries, Indonesian students perform poorly. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked Indonesian students the last out of 40 countries in 2003 and the 72nd out of 77 in 2018, while the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) ranked them 34th out of 45 countries in 2003 and the 44th out of 49 in 2015. Educational policies and their implementation still depend a lot on the fluctuating political will of those in power (Rosser, 2018), a situation often mocked by Indonesians with a saying: "*ganti menteri ganti kebijakan*" (policies change with each new minister of education).

Despite his defects, Suharto had a tremendous success in raising the national school enrolment rate,[3] something his predecessor Sukarno could not accomplish (Darmaningtyas, 2015; Zainu'ddin, 1970). The credit cannot go only to him, but Barbara Leigh (1999) finds that in Suharto's era, Indonesian parents began to believe in the importance of schooling. They believe that schooling will make their children "have greater job options" and that it is a process "necessary for making money". Even deeper than beliefs about its practical benefits, they also attach to the ideas that schooling is "an indicator of ability" and "should result in 'the gaining of wisdom' for the younger generation" and teach the youth "how to behave as a 'developed' human being". In short, schooling is "the best thing they can give to their children" and the schooling level is "an overt indicator of not just an individual's, but also a family's level of development" (Leigh, 1999). Scholars have taken note that, like in the United States or the Netherlands, centuries of compulsory schooling contributed to the public view that parents as less appropriate and less effective educators than professional teachers, if not incapable at all (Blok, 2004; Murphy, 2012; Rothbard, 1999). For parents, deciding to homeschool means to go against that view. Before

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[3] Compared to the end of Sukarno's era in 1960s, the crude participation rate at primary school, junior high school, and high school levels during Suharto's reign rose, respectively, from 64% to 99.7%, from 16.9% to 66.7%, and from 8.6% to 45.1% (Darmaningtyas, 2015, p. 10).

I discuss further how such oppositions eventually developed into the organizing of homeschool parents in advocacy organizations and movements, I need to explain another key debate in the public discourse of homeschooling in Indonesia, namely, its conflation with flexi schools.

Clarifying the term. A clarification here is necessary because in Indonesia currently there is a widespread misunderstanding about what homeschooling is. There are many alternative or flexi schools (Moffat & Riddle, 2019; Morgan et al., 2014; Shay, 2017), usually operating under a legal license as a non-formal education institution, that inaccurately brand their institutions or services as "homeschooling" (Pranyono, 2016). Parents enrol their children there and then those schools will supply them with academic materials and private tutorials for monthly tuition fees of up to millions of rupiah. National media write that these "homeschooling" franchises proliferate in many cities, scoring billions of rupiah in turnover (Marantina & Kusumaningtias, 2013; Natalia, 2011; SwaOnline, 2007).

The misconception about homeschooling is so widespread that many academic theses of university graduates equate homeschooling with being enrolled in the "homeschooling" flexi schools. They are not aware, as Murphy (2012) argued, that not all situations that resemble homeschooling can count as one if they miss the essential feature of homeschooling, that is, a refusal of institution-based education. Homeschooling is "one of many manifestations of discontent with the current state of public schooling" (Van Galen & Pittman, 1991, p. 3), even "a deliberate rejection of and alternative to government schooling" (Gaither, 2008, p. 219).

In this chapter, I use the term "homeschooling" as it is commonly understood by worldwide scholars. Although there are many definitions of homeschooling, they are essentially pointing to the same practice when parents take responsibility for their own children's education and no longer depend on any educational institution. Parents must be the main educators (Lines, 1991). Parents may recruit tutors outside of the family, but the nature of homeschooled children's educational activities is "home-based and parent-led" and "clearly under their parents' authority rather than under the authority of a state-run public school system or a private school" (Ray, 2004 as cited in Murphy, 2012). Instructing other children at their home for compensation should be defined as an example of a private school operating in a home, not homeschooling (Roach, 1988 as cited in Murphy, 2012).

From parental decisions to advocacy organizations. As aforementioned in the Introduction section, the number of homeschooling children in Indonesia has increased since the early 2000s, but still considerably marginal compared to the school children population. These homeschooling families faced many challenges, from discriminative treatment between homeschool children and schooled ones in the public, discrepancies between flexible home education practices and rigid standards required by the education system, low quality and complicated mechanism of legal acknowledgement for homeschool children's academic capabilities, to the inadequacy of supporting infrastructures for homeschool families. But these practical problems are just the tip of an iceberg. At a social analysis workshop in October 2016, preceding the founding of the PHI, fourteen homeschool parents identified that all those problems are rooted in the underlying reality that people still hold

onto the belief that education always means schooling and parents are incapable educators. These beliefs make the grandparents and relatives resist parents' choice to homeschool, public and private institutions discriminate against homeschool children, government officials are indifferent to their interests, and regulations do not address homeschoolers' interests.

