

KORESPONDENSI DENGAN SAGE OPEN (Scopus, Q1)

Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Ethnic Groups Do It?

Submit 13 Maret 2020, Accepted 22 Oktober 2020, Publish Maret 2021

1. Submit pada 13 Maret 2020 (scholar one manuscript central)

The screenshot shows the SAGE Open submission site in a browser. The page has a blue header with the SAGE Open logo and a 'SAGE track' link. Below the header, there are links for 'Log In', 'Reset Password', and 'Create An Account'. A yellow warning box at the top asks the user to add the site to their pop-up blocker exception list. The main content area features a 'Log In' form with fields for 'User ID' (filled with 'erondamanik@unimed.ac.id') and 'Password'. There are also links for 'Create an Account' and 'Reset Password'. To the right of the form, there is a 'Welcome to the submission site for SAGE Open' section with instructions for new users and a 'Resources' section with links to 'FAQs & User Guides' and 'Journal Home'. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sageopen'.

The screenshot shows a Gmail inbox with an email from SAGE Open. The email subject is 'SAGE Open - Account Modified in ScholarOne Manuscripts'. The email content includes a notification that the account has been modified, the user ID (erondamanik@unimed.ac.id), and a password reset link. The email is dated 14-Mar-2023. The email body text is as follows:

Dear Mr. Damani:

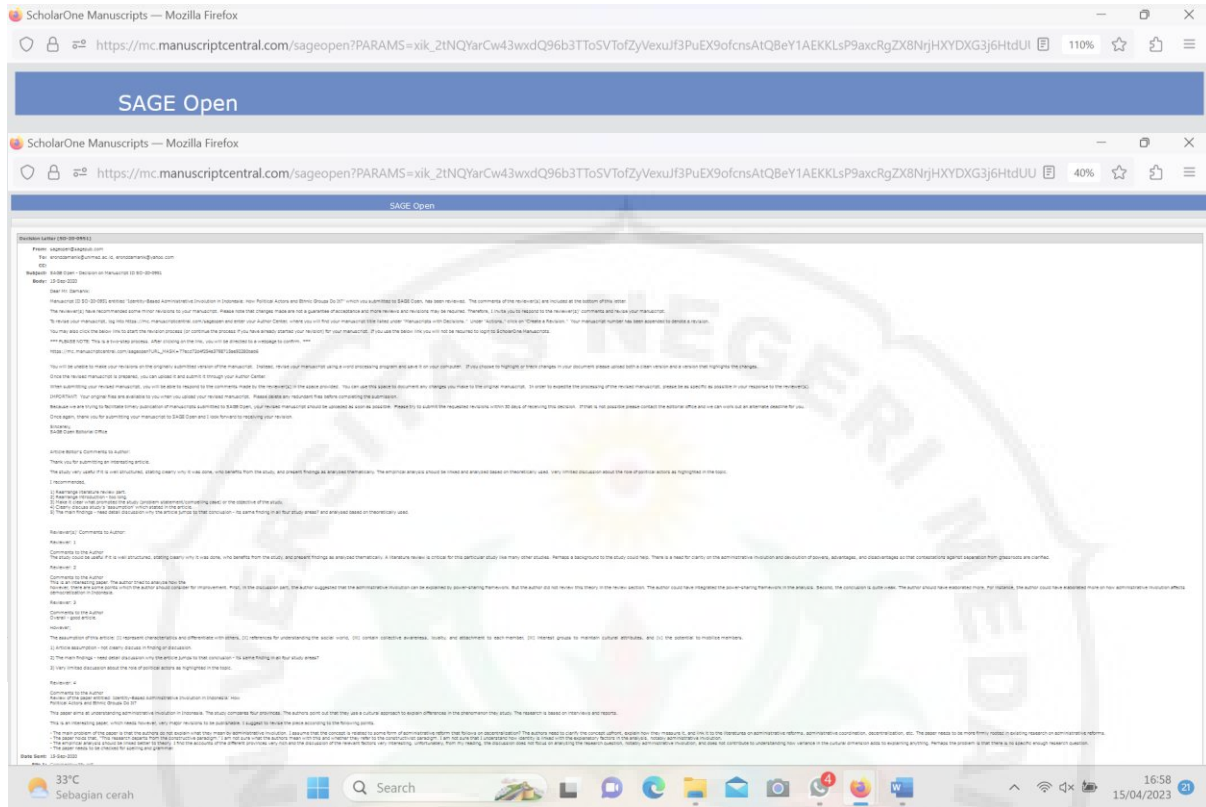
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USER ID: erondamanik@unimed.ac.id
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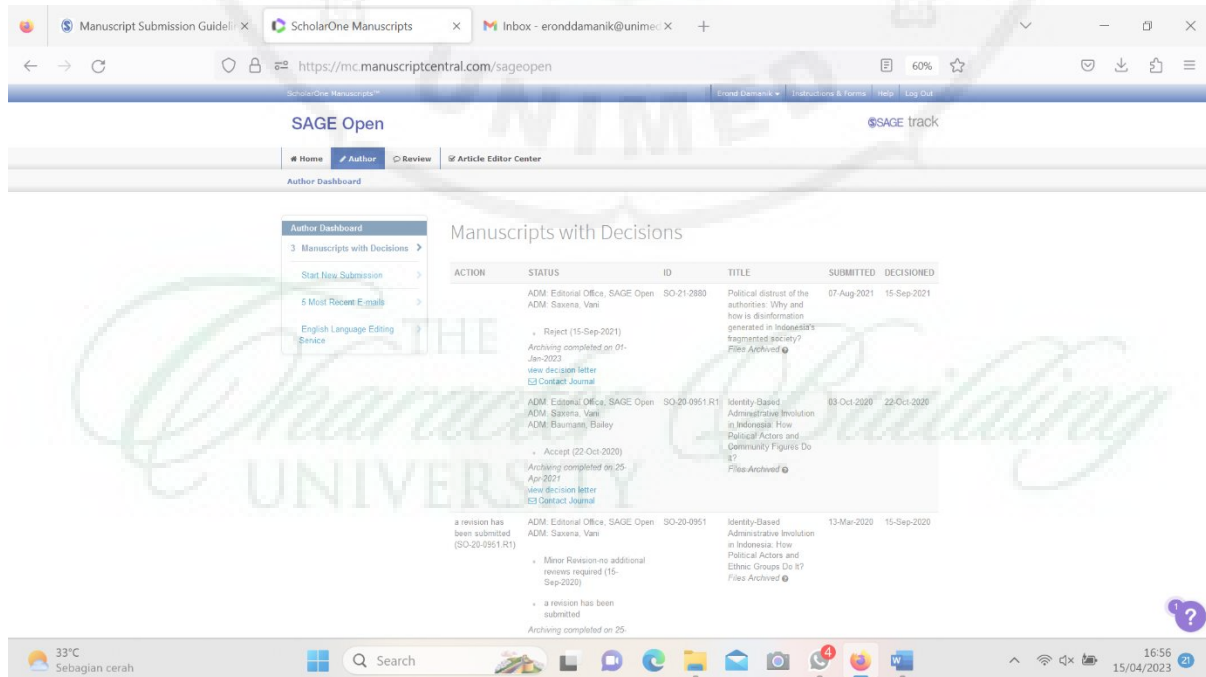
https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sageopen?URL_MASK=057e10a186ba4b5c81676679dca4ffa Please note that the single use link will expire on 17-Mar-2023 9:45:47 AM GMT / 17-Mar-2023 5:45:47 AM EDT. If the single use link has expired, you can generate a single use password by entering your email address into the Password Help function on your site log in page: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sageopen>

Sincerely,
SAGE Open
Editorial Office

2. Direspon pada 15 September 2020 dan ulasan 4 reviewer



3. Dibalas pada 03 Oktober 2020 (dilengkapi respon atas ke-4 reviewer)



4. Diterima pada 27 Oktober 2020

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- From:** sageopen@sagepub.com
- To:** erondamanik@unimed.ac.id, erondamanik@yahoo.com
- CC:**
- Subject:** SAGE Open - Decision on Manuscript ID SO-20-0951.R1
- Body:** 22-Oct-2020

The main body of the email contains the following text:

Dear Mr. Damanik:

It is a pleasure to accept your manuscript entitled "Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Community Figures Do It?" in its current form for publication in SAGE Open.

Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of SAGE Open, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.

Sincerely,
SAGE Open Editorial Office

Code Ocean Trial: SAGE Open is running a trial with Code Ocean (<https://codeocean.com/>). Authors can upload the code associated to their published article so that readers can view and execute it. The platform, which is based on Docker, hosts the code and data in the necessary computational environment and allows users to re-run the analysis in the cloud and reproduce the results, bypassing the need to install the software. A link to the code, data and computational environment will be included in the journal article enabling readers to seamlessly access and reproduce the code or rerun it against their own inputs. Please visit <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/research-data-sharing-policies#Code%20Ocean%20Trial> for more information and instructions for how to utilize this service for your article. If you wish to use this service, please upload your code as soon as possible after receiving this letter, to ensure the code can be linked to your article during the production process.

Date Sent: 22-Oct-2020

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with a temperature of 33°C, a search bar, and various application icons. The system clock indicates the time is 16:36 on 15/04/2023.

