Future Teachers as Peacebuilders in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Photo Credit: UNICEF Indonesia, 2014
http://unicefindonesia.blogspot.nl/2014/12/the-emergency-volunteers-who-stayed-to.html

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Student: Faryaal Zaman
Student Number: 11181567
Supervisor: Dr M.T.A Lopes Cardozo
Second Reader: Ms. E. J. T. Maber
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Abstract

Having experienced more than ten years of peace after the end of a bloody civil war lasting 30 years, the province of Aceh, Indonesia is often celebrated as a rare case of successful conflict resolution. The aim of this study is to provide insight into the understudied education systems of Aceh and how educational actors are situated in its post-conflict setting. More specifically, this study explores the extent to which Acehnese teacher education systems facilitate practicability of sustainable peacebuilding amongst future teachers in the context of an observed ‘fragile’ peace. Located in Aceh’s uniquely Islamic, post-conflict and post-tsunami context, findings from this study were determined using a qualitative data collection process in which the majority of respondents were pre-service teachers enrolled in Education programs in Banda Aceh. Applying a multi-scalar combination of theoretical frameworks, the research analyses how the agency of future teachers in being able to practice sustainable peacebuilding relates to a wide range of contextual, structural constraints, including curricula, teacher trainers, and socio-cultural, political and economic factors; it also reveals the limited extent to which elements of sustainable peacebuilding, namely redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation, are present within Acehnese teacher training systems.

Keywords: teacher education, agency, peacebuilding, Islam, gender
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Glossary and Abbreviations

4 Rs – Theoretical Framework for Sustainable Peacebuilding
*Bahasa Indonesia* – National Indonesia language
CCPEE – Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education
CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis
Dayah – type of Islamic boarding school
*Din Minimi* – Acehnese criminal group formed by ex-GAM combatants
GAM – *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or Free Aceh Movement*
HRE – Human Rights Education
*Ibuism* – Indonesian ideological construction of womanhood
ICAIOS – International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies
LoGA – Law on Governing Aceh
LCC – Local Content Curriculum (a 1994 national law to include local content in education)
*Madrasah* – Islamic day school
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding (Acehnese peace agreement signed in 2005)
Pancasila – Unifying Indonesian state ideology
Pesantren - type of Islamic boarding school
PPL - *Program Pengalaman Lapangan* or Field Experience Program for trainee teachers
*Qanun* – Acehnese regional bylaw
*Sekolah* – Day school
Shari’a Law – Islamic law
SRA – Strategic Relational Approach
*Ulama* – body of Islamic scholars with religious authority
Wahabi – orthodox branch of Sunni Islam
*Zakat* – charitable donations required by Islam
Photograph 1: A final-year education student on their practical field placement (PPL), taken in a school in Aceh Besar. Credit: Farah Hanum
"I want to change the views of society, that is the role of a teacher. But if I depend too much on the lecturers or faculty, I won’t have a big effect. If I want to do this, I have to do myself."

The above reflection came from a young man studying to become a Civic Education teacher in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. An autonomous region occupying the northernmost tip of Sumatra island in Indonesia, Aceh has been the site of significant civil conflict and disaster in recent years. With the most recent civil war ending in 2005, the post-conflict period has been characterised by a normalising of relationships between previously conflicting groups, the reintegration of ex-combatants into society, and progress in human development indicators (UNDP, 2010). However, over ten years on from the end of the conflict, this current state of ‘peace’ is arguably fragile due to a continued lack of governmental interest in addressing past injustices (Amnesty International, 2015), and occasional outbreaks of violence (BBC, 2015). In light of this, various perceptions about how to achieve a truly peaceful society can arise amongst the younger generations tasked with sustaining it in the future, as reflected by the student’s thoughts above.

Conflict in Aceh has stemmed from the fact that Aceh has historically been more devoutly and uniquely Islamic than the rest of Indonesia (Milallos, 2007). In defence of their strong Islamic identity, Aceh has had a longstanding resistance to the presence of external authority, first against Dutch colonial powers and then against a Javanese-centred Indonesian state (Burke, 2008). The most recent example of hostility between the Acehnese and the state came in the form of a violent civil conflict that lasted nearly 30 years, between Indonesian national forces and GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdaka or Free Aceh Movement). Further disaster struck on the 26th December 2004 in the form of a huge earthquake in the Indian Ocean off the Western coast of Sumatra, causing a huge tsunami that resulted in the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in Aceh. With the tsunami being acknowledged as a catalyst to encourage peace talks (Burke, 2008; Gaillard et al., 2008) the civil conflict formally ended in 2005 through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Helsinki. Despite this, the war was largely ignored by international actors on the ground in post-tsunami Aceh – aid was heavily concentrated on reconstruction work rather than conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding initiatives, with any examples of the latter being completely phased out by 2011 (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). In the absence of any lasting peace initiatives, there is a lack of recent information about the current state of ‘peace’ in the province, and how it continues to persist.

The Acehnese education system has also been shaped by the civil war and the devout Islamic identity associated with the province. During the 30-year conflict, schools were burned down and many teachers killed, having long-lasting traumatic effects on students, teachers and other educational stakeholders (Srimulyani, 2013). Since Aceh was granted special autonomy after the conflict, it was able to implement a local curriculum that focused on learning Islamic teachings (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). With this in mind, there is limited insight into the structure of the Acehnese education system, despite it being well-established for centuries (Srimulyani, 2013). Furthermore, education structures are argued
to be able to significantly contribute to building peace and social cohesion in post-conflict contexts (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). Considering that it is teachers who specifically hold the power to promote peace and societal change within these structures (Lopes Cardozo, 2011; Kirk, 2004; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006), there is a knowledge gap in understanding how the Acehnese teacher education system trains future teachers in the context of a seemingly fragile, sustained peace.