Even the Minister of Education Regulation No. 129/2014 (MER) that regulates homeschooling fails to understand its essence. On one hand, it states that "homeschooling (*sekolahrumah*) is done by the family" (article 3), but on the other hand, it states a type of homeschooling—termed as community homeschooling (*sekolah rumah komunitas*)—must operate as a non-formal institution (article 6 paragraph 4).[4] Therefore, when on May 9–11, 2017 the MoEC's Directorate General of Early Childhood Education and Society Education wanted to prepare a revision draft of the MER, it did not invite representatives of homeschool families, but those of "homeschooling" flexi schools, seven schools of them. PHI actually lobbied the General Directorate officials to be allowed to attend the meeting as a representative of homeschool families, but the request was rejected.

Two years later on November 28, 2019, the Center of Islam and Society Studies of the Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic University (PPIM UIN) launched the results of their research "Radicalism and Homeschooling: Measuring Resilience and Vulnerability". The researchers wanted to find out whether homeschooled children are prone to be driven towards puritanism, extremism, militancy, fundamentalism, and against democratic attitudes (Subhan, 2020). Out of 51 samples assessed by the researchers, only 20 were homeschool families, and the 30 others were "homeschooling" institutions. The day after the launch, the media wrote news with tendentious titles like "Beware of Radical Homeschooling" (Hutami, 2019) and "Exclusive Homeschooling May Spread Radicalism" (Safutra, 2019). When PHI organized a press conference and protested the sampling methodology, the representative of PPIM UIN explained that they only followed the definition of homeschooling as written in the MER. They said they had tried to collect more samples of homeschool families, but MoEC's Regional Education Office had no data. Later, the PPIM UIN invited PHI to attend a focused group discussion to talk about the follow-up of the launched research.

To overcome structural problems like the ones described above, Indonesian homeschool parents must have a solid advocacy organization. The need for such an organization has been identified since the late 2000s. In 2009, ten homeschool mothers founded the *Asosiasi Praktisi Pendidikan Rumah Seluruh Indonesia* (ASPIRASI, Association of Home Education Practitioners in Indonesia). Activities reported on

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[4] According to Education Act No. 20/2003, in Indonesia's education system, the government acknowledges three paths of education, i.e., the formal, the nonformal, and the informal ones. The formal refers to schools. The non-formal refers to early childhood education centres, courses, training centres, and other complementary or alternative educational services. Both formal and nonformal are institution-based education. Homeschooling is categorized as informal education. The terms formal, non-formal, and informal education in the Act should not be confused with the ones used by Thomas J. La Belle (1982) meaning a typology of modes of education.

their website spanned from June to August 2009, and then the organization vacuumed. In 2014, another group of homeschool parents initiated the *Aliansi Pendidikan Rumah Independen Indonesia* (APRINESIA, Alliance of Indonesian Independent Home Education). This organization held its first national conference in May 2015 but then, for some unpublished reasons, it was self-deactivated the following year.

The short-lived attempts signalled internal challenges that must be unravelled before homeschoolers can organize themselves well. This topic was discussed among homeschool parents in a social analysis workshop in Semarang, October 2016. The participants recognized some characteristics of Indonesian homeschool parents that seemed related to the challenging task of organizing Indonesian homeschool parents: (1) They are a heterogenous population with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests; (2) They are middle-class and come from urban settings with a strong individualistic tendency instead of a collectivist one; and (3) Most of them grew up in Suharto's authoritarian regime and very likely has an imprinted sense of fear, or at least reluctance, to get touch with anything considered political. Any parties who try to organize Indonesian homeschoolers must realize that those factors are prone to trigger various kinds of disagreement, suspicion, or mistrust towards their endeavours and they must be prepared to anticipate them.

After this workshop, nine participants determined to follow it up and made the third attempt to organize Indonesian homeschoolers. Perkumpulan Homeschooler Indonesia (PHI, Association of Indonesian Homeschoolers) was founded in December 2016. Using insights gained from the social analysis sessions, the founders of PHI faithfully follow a bottom-up and a transparent approach in organizing homeschool parents. Trust is deemed as a very valuable asset. Within four years of its activism, PHI has built networks with more than 300 homeschool families in 86 cities in 24 provinces. This growing network is very helpful when homeschool families need to advocate some strategic issues, such as in the cases told above. But still, organizing homeschoolers in Indonesia is not an easy task. To sustain this effort, PHI founders consider it very important to impart homeschool parents with a critical perspective, so that they can see their issues from a wider social and political context and have an internal motivation to get involved in activism. PHI members, especially the city coordinators, were then facilitated to learn more about government regulations, to attend audiences with government officials, to enrol in social analysis workshops, to read and discuss book about critical pedagogy, to organize public socialization events about homeschooling regulations in their respective cities, to build networks with other communities or organizations, and to get involved in various PHI advocacy activities. Very gradually, from a population that used to be indifferent to social and political contexts of their issues, homeschool parents who become PHI members start to understand about the importance of organizing themselves into an advocacy organization.

13.4   Findings: Profiling Indonesian Homeschool Parents

The current section presents the findings of the survey conducted among homeschool parents. Who are these parents? Why did they decide to homeschool despite the public view about the importance of schooling? We surveyed 76 homeschool families consisting of 75 couples and 1 single mother. Fathers' age ranges 31–59 years old and mothers' are 27–59 years old with occupations shown in Table 13.1.

There are 32 families (42.1%) which once sent their children to school but then chose to homeschool. Each of these 76 families are homeschooling or once home-schooled their 1 to 4 children. Age ranges of their 155 children in 2020 are shown in Table 13.2.