5. Copy edit pada 11 November 2020

The screenshot displays a Gmail inbox in a browser window. The selected email is titled "RE: Page proofs for 'SAGE Open' - SGO 974015 (For Author Review)". The sender is "Sage Proofs" with the email address <sage.proofs@eandm.co.in>. The email content is as follows:

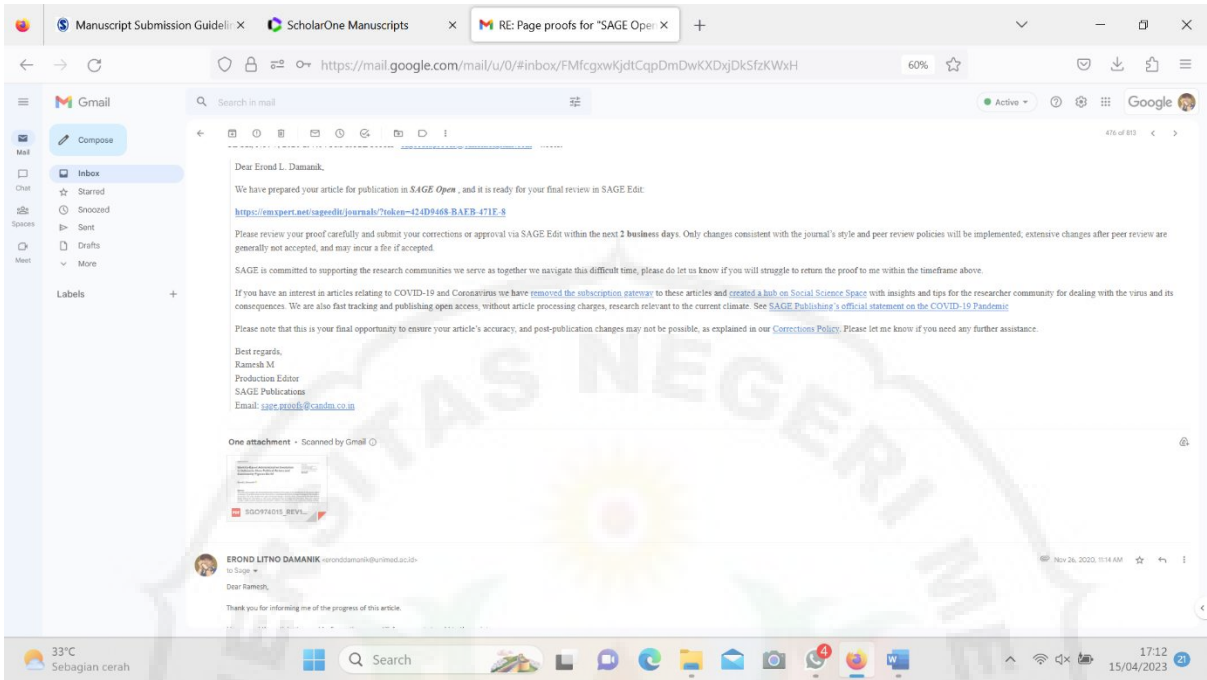
Dear Dr. Damanik,

Find attached corrected proof. Please send back further corrections (if any) in one working day by annotating the PDF using comments tool of Acrobat Reader/Professional.

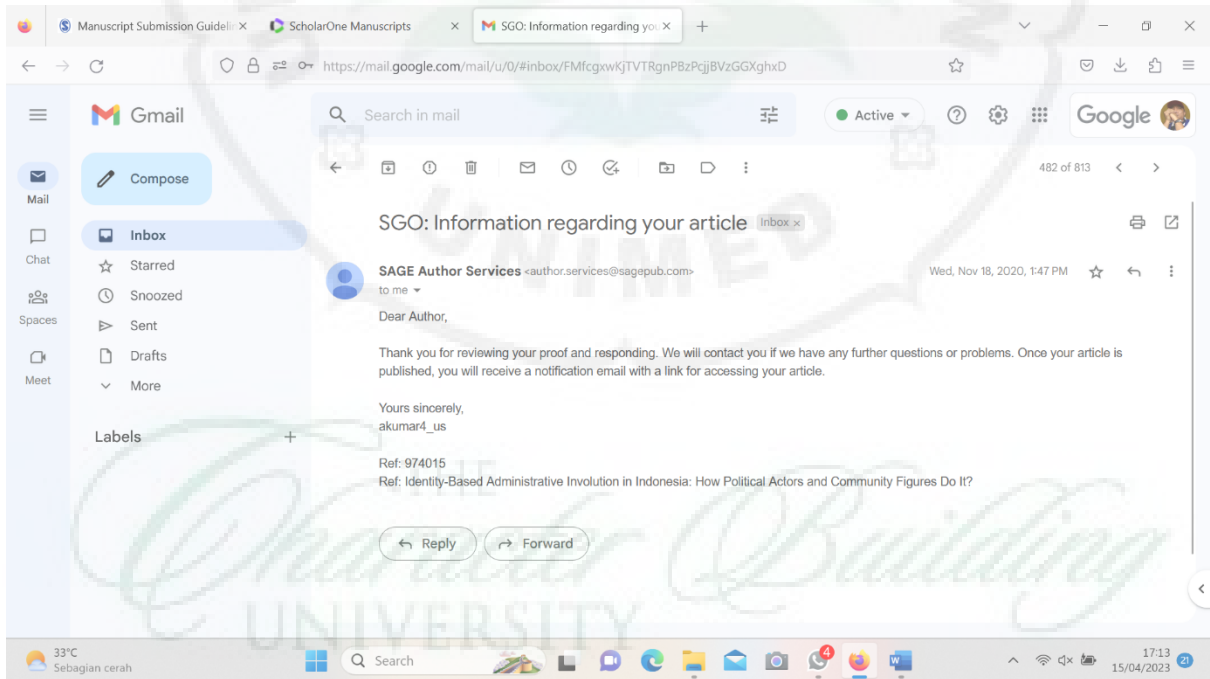
Best Wishes,
Ramesh

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6. Konfirmasi hasil copy edit pada 17 November 2020



7. Pra-publish pada 7 Desember 2020

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface with a browser window open to a Gmail message. The browser tabs include 'Manuscript Submission Guide...', 'ScholarOne Manuscripts', and 'Author survey for SAGE Open'. The email is from 'SAGE Author Services' to 'me' on Wednesday, Dec 2, 2020, at 1:49 PM. The subject is 'Author survey for SAGE Open'. The email content reads: 'Dear Author, Thank you for choosing to publish Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Community Figures Do It? in SAGE Open. To help ensure SAGE and SAGE Open provide the best possible service to their authors, we would greatly value your completion of a short questionnaire about your publishing experience for this article. Simply [click here](#) to access the questionnaire. We really appreciate you taking the time to give us your feedback and hope you will choose to publish with SAGE again. With thanks and best wishes, akumar4_us www.sagepub.com'

8. Sage Support pada 17 Maret 2021

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface with a browser window open to a Gmail message. The browser tabs include 'Manuscript Submission Guide...', 'ScholarOne Manuscripts', and 'Supporting you through every...'. The email is from 'SAGE Reviewer Support' to 'me' on Wednesday, Mar 17, 2021, at 3:07 PM. The subject is 'Supporting you through every step of your reviewer journey'. The email content includes a link to 'View as webpage | Email alerts', a 'Share' button with social media icons, and a section titled 'SAGE Journal Reviewer Gateway'. Below this, it says 'Resources to support you through your reviewer journey' and 'We endeavour to support you through every step of your reviewer journey. SAGE have developed a multitude of resources to keep you on track. Whether you are new to peer review or an experienced reviewer, SAGE provides the resources you need to contribute to this important process. Visit the [SAGE Journal Reviewer Gateway](#) for information on:
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SAGE Open

Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Community Figures Do It?

Journal:	<i>SAGE Open</i>
Manuscript ID	SO-20-0951.R1
Manuscript Type:	SAGE Open - Research Paper
Keywords:	administrative, cleavages, consolidation, identity, involution
Main Discipline or Subject Area:	Political Science
Approaches:	Qualitative
Methods:	This study uses a pragmatic methodological worldview
Abstract:	<p>The article aims to explore and discuss administrative involution in the context of the establishment of autonomous regions in Indonesia. The problem focuses on the role of actors to consolidate identities as a strategy of cleavage and the emergence of provinces. The study compares four cases of provincial cleavage in Sumatra, where two provinces have been formed; Bangka Belitung and Riau Islands, as well as two pending provinces of Tapanuli and Nias Islands. Data were collected through in-depth, personal interviews, and self-report measures. The study refers to the constructive identity paradigm. Administrative involution, the findings of this study, is a product of ethnic politics that consolidates identity, determines the main political actors and categories, and changes its particular characteristics into a significant predictor of self-esteem for power-sharing. Administrative involution, the conclusion of the study is an actor's game of dividing the province, the power-sharing mechanism.</p>

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Fig.1. Map of Indonesia and research locations
Source: Southeast Asia.svg



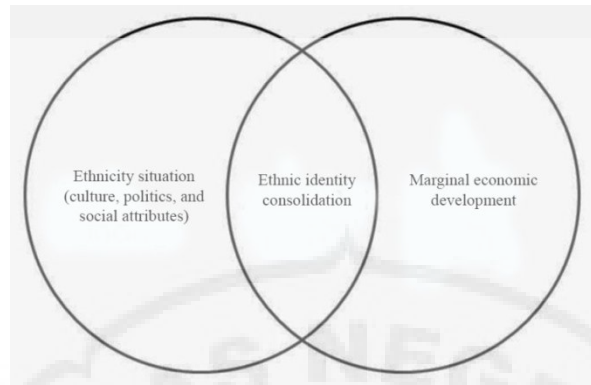
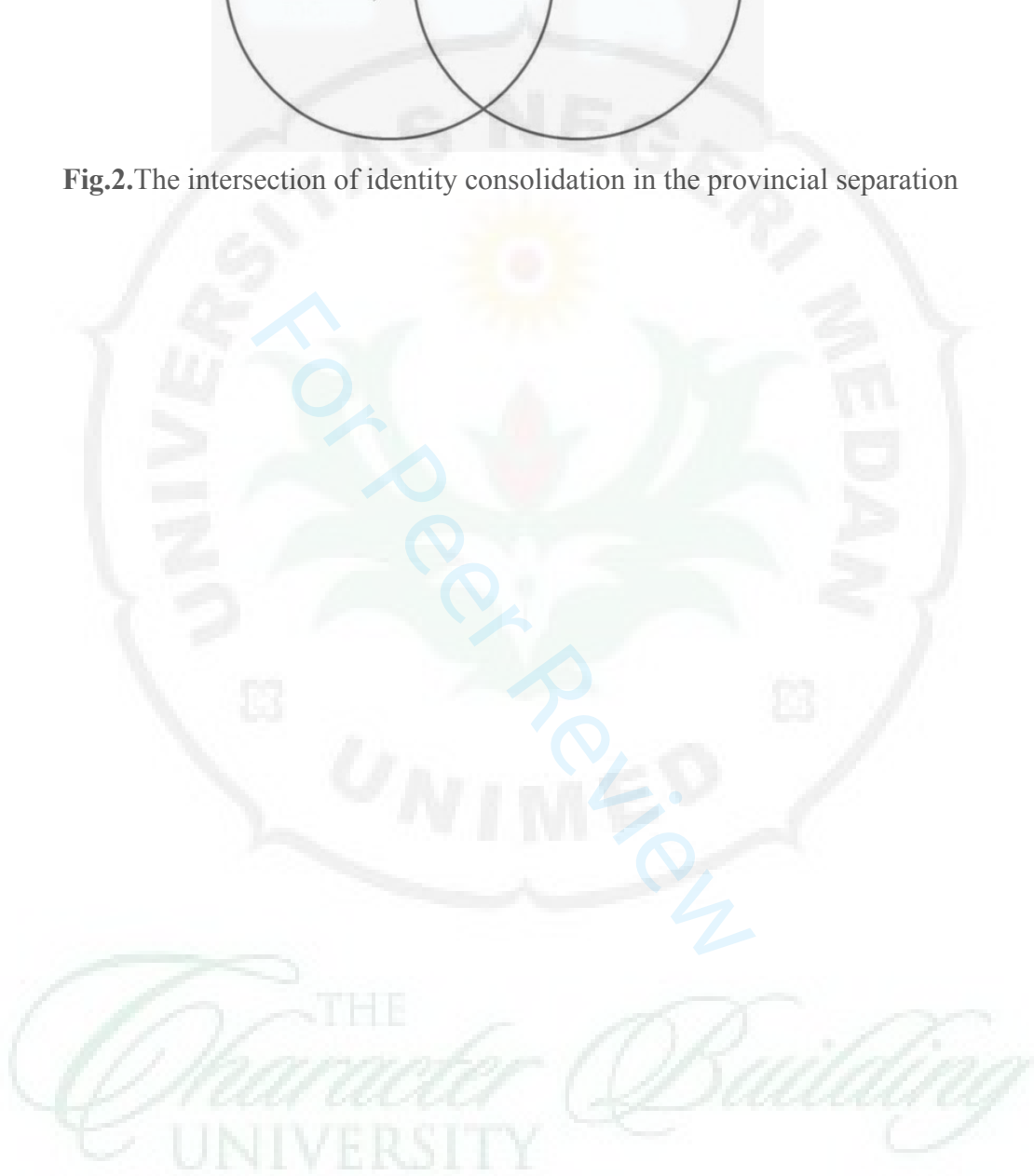