**Research Purpose, Relevance and Motivation**

There has been a rise in political Islam in recent decades globally, increasing the prominence of some extremist religious concepts such as militant and jihadic Islam, which have become embedded in some global discourses about conflicts (Othman, 2006; Milallos, 2007). Despite its Islamic conservatism, the current state of peace in Aceh is celebrated as a rare case of successfully implementing humanitarian, development and security aid in a post-conflict environment (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014), even though it is clear that the full implications of the civil war have still not been addressed. Aceh is further worthy of study because of its “perceived break” (ibid: 5) from cultural and political conflicts in the past, in an effort to remake itself after a violent and tragic history. There are also relatively few studies available on Indonesia and the internal conflicts it has experienced, even though it is home to the largest Muslim population in the world. Therefore, this research hopes to make a small contribution towards understanding the circumstantial nuances and logistics which shape notions of peacebuilding in Islamic, post-conflict contexts.

Teachers can be seen as strategic political actors that directly contribute to and influence the perceptions of future generations about different groups of people (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). Thus, future teachers can be seen as crucial components within the notion of sustainable peacebuilding education because of their potential to become critical agents of transformation in post-conflict settings (Vongalis-Macrow, 2006). Little research has been undertaken previously in Aceh province due to the lack of international presence before the conflict, with Acehnese education systems being especially understudied (Schultz, 2008; Srimulyani, 2013). There is virtually no literature on how Acehnese pre-service teachers are formally trained to deliver an education that is complimentary to the sustained state of peace, in the context of post-conflict and post-disaster recovery, as well as strong Islamic conservatism. Therefore, this research also aims to build on wider debates about the societal and political roles of teacher education in post-conflict contexts.

Furthermore, the discussion of gender roles in Islamic contexts typically associates women with negative connotations of oppression (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Gender roles in Aceh do not fully fit this pattern, as women are often subject to the constraints of a patriarchal society, yet are also awarded matrifocal status, having prominent roles within the home and schools. However, general studies of education in the Islamic world have not focused on the existence of women within these structures (Srimulyani, 2012). During the civil conflict, Acehnese women had a wide variety of experiences; many endured various
forms of gendered suffering such as rape, while others actively fought as part of the rebel army (Lee-Koo, 2012). Despite the significance of their experiences and contributions, they were largely excluded from the peace process (ibid.). Following this, there is little understanding of how female students and teachers currently operate within Acehnese education systems, the construction of gender roles and identities in these systems, and how such notions might relate to sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict Aceh.

**Research Questions**

My main research question was formulated as follows:

*To what extent can Acehnese teacher training facilitate practicability of sustainable peacebuilding amongst future teachers?*

By teacher training institutes, this research refers to the formal pre-service education system for Acehnese future teachers. In responding to the main research question, I divided it into four corresponding sub-questions as specified below:

*To what extent are aspects of sustainable peacebuilding education incorporated into Acehnese teacher training curricula?*

*How do Acehnese teacher trainers’ perceptions about the conflict, present state of peace and their role in educating future teachers affect teacher education in practice?*

*How do Acehnese future teachers perceive their training, the previous conflict and present state of peace? How does this influence their outlook on the teaching profession and sustainable peacebuilding?*

*How are gendered roles established through teacher training, and how does this affect notions of sustainable peacebuilding in teacher education?*

Following the formation of these sub-questions, this thesis proceeds by offering a description of the research location and an overview of key contextual features associated with it – namely the recent conflict, tsunami, peace, education and gender. The next chapter presents the theoretical lenses employed to frame this research, followed by the details of research methodology used. Findings Chapters 1, 2 and 3 subsequently present the outcomes of the data analysis used to answer the four sub-questions. Lastly, this thesis will relate back to the main research question in the final discussion chapter by reflecting on the key findings.
Description of Research Location

This research was carried out in the Republic of Indonesia, an archipelagic island nation in Southeast Asia lying between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As of 2014, the population was measured at 254 million people with a GDP per capita of $3,360, classifying it as a lower middle income country (World Bank, 2016). Though Bahasa Indonesia is the official language, in reality there are thousands of ethnic groups speaking hundreds of languages and dialects (Drakeley, 2005). Historically, Indonesia’s inhabitants have been divided across a wide array of territories, including kingdoms in neighbouring countries such as Malaysia; this has meant that Indonesia’s biggest challenge since independence in 1945 has been constructing a unified national identity (ibid.). Islam is the majority faith with around 88% of the population following the religion (Pew Research Centre, 2011).

More specifically, the research was undertaken in Banda Aceh, the capital of the semi-autonomous Aceh Province which occupies the northernmost tip of Sumatra Island. In addition to Bahasa Indonesia, many of the residents speak the local language known as Acehnese. Historically, as the westernmost point in the nation Aceh was a first point of contact for Arab and Indian traders with Indonesia, and the first significant conversions to the Islamic faith in the country took place here (Aspinall, 2007) – it is known as the “Veranda of Mecca” or Serambi Mekkah because of this, and also due to it historically being the main departure point for those leaving for pilgrimage (Lingga, 2007). The Islamic faith is central to the identity of Acehnese people (around four million in total), with estimates of Muslims making up between 90 and 99% of residents in the province (Jauhola, 2013), and a widespread belief that “being Acehnese is inseparable from being Muslim” (Aspinall, 2007: 247). This strong religious identity is further evident in the fact that Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that has implemented partial Shari’a Law (Vaswani, 2009).

Map Source: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/indonesia605/autonomy.html#map
Research Context

Given that the nature of this research requires going into further details about the Acehnese context, this section will build on the information outlined previously to give more in-depth overviews of different aspects of Acehnese culture, history and society.