Hagen (2011) thinks that homeschooling movements can be understood as a result of public education that successfully equips people with literacy and critical thinking. In America, comparative data on homeschool parents' education levels consistently reveal they are generally well educated, falling somewhere between "somewhat better educated" and "considerably better educated" than non-homeschool parents (Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2005). We find similar data in our survey. More than 80% of Indonesian homeschool parents have graduated from college, which means they belong to 9.11% males and 9.88% females of Indonesian population who hold college degrees (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020) (Table 13.3).

Regarding economic resources, analyses over the last decades portray homeschool families as solidly middle class, although rarely on the very rich end of the income

Table 13.1 Indonesian homeschool parents' occupations (PHI, 2020)

Occupations	Homeschool father (N = 75) (%)	Homeschool mother (N = 76) (%)
Entrepreneurs	48.7	38.2
Private sector workers	35.5	10.5
Public sector workers	6.6	6.6
Stay-at-home parents	2.6	44.7
Others	6.6	0

Table 13.2 Indonesian homeschool children's age ranges (PHI, 2020)

Children's age	Category in formal schooling system	Number of children
0–6 years old	Pre-primary	56
7–12 years old	Primary	71
13–15 years old	Lower Secondary	20
16–18 years old	Upper Secondary	6
> 18 years old	Tertiary	2

Table 13.3 Indonesian homeschool parents' level of schooling (PHI, 2020)

Levels of schooling	Homeschool father (N = 75) (%)	Homeschool mother (N = 76) (%)
High school graduate, never attended college	8	5.3
High school graduate, attended college	10.7	7.9
Associate degree	6.6	14.5
Bachelor degree	56	59.2
Master degree	16	11.8
Doctoral degree	2.7	1.3

Table 13.4 Indonesian homeschool parents' estimated monthly household income and expenditures (PHI, 2020)

Amount (in IDR millions)	Estimated monthly household income		Estimated monthly household expenditures	
	Number of families	Percentage (N = 76) (%)	Number of families	Percentage (N = 76) (%)
Up to 3	3	3.95	13	17.1
> 3–5	15	19.7	19	25
> 5–10	26	34.2	33	43.4
> 10–15	16	21	5	6.6
> 15–20	3	3.95	5	6.6
> 20–25	6	8	1	1.3
> 25	7	9.2	0	0

spectrum (Murphy, 2012). Middle-class parents have a greater tendency to look for an individualized education with better quality and are more open to various forms of alternative education (Sheng, 2014). Table 13.4 displays survey results on the socioeconomic status (SES) of homeschool parents based on levels of income and expenditures.

The Asian Development Bank (2010, p. 5) defines middle-class (MC) in developing countries as "those with per capita daily consumption of US$2–20". ADB thresholds of low, middle, and upper MC, respectively, are US$2–4, US$4–10, and US$10–20 (World Bank, 2019, p. 205). When the surveyed families' estimated monthly household expenditures are divided by their numbers of family and by 30 days, and then converted into US dollars, we find that 82.9% of Indonesian homeschool families surveyed belong to the middle class as defined by ADB (Table 13.5).

With all these cultural and economic capitals, homeschool parents come to have the ability to reflect critically about the meaning and purpose of education. The Internet, which came to Indonesia during the early phase of the political crisis in

Table 13.5 Indonesian homeschool parents' economic class (PHI, 2020)

Middle-class categorizations by daily consumption per capita (USD 1 = IDR 14,500)	Number of families	Percentage ($N = 76$) (%)
Upper Middle-Class (US$10–20)	3	4
Middle Middle-Class (US$4–10)	27	35.5
Low Middle-Class (US$2–4)	33	43.4
Below Middle-Class (less than US$2)	13	17.1

Table 13.6 Indonesian homeschool parents' view on education and schooling (PHI, 2020)

Statements	Fathers' approval ($N = 75$) (%)	Mothers' approval ($N = 76$) (%)
Parents must play a major part in their children's education process	94.7	97.4
The curriculum, process, and practices of education should be customizable according to children's conditions, needs, and interests	89.3	93.4
Education has a larger meaning than and is not restricted to schooling	96.0	94.7
Schooling should be viewed as a right, not an obligation for a child	77.3	85.5
Schooling experience may be harmful for children	69.3	80.3
A child has a right not to school if schooling harms his well-being or does not meet his needs or hinders the development of his interests	82.7	93.4
A government should legalize homeschooling as an educational option a family can rightfully choose	94.7	93.4

the 1990s (Lim, 2003), helped them find more learning resources online (Sumardiono, 2007). Parents joined homeschool parents' online forums, got exposed to diverse ideas of educating children, did their own research, and chose methods they liked best. Some became practitioners of unschooling, others preferred classical, Charlotte Mason, Montessori, or Waldorf education, or whatever-we-like (eclectic) methods. Despite their differences in philosophical principles or teaching techniques, homeschool parents share some common beliefs that education is not identical with schooling, that schooling is not an obligation, and that a child has a right not to go to school. In the survey, we provided parents with some statements about education and schooling derived from the ideas of John Holt, one of the most influential thinkers of the homeschool movement in America (Holt, 2004; Holt & Farenga, 2003), and asked them to check which statements they approve of. The result in Table 13.6 reveals their strong agreement with most of them.