Fig.2.The intersection of identity consolidation in the provincial separation



Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Community Figures Do It?

Abstract

The article aims to explore and discuss administrative involution in the context of the establishment of autonomous regions in Indonesia. The problem focuses on the role of actors to consolidate identities as a strategy of cleavage and the emergence of provinces. The study compares four cases of provincial cleavage in Sumatra, where two provinces have been formed; Bangka Belitung and Riau Islands, as well as two pending provinces of Tapanuli and Nias Islands. Data were collected through in-depth, personal interviews, and self-report measures. The study refers to the constructive identity paradigm. Administrative involution, the findings of this study, is a product of ethnic politics that consolidates identity, determines the main political actors and categories, and changes its particular characteristics into a significant predictor of self-esteem for power-sharing. Administrative involution, the conclusion of the study is an actor's game of dividing the province, the power-sharing mechanism.

Keywords: administrative, cleavages, consolidation, identity, involution.

Introduction

This study is motivated by the phenomenon of ethnic identities consolidation during reforms in the formation of autonomous provinces. During the 20 years of the Reform era (1999-2019), the number of autonomous provinces increased from 27 to 34. An exception was the referendum in 1999 when East Timor separated from Indonesia. In the same year, 3 new provinces were formed: North Maluku, East Irian Jaya, and Central Irian Jaya. Furthermore, in 2000, the number of provinces increased to 32 after the formation of Babel, Gorontalo, and Banten provinces. Furthermore, in 2001, East and Central Papua merged to become Papua Province. The number of provinces became 33 after the formation of Riau Islands in 2002 and West Sulawesi in 2004. The 34th province is North Borneo, formed in 2012. The number of provinces is confirmed to increase in line with the plan to form 8 new autonomous provinces: Tapanuli and Nias Islands in North Sumatra, Kapuas Raya in West Borneo, Bolangmangondow in North Celebes, Sumbawa Island in West Nusa Tenggara, as well as Southwest Papua, South Papua and Central Papua in Papua.

In addition to 8 proposals for autonomous provinces, there are 57 ongoing proposals for the formation of regencies and cities. The 2014 moratorium delayed the formation of new autonomous regions. However, in 2019, during President Jokowi's second period, the formation of autonomous regions became possible. During the two decades of the reform era (1999-2019), 215 new autonomous regions have been formed, consisting of 7 provinces, 173 regencies, and 35 cities. Until 2019, when the study was conducted, the nation-state had 524 autonomous regions, consisting of 34 provinces, 98 cities, and 398 regencies.

This study focuses on the cleavage and formation of 4 autonomous provinces on the island of Sumatra. In both cases, the cleavage and formation of provinces are seen as administrative involution, dwarfing, and create new political arenas. Administrative involution is a pragmatic step in understanding the social world that demands power-sharing, which has implications for the formation of political structures, governance, and budget allocations. Administrative involution is an actor's game to expand the political arena and assert their ambition. The actors are individuals; leaders and cadres of parties, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and leaders of social institutions (Bayu, 2018). Actors collaborate with officials in the regions as well as political figures in Jakarta to facilitate the formation of provinces. Actors have

hidden goals of creating political opportunities and access to economic resources and power. Administrative involution, thus, is the systematic organization of identities to expand the political arena to smaller autonomous regions.

The formation of new autonomous regions allows a transition from centralism to decentralization as part of democratization. However, decentralization is implemented through regional autonomy, giving rise to 5 trends; (1) the birth of “little kings”; (2) cleavage and formation of autonomous regions; (3) the emergence of the concept of “local sons” in general elections; (4) the phenomenon of the existence of a single candidate in the executive election, and (5) identity politicization (Nordholt and van Klinken, 2007; Damanik, 2020a). The determination of cleavage and the formation of provinces emphasize the consolidation of identities to touch ethnic spirituality. The identity contains references, sources of motivation, and symbolic construction to understand the social world. However, concerning administrative involution, identity consolidation is intended more as a strategy and tactic of mobilizing grassroots.

The article is focused on four provinces, 2 of which have been formed; Bangka Belitung (Babel) and the Riau Islands (Kepri), as well as 2 provinces that are still pending; Tapanuli (Protap) and Nias. Although still pending, the proposal for the formation of the Protap and Nias only needs legislative approval in Jakarta. The four provinces have 5 characteristics: (1) three provinces represent an archipelago and one mainland, (2) Babel and Kepri tend to be multi-ethnic, while Protap and Nias tend to be homogeneous, (3) identity as determination: Babel and Kepri take advantage of identity sentiments, in which mainland Malay (more advanced) and Island Malay or Straits (backward), as well as their origins; ethnic hosts (Malays) and immigrants (Javanese and Chinese) (Nuraini, 2007), (4) Protap takes advantage of religious, descendant and clan sentiments, while Nias takes advantage of village sentiment, religion and island isolation (Damanik, 2018; 2019b), and (5) elitist agenda. Figure 1 depicts 4 study locations on the island of Sumatra.

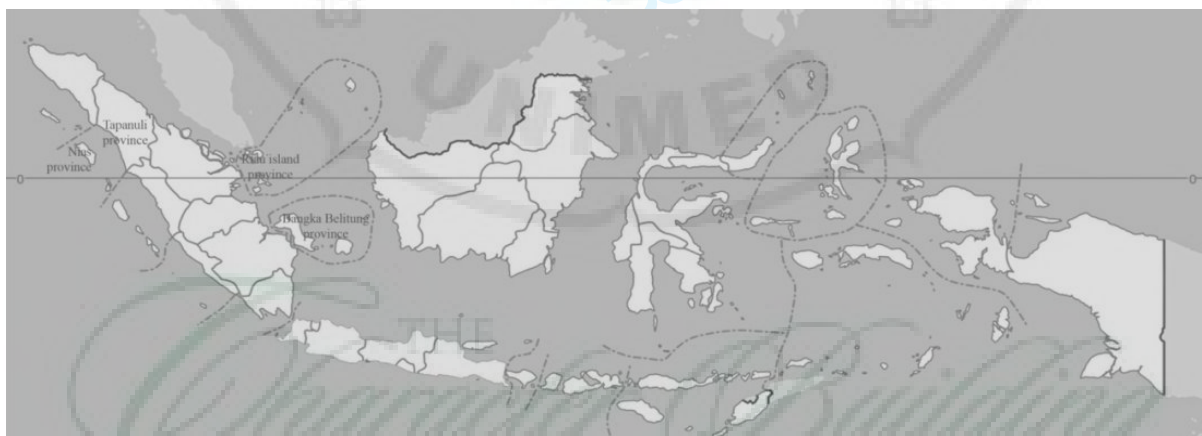


Fig.1. Map of Indonesia and research locations
Source: Southeast Asia.SVG

This study is built on 6 basic assumptions: (1) identity is a personal reference, a source of motivation, and social symbol construction to understand the social world, (2) identity is considered to represent a particular characteristic, which is a differentiator from other communities, (3) identity contains collective awareness, loyalty, and attachment, (4) actors consolidate identity as interest groups to demand power-sharing, (5) new provinces are new arenas for political actors, and (6) administrative involution is a political actor’s game.

Theoretical framework

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3 **Administrative involution is the reality of consolidating identities during decentralization.**
4 Involution, to borrow Geertz's (1963a) term is the opposite of evolution in describing the
5 decline of agriculture in Java. Involution is seen as an administrative setback, dwarfing
6 autonomous regions with the intention of power-sharing. The parent region is considered to
7 be uncaring towards grassroots welfare, is discriminatory, and creates development gaps.
8 Accelerated development of parent regions, from the actor's perspective, must be dwarfed.
9 According to the actor, power-sharing requires grassroots approval by consolidating identity
10 (Haboddin, 2012).
11

12 Identity is the basis of ethnic politics, a movement rooted in history and culture (Abdilah,
13 2002). Consolidation is the organizing of identity as a major political category demanding
14 power-sharing (Heller, 1996), or the determination of who is accepted or rejected (Morowitz,
15 1998). Identity is biopolitics that constructs a grand narrative to accept or reject others.
16 Identity is seen as a personal reference, a source of motivation, and a symbol construction to
17 understand the social world (Hale, 2004; Sanders, 2002). Identity is a tool to mobilize
18 grassroots according to social situations (Hale, 2008). Identity is the categorization and
19 identification of managing individual interactions in society (Barth, 1969). Identity
20 consolidation is a projection of strategic stability (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; 1975; McKay,
21 1982), to contest in a pluralistic society. Identity does not stop at primordial attributes,
22 instead directed at particular characteristics, emphasizing social boundaries.
23