The Conflict

Aceh province has a long history of conflict and Islamic militancy, going as far back as the late 19th century when there was a revolt against the increased colonial expansion of the Dutch, led by the ulama (religious scholars) (Aspinall, 2007). Similarly, during the 1950s, after Indonesia declared independence, the Acehnese revolted against the government due to a broken promise of granting autonomy to the region. In 1971, the discovery of natural gas reserves in Aceh led to the arrival of foreign companies such as Mobil in the province. Profits from this discovery and other resources present in Aceh (including timber and minerals) were siphoned away from the local area to benefit the foreign corporations as well as elite officials in Jakarta; only 5% of such profits remained in Aceh (WorldWatch Institute, 2013). Grievances were further magnified during this time due to the “perceived Javanisation of national culture” (Barron and Burke, 2008: 5) by Suharto’s ‘New Order’ regime. Tensions culminated in the creation of GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or the Free Aceh Movement) in 1976 by Hasan di Tiro, who founded the movement in response to the various ongoing injustices within Aceh province. Later that year, a small uprising from GAM was quickly crushed by the Indonesian military, sparking a civil war that was to last for three decades (WorldWatch Institute, 2013). During this period, the conflict was characterised by mass killings of civilians, mass arrests of GAM members, the assassination of several human rights advocates, as well as many demonstrations and insurgency campaigns against the national government (ibid.).

Though various peace agreements were attempted throughout the 1990s and early 2000s through facilitated talks between the national government and GAM leaders, none of them lasted (Lingga, 2007). After martial law was introduced in 2003, the conflict intensified and Aceh experienced even more human rights abuses such as forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial killings (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The total amount of casualties, including civilians, resulting from the civil war over the full 30-year period is estimated to be close to 30,000 (Aspinall, 2009b), and the majority of perpetrators (whether they were GAM insurgents or government forces) were never brought before an independent Indonesian court of law (Amnesty International, 2013). The civil conflict finally came to an end in 2005, less than a year after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which will be discussed further below.

The Tsunami and the End of the Conflict

On 26th December 2004 Indonesia was struck by a tsunami triggered by a massive 9.2 magnitude earthquake in the Indian Ocean, with its epicentre located around 100 miles off the coast of Northern Sumatra. Aceh was among the hardest-hit regions affected by this
disaster, with an estimated 164,000 people killed in the province and a further 500,000 made homeless or displaced (Burke, 2008).

Previously, the imposition of martial law has been used to restrict international humanitarian organisations and media outlets from having access to the region, effectively closing off Aceh from the international community (Lee-Koo, 2012). This changed in the aftermath of the tsunami – suddenly there was a huge influx of international actors including aid agencies, multilaterals, foreign troops and media agencies. The tsunami and the global attention on Aceh in its aftermath had a significant role in paving the way for a relatively swift peace process; by August 2005 GAM and the Indonesian government had signed an internationally-brokered Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Helsinki, which granted the region semi-autonomous status. By the end of the year Aceh had witnessed the successful demilitarisation of GAM and the withdrawal of the majority of government forces from the province (WorldWatch Institute, 2013).

The Aftermath and Peacebuilding Efforts
With the rush of aid into Aceh after the tsunami there was a boom in building and reconstruction efforts (Aspinall, 2009a), and the MoU was praised as a perceived successful implementation of peacebuilding by international actors in an Islamic region (Burke, 2008). However, in reality Aceh had not been widely known as a conflict-affected area previously amongst the international community, due to a lack of media attention. International support and funding for peacebuilding had instead been generally geared towards more politically significant, vulnerable states such as Iraq and Afghanistan (Burke, 2008). International organisations present in the relief effort were therefore unable to grasp the longstanding animosity between Acehnese citizens and the state, and where awareness of the conflict was present, practical constraints existed in terms of staff not possessing conflict-sensitive expertise, or being preoccupied with meeting more achievable targets in reconstruction (ibid.). As a result of this there was a clear prioritisation of disaster relief over conflict relief and by 2011, the majority of the very few conflict-sensitive initiatives and peacebuilding programs that had been implemented were phased out (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). With the majority of injustices experienced during the conflict seemingly still unaddressed (Amnesty International, 2013), the present state of stability and peace in the region appears somewhat superficial from an outside perspective, further increasing the case for research. Indeed, any sense of peace is undermined by regular flares of violence amid increasing Islamic conservatism in the region – a recent example of this was the burning down of two churches in Aceh (BBC, 2015).

Education
There is an extremely limited amount of written or English translated work about the overall education system in Aceh, because of the restricted access to Westerners during the conflict period (Schultz, 2008). In contemporary conflicts schools often become targets (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000), and this was unfortunately the case in Aceh during the civil war. Estimates suggest that around 4,379 or 66% of schools in Aceh were damaged or destroyed during the
30 years of war (Amnesty International, 2013; Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a). After the 2004 tsunami there was significant investment from foreign donors to rebuild the education system, reconstruct facilities and hire new teachers (Schultz, 2008). As a result of this, along with an Acehnese cultural preference for education at all levels, in recent years the province has outperformed others in terms of school participation rates (UNDP, 2010).

The peace agreement that granted Aceh its semi-autonomy also allowed regional governments to have greater control, including over education, through the Law of Governing of Aceh (LoGA). Although considerable attention has been paid to reconstruction of the schooling system and improving equitable access to education through LoGA, patriarchal ideas about gender roles continue to affect the content of education (Srimulyani, 2012). Pancasila, a unifying state ideology promoting a single national identity through various Islamic values (Baidhawy, 2007) is supposed to be incorporated into Acehnese curriculum, but in reality this is undermined by LoGA and a Local Content Curriculum (LCC) program, which emphasises conservative Islamic teachings and a unique Acehnese identity rather than focusing on national unity (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014).

Laws relating to the national education system of Indonesia dictate that those wishing to pursue teaching must go through a certification process involving completing an Undergraduate degree in a Faculty of Education at university (normally lasting four years), with teacher education consisting of four competencies: pedagogic, personality, social and professional (Chang et al., 2013; Firman and Tola, 2008). In Banda Aceh there are three universities: UIN Ar-Raniry (Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, or State Islamic University of Ar-Raniry), Universitas Syiah Kuala, and Universitas Serambi Mekkah, the last of which is a private university. UIN Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala University are the largest with the most extensive Education Faculties; all participants in this research were from these two institutions. The Faculty of Education in both universities is split into departments by subject, offering different content according to the teaching subject students will specialise in. Syiah Kuala University offers a diverse choice of teaching programs, from Civic Education to Counselling Education, while the Education degree offering at UIN Ar-Raniry is mostly limited to traditional subjects such as English, Maths and the Sciences; the more religious focus of the university is also evident in that it offers Education programs in Arabic and Islamic Studies, which are not available at Syiah Kuala.