13.5   Ideals of Education Pursued

Homeschool parents generally have not one, but many considerations, before they resolve to take control over their children's life and education and no longer give the authority up to the school. The first source of their considerations is the recollections of their past experience with schools (Arai, 2000; Knowles, 1991). In the survey, nine Indonesian homeschool families explicitly mention their dissatisfaction with their past schooling experience. Three of them say that the long duration of schooling they have spent was not worth the little amount of useful knowledge they gained. Two respondents say that schooling's grading system eroded their natural enthusiasm for learning. One couple says that the school certificate is not necessary for them to get a good job. Three other parents, who once worked or still work as professional teachers, believe it is difficult to reform schools.

The next source of considerations was parents' observation of their children or other children's experience with schools (Mayberry, 1989). When asked to assess the current schooling system, most of the Indonesian homeschool parents had nothing good to say about it (the negative response). Some could see the good side of the current formal education but still listed more of the bad ones (the somewhat negative response). A few mentioned that good points were as many as bad ones (the neutral). Only a very few of them saw the formal education system as good or promising than bad (the somewhat positive). No one perceives formal education as all positive (Table 13.7).

Good things about the current schooling appreciated by respondents include its wide reach of service, availability of similar age friends, academic discipline, competitive atmosphere, complete learning facilities, and apparent improvements under the current government. The shortcomings of the current schooling according to respondents can be seen in Table 13.8. The top objection is its lack of customizability and lack of character building. Parents also become very motivated to homeschool when their children refused to continue schooling or proposed to start homeschooling, their children's special needs were not met at school, their children repeatedly experience bullying or discrimination at school, or schooling brought negative impacts on their children's behaviour or intellectual growth.

Table 13.7 Indonesian homeschool parents' perception of the current formal education (PHI, 2020)

Perception of the current formal education in Indonesia	Homeschool fathers ($N = 75$) (%)	Homeschool mothers ($N = 76$) (%)
Positive	0	0
Somewhat positive	2.7	1.3
Neutral	9.3	5.3
Somewhat negative	22.7	17.1
Negative	65.3	76.3

Table 13.8 Indonesian homeschool parents' perceived shortcomings of the current formal education (PHI, 2020)

Perceived shortcomings of the current formal education	Homeschool fathers (N = 75) (%)	Homeschool mothers (N = 76) (%)
Lack of room for customization to children's unique needs	61.3	52.6
Lack of holistic character education	33.3	51.3
Lack of relevance with real-life or future challenges	20	9.2
Profit-oriented/expensive	14.7	13.2
Teachers' unsatisfying performance	6.7	14.5
Negative socialization	6.7	6.6
Rote learning	6.7	3.9
School dependence on changing political situations	1.3	5.3

The third source of consideration is encountered with critical ideas about schools in general (Van Galen & Pitman, 1991). In their writings, some homeschool parents mentioned names such as Tetsuko Kuronayagi, John Holt, David and Micki Colvax, Mary Pride, Ivan Illich (Aar et al., 2009), Raymond Moore (Mardiati, n.d.), John Taylor Gatto (Arianto, 2011), and Charlotte Mason (Kristi, 2012), whose ideas they consider influential and important. Some parents I personally know chose to homeschool after reading books authored by earlier Indonesian homeschool parents, attending seminars about homeschooling, or simply becoming friends with homeschool families.

All these considerations created a dynamic of factors pushing parents away from public schools and factors pulling them towards homeschooling in four categories: religious, academic, social-environmental, and family (Murphy, 2012). Religious-based motivations contain parents' belief that God wants them to homeschool their children and that they need to protect them from wrong doctrines. Academic ones are about a sense that the current public education system is failing either in pedagogy, content, structure, or impact, and is very difficult or almost impossible to reform. Social/environmental rationales are more about parents' drive to protect their children from physical, emotional, or social harm at school. Family-based motivations are children's or parents' practical or special needs that the schooling system cannot fulfil satisfactorily (see: Murphy, 2012, pp. 87–104). In the survey, parents' answers on why they homeschool were categorized accordingly, with the result as shown in Table 13.9.

In the United States and Europe, religious-based motivation is a significant rationale among homeschool parents as a response towards the secularization of public schools (Carper, 2000; Kunzman, 2009; Lines, 1991; Mayberry, 1989; Murphy, 2012; Petrie, 2001). The survey shows that homeschool parents in Indonesia are a different case. Their decision to homeschool is mostly motivated by academic, instead of

Table 13.9 Reasons behind indonesian parents' decision to start homeschooling (PHI, 2020)

Push/Pull motivating factors	Number of families considering them	Percentage (N = 76) (%)
Religious/spiritual	6	7.9
Academic	55	72.4
Social/environmental	19	25
Family	23	30.3

religious, considerations. There are only 6 families mentioning religious reasons to homeschool. This might be related to the fact that religion is a compulsory subject in Indonesia. Interestingly, 3 out of 6 families chose to leave or avoid schools because of the phenomenon of "over-religiosity" at school they feel uneasy about. The first family objected against the atmosphere of "religious exclusivism" and "inability to appreciate diversity" at school; the second said their child was confused by the religious teaching at school which was different from the child's own religious beliefs; and the third could not find a school that is not too religious.