24 Actors consolidate identities into political movements to pave the way for their political
25 ambitions. Less divisible power, access to limited economic and political resources, self-
26 exclusion, and separation are seen as solutions (von Beyme, 1995). Identity consolidation is a
27 game by actors who construct social boundaries according to ethnic situations (van den
28 Berghe, 1970; Barth, 1969), and is projected to become an interest group in service to
29 political expectations (Royce, 1982, Yinger, 1985).
30

31 Administrative involution is an actor's game according to strategic stability that demands
32 power-sharing. More specifically, consolidation is the political discourse between "us" who
33 want power, and "those" who relinquish power (Chandakirana, 1989). Consolidation
34 correlates with the cultural system, values, and beliefs of local communities (Fikri and
35 Oktario, 2018). Identity represents social institutions, including ethnicity, culture, religion,
36 economy, and politics as well as the embryo of differentiation (Sukamto, 2010).
37 Consolidation is not just emphasizing distinguishing symbols, signs, or attributes, rather also
38 directed as a significant predictor of group esteem (Alba, 1985; Castells, 2009; Fukuyama,
39 2004). Consolidation is carried out by tracing historical, cultural, and social bases (Naroll,
40 1964). The consolidation of identity is thus closely related to political interests.
41

42 In Indonesia, the 1999 reform was marked by a change in the state administration from
43 centralism to decentralization. In practice, although not yet final, decentralization became the
44 answer to demands for regional autonomy. The implementation of autonomy gave birth to 2
45 new political phenomena; (1) the proliferation of identity politics, and (2) the cleavage and
46 formation of autonomous regions over their parent regions (Nordholt and van Klinken, 2007).
47 The reform euphoria has become a momentum for demanding state recognition of identity.
48 For the record, compared to the New Order, identity consolidation was stronger during the
49 reform era. During the New Order, identities were locked tight. Discussing identity was
50 considered subversive. Identity becomes a "Pandora's Box" not to be discussed even though
51 it has always been studied in school or college. On the other hand, in the reform era, identity
52 is not just a hot topic but has become a political tool, strategy, and tactic; (1) executive
53 elections (governors, regents, and mayors), (2) legislative elections, (3) presidential elections,
54 and (4) formation of autonomous regions.
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56 Indonesia, to borrow the terms Boeke (1953) and Furnivall (1939), reflects plural societies
57 characterized by a diversity of ethnicities; religions, languages, dialects, genealogy, historical
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3 origins, and cultural attributes. There are 360 language groups (Jaspan, 1958; Bruner, 1974),
4 and 713 ethnic groups in Indonesia. On the one hand, pluralism positions Indonesia as the
5 most heterogeneous country in the world (Hildred Geertz, 1976), but on the other hand, the
6 nation-state has the potential to generate primordial sentiments (Geertz, 1963). Plurality
7 demands a balance of identity in government structures (Rex, 1959; Rex and Singh, 2003).
8 Every ethnic group wants recognition of its identity, both in government structures and in
9 autonomous regions.
10

11 Administrative involution is a consequence of consolidating identity during regional
12 autonomy. Each group wants the province to represent their identity. Before the reform era,
13 provinces in Indonesia reflected the amalgamation of 2 or 3 groups. North Sumatra, for
14 example, is a province consisting of 8 groups; Malay, Minangkabau, Toba, Simalungun,
15 Angkola, Pakpak, Nias, and Karo. On the island of Java, the Betawi, Sundanese, and
16 Javanese each have their province. In South Sulawesi, the Bugis, Buton, Makassar, and
17 Mandar are collectives of a single province. Post-reformation, North Sumatra was cleaved
18 into Protap and Nias; South Sumatra into Babel, and Riau into Kepri. Afterward, South
19 Celebes was cleaved into West Celebes. Except for Madura, each group in Java; Betawi,
20 Sundanese, and Javanese have their provinces, even Betawi and Javanese each has 2
21 provinces.
22

23 Province cleavage makes use of constructive identity. Although they may have similar
24 identities such as language and religion, ethnic boundaries are built on their specific
25 attributes. Consolidation shifts from a particular characteristic to a social boundary. Identity
26 is not seen as static, but rather melting and even manipulative. Identity is packaged according
27 to social, political, and economic situations. Consolidation greatly depends on advantages and
28 returns expectations; material and immaterial resources. Consolidation is a mechanism for
29 actors to trick the grassroots for political support. The game involves actors; politicians,
30 officials, businessmen, state civil servants, political party leaders, and leaders of social
31 institutions, collaborating with politicians in Jakarta for their agenda. Administrative
32 involution, thus, is a mechanism for expanding the arena that advantages actors more than the
33 grassroots.
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38 **Method**

39 The study was carried out qualitatively with a pragmatic methodological approach (Creswell,
40 2007), according to the perspective of political anthropology (Banks, 1996). The pragmatic
41 approach views social reality, single and multiple administrative involutions, which believes
42 that knowledge is either objective or subjective; biased, or directed. The research question
43 determines the choice of rhetoric and methodology because validity exists in all approaches
44 (Creswell and Clark, 2011). In this study, the pragmatic approach is considered ideal because
45 it is compatible with mixed methods designs (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Then, a
46 variety of perspectives is seen as providing the best information about the problem being
47 studied (Greene and Hall, 2010), and useful when single information from one source is
48 insufficient (Cresswell and Clark, 2011). The perspective of political anthropology in this
49 study is focused on the grassroots understanding of identity and the formation of provinces.
50

51 The study involved 28 informants, consisting of 20 men and 8 women. A total of 15
52 informants, aged 45-70 years and the rest aged 35-44 years, were selected from 4 research
53 locations. Selection and determination of informants are based on 4 considerations; (1) active
54 participation in the formation of provinces, (2) roles and functions (drafter, negotiator,
55 coordinator, and propagandist), (3) social relations between politicians, bureaucrats,
56 community figures, leaders of social institutions, entrepreneurs and elites in Jakarta, and (4)
57 the main agenda for cleavage and formation of provinces. All four considerations boil down
58 to determining which informants had sufficient knowledge of the initial ideas, processes,
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3 mechanisms, urgency, as well as the significance of the formation of a new province.
4 Informants were recruited from the provincial capital using purposeful criterion-based
5 strategic sampling which included maximum variation, based on ethnicity, and snowball
6 techniques to document patterns and variations (Creswell, 2007; Creswell and Clark, 2011).
7 28 informants consisted of (1) political actors, (2) bureaucrats, (3) regional heads, (4)
8 regional legislature members, (5) party leaders, (6) community figures; religious leaders,
9 heads of ethnic associations, traditional leaders, and youth leaders. As many as 21 informants
10 were individuals and social institutions who actively participated, while the rest were
11 completely unrelated to the cleavage and formation of the province.
12

13
14 The study focuses on the strategies and tactics of actors to consolidate identities to form
15 provinces. Identity is evaluated following the multigroup ethnic identity measure mechanism;
16 affirmation and belonging, ethnic behavior, and identity achievement (Phinney, 1992;
17 Phinney, Cantu and Kurtz, 1997). Informants are motivated to speak freely and convey their
18 knowledge regarding the formation of provinces. For example; what do you know about
19 identity? What do you know about the motivations for cleavage and formation of provinces?
20 What would your perception be if the consolidation of identity was mainly correlated with the
21 formation of provinces? What do you think about the urgency and significance of forming a
22 province? Please describe your participation in supporting the cleavage and formation of
23 provinces.
24

25 Interview results were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically. After the initial
26 reading, the raw information is reduced by coding the data according to its relevance with the
27 intention behind the study. Data are combined in broader categories and themes, reflecting
28 descriptive analysis, classification, and interpretation (Creswell, 2007). In the final session,
29 validation was carried out using a triangulation strategy, member checking, rich descriptions
30 (Creswell, 2007), and saturation (Merriam, 2009). All data is read and confirmed through
31 focus group discussions to ensure that all information is under social reality.
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34 **Finding and discussion**

35 ***Determinants of cleavage and formation of 4 provinces***

36 The following descriptions detail the consolidation of identity, the main basis for cleavage,
37 and the formation of 4 new provinces on the island of Sumatra. First, the cleavage and
38 formation of the Babel out of South Sumatra. Babel is located at 1°50'-3°10' South Latitude
39 and 105°-108° East Longitude, consisting of 1 city and 6 regencies; Pangkalpinang City
40 (provincial capital), Bangka Regency, Belitung, West Bangka, Central Bangka, East Bangka,
41 and South Bangka. It consists of 470 islands, the 2 largest islands of which are Bangka and
42 Belitung. The total population based on the 2015 Population Census is 1,224,307. Based on
43 religion, Islam is the majority (88.71%), Buddhist (4.49%), Protestant (3.37%), Catholic
44 (1.31%), Confucian (3.30%), traditional religion (0.11%) and Hindu (0.01%).
45

46 The populations of Babel identified themselves as Malays. However, more than 40% of
47 the population is Chinese and Javanese, migrants from the colonial period whose livelihood
48 was in processing. Compared to the Malays and Javanese, the Chinese occupy the highest
49 social strata, controlling the local economy and trade. In the economic structure, 20.40% of it
50 is supported by the primary sector, agriculture, mining, and quarrying, 5.87% by the
51 secondary sector, manufacturing industry, and 34.81% by the tertiary sector, services, and
52 trade.
53

54 The main motivations for the formation of Babel: (1) reducing the dominance of Malay
55 Mainlanders (*Melayu Daratan*) over Islanders (*Melayu Pulau*) in the political, economic, and
56 social arenas, (2) the relative span of control and managerial to Palembang, the capital city of
57 South Sumatra province, and (3) the marginalization of development in the archipelago
58 compared to the mainland. The determinant of the cleavage and formation of Babel was the
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3 exclusion of the *Melayu Pulau* identity, perceived as underdeveloped and stupid.
4 Substantively, the formation of Babel was an attempt to separate the identity of Islander
5 (*Orang Pulau*) from the Mainlander (*Orang Darat*). *Melayu Pulau* or *Orang Pulau* is a label
6 that Land Malays attach to the entire population of the island, although not all of them are
7 Malay. The concept of *Melayu Pulau* is a label, a pejorative that emphasizes backwardness,
8 ignorance, filth, slums, and poverty. On the island, there are Chinese, Javanese,
9 Minangkabau, and Bugis.