Admissions to UIN Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala occur on the basis of performance in nationalised entrance exams, possibly followed by more subject-specific exams dependent on the exact Education program the student wishes to follow. Though curricula naturally differ in content across the various subject degrees, there is a core teaching curriculum in both universities that all students within the Education Faculties must follow. Most of it is determined by national standards for teacher education, and includes compulsory courses such as Teaching Methodology and Civic Education, as well as practical aspects such as mock teaching classes (known as ‘Microteaching’) and a school placement in the final year of study.
There are a number of different school types within which Acehnese trainee teachers will eventually operate. The provincial education system is made up of Sekolah (public day schools that dedicate a few hours weekly to religious education), Madrasah (religious schools which follow the national curriculum), and Dayah or Pesantren (religious boarding schools that do not follow the national curriculum and largely focus on religious education). Many Pesantren are funded by Islamic organisations or nations such as Saudia Arabia which encourage a conservative Wahabi interpretation of the faith, resulting in the schools occasionally being associated with extremism (Shah and Lopez Cardozo, 2014). However, in practice many promote the study of secular studies alongside religious ones, and some have even been documented holding workshops that discuss contemporary Islamic issues such as terrorism and domestic violence (Srimulyani, 2012). Additionally, though any explicit peace education initiatives were limited to a few schools in the province, some instructors have been trained to deliver peace education and incorporate textbooks from such initiatives into teaching (Srimulyani, 2013).

**Gender**

Acehnese society revolves around traditional roles, with the woman’s place usually seen as residing in the home – Kamaruzzaman notes that, in more conservative areas, even if women participate in agricultural work, they are perceived to be simply assisting their husbands (2000). Despite this, Aceh is also a matrifocal society, meaning that women often own the family houses and the land (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). This connects with the state notion of Ibuism, an ideological conception of motherhood that extends beyond the simple maternal duties to include a nation-building aspect (Srimulyani, 2012). However, Acehnese and Indonesian society overall is patriarchal in that women’s roles, appearances and participation in the public sphere is constrained by the role of Islam, Shari’a law and the influence of the ulama (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Education in Aceh has also played a role in establishing unequal gender relations; for example, certain textbooks used in religious Pesantren schools have been documented promoting patriarchal ideas such as permitting husbands to beat their wives (Srimulyani, 2007).

The civil war affected gender roles in numerous ways. Thousands of women were widowed during the conflict, and many became sole providers for households and communities when their husbands were forced to flee (Kamaruzzaman, 2000; Lee-Koo, 2012). A system of gendered violence has also been well documented in terms of rape and other sexual crimes against women (Amnesty International, 2013; Lee-Koo, 2012); such experiences of women during the war have not been fully acknowledged in the post-conflict context due to associated stigmas and shame (Lee-Koo, 2012). Though it was women’s groups that had made some of the first pre-tsunami organised efforts towards promoting peace in Aceh (Kamaruzzaman, 2000), they were excluded from peace-making processes (Lee-Koo, 2012) – for example no women were involved on either side during the Helsinki talks, despite the clear existence of female combatants in GAM. This arguably led to a masculine formation of peace enabled by an “elitist masculine agenda” (ibid.: 101). Silence surrounding women’s
experiences in contributing to the conflict and their peacebuilding initiatives, as well as their exclusion from formal peacebuilding processes has arguably reinforced gender stereotypes of submissiveness and vulnerability, and undermines their post-conflict-agency (ibid.). It also diminishes the opportunity for a robust and lasting peace in the province.

With the contextual background of the research outlined, the next step is to establish the lenses best suited to frame an analysis within this particular context. The following section will therefore explain the theoretical frameworks used in this research.
Photograph 2: Inside the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh, taken after the Tarawih evening prayers during Ramadan
This research was conducted from a critical realist perspective, an ontology that contends that inquiries into social phenomena cannot be judged solely by our experiences of them (Robertson and Dale, 2015). In reality, background contexts and even seemingly abstract concepts must also be examined in order to gain deeper understandings of research contexts; critical realism holds to the existence of underlying structures and mechanisms that can affect the experiences we study in a variety of ways (Rees and Gatenby, 2014). Based on this ontological framework, this research was interpreted through a Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education analysis (Robertson and Dale, 2015) and the Strategic Relational Approach (Jessop 2005; Hay 2002), mirroring Lopes Cardozo and Shah’s (2014, 2016a) combination of the two approaches. The advantage in combining the two approaches is that it enables a multi-scalar understanding of the complex relationships between education and social, cultural, political and economic structures, institutions and actors in conflict-affected or post-conflict contexts (ibid.), helping to expose clashes between agendas and power relations in the arenas of development, education and peacebuilding. The notion of sustainable peacebuilding education is examined through the 4 R’s analytical framework (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith, 2015), to assess how Aceh’s specific post-conflict and post-disaster context affects factors of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation within the teacher education system. Finally, the above frameworks are viewed alongside a theoretical lens of matrifocality, in order to critically examine constructions of gender roles within the interlinked spheres of education, future teacher agency and sustainable peacebuilding.

**Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE)**

The use of a CCPEE lens in this research is complementary to the critical realist perspective in that it presents education in the form of an ensemble that is closely interlinked with a complex array of actors, institutions and local contexts that determine its current role and functioning in post-conflict situations (Robertson and Dale, 2015). Drawing further on the interpretation of Lopes Cardozo and Shah (2016a), as a conceptual framework, CCPEE can provide a useful tool to investigate how education manifests itself through cultural, economic and political processes and factors in post-conflict settings to work towards transformative goals (ibid.). The CCPEE approach is advantageous in that it facilitates moving away from state-centric conceptions of education and peacebuilding to also include the influence of social and cultural practices, along with political and economic structures (ibid.). Given that there are various strata within an education ensemble, some may be unobservable but they may still have strong effects on current experiences and observations (Robertson and Dale, 2015). In Indonesia, a teacher-centric approach to classroom teaching is deeply embedded in education structures, resulting from years of institutionalised policies, decentralisation (Zulfikar, 2010) and an ingrained culture of obedience (Bjork, 2005). Furthermore, within Aceh especially, the effect on education from its strong Islamic identity cannot be separated from past historical, economic and cultural events – such as the recent conflict - that continue to influence all aspects of life (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a).
In post-conflict contexts such as Aceh, the role, status, and perceptions of education systems can be subject to change and disruption (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a). Changing beliefs and values placed upon education are central in determining its potential for building peace. CCPEE analysis can supply a comprehensive framework for critically understanding how these might change over time, and is able to situate these new concepts into the current context. This theoretical lens therefore allows for analysis into how the effects of the overlapping Acehnese cultural, political and economic realms creates contextualised education and notions of peacebuilding, in particular revealing how:

“1) the relationship between education and peacebuilding is articulated discursively and materially through social relations, experiences, and practices (the cultural);

(2) the ways in which education and peacebuilding fit into relations of production, distribution and exchange in society (the economic); and

(3) the fashion in which an agenda promoting education’s links to peacebuilding has been determined and subsequently governed (the political).” (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a: 529)

Positioning the Acehnese teacher training system within the spheres of local culture, economics and politics helps to locate it within the overarching post-conflict context, in turn determining how notions of sustainable peacebuilding can or cannot be potentially formed within these connected realms (see Figure 1).

**Strategic Relational Approach (SRA) and Future Teacher Agency**

Linking with critical realism and CCPEE, the SRA analysis enables a multi-layered understanding of structures and agents within certain contexts. Though there is separation between them, actions and structures are examined in relation to each other, therefore, through analysis, structures become strategically selective in their form, while actions performed by agents can be perceived as structured as well as structuring (Jessop, 2001). During particular spatio-temporal periods, the presence of stable structures can naturally encourage certain activities, behaviours and strategies of actors, as well as discourage other practices (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a). However, in the constantly changing environment of post-conflict settings, actions and strategies must adapt to structures that do not remain static (ibid.). When structures are not fixed, they are more easily affected by the actions taken by actors within them – this means that the agency of those actors can become responsible for the overall outcomes seen in observation (Hay, 2002).

SRA can be used in an educational context to understand teacher agency, or for this research specifically, the agency of future teachers. Within the SRA framework, actions and manoeuvrability are always underlined by actors’ reflections on the limits and structures of
their local environment; the interaction of social, economic and political spheres can present actors with an uneven distribution of room for manoeuvre (Hay, 2002). In the Indonesian education system, reforms in the form of Teaching Laws provide a comprehensive overview of teacher standards, competencies, development and the role of educational governing bodies (Chang et al., 2013) – trainee teachers and lecturers must operate within these structures. In the context of this research, the curricula and teacher trainers associated with Acehnese teacher education form part of the strategically selective context, while trainee teachers are strategic actors who exercise agency in relation to practicing sustainable peacebuilding (see Figure 1).

It is also important to note that teacher training institutes themselves are located in the strategically selective context of local communities (Lopes Cardozo, 2011), and teacher trainers are themselves actors with agency. While the strategic actions of actors can have a transformative effect on their strategic contexts (Hay, 2002) the fact that in this research case, teacher trainers in the structure are agents who can influence the context themselves, implies that the agency of future teachers is also dependent on the agency of their trainers. In practice, SRA should highlight the interplay between all of these variables; Acehnese future teachers constantly navigate between the boundaries of their educational curriculums and lecturers, and other contextual factors associated with the Islamic, post-conflict, post-disaster environment, to deliver an education system that is conducive to the present state of peace in the region. Therefore, future teacher agency to practice sustainable peacebuilding can be understood in relation to their potential capacities to influence this post-conflict context (Sayed and Novelli, 2016).

Teachers are seen by Giroux (2003) as transformative intellectuals with the potential to deliver new ways of teaching, and this is also relevant to future teachers currently undergoing their training. The idea of transformative intellectuals refers to those who are able to educate their students about good citizenship through their own reflection and intellectual experiences and practices (Giroux, 2003). Rather than being simple agents of implementation, they must have the ability to raise questions about what is being taught; future teachers as transformative intellectuals and possible agents of peace must have some agency outside of the scope of their training context in order to carry such ideas into their future careers. This becomes very difficult if future teachers are not able to critically engage with the boundaries of their own education (Giroux, 2003), which reiterates the significance of their interactions with, and the role of, their trainers. Additionally, the capacity for Acehnese future teachers to engage with their educational boundaries is unclear given Indonesian nationalist agendas present in education. For example, in pre-independence East Timor, which like Aceh, has a long history of colonisation and conflict, imposed Indonesian education was seen as an instrument of oppression by Timorese teachers that limited their agency in terms of being able to teach about their own culture (Arenas, 1998; Millo and Barnett, 2004).
**Sustainable Peacebuilding Education for Future Teachers**

Education as a structure and institution has widely been acknowledged as having multiple faces during conflicts and after them (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2010). With education in conflict now being an established field of research, it has demonstrably been used in conflicts-affected contexts as a weapon, utilised to incite hatred against certain groups or promote unequal opportunities through selective provision (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). Conversely, education during and after conflict also has the potential to facilitate the rebuilding of peace by promoting values of tolerance, equality and mutual dialogue (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Miller and Ramos, 2000). While the term ‘teacher education’ can also refer to ‘in-service education’ (i.e. professional development for qualified teachers), for the purpose of this research I chose to specifically concentrate on ‘pre-service education’ (the training process to become a qualified teacher). Since pre-service teacher training institutes are where future generations of educators are trained, they are crucial to educational and subsequently, societal change (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). The training of future teachers is central to the way societal values are sustained and disseminated in the school system further down the line; transformative teacher education links the learning of teachers to the learning of communities (Miller and Ramos, 2000). Therefore, while in post-conflict Aceh, teacher training could potentially be central to building and sustaining notions of peace in the education system and local community, it is also conceivable that they could be used to reproduce values and perspectives that hinder the peacebuilding process.