Summarizing the push and pull factors identified in their answers, we get a picture of the ideal education Indonesian parents think they can pursue more optimally through homeschooling rather than through schooling (Table 13.10).

13.6 How Parents Cope with Challenges

The majority of homeschool parents had their decision tested by people around them right from the start. Some were just curious about homeschooling, posing questions to know more about it, but many were vehemently opposing their decision (Table 13.11).

Parties most often mentioned as resistant are grandparents and relatives. They may be so upset about it that they tried everything to change parents' mind, either by persuading the parents (e.g., offering to pay for children's school tuition fee) or persuading the children (e.g., promising to buy them new shoes and bags if they agree to go to school) or just attacking the parents with hurtful words (e.g., accusing them as being irresponsible parents, stupid, arrogant, ruining children's lives, etc.). Other resistant people mentioned include parents' friends, co-workers, neighbours, children's ex-teachers, and even local government officials.

Facing a lack of support from their social environment, homeschool parents naturally look for other families with whom they share a sense of comradeship. Using the Internet, homeschool families identified each other in the same area, or practiced the same method, and they began to arrange local offline meetings and establish their local homeschool communities. Out of the 76 homeschool families surveyed, 50% of them join online and offline communities; 35.5% join online communities only; 6% only join offline communities, while 5 do not join any community. They feel very strengthened (60.5%) or moderately strengthened (38.2%) by their communities.

Table 13.10 Ideals of education motivating indonesian parents' decision to start homeschooling (PHI, 2020)

Ideals of education motivating Indonesian families to start homeschooling		Number of families motivated
Religious/spiritual	Nurturing children's spirituality	3
	Free from teachings conflicting with the family's religious beliefs/disbeliefs	3
	Respecting parents' sacred role to be children's main educator	2
Academic	Customizable curriculum according to the family's vision and values	35
	Nurturing children's natural potencies (talents, interests, creativity, curiosity)	18
	Short duration/enough playtime	10
	Respecting children's autonomy	7
	Good quality teacher (competent, attentive, helpful, self-upgrading, fair)	7
	Thorough, meaningful learning process	4
	Good quality books/reading materials	3
	Low teacher-to-student ratio	1
	Stable curriculum	1
Social-environmental	Free from bullying and violence	9
	Well-mannered friends/positive peers	6
	Friendship without discrimination	2
	Encouraging, collaborative atmosphere	3
	Genuinely caring adults	1
Family	Promoting close, healthy relationships between parents and children	8
	Flexible budgets	6
	Flexible time management	5
	A more relaxed life for the whole family	4
	Parents learn to become better parents	4
	Suiting children's special needs	2
	Parents are children's primary role models	2

Further, as aforementioned in the earlier section of Homeschooling in Indonesia: A Brief Introduction, Indonesian homeschooling families have not only made connections with each other but also organized themselves into an advocacy organization (Table 13.12). In the survey, respondents were asked what their reasons were in joining PHI as an advocacy organization; their responses were as follows:

Table 13.11 Social reactions to Indonesian parents' decision to homeschool (PHI, 2020)

People's reactions to homeschooling decision	Number of families experiencing	Percentage (N = 76)
Relaxed	11	14.4
Curious	10	13.2
Opposing	55	72.4

Table. 13.12 Indonesian homeschool parents' reason to join an advocacy organization (PHI, 2020)

Reasons to join an advocacy organization	Number of families mentioning	Percentage (N = 76)
To have a supporting network of homeschool families all across Indonesia	48	63.16
To educate oneself more about homeschooling regulations in Indonesia	36	47.4
To advocate policymakers about homeschooling issues	15	19.7
To educate the public about the real meaning of homeschooling and homeschooling issues	7	9.2
To fight for homeschool children's rights	6	7.9
To fight for a better-quality education for all children in Indonesia	3	3.9
To strengthen homeschool families' position in the society	2	2.6

13.7 Concluding Reflections

Looking at the phenomenon of homeschooling in Indonesia and all its dynamics from a critical perspective, I have several things to highlight. Firstly, at the centre of all problems homeschool families faced, there is an issue of struggle for control over children's life and education. Rothbard (1999) wrote that the history of compulsory education is a record of how the State successfully usurp parents' control over children for its own behalf. Therefore, of all the rationales parents homeschool their children, one overarching reason is to take that control back into their hands again (Murphy, 2012). It means homeschooling has a common thread with other classic causes in Indonesia education such as the autonomy of teachers, the autonomy of schools, or the equality between state schools and private schools Indonesia (Darmaningtyas, 2005, 2015; Darmaningtyas & Subkhan, 2012), even with other causes beyond the field of education. Homeschool families are linked with other groups that refuse to be hegemonized by the structure in power. To really win their cause, homeschool families need to go beyond their narrow scope of interests, nurture a sense of unity and solidarity with others, and build a form of collective action.