10
11 Geographically, the mainland and the islands are separated by the Malacca Strait. From a
12 development aspect, the island is lagging behind the mainland. The island tends to be poorer,
13 dirty, and shabbier than the mainland. The allocation of development is focused on the
14 mainland. Mainland political actors dominate the political arena on the island. Mobility
15 between the islands is relatively difficult because it is limited by waters surrounding each
16 island. The government bureaucracy, party leaders, state civil servants, and heads of
17 government tend to come from the mainland. The island became the place to dump officials,
18 military, police, judges, prosecutors, and civil servants who are considered negligent or who
19 oppose their superiors. The island, thus, is a reflection of isolation, marginalization, and
20 poverty.

21
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23 In line with the regional autonomy in 1999, political actors collaborated with community
24 figures, state civil servants, businessmen, and leaders of social institutions to initiate the
25 cleavage of the South Sumatra province. The figure of Yusril Ihza Mahendra, a legal expert,
26 and minister for 3 periods who came from Belitung, played an active role in cleaving and
27 forming the Babel in 1999-2000. The initiators realized that the position of Yusril Ihza
28 Mahendra had a great opportunity to lobby Jakarta (the Parliament and President). In 2000,
29 the province of South Sumatra was cleaved into a new Babel province, with Belitung as its
30 capital.

31
32 The essence of the role of actors in the cleavage of South Sumatra Province and forming
33 Babel are as follows: (1) political actors organize community figures; chairman of the
34 association of ethnic, religious, youth, women, party leaders, state civil servants, and society
35 in 3 discussions regarding the plan to form Babel; (2) the actor initiated and funded 2
36 seminars and recommended the urgency and significance of the formation of Babel; (3)
37 actors have an audience with the Governor of South Sumatra, conveying the desire of
38 grassroots to form Babel; (4) actors form the structure of the provincial formation committee;
39 protectors, advisors, chairpersons, general secretary, general treasurers, and committees,
40 which consist of community elites; (5) assignment of academics financed by the Regional
41 Budget (APBD) of South Sumatra Province, a comprehensive study and feasibility as a
42 province; (6) the results of the study were submitted in 2 seminars, attended by governors,
43 regents, members of the legislature and initiators; (7) the recommendation of the seminar, the
44 formation of Babel signed by the governor to be submitted to the Minister of Home Affairs
45 and the legislature; (8) Yusril Izha Mahendra, a politician and bureaucrat in Jakarta, lobbied
46 the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Law and Legislation, the Coordinating Minister
47 for Politics, Law and Security, and the legislature; (9) the legislature reviews the feasibility
48 and readiness of Babel to become a province, (10) the legislative plenary decided that Babel
49 would become a single province.

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53 Identities have been strengthened and expanded during the discourse on the cleavage of
54 South Sumatra Province. The construction of identity is not only immersed in cultural and
55 religious attributes but is also extended to social and economic attributes. The pejorative and
56 marginal labels were affixed by *Melayu Daratan* to the *Melayu Pulau* and then used by actors
57 as collective energy to influence grassroots. Island Malays construct themselves as natives,
58 the origin of the mainland; the island civilization is said to be older than the mainland; the
59 cultural attributes of the island are said to be more original Malay; the island is called the
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3 base of international shipping, the origin of trade; Islam is said to have originated from the
4 island and spread to the mainland; the population of the island is more diverse than the
5 mainland due to the migration of traders since the opening of the Tin Mine during the
6 colonial era; the island's natural resource wealth is dredged to develop land; marginalization
7 of the island is related to cause and effect, the dominance of politicians, bureaucrats, and state
8 civil servants; poverty is the indifferent consequence of politicians and governments who
9 underestimate the island.
10

11 Mainstreaming identity is needed by actors to gain grassroots acceptance and support.
12 During the initial momentum, informal discussions in the politicians' workroom extended to
13 the grassroots. The exclusion of identities, the pejorative label, and the negative stigma of the
14 island, are further accepted and constructed. The actors choose identity exclusion over
15 economic development as a determinant of formation. Identity is considered to touch
16 grassroots because it is attached to itself. The exclusion of identity is the subject of discussion
17 and discussion in coffee shops, markets, offices, mosques, monasteries, churches, even at
18 informal meetings between 5-10 community members. In the first semester of 2000, the plan
19 to create the Babel became a topic of heated discussion at the grassroots level. Actors felt that
20 they had succeeded in influencing grassroots and expressed their support for the formation of
21 Babel. Finally, on December 4, 2000, Abdurrahman Wahid, the President of Indonesia,
22 signed Law Number 27 of 2000 concerning the Establishment of the Babel.
23

24 Second, the cleavage and formation of the Kepri out of Riau. Kepri consist of 2 cities and
25 6 regencies; Tanjungpinang and Batam City, Bintan Regency, Karimun, Natuna, Anambas,
26 and Lingga. Administrative boundaries adjacent to other countries; Vietnam and Cambodia to
27 the north, Malaysia and West Borneo to the east, the provinces of Babel and Jambi to the
28 south, and Singapore, Malaysia, and Riau to the west. Kepri consist of 2,408 islands, 30%
29 among which are unnamed and uninhabited. The total area reaches 8,201.72 km², of which
30 25% island, while the rest are either saltwater or freshwater. The main economic structures
31 are transportation and communication (8.51%), processing industry (7.41%), finance and
32 leasing (6.89%), services (6.77%), and trade, restaurants, and hotels (6, 69%).
33

34 The population of the Kepri, according to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (2015),
35 is 1,817,604. Batam and Tanjungpinang are the most densely populated cities. Based on
36 religion, Islam is the majority (77.34%), followed by Protestants (12.28%), Buddhists
37 (7.66%), Catholics (2.46%), Confucians (0.19%), and Hindus (0.07%). Based on ethnicity,
38 Malay is dominant among Javanese, Chinese, Bugis, *Orang Laut*, Minangkabau, and Batak.
39 Batam is an industrial city with the largest concentration of migrants. Strait people (*Orang*
40 *Selat*) is the Malay's conception of the population in the island, with pejorative meaning,
41 underdevelopment and poor.
42

43 THE
44 The main motivation is to cleave and form Kepri; (1) upholding the historical basis of the
45 colonial period, (2) reducing the domination of mainland Malay in the island, (3) establishing
46 the identity of *Orang Selat*, and (4) reducing the development gap on the island. For the
47 record, during the period of Dutch colonialism, Kepri was called *Riau and Kepulauan (Riouw*
48 *en Onderhoorigen)* in 1856 (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia [ANRI], 1970;
49 Ricklefs, 2001). The historical basis was used to petition for the cleavage and formation of
50 the Kepri. Juridical reasons allowed the formation of the Kepri, but the collective energy is
51 identity. The island has barely been touched for 30 years since the national independence.
52 However, since 1973, the islands, especially Batam, have been molded into industrial
53 authorities and centers. B.J. Habibie, an alumnus of Aachen University, Germany, was
54 entrusted as the Chairman of the Batam Authority.
55

56 Gradually, Batam and several islands; Bintan, Karimun, and Tanjungpinang have
57 progressed into developed areas on the island. In 2020, there are 17 types of industry and
58 1,309 companies in the archipelago, dominated by 211 types of machinery and metal
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3 industries. The entire industry is foreign and domestic capital participation, which absorbs
4 169,265 of both Indonesian and international workers. Batam has become a destination for
5 migrants looking for work and establishing businesses. Archipelagic and international
6 relations; Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand are connected by sea and air. Thousands of
7 island populations prefer to travel to neighboring countries over to Sumatra. The Batam
8 Authority is a determinant of territorial progress and has made the islands more advanced
9 than the mainland.

10
11 The population of Riau, both on the mainland and in the island, is predominantly Malay
12 and Moslem. However, Strait people, the mainland population of islands, are the inhabitants
13 of hundreds of islands in the Straits of Malacca and the Singapore Peninsula. From the
14 perspective of *Melayu Darat*, Strait people are marginal and underdeveloped. Their
15 Malayness is often questioned, and they become synonymous with being un-hygiene, having
16 many children, and poor. The pejorative label and stigma are relevant to the general
17 characteristics of Indonesia's island population, namely poor and underdeveloped. The
18 development on the islands is relatively left behind compared to the mainland. However,
19 since 1973, the islands have become more advanced than the mainland.

20
21 The actors see the rapid development of the island as a new political arena. Foreign and
22 domestic investment became political resources to form new provinces. The province is seen
23 as an arena for widening political chances and opportunities. For actors, the determinant of
24 identity shifted from exclusion according to the perspective of *Melayu Darat*, referring to
25 historical bases and recent achievements in the island; (1) accepting the pejorative label
26 *Orang Selat* according to the mainland Malay, (2) idolizing Hang Nadim, Hang Jebat, and
27 Hang Tuah, an imaginative figure, a local Malay hero, conqueror of Malaysia, Singapore and
28 Southern Thailand, originating from the strait, as a social mascot, (3) *Orang Selat* civilization
29 is older than the mainland Malay, (4) *Orang Selat* is a Malay embryo spreading to the Riau
30 mainland, (5) all *Melayu Darat* originated from the Strait, (6) the Strait (Malacca) became the
31 origin of the Riau Islamic Sultanate on land, and (7) the folklores and cultural attributes of
32 *Melayu Darat* originated from the strait. In the Kepri, in comparison to the theme of
33 development, identity facilitates the demands for new autonomous regions.

34
35 The difference between the phonetics of *Melayu Darat* and *Orang Selat* is not significant.
36 Language and dialect are relatively the same, cultural attributes; ceremonies, rituals, arts,
37 colors, and traditional clothes are relatively the same. The battle for identity, the Straits, and
38 Land Malays, emphasizes genealogy and Islam. From the perspective of *Orang Selat*, *Melayu*
39 *Darat* had originated from the Strait. Islam first spread on the island, as a result of the
40 encounter with Arab traders, and subsequently spread to the mainland. However, Dutch
41 colonialism changed all these assumptions, preferring Bengkalis on the mainland as the
42 capital and seat of *Karasidenan Riau* (Riau Residency).

43
44 The actors who came from the island, Huzrin Hood, collaborated with party leaders, state
45 civil servants, and businessmen to form the Riau Islands province. The chosen mechanism
46 focused on 4 points; (1) consolidating identity to gain political support, (2) exploiting identity
47 exclusion demands cleavage of provinces, (3) forming provinces as a strategy for revitalizing
48 identity and accelerating development on islands, and (4) establishing collaboration with
49 leaders of ethnic, religious, social associations, bureaucrats and political party leaders. The
50 consolidation pattern is carried out by the following means: (1) informal elitist discussions,
51 (2) seminars, (3) coordination with governors and regents, (4) research on the urgency,
52 significance, and feasibility of becoming a province, (5) seminars and preparation of
53 recommendations, (6) submission of proposals to the central government and the parliaments
54 in Jakarta, (7) reviewing candidates for the province and capital city, and (8) determining the
55 status of a new province. Finally, on Friday, October 25, 2002, Megawati Soekarno Putri, the
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3 President of Indonesia, signed Law Number 25 of 2002 concerning the Establishment of the
4 Province of Riau Islands.