The promotion of peace in the Acehnese teacher training system will be examined from the perspective of the 4 Rs, which are presented as an analytical framework with which sustainable, positive peace can be achieved through education in a post-conflict context (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith, 2015). The framework builds on Galtung’s (1969) distinction between positive peace (social justice, in terms of an absence of structural violence and injustices) and negative peace (simply an absence of violence), recognising that working towards the former is necessary in order for peace to be truly sustainable. ‘Peace education’ is also made distinct from ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘peacebuilding education’ in this context; peace education assumes that acquiring critical educational and life skills will facilitate a behavioural change that promotes human development rather than violence, while peacebuilding actively addresses the root causes of conflict, not only in terms of the social realm, but also in cultural, political and economic structures (Sayed and Novelli, 2016). It also important here to distinguish between ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ forms of peace/peacebuilding education, with the former referring to activities such as peacebuilding training for teachers, and any initiatives specifically introduced in conflict-affected contexts to address the legacies of conflict (Smith, Datzberger and McCully, 2016). The latter signifies any policies or programs that are not introduced to specifically build peace, but indirectly encourages processes of societal transformation conducive to sustainable peacebuilding (ibid.).
According to the 4Rs framework, the four interconnected educational elements that are central to sustainable peacebuilding are as follows:

1. Redistribution: educational access after conflict must aim to address inequalities, and therefore must be non-discriminatory in the way it is allocated, as well as in the way it creates opportunities for learners.

2. Recognition: educational curriculum should respect diversity among religious, ethnic and cultural differences. A pluralistic form of identity should be acknowledged through teaching.

3. Representation: equitable participation of all possible educational stakeholders should be encouraged in decision-making.

4. Reconciliation: injustices in the past, present and future must be acknowledged and addressed through dialogue, therefore allowing new relationships of trust to be built (Novelli et al., 2015).

From the existing literature, it seems that some of these have at least been partially addressed in Acehnese education – for example, a redistribution of resources achieved through reconstruction and relief efforts that poured in after the 2004 tsunami (Aspinall, 2009a; Burke, 2008). However, this is not a complete picture; redistribution also contains an element of equal participation and opportunities, which have been hindered by a decentralisation of education in Aceh (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). Furthermore, there are serious issues regarding lack of recognition of injustices during the conflict (Amnesty International, 2013; Lee-Koo, 2012) which links to a lack of reconciliatory aspects in post-conflict education (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014), as well as mis-representation of educational stakeholders through a culture of “patronage politics” (ibid.: 11). Critically examining different features of the Acehnese teacher training system using the 4 Rs will uncover the extent to which elements of them are present or not, providing an overall picture which can be used to assess the feasibility of sustainable peacebuilding being practiced by future teachers.

**Matrifocality**

A gendered aspect of the theoretical framework was implemented into this research due to the presence of a deeply patriarchal society in Aceh and across Indonesia, legacies of gendered violence during the civil conflict, and anecdotal evidence that most teaching jobs are taken up by women. Linking with the cultural, political, economic aspects of the CCPEE framework (see Figure 1), gender is examined from the point of view of constructions of womanhood within Aceh, namely matrifocality, in order to observe the effects of this on gender roles within teacher education, future teacher agency and practicability of sustainable peace. In defining matrifocality, Nancy Tanner (1974) builds on the concept of
motherhood to include “two constructs: (1) kinship systems in which (a) the role of mother is structurally, culturally, and affectively central and (b) this multidimensional centrality is legitimate; and (2) the societies in which these feature coexist, where (a) the relationship between the sexes is relatively egalitarian and (b) both women and men are important actors in the economic sectors” (Tanner, 1974: 132). Structurally central is defined as having some control over the family resources and being involved in decision-making processes, while culturally central refers to the valuation and societal importance of the position (Tanner, 1974). Though matrifocality can exist in a wide range of social and economic settings - in Indonesia it links closely with the state cultural ideology of Ibuism, which in Aceh specifically manifests itself as a religiously inspired glorification of motherhood (Srimulyani, 2010). Women in this way can be seen as markers of cultural identity and a central aspect of state efforts to pursue certain political and economic agendas (Charrad, 2011).

While Tanner’s interpretation of matrifocality focuses on women as being both economically and culturally significant in the family, in reality the rise of Islamic Ibuism in Indonesia, with its associated religious, political and gender discourses, including Javanese-centred ideals about womanhood, have arguably resulted in imposed views about gender relations (Othman, 2006; Srimulyani, 2012). These dominant ideologies about gender relations can subsequently cause gender vulnerability to become embedded in social arrangements (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Therefore, in the context of Aceh, any gender analysis and advocacy also requires knowledge of Islam and Shari’a law (Jauhola, 2010). It is important to note here that ideals associated with womanhood vary greatly across the Islamic world, with Islam simply acting as an overarching “umbrella identity” (Charrad, 2011: 420) to connect these in a cultural idiom of unity (ibid.). In Acehnese education specifically, especially in religious schools, the concept of Indonesian and Muslim womanhood is one that views education as a way of preparing women to deal with their future maternal duties, including being a morally and religiously good wife (Srimulyani, 2007). Arguably this form of matrifocality can disadvantage women through economic insecurity, intensified by women’s assumed responsibility for the family (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Alternatively, Indonesian Ibuism can extend to positioning female teachers as role models within the community who gain status and respect, as well as economic importance (Kirk, 2004). When considering this alongside future teachers being possible agents of transformation and peace, this raises the question of whether a normalising of traditional gender relations and matrifocal values through education has implications for the agency of future female teachers, and the current state of fragile peace in the province.
The conceptual scheme above aims to situate the main aspects of the theoretical framework within the actual context of the research. The outer box represents the wider structure of Acehnese Society, within which the smaller Acehnese Education and Teacher Training structures are subsequently located. Matrifocality, which frames the gendered aspect of this research, is shown to be embedded in Acehnese society in all three Cultural, Political and Economic realms, with the Acehnese Education and Teacher Training systems therefore also being located within this contextual framework associated with the wider societal structure. At the centre of this are Future Teachers, whose Agency in the Education structures is more immediately determined by the interactions between Curricula and Teacher Trainers, as well as the wider structures, altogether making up the strategically selective context in which Future Teacher act. Sustainable Peacebuilding Education is achieved through a combination of Future Teacher Agency and elements of Reconciliation, Recognition, Representation and Redistribution being embedded in Acehnese Education structures.
Research Approach