The second point is related to the first one above. Since the 1980s, scholars have considered homeschooling in the United States as a social movement (Common & Macmullen, 1987; Collom & Mitchell, 2005; Crowson, 2000; Divoky, 1983; Klicka, 1988; Knowles et al., 1992; McDowell & Ray, 2000; Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2001; Riegel, 2001; Stevens, 2001; Wyatt, 1999). It is considered as a movement because it is a form of collective action with a sense of unity and solidarity and it successfully breaks the status quo of the education system and social practices (Melucci, 1989; Wyatt, 1999). Compared to the homeschooling movement in the United States, I think homeschooling in Indonesia has not become a social movement yet, although it has the potential to be one. The numbers of homeschool families are growing but the sense of unity and solidarity are still lacking. Indonesian homeschool parents are still focusing their attention inward. They act more like an interest group rather than a part of a social movement striving for social justice in education. If Indonesian homeschool families want to have a future like what their counterparts in the United States have nowadays, there is indeed a lot of homework they must do.

Third, if homeschool families and schooling institutions hold a common vision of a world where every child's rights to enjoy quality education are fulfilled, there should be no vis-à-vis positioning between homeschooling and formal education. We have seen that homeschool parents themselves are a high-end product of the formal education system. Although the system has many defects to criticize, the parents took some benefits from it anyway. Scholars present some evidence that formal education may increase the quality of life in developing countries, including Indonesia (Akresh et al., 2018; Duflo, 2001, 2004; Mazumder et al., 2019). There are also studies showing that homeschooling is probably not the best educational choice for all children (Hagen, 2011). Barnett (1995) argues that the benefit of home education is relative. Children of highly supportive parents may benefit more from homeschooling, while children of impoverished parents with no social support system may benefit more from institutional education. Therefore, homeschooling and schooling should be seen as equally valuable paths of education, complementary to each other and chosen for the best interests of the children.

Fourth, homeschool parents in general are a population with cultural and economic privileges. They have the option to opt out of the formal education system in a way that many other less privileged populations might not have. There are other parents whose children are harmed by their schooling experience but do not have the courage or simply cannot choose to stop sending their offspring to school because they must work long hours every day, they do not have access to the Internet, their marriages are in critical conditions, etc. This reality should remind homeschool parents to be more empathetic instead of judgmental of other parents who cannot do what they do.

Lastly, further studies are necessary to understand more about homeschooling in Indonesia. The data I offer here is based on PHI members, who are only a small portion of a much larger population of Indonesian homeschool families. Aligning with my epistemological commitment to multiplicity, the analyses in this chapter have sought to demonstrate transparency, internal coherence, and clarifications of

positionality. I am cognisant that it is very plausible that those other families may have a wide spectrum of beliefs different from the ones presented here. After all, diversity is one adhered value in the world of homeschoolers.

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Chapter 14
Conclusion

Teguh Wijaya Mulya and Zulfa Sakhiyya

14.1 Reflective Notes on the Critical Perspectives in and Practices on Education

14.1.1 Critical Ideas and Insights

The chapters in this volume have begun to map the landscape of Indonesian education vis-à-vis equity and social justices through critical perspectives. Education is both not only having the potential to reproduce social inequality but also enabling social change. Whether as researchers, teachers, or policymakers, the complexity of policies and practices in education demands careful attention. In this concluding chapter, we reflect on the critical ideas and insights laid out throughout the volume.

The first part of the volume, **Equality and Inclusiveness in Indonesian Education** has taken up the issues of gender, class, and identity politics and how marginalization against certain groups based on those categories has been recurrent in the education sector. Pangastuti in Chap. 1 argues that women have been marginalized in the highly perceived feminine domain of Early Childhood Education as free/cheap laborers by using and romanticizing their socially constructed traditional caregiving role. The Covid-19 pandemic has also marginalized students from low socio-economic backgrounds as access to quality learning resources have been constrained. This issue has been discussed by Irhamni and Sahadewo in Chap. 2 by using a large quantitative survey and interview data in Jakarta. Yulindrasari, Adriany, and Kurniati in Chap. 3 evaluate the impacts of school readiness discourse on children

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and teachers, and how it marginalizes especially those of economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They argue that school readiness actually starts from the school and society's readiness to acknowledge and respect students' diversities, including their diverse linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The second part, **the Neoliberalization of Indonesian Education System**, interrogates the current neoliberalizing process of educational reforms and practices. By examining the vocationalization trend in secondary education, Subkhan in Chap. 4 problematizes the narrow and highly neoliberalized approach in reforming school curriculum. It gets us to pose a critical question, if we live in a knowledge economy, why is this link-and-match policy focuses only on skills? Gaus and Tang in Chap. 5 expand this discussion on the narrow approach to educational reforms by focusing on higher education. They pose a difficult question of the unintended consequences of contemporary reforms: is it a bare pedagogy? Casualization and precariousness are other symptoms of neoliberal reforms, and Adiningrum explores this issue in Chap. 6. She looks into the case of casual lecturers and argues that while their works have been supportive of the many loads in universities, their work and position are highly invisible with no security as they are merely cheap labor for the increasingly neoliberal universities.