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6 Third, the cleavage and formation of Protap out of North Sumatra. The population of
7 Protap, based on the 2015 Population Census, is 807,271. Based on religion, Protestants are
8 the majority (78.96%), followed by Catholics (16.69), Islam (3.7%), *Malim* (native belief of
9 the Toba) (0.54%), Buddhists (0.02), and Hindus (0.005%). Toba (93%) is the majority and
10 the rest are Nias, Simalungun, and Minangkabau. The Toba proudly identifies itself as Batak
11 People (*Orang Batak*), a label used by foreign explorers from the early 16th century (Hidayat
12 and Damanik, 2018). The label Batak is attached to 6 ethnic groups; Simalungun,
13 Mandailing, Angkola, Pakpak, Toba, and Karo to distinguish it from Malays (Damanik,
14 2019a; Perret, 2010).

15
16 Protap has its historical base since the period of colonialism, *Karasidenan Tapanuli*
17 (Castles, 1982). Its area includes North, South, Central, Sibolga, Nias, and Dairi Tapanuli.
18 However, after the national independence, in 1956, Protap was merged into North Sumatra
19 Province (Damanik, 2018). Protap formation was planned for 2007 and was expected to be
20 realized by 2009. However, a protest by Protap's supporters at the 2009 North Sumatra
21 legislative plenary session resulted in the death of Azis Angkat, the chairman of the
22 legislature. The Plenary rejected the new province formation. Protap leaders; Chandra
23 Panggabean, Viktor Siahaan, Datumira Simanjuntak, Burhanuddin Rajagukguk, Gelmok
24 Samosir, Jon Haidir Samosir, and Parles Sianturi, were arrested and imprisoned. After the
25 incident, the Mandailing elite especially addressed the issue of Christianization in the plan to
26 form a province. The statement is based on the cover with a church background in the
27 proposal for the province formation.

28
29 The plan for the formation of Protap faced a winding road: (1) South and Central
30 Tapanuli, Dairi, Pakpak Bharat, Nias Regency, and Sibolga City refused to join, (2) Nias, due
31 to its distance and separation from Sumatra, refused to join and plans to form its province, (3)
32 South Tapanuli, dominated by Mandailing and Angkola on the grounds of religion (Islam),
33 refused to join forces and plans to form its province, (4) Central Tapanuli Regency and
34 Sibolga City, a mixture of Toba, Mandailing, Nias, Angkola and Minangkabau, and a balance
35 of religions (Islam and Christianity), chose to be gray area, (5) Pakpak Bharat Regency, for
36 historical reasons, refused and chose to remain with North Sumatra, and (6) Dairi Regency
37 became gray area because its territory overlaps with that of Pakpak Bharat Regency. Based
38 on the above phenomena, undoubtedly 1 regency; North Tapanuli will become a province.
39 However, the Toba political actors are not at a loss; (1) encouraging the cleavage of villages
40 and sub-districts, and (2) forming new regencies based on cultural areas, Silindung,
41 Humbang, Toba, and Samosir into new regencies (Damanik, 2019b). According to juridical
42 reasons, 4 regencies north of Tapanuli deserve to be made into 1 province.

43
44 The biggest motivation to form Protap: (1) exclusion of identities in North Sumatra, (2)
45 the desire to form a province on behalf of ethnicity, (3) difficulties breaking through the
46 bureaucracy, becoming governors, deputy governors, or officials in North Sumatra, (4)
47 negative labels and stigma against Batak of being aggressive, conflict-loving, and stubborn,
48 (5) the development gap between the northern parts of Tapanuli and the west and east coast
49 of North Sumatra, and (5) expansion of political arena in the regions. The Toba believes they
50 are superior to other groups in North Sumatra; (1) the first group in North Sumatra to have
51 received a modern education since the German Missionaries arrived in 1864, (2) during
52 colonialism, the Toba elite was put in strategic positions in plantations, missionary, and
53 colonial administration, and (3) post-independence, the Toba elite secured strategic posts in
54 North Sumatra and Jakarta.

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56 Regional autonomy and direct elections proved to have limited the Toba elites in North
57 Sumatra. Gradually, the Toba elite encountered difficulties breaking through the bureaucracy
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3 or becoming officials. For actors, this fact encouraged the cleavage of North Sumatra by
4 forming the Protap. Procedurally, the formation of Protap is following Law Number 78 of
5 2007 concerning Procedures for the Formation, Abolition, and Merger of Regions in
6 Indonesia. However, the juridical reason for requiring collective energy to encourage the
7 formation of Protap. In this section, actors polish the exclusion of identities, the systematic
8 exclusion of officials and politicians, and the marginalization of development. Mainstreaming
9 of identity can create grassroots support. However, the incident in 2009 became a crucial
10 reason for the rejection of Protap's proposal. Currently, in the second period of President
11 Jokowi, there may be a chance to reinforce the proposal. Two of Jokowi's ministers, Luhut
12 Panjaitan (Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment) who comes from
13 north of Tapanuli, and Yasonna Laoly (Minister of Law and Human Rights) who comes from
14 Nias had a big influence in ratifying the Protap.

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16
17 Fourth, the cleavage and formation of Nias out of North Sumatra. Nias Island is located in
18 the Indonesia Ocean, an 18-hour boat ride from Sibolga Harbor, or 1.25 minutes by plane
19 from Kualanamu Airport. Nias is the farthest area from Medan, the capital of North Sumatra.
20 Before the reformation, Nias was a regency in North Sumatra. From 1999-2006, Nias was
21 cleaved into 4 regencies and 1 city; South Nias regency, West Nias Regency, North Nias
22 regency, Nias Regency, and Gunungsitoli City. The formation of new regencies is intended to
23 fulfill the juridical basis for the formation of the province. In 2008, Nias was planned to
24 become 1 province, cleaved out of North Sumatra.

25
26 The population of Nias, based on the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2018, was
27 1,013,891. The dominant population is ethnic Nias (96%) and a small number of migrants of
28 Batak, Javanese, and Minangkabau. Based on religion, Protestants are the majority (76.31%),
29 followed by Catholics (18.99%), Islam (4.61%), and Buddhists (0.05%). The main economic
30 structures are agriculture, marine, trade, and services. The main livelihoods are agriculture
31 and fishing. Anthropologically, the population is homogeneous and divided into clans (*mado*)
32 and several villages (*ori*). Although homogeneous, they have different dialects, traditional
33 house forms, rituals, and ceremonies. The differences are summarized in the expression
34 "different villages, different customs" (*bo' o mbanua, bo' o mbowo*). All Nias people admit
35 that their ancestors were sent down by God in Gomo Hill, Bawomataluo area, and spread
36 throughout the island.

37
38 Nias is one of the underdeveloped areas in North Sumatra; (1) the potential for natural
39 resources is very minimal, (2) human resources are low, (3) the areas visited by officials are
40 least frequently visited, (4) disposal site for dissident officials, (5) isolation of the island
41 causes difficulties in mobility and territorial underdevelopment, and (6) the control and
42 management are made difficult by its relative distance from the capital city of North Sumatra.
43 The six points were wrapped up for exclusion reasons; (1) exclusion of identity so that it is
44 less well known, (2) elite subordination in the political, social, economic, and cultural arenas,
45 (3) the inability to contest in the political arena, and (4) development disparities compared to
46 other regions in North Sumatra.

47
48 The momentum of decentralization has become the cornerstone of the formation of Nias'
49 province. Social identity is created by searching for historical and cultural backgrounds. A
50 span of control and managerial, juridical basis, as well as development gabs, require similar
51 steps. The collective energy generated is identity exclusion, packaged through informal
52 discussions, focus group discussions, seminars, and political negotiations. Currently, the
53 chances of the formation of a province are extremely large, in line with the revokement of the
54 2019 moratorium. Joko Widodo's visit to Nias in 2019, which was the first time in the
55 region's history, opened up opportunities for the formation of a province. The influence of
56 Yasonna Laoly, the Indonesian Minister of Law and Human Rights who came from Nias and
57 Luhut Panjaitan, the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, has the
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3 potential to reinforce the formation of Nias Province. Christian Zebua, chairman of the
4 Preparatory Body for the Establishment of Nias Province, has a close relationship with Tito
5 Karnavian, the Minister of Home Affairs, both generals, had served in Papua.

6 Based on the explanation above, it is found that actors package identity into determinants
7 of cleavage and formation of provinces; (1) in Babel, it is receiving the *Melayu Pulau*
8 identity: marginalized, poor, and underdeveloped, as well as tracing the historical base of
9 indigenous population and civilization who rejected *Melayu Daratan*, (2) in Kepri, it is
10 supporting the label of *Orang Selat*: uncivilized, poor and underdeveloped, tracing a unifying
11 figure as a social symbol, and questioning the identity of *Melayu Darat*. The island's
12 advancement led to the formation of provinces as a means of establishing Malay identity; (3)
13 in Nias, underdevelopment, poverty, and disparities are bundled in political, cultural, and
14 social identities exclusion, and (4) in Protap, the inability of elites to break through the
15 bureaucracy and development gaps is wrapped in identity exclusion. The Protestant religion
16 which is the majority adhered to by the elite is one of the obstacles to serving public offices
17 in North Sumatra. The consolidation of identity, based on the description above, for actors,
18 moves from cultural attributes, is constructed into a social criterion and is managed
19 politically.
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24 ***Political actors' game***

25 The following descriptions are explanations of the 6 assumptions put forward in the
26 introduction above. First, identity contains references, sources of motivation, and symbolic
27 construction to understand the social world. The four provinces shift and lead to social
28 differentiation; *Melayu Pulau* versus *Melayu Daratan* in Babel, and *Orang Selat* versus
29 *Melayu Darat* in Kepri. Furthermore, the confirmation of identity as a differentiator was
30 carried out by the Nias people in Nias Islands, and Toba Batak in Protap. In Babel and Kepri,
31 the concept of Malay is differentiated based on its origins referring to the Malay originality.
32 Likewise, Islam has received confirmation between the island and the mainland.
33