Photograph 3: The remains of a bridge destroyed by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, near Alue Naga Beach, Banda Aceh
Methodology

As outlined previously in the Theoretical Framework chapter, this research was undertaken with a critical realist ontological perspective. The role of critical realism in this research was to establish a link between the subjective understandings of my research participants, and the structural positions in which those individuals were located (Rees and Gatenby, 2014). As the researcher, this ontological positioning entailed accepting the existence of an external reality that could affect these structures but could also be outside of my observations.

Given the nature of my research questions and the theoretical frameworks used, a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and critical discourse analysis (CDA) were the most appropriate choices for the research methodology. Main units of analysis included male and female trainee teachers from UIN Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala universities, lecturers in the Education Faculties at these universities and curriculum material in the form of a Civic Education textbook. Semi-structured interviews served as a tool to gather in-depth data from the lecturers, including, but not limited to their motivations, strategies, perceptions about peace in the region, and whether there were any perceived links between peacebuilding and teacher education. While I was also able to individually interview a small number of student respondents in this way, the majority of them participated in focus groups; I often found that students were more comfortable speaking in groups, especially about more sensitive topics such as conflict experiences and gender roles. Focus groups also encouraged discussions amongst each other, allowing me to gain a richer understanding of youth perceptions and interactions in the context of Acehnese universities. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the research, I could only take part in one classroom observation, which will be further explained in the ‘Scope and Limitations’ section of this chapter. However, this was still useful in providing insight into teaching practices and what were considered to be ‘good teaching’ methods in the teacher education system.

Finding willing student participants was made easy with the help of my translator, an English Education student herself, who therefore had an extensive network of friends and contacts from the Education Faculties at both UIN and Syiah Kuala. The sampling process thus was a ‘snowballing’ one, with the resulting group of student participants resembling an extended social network (Small, 2009). A ‘snowballing’ strategy was also used to interview lecturers and senior Faculty members from the Education departments, with colleagues at ICAIOS using their contacts to help set up initial connections with potential participants. Purposive sampling was introduced midway through the research period in order to increase the variety of participants (Bryman, 2012) in terms of gender and university – up until then the majority of my respondents had been female students from UIN Ar-Raniry. Though initially I had intended to interview an equal number of male and female participants, in the end male respondents were outnumbered by female ones. However, I feel that this was representative of the actual ratio of male to female students in the Education Faculties. Similarly, most of the lecturers I interviewed were female, while the most senior lecturer
participants were male, reflecting the actual gender dynamics among Acehnese higher education staff.

As I had access a Civic Education textbook used in Acehnese teacher education, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to examine this data source. CDA focuses on the relations between discourse and other social elements such as existing contextual ideologies, institutions and identities, which makes it complimentary to the critical realist ontology and an especially useful tool for analysing aspects of education policy (Fairclough, 2013). Though I had initially hoped to have access to more official curriculum documents, even being able to critically analyse a few chapters in the textbook allowed me to more deeply understand national civic values and aspects of the Pancasila ideology that were considered important to instil in university students; CDA further enabled viewing the educational discourse in a semiotic sense as part of a network of social practices (ibid.) which constitute Indonesian teacher education.

Data Analysis
All interviews and focus groups were recorded after asking for permission informally, followed by transcribing as soon as possible. For the classroom observation, detailed notes were made instead. All transcriptions, translations, fieldwork notes and participant records were backed up on my computer and on a USB, in the interest of improving the ‘dependability’ (Bryman, 2012) of this research. Transcriptions were then uploaded onto dedoose, an online coding and analysis program for qualitative data. Data was then coded in various stages, at first using numerous codes corresponding with indicators I had outlined when operationalising my main research concepts (see Appendix 1), and finishing by grouping these codes into overarching shared concepts or other themes. Before I left the field I presented my preliminary research findings in a public discussion session at the ICAIOS office which was attended by many current students from the Education Faculty at UIN, including a couple of respondents, thus enabling me to validate the research through their feedback and questions.

Since I was only able to borrow the Civic Education textbook, I photocopied the most relevant chapters to bring back with me. The textbook was written in Bahasa Indonesia, and due to limited time and resources I was unable to translate everything, so the most relevant sections were analysed. This was completed through a fairly tedious process of copying sections into Google Translate, followed by critically analysing the English translation of these paragraphs, using some of the codes from the interview data to pick out concepts and themes.

Scope and Limitations
The timing and length of the research period were the main limiting factors during fieldwork. Ramadan ended around ten days after my arrival in Banda Aceh, which meant
during that initial period it was difficult to establish contacts as most schools were closed and offices were open for a limited time each day. Even after Ramadan ended in mid-July, for many university students the term did not properly commence until September, so many of my translator’s friends and acquaintances were still in their hometowns outside Banda Aceh. The timing of the fieldwork also meant that I was not able to carry out more class observations – in particular I was hoping to observe final year Education students on their practical placements in schools, during which they hold real classes for the first time, putting their theoretical learnings into practice. Unfortunately, the placement period started just after my scheduled departure from Aceh at the end of August. The scope of my research was also limited by this time constraint; with more time I could have potentially travelled to more rural areas outside Banda Aceh, in order to observe such participants, or even newly qualified teachers. Though I tried to ensure ‘transferability’ of this research by providing as much specific contextual information as possible (Bryman, 2012) in the previous ‘Introduction’ chapter, different regions in the province experienced varying degrees of violence during the civil conflict, meaning that educators in rural areas could have different perceptions of the conflict and peace than their urban counterparts. Therefore, as it stands, this research is only generalisable to Banda Aceh.