Grounded in socio-political-historical milieu of contemporary Indonesia, the third part of this edited book, **Education and the State Apparatus** has discussed at least three socio-political realms pertinent to education and social justice in Indonesia, namely, Islamic religion, the law, and local educational politics. The traditional Islamic model of schooling, that is *pesantren*, was discussed in Chap. 7 by Isbah and Sakhiyya in terms of its long history and contemporary contributions to educational justice, particularly for lower-class families. They argue that within contemporary Indonesia's changing socio-economic landscape, *pesantren*'s transformation as a model of education has been characterized by struggles to reconcile the tension between equity principles and market orientation. Moving to the realms of the law and justice systems, in Chap. 8, Rosser and Joshi presented evidence of how litigation has been utilized by both parents and activists to fulfill education rights in postauthoritarian Indonesia. Examining some high-profile cases, they highlighted that—depending on various factors—litigation has been generally effective for ensuring poor and marginalized citizens' access to education, but not necessarily for improving the quality of education. In Chap. 9, Hariri, Izzati, and Sumintono investigated the processes of Indonesian educational decentralization since the early 2000s which, despite some advances in terms of social justice and student learning support, has mostly been about competition for resources, legitimacy, and authority dialectics between local/district and central institutions. These discussions on religion, the law, and local actors attest to the fact that education does not exist in a "neutral" and "objective" socio-political vacuum. Understanding and imagining the future of Indonesian education requires a deep and critical engagement with the complexity of Indonesian history, politics, economy, culture, and religious traditions, including power relations and injustices implicated within these domains.

The final part, **Strengthening Democratic Practices, Exploring Critical Alternatives**, has presented different types of alternative approaches to education in

Indonesia at various levels, from classroom teaching, curriculum contents, to a refusal of conventional public education altogether. In Chap. 10, Mambu and Kurniawan detailed the intricacies of teaching and learning critically with students from "underdeveloped" areas in the context of Covid-19 pandemic. Grounded in the students' local-historical situatedness, they showed that students were not passive recipients of knowledge, but active meaning-makers; they exercised agency in their learning by drawing upon available discursive resources around them. In Chap. 11, Wijaya Mulya's analysis offered a form of education and learning that takes sexual justice into account. He reminded that sexual justice is a part of social justice—one that is often ignored and difficult to be discussed considering various dominant socio-political-religious discourses surrounding sexuality education in contemporary Indonesia. Nugroho in Chap. 12 examined an educational alternative—homeschooling—as a resistance against the hegemonic practices of conventional schooling by decoupling education from schooling. In identifying and circulating these critiques and alternatives, contributors in this part have demonstrated that a different way of doing education—one that is more emancipatory, democratic, and critical—is possible in each of their own local contextuality. They discursively reworked and opened up new ways of seeing and being a lecturer, a teacher, a parent, a student, and an educational researcher with a vision of a more socially just Indonesia. This, by definition, is an act of political resistance through education.

14.1.2   Implications

The implications of pursuing an inclusive education agenda and delivering more of a level-playing field for students learning as discussed in Part 1 are twofold. Firstly, in targeting education as one development agenda, policymakers and international/national development agencies need to pay more attention to the marginalized groups and those who bear the brunt of the neoliberal reforms. As argued by our contributors in Chap. 1, ECE teachers, casual lecturers, and students of low socio-economic backgrounds require more resources at place to perform. While the Indonesian government has committed to allocate 20 percent of the National Budget to the education sector, its realization has to be carefully monitored and prioritized for these marginalized groups. Critical approaches in formulating more sensitive and inclusive policies are key to realize this goal. Secondly, schools and universities should be the sites where negotiation between government policies and the aspirations of lecturers, teachers, and students occur, not merely an extension or passive implementation of the policies.

   The critiques on the discourses of knowledge economy and the way our contributors problematize the political-economic nature of the contemporary educational policies in Part 2 have left at least two important points. Firstly, it is important for educational policymakers to think of alternative reforms, despite their unpopular nature. The dominant neoliberal discourses in education, such as competitiveness, efficiency, vocationalization, and casualization, are very popular, but their real

impacts on human lives are excruciating. The instrumentalization of knowledge, the vocationalization of educational institutions, and the casualization of knowledge workers might become the contemporary trend, but they have changed the very nature of knowledge from "priceless to priced." Secondly, public and grassroot participation which is more bottom-up is necessary to search for alternative solutions towards complex educational problems.

The implications of recognizing the complex relationship between the State apparatuses and education in Indonesia as discussed in Part 3 are twofold. Firstly, policymakers need to take into account the complexity of Indonesia's socio-political-historical conditions in reforming education systems. Decentralization was an exemplary evidence where unforeseen local conditions impeded the democratic intentions of such educational policy. A contextually grounded policy that considers Indonesia's religious, familial, legal, economic, institutional, and other discursive configurations would be more effective when implemented. Secondly, schools, teachers, and other educational practitioners might find benefits in being critically aware of the underlying political-ideological tensions in their teaching practice. As Indonesia's long path of democratization unfolded, tensions between the past authoritarian history, future neoliberal visions, and currently ever-changing education policies might generate not only confusions and uncertainties but also resentment and a sense of unfairness. Being cognizant of these discursive contestations might be helpful to be more empathetic towards self, colleagues, and students, and, hopefully, reinvigorate the passion for socially just educational aspirations.