34 In Nias and Protap, Christianity has become a social basis for maintaining domination.
35 The dominance of Christianity in Nias and Protap has been a factor in the delay in the
36 formation of both provinces. The ethnic reality in 4 provinces shows the construction of
37 identity, moving from cultural, historical to social bases to determine political bases. Identity,
38 in this section, as stated by Hale (2004) becomes the basis for understanding the social world.
39 Identity is the foundation of ethnic politics for designing strategies and tactics (Hale, 2008).
40 Identity stability has never been obtained, is dynamic according to social situations (Royce,
41 1982), and undergoes construction in line with expectations. The construction and
42 consolidation of identities is a hidden agenda to ensure smooth political steps.
43

44 Second, identity is considered to represent a particular characteristic and differentiate it
45 from others. The conceptions of *Melayu Pulau*, *Orang Selat*, *Orang Nias*, and *Orang Toba*
46 are an affirmation of social boundaries. The beginning of the spread of Islam in Babel and
47 Kepri refers to early civilization, the reconstruction of today's social identity. Protap and
48 Nias, Christianity has become sociocultural boundaries. Particular characteristics are not
49 given as mentioned by Geertz (1963), or ascriptive as stated by Naroll (1964), but tend to be
50 constructive as mentioned by Barth (1969) and Hale (2008). As a foundation, a particular
51 characteristic needs a core, cultural-based as the basis for social differentiation. In Babel and
52 Kepri, Malay originality and the beginnings of Islamic civilization started from the islands
53 and spread to the mainland. In Nias, the determinants are emphasized on religious isolation
54 and homogeneity, while in Protap it refers to history and religious homogeneity.
55 Administrative involution is the ability of actors to play with identities as the basis for ethnic
56 politics or as the main political category, as a basis for their political expectations.
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Third, identity contains awareness, loyalty, and collective attachment to each member. Administrative involution has absolutely nothing to do with the stability of identity. Administrative involution, rather than identity, is made more possible by juridical reasons, as noted in the proposed formation of the four provinces. The role of identity is content; social reference and source of motivation, social radar understands the world. The social world refers to a new province. Through content, it is easier for actors to gain grassroots acceptance. Identity is a determinant of involution, but the biggest motivation is the formation of a new political arena. Grassroots tend to be mocked, actors arouse emotions, foster a sense of belonging for political purposes. Administrative involution is an actor's game by utilizing awareness and loyalty to create collective awareness.

Fourth, political actors consolidate their identities into interest groups to form new provinces. The cleavage of provinces is closely related to the wishes of political actors in the regions. Identity consolidation is considered a solution to political impasse and power-sharing. If power-sharing is deadlocked, separation becomes an alternative. Separation is carried out by cleaving the province. However, the plan must be recognized by the grassroots. Consolidation creates an intersection between situations of ethnicity and development disparities. The consolidation as described above is a political movement, a way out to overcome political stagnation (von Beyme, 1995). Identity is an ethnic representation, packaged as an interest group (Royce, 1982), to increase political expectations.

Fifth, the goal of cleavage and formation of provinces is to expand the political arena, access to economic resources, and power. In the social reality in Babel and Kepri, after the formation of the province, the initiators plunged themselves into legislative and executive candidacy, at a provincial, regency, and city levels alike. However, not all candidates were elected. In the first 5 years, 127 initiators of Babel became members of the legislature. Furthermore, 5 of them were elected to be legislative in Jakarta. In Kepri, 82 initiators were elected to become legislatures in regencies, cities, and provinces and 4 were elected as legislatures in Jakarta. Political expectations in Babel and Kepri can achieve their political dreams. In the Kepri, for example, the general chairman of the formation of the province was elected to be the regent of Bintan for 2 periods, and in 2020 he is planning to run for governor of Kepri.

In Nias and Protap, although still pending, the initiators ran for legislative positions in their respective regions, North Sumatra as well as Jakarta. The initiators vent their political ambitions to become legislative, executive, or control economic resources. After the formation of 4 regencies, 37 initiators were elected as legislatures in their regions, 4 became the legislative in North Sumatra, and 2 became the legislative in Jakarta. Furthermore, the initiators form institutions, foundations, or companies to obtain funds or work on regional projects. Regional projects are access to economic resources that are being watched closely by the initiators.

Sixth, administrative involution is a game for political actors. Identity exclusion was consolidated into a political tool like in Babel and Protap. Identity stability was manipulated into a political tool such as in the Kepri and Nias. Both exclusion and stability require an identity wrapped in marginalization, subordination, poverty, and underdevelopment. The main reason behind this statement is the ease of organizing grassroots according to the wishes of the actors. 4 study locations showing the dialectic of identity, a tug of war, affirming and rejecting other communities. Identity is not static and steady, but dynamic according to the social situation. It tends to be fluid and manipulative, containing opportunities, expectations, and advantages.

The use of identity in the formation of 4 provinces is an actor's game. The actors understand the social situation and use it as a political tool. Politicians speak on behalf of ethnicity, religion, and development; package identity insubordination and poverty, to

convince grassroots. Strengthening identity is not a final goal, but an attempt to break the political deadlock. Administrative involution, based on the explanation of the 6 assumptions above, shows the ability of actors to consolidate identities. Consolidation with an intersection pattern, the interconnection of 2 main aspects; the situation of ethnicity and development inequality. Both aspects boil down to identity as energy to complete political ambitions. Figure 2 shows the interrelation of the consolidation of the two aspects in the framework of the formation of 4 new provinces in Sumatra.

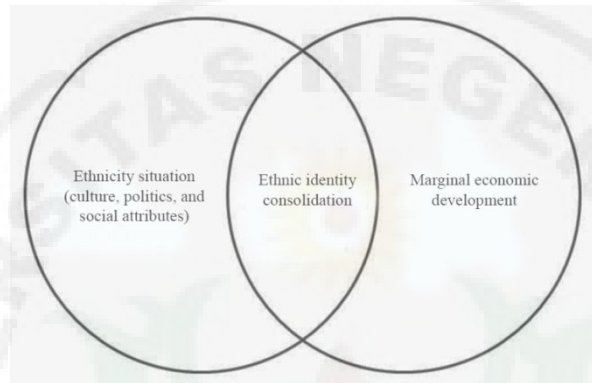


Fig.2. Identity inspection in the formation of 4 provinces in Sumatra

Figure 2 above shows the administrative involution mechanism in the case of cleavage and the formation of an autonomous province in Sumatra. The consolidation of identity includes situations of ethnicity linked to development gaps. Consolidation departs from the exploration of significance; symptoms or political realities, social and cultural, and development disparities. Based on the situation of ethnicity, a new identity was created, referring to historical, cultural, social, and political backgrounds. The integration of a new identity is immersed as a social boundary to gain equality. Actors realize that grassroots support can only be obtained by consolidating identities.

Not only in the 4 provinces in these articles but other causes of the formation of autonomous regions in Indonesia, also exhibit the same phenomenon. Identity consolidation, in the concept of administrative involution, is an actor's game to open up new political arenas. On the one hand, identity consolidation is meant to polarize grassroots while on the other hand, it opens up political opportunities. In the West Sulawesi Province, for example, the actors consolidated Mandar's identity to reduce Bugis domination (Kambo, et al, 2009; Kambo, 2009). Gorontalo in Central Celebes is polarizing identity based on religion; Christianity and Moslem (Marzuki, 2018; Hercahyani, 2008). Pakpak Bharat Regency in North Sumatra is a polarization of Pakpak from the dominance of Toba (Damanik, 2016); Batubara Regency is a separation of Toba and Malay, even though both are Moslem (Khairudin, 2013); The regencies of North Labuhanbatu and South Labuhanbatu are separated between Malays, Toba, and Mandailing, although they are Moslem (Damanik, 2018); Padanglawas Utara and Padanglawas regencies are the results of separation between Angkola from Mandailing domination (Damanik, 2018); Mentawai regency was formed to reduce the domination of Minangkabau (Eindhoven, 2007); West Sumba regency (Vel, 2007), West Kalimantan (Kristianus, 2016; Tanasaldy, 2007; Maunati, 2004), East Lombok (Kumbara, 2008), Riau (Faucer, 2007), Sambas and Buton (Percik, 2007), the same phenomenon.

In Indonesia, 215 autonomous regions were formed during 2 decades of reform, consisting of; 7 provinces, 173 regencies, and 35 cities. As mentioned in the introduction above, new autonomous regions will continue to increase in line with the lifting of the moratorium. One

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3 thing is certain, according to the findings of this study', the consolidation of identities is a
4 determinant of the formation of autonomous regions. Furthermore, the trend of forming
5 autonomous regions is the birth of little kings, budget piracy, corruption, collusion, and
6 nepotism. In the two decades of reform (1999-2019), 109 executives (regents, mayors, and
7 governors) were arrested by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Besides, 238
8 legislative and government officials were arrested by the KPK. Autonomous regions become
9 political arenas to steal state property, enrich themselves, expand political dynasties,
10 including executive elections with a single candidate (Damanik, 2020a). Identity polarization
11 and sentiment are used to divide groups, based on cultural and natural fortifications
12 (Damanik, 2019a), and to strengthen intolerant attitudes (Damanik, 2020b).

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14
15 Administrative involution, rather than grassroots, actors receiving political, economic, and
16 social advantages. Political advantages include; (1) becoming an executive or legislative; (2)
17 taking charge of political parties; Regional Leadership Council (DPD) or Branch Leadership
18 Council (DPC); (3) an official in the regional bureaucracy; (4) a government partner working
19 on the project; (5) optimizing the functions of political parties in formulating policies; and (6)
20 strengthening democratization in the regions. Furthermore, the economic advantages are the
21 allocation of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), which includes; (1)
22 personnel expenditure, (2) official expenditure, and (3) development expenditure. Political
23 actors; legislative and executive, play a major role in the absorption of the budget.
24 Oftentimes, state funds are stolen through a mark-up mechanism, or tips collection. Besides,
25 social assistance to grassroots, social grants to places of worship, and social institutions are
26 all managed by actors. In Indonesia, it is not a secret that the distribution of aid or grants is
27 carried out by collecting tips or cutting aid. Social advantage, actor popularity correlated with
28 electability in the general election.