This volume's discussions on Indonesian alternative educational practices in Part 4 showed that—if policymakers are willing to turn their attention from bureaucracy and market-driven reforms—there are more than enough examples of critical and democratic education pertinent to Indonesian contexts to be learned from in order to develop a more critically informed and socially just educational policies. For instance, one particular feature of these alternative educational approaches is that they involve genuine and meaningful learning experience, one that is contextually grounded, critical of injustices, and recognizes the learner's agency, as opposed to the standardized, box-ticking, and job-oriented ones. Such learning would require teachers as competent learning facilitators; a condition which might not be readily and evenly available in Indonesia at the moment—so the dominant argument goes. However, externalizing such distrust in teachers into an audit-based controlling system in the name of accountability might not be very helpful in this critical direction. Another implication of this edited volume for schools and teachers struggling with the bureaucratic educational system imposed upon them is that learning about how other schools and teachers have successfully—to a degree—negotiated their educational ideals within the limiting conditions (some have been displayed in this edited book) might provide a sense of relief, solidarity, and hope. Here, personal practice of redefining what "good education" means beyond the hegemonic ideology is indeed a disruptive act of resistance.

14.1.3 Future Directions

Part 1 of this volume has taken the issues of (in)visibility and marginalization of certain class and gender within educational settings. In order to push the boundaries on gender and socio-economic class in the context of educational policymaking and praxis, as well as generate alternative understandings of what counts as inclusive education, critical research in education needs to first unpack dominant discourses circulating in the education sector. These attempts of re-definition and reconceptualization could potentially contribute to a more inclusive and socially just education system.

Neoliberalization processes in the education sector are the center of gravity in Part 2 where instrumentalization of knowledge, vocationalization of educational institutions, and casualization of knowledge workers are the neoliberal symptoms under study. These policy narratives position educational institutions as static entities within the market economy, but actually, there are alternatives to this view: that schools and universities are dynamic sets of relations within a wider ecology of diverse interests and organizations. Therefore, in order to push the boundaries of educational institutions and agents/actors and imagine alternative understandings of knowledge production, there needs to be a shift from the dominance of "knowledge economy" into "knowledge ecology" (Wright, 2017).

Part 3 of this edited book has begun to (re)connect analyses of education and educational justice with various socio-political-historical dynamics of contemporary Indonesia. Further studies are needed to expand academic knowledge in this field through various critical lenses. In citizenship education, for instance, one may ask how Soeharto's legacy of militaristic approach to correctness still characterizes Indonesian educational praxis almost a quarter century after his downfall, and what the consequences are for Indonesia's democratization. Other ideological state apparatuses and their relation with education also need to be further scrutinized, from the media (including social media), family, civil society organizations, and even private tuition services; and how these play a role in the struggle for social justice. For example, in what ways did the new trend of using social media influencers in some private schools' marketing campaigns redefine the interplay between education, capitalism, the media, and the role of the State? Moreover, while grounding analyses of education in the local contextuality and history, we also call for research and insights into the complex interrelations between global educational discourses, local educational practices, and the politics of contemporary Indonesia. A postcolonial theoretical framework might be appropriate in these kinds of analysis—which is a theoretical approach contributors in this volume have not yet intently utilized.

Finally, the Part 4 of the current edited volume has demonstrated that there are already some alternative education practices that are underpinned by and promote democratic values, critical perspectives, and social justice. In order to push further the boundary of educational knowledge production and progressive practices in Indonesia, more studies that critically reflect and build upon these available resources

are needed. There is a dearth of quality research that—not just describe, but—unearths underlying discourses within those alternatives and discusses them in relation to the hegemonic educational structures and concepts. Some examples include the growing number of *sekolah alam* (nature school) with their focus on socio-environmental justice, progressive Islamic schools actively working towards religious pluralism, and alternative schools whose practices are rooted in local wisdom. At another level, exploring the intricate educational dynamics among teachers and students who brought social justice into their teaching and learning is also warranted. In what ways these schools, teachers, and students have discursively contested, for example, the legacy of the New Order's educational ideologies, the dominant neoliberal discourses in the current Indonesian education reforms, or even reshaped what (the Western-originated notion of) "democratic education" means? Future studies may also explore the less-researched dimensions, issues, and contexts of social justice in Indonesian education, in addition to the aforementioned sexual justice and environmental justice, such as spatial justice, indigenous knowledge, migration, (post-) conflict regions, and peace-building through education. Pushing the boundary of knowledge in these fields through critical lenses would further diversify, democratize, and destabilize the dominant theorizations of education both in Indonesia and internationally.

What is missing from this volume and might serve as a future direction for research is the use of postcolonial and globalization perspectives in looking at Indonesian education. This deserves an attention as Indonesia is a postcolonial nation with distinctive postcolonial issues and challenges that exists in the twenty-first-century contexts of globalization where geo-political-economic policies play important roles in shaping the national education system (Sakhiyya, 2011). In addition, the perspectives of neurodiverse and people with disability as they experience education is also missing from this volume. These areas are important and fertile ground to explore to set the scene of critical perspectives on equity and social justice in Indonesian education.

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