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31 On the contrary, for grassroots, administrative involution had no significant impact.
32 Although grassroots understand the urgency of forming an autonomous region, they usually
33 do not have political, economic, and social implications. Identity is only represented in
34 government office architecture, employee attire, street names, and building colors. Also, the
35 reality in Papua, Aceh, Bali, and West Sumatra, for example, highlights religious attributes in
36 the form of mosques and churches, or the formulation of religion-based regional regulations
37 (Anggriani, 2011; Kurniati, 2018; Hutabarat, 2015; Sarjana, 2018). Another reality is that the
38 organization of identity has become the main political basis for executive and legislative
39 elections (Daulay et al. 2019; Kristianus, 2016; Lestari, 2019; Nasrudin and Nurdin, 2018).
40 Two decades of reform and 215 new autonomous regions later, there appears to be a lack of
41 acceleration before a new region is cleaved out of their parent. Several autonomous regions
42 are demanding to be reunited with parent regions because the development gap and poverty
43 are widening.

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46 The movement of identity or ethnic politics (Hale, 2008), based on this study, intends to
47 (1) build a big narrative, differentiating against other groups; (2) creation of a specific
48 identity, and (3) solutions for power-sharing. The identity movement is the consolidation of
49 identity as a significant predictor of self-esteem, as well as the main political category
50 demanding an autonomous province. This study, based on the description above, confirms the
51 6 assumptions put forward previously. Administrative involution, thus dividing the provinces,
52 is a power-sharing mechanism but does not show linear progress. Administrative involution,
53 the dwarfing and create 4 provinces, is a consolidation and confirmation of new boundaries
54 for identity. The provincial formation is an actor's game expanding the political arena.
55 Identity consolidation is a grassroots organizing strategy and tactic, immersed in the actor's
56 game. Cleavage and formation of provinces, the general phenomenon of reform is a strategy
57 to expand the political arena. Armed with identity exclusion, grassroots are mobilized and
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3 then actors filed a lawsuit against the province. In the new province, actors build greater
4 political opportunities to access power and economy.
5

6 7 **Conclusion**

8 Administrative involution only divides the province, a power-sharing mechanism but does
9 not show linear progress. Mainstreaming identity is intended to be a strategy and tactic to
10 touch grassroots. Consolidation links situations of ethnicity with economic inequality,
11 respectively through the exploration of significance, creation of new boundaries, immersions
12 in social identity, equality, and continuous experimentation according to ethnic situations.
13 Consolidation of identity, for actors, is prioritized on political interests, the way out demands
14 power-sharing. This study concludes that administrative involution, the formation of an
15 autonomous province is an actor's game to expand the arena and affirm political interest. It is
16 administrative involution, rather than grassroots, that provides more advantages to actors;
17 creating opportunities and strengthening political careers, as well as ease of access to
18 economic resources and power. This study, theoretically, contributes to the recognition of the
19 constructive identity paradigm and practically becomes a political tool. On the one hand,
20 organizing identity, the basis of ethnic politics and major political categories, the potential
21 means of demanding power-sharing, but on the other hand, the opportunity to create identity
22 sentiments has implications for polarization, discrimination, and intolerant attitudes. The
23 study recommends the urgency of similar research in other regions, to explore and understand
24 ethnic political trends and tendencies in the nation-state of Indonesia.
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RESPONSES TO EDITOR AND 4 REVIEWERS

Reviewers	Comments	Authors Responses
<p>Editor</p>	<p>Article Editor's Comments to Author:</p> <p>Thank you for submitting an interesting article.</p> <p>The study very useful if it is well structured, stating clearly why it was done, who benefits from the study, and present findings as analyzed thematically. The empirical analysis should be linked and analyzed based on theoretically used. Very limited discussion about the role of political actors as highlighted in the topic.</p> <p>I recommended,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rearrange literature review part. 2) Rearrange introduction - too long. 3) Make it clear what prompted the study (problem statement/compelling case) or the objective of the study. 4) Clearly discuss study's 'assumption' which stated in the article. 5) The main findings - need detail discussion why the article jumps to that conclusion - its same finding in all four study areas? and analysed based on theoretically used. 	<p>Thank you for appreciating and responding positively to this article. In accordance with the email received, I have made thorough improvements according to the responses of reviewers and editors:</p> <p>(1) the article has been rearranged and well structured, explaining urgency and significance, who benefits, and analysis of the thematic findings, (2) the introduction has been reviewed and shortened to contain the motivation to study it, and how actors and figures do it as Indonesians understand it, (3) The literature review section before the methods section has been provided in this corrective article, outlining the state of the arts for comparing studies and other findings, (4) The methods section has clarified ethical considerations and reliability issues, (5) a brief profile of four sites has been identified. shifted to introduction and shortened, (6) the analysis has been updated by dividing them by 2 thematic; consolidating the identity and playing of actors, (7) The title 'result' has been changed to 'finding', (8) compared to grassroots, actors benefit more from administrative involution, and (9) the conclusion has been re-examined that administrative involution is an attempt by actors and figures to divide province to expand the political arena. Administrative revolution, thus, is a game of actors and figures, a power-sharing mechanism by dividing and forming</p>

		<p>new provinces.</p> <p>I hope that the revision can be a consideration for the follow-up to the publication of this article</p>
1	<p>The study could be useful if it is well structured, stating clearly why it was done, who benefits from the study, and present findings as analyzed thematically. A literature review is critical for this particular study like many other studies. Perhaps a background to the study could help. There is a need for clarity on the administrative involution and devolution of powers, advantages, and disadvantages so that contestations against separation from grassroots are clarified.</p>	<p>This study is based on social realities, administrative involution, dwarfing the main territory through cleavage and formation of new territories. The formation of new regions, on the one hand is a common phenomenon in Indonesia because it is permitted by law. However, on the other hand, administrative involution, the focus of this study shows the determination of the role of political actors and community figures in the formation of new regions. Administrative involution, in this study, tends to focus on the cleavage and creation of new regions through the affirmation of the boundaries of ethnic identities: clans, dialects, historical origins, and other cultural attributes. Identity, although it does not provide a marked difference for the whole society at 4 regions is the main tool for political actors. Administrative involution, for political actors is intended to create political opportunities in new areas. For the community, actors are seen as representations for the development of their identity. Public understanding only focuses on the views played by the actors. Administrative involution, thus seen as a devolution of power through the formation of new areas of power through limiting and affirming the attributes of difference.</p>
2	<p>This is an interesting paper. The author tried to analyze how the however, there are some points which the author should consider for improvement. First, in the discussion part, the author suggested that the administrative involution can be explained by power-sharing</p>	<p>Administrative involution in this study is the dwarfing of power from the parent region through cleavage and formation of new regions.</p>

	<p>framework. But the author did not review this theory in the review section. The author could have integrated the power-sharing framework in the analysis. Second, the conclusion is quite weak. The author should have elaborated more. For instance, the author could have elaborated more on how administrative involution affects democratization in Indonesia.</p>	<p>The main focus of the study is placed on the role of political actors and society to organize, form opinions and mobilize grassroots. On the one hand, administrative involution is seen as power-sharing, but tends to be done through the use of an identity basis. In my opinion (the writer), the role of actors and society, how actors and community figures do it, is an interesting thing to study. This study, as a whole in Indonesia, is expected to become a consideration for the formation of new regions because the motive is not at all for accelerating development and welfare, but rather for political interests. Conclusions that are considered weak, I will correct them.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>The assumption of this article: (i) represent characteristics and differentiate with others, (ii) references for understanding the social world, (iii) contain collective awareness, loyalty, and attachment to each member, (iii) interest groups to maintain cultural attributes, and (v) the potential to mobilize members.</p> <p>1) Article assumption - not clearly discuss in finding or discussion.</p> <p>2) The main findings - need detail discussion why the article jumps to that conclusion - its same finding in all four study areas?</p> <p>3) Very limited discussion about the role of political actors as highlighted in the topic.</p>	<p>The three suggestions for improvement will be improved according to the assumptions made in this study. However, for the record, administrative involution is a phenomenon in Indonesia in the last 2 decades, or during reform (1999-2020). Administrative involution is a strategy for actors to open up political opportunities. They (actors), in general, are officials of political parties in the regions, civil servants, figures who failed to become members of the Regional People's Representative Assembly (DPRD), and others, who do not have access to politics or positions in the regional bureaucracy.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Comments to the Author Review of the paper entitled: Identity-Based Administrative Involution in Indonesia: How Political Actors and Ethnic Groups Do It?</p> <p>This paper aims at understanding administrative involution in Indonesia. The study compares four provinces. The authors point out that they use a cultural approach to explain differences in the phenomenon they study. The research is based on interviews and reports.</p>	<p>Actually, administrative involution, in this study is not an administrative reform in the bureaucratic system during decentralization. Administrative involution, in this study is a conception to describe and explain the dwarfism of the main territory through cleavage and formation of new territories.</p>

	<p>This is an interesting paper, which needs however, very major revisions to be publishable. I suggest to revise the piece according to the following points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main problem of the paper is that the authors do not explain what they mean by administrative involution. I assume that the concept is related to some form of administrative reform that follows on decentralization? The authors need to clarify the concept upfront, explain how they measure it, and link it to the literatures on administrative reforms, administrative coordination, decentralization, etc. The paper needs to be more firmly rooted in existing research on administrative reforms. - The paper holds that, "This research departs from the constructive paradigm." I am not sure what the authors mean with this and whether they refer to the constructivist paradigm. I am not sure that I understand how identity is linked with the explanatory factors in the analysis, notably administrative involution. - The empirical analysis should be linked better to theory. I find the accounts of the different provinces very rich and the discussion of the relevant factors very interesting. Unfortunately, from my reading, the discussion does not focus on analyzing the research question, notably administrative involution, and does not contribute to understanding how variance in the cultural dimension adds to explaining anything. Perhaps the problem is that there is no specific enough research question. - The paper needs to be checked for spelling and grammar. 	<p>Administrative involution, in this study is the dwarfing of the main power through separation and formation of new territories. This formation mechanism is focused on the constructive paradigm that ethnicity is not static but dynamic and manipulative as explained by Henry E. Hale (2004; 2008).</p> <p>The people at 4 regions are homogeneous (Malays, Bataks and Nias) with special differences in cultural attributes such as dialects. The difference attribute is used by political actors and community figures as a tool to form new power. Administrative involution, thus is the ambition of a small part of society to open wide opportunities for their political interests.</p> <p>In my view, according to social realities at 4 regions, ethnicity, especially identity is not permanent but is fluid and manipulative. Political actors and public figures take advantage of this melting identity to build political opportunities. Finally, in the first and second periods, after the formation of new regions, almost all political actors became members of the DPRD, or bureaucrats in their respective regions. Social conflicts spread during the elections for regional heads and members of the DPRD.</p> <p>Spelling and grammar will be improved</p>
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