Using a translator was necessary for the majority of interviews and focus groups held during this fieldwork, which meant that there was a risk of data not being properly translated between the languages. To minimise this, I worked with the translator extensively before the initial interviews, going through my research proposal and editing the interview guide together to ensure she had a deeper understanding of my research aims. However, when translating between two languages it is inevitable that sometimes nuanced meanings can be lost or diminished; for example, during the first few interviews it was difficult to get respondents to talk about my conceptualisations of topics such as ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘gender’. This did improve over time, thanks to the abilities of my translator who quickly learned to adapt how she conveyed these themes to student respondents. In the case of the textbook analysis, I had to rely on Google Translate for interpretation, which has possibly resulted in a lower standard of translation for this particular aspect of my research. However, the ideas outlined in the text are expressed in formal dialogue, hopefully reducing the chances of any mistranslation.

Whilst researching this topic I had the fairly unique position of being a Westerner but also a Muslim woman with South Asian heritage. I feel that revealing my Muslim background to respondents encouraged a sense of familiarity with respondents during interviews and focus groups; they were able to freely talk about Islamic concepts without having to explain them, and I would often recognise and verbally acknowledge these terms being mentioned in Arabic when they were speaking in Bahasa Indonesia to my translator. Conversely, it could be argued that my existing partial understanding of the Islamic context in Aceh decreased the objectivity of my position as an external researcher. Nonetheless, our mutual Islamic backgrounds also revealed our differences – when I invited respondents to ask me questions after the sessions, students often asked if I wore a hijab at home in Europe. When I said that
I did not, some respondents were puzzled, demonstrating the devoutly particular understanding of Islam that is so entrenched in this region. However, I was always careful to ensure that my own personal religious interpretations and Western-influenced cultural beliefs did not shape interviews.

**Ethical Considerations**

The unique post-conflict and post-disaster context of Aceh necessitated using an especially sensitive approach to all aspects of the research. Though the civil conflict officially ended over 10 years ago, political tensions still exist, and memories of the war were still fresh for many research participants, which made it imperative that I was aware my research potentially might not be viewed as completely neutral by participants (Goodhand, 2000). Cultural sensitivity was also required due to the presence of Shari’a law in the province – male students were especially selective in where they wanted to be interviewed, which was usually in busy cafes frequented by many other young people. There were also ethical considerations specific to the educational environment of the teacher training Faculties. As in some cases I interviewed lecturers and students from the same department, it was appropriate to guarantee all student participants that their identities, their opinions, or any information about their learnings would not be shared with their immediate supervisors (Erickson, 1985). Similarly, the identity of and any information shared from lecturers was not shared with students.

Informed consent is a basic requirement for any research involving participants, and was explicitly asked after giving a brief explanation of the research goals at the start of each interview, focus group and classroom observation. Given that any notion of peace in Aceh is politically sensitive, confidentiality was a necessary further ethical measure to protect the identity of any participants, so all respondents were completely anonymised in my transcriptions by coding their identities (see Appendix 2). Furthermore, with any research topic that is even remotely political in nature comes the issue of whether the researcher should try and adopt a completely value-free stance, or whether their personal and political convictions should influence the research and data analysis (Riddell, 1989). Finch (1986) argues that there is a long tradition of social research, especially qualitative methods, recognised as never being entirely value-free, but that it is possible to guard against bias by being constantly reflexive, which I did by ensuring my personal beliefs did not influence the direction of interviews, as mentioned previously. Lastly, it was important to be aware of any potential power relations at work within the research, by ensuring the collection of data did not objectify participants, while making sure they felt comfortable with me as the interviewer (Riddell, 1989). Although I felt this was somewhat achieved by connecting through a shared Islamic background, it extended to swapping contact details with all respondents and following up with them after the interviews and focus groups.
Findings Chapter 1:

Photograph 4: Rice fields on the outskirts of Banda Aceh
This chapter explores what, from whom, and how future teachers acquire and develop their skills, motivations and perceptions surrounding education and peacebuilding. The ‘what’ aspect of this is determined by formal curricula, which are mainly decided at the national level and dictate what content students are exposed to on an everyday basis. Linking future teachers with their curriculum also necessarily involves examining the lecturers, ‘who’ significantly influence the outcome of future teachers’ professional and personal development, themselves operating within the structural context of the education system. ‘How’ future teachers learn from the curriculum and their lecturers is through a participatory aspect of pedagogy, which in turn is dictated by the curriculum. Together, teacher education curricula and teacher trainers form a significant part of the strategically selective context in which future teachers act. In exploring these components, the following research questions will be addressed:

To what extent are aspects of sustainable peacebuilding education incorporated into Acehnese teacher training curricula?

How do Acehnese teacher trainers’ perceptions about the conflict, present state of peace and their role in educating future teachers affect teacher education in practice?

By examining the curriculum, this chapter explores the extent to which the current structure and content of teacher education can potentially equip Acehnese future teachers with the skills associated with sustainable peacebuilding. Fundamental curricular components of teacher education are examined to determine how conducive they may or may not be to sustainable peacebuilding, by looking for evidence of the key elements outlined in the 4 Rs framework, namely redistribution, representation, recognition and reconciliation. Features of teacher education that were considered significant include a noticeable lack of explicit peacebuilding education in favour of local, Islamic content, discourse used in a Civic Education textbook, and the participatory aspects of training. Meanwhile, exploring the perceptions, practices and strategies of the lecturers, in relation to the structural restraints provided by the curriculum and the post-conflict, Islamic socio-political context, is necessary to understand how they themselves can affect future teachers’ agency for facilitating sustainable peacebuilding in Aceh.

“Peacebuilding Education? We don’t have a class for that” (BIT1-F)

After being involved in intractable conflict, the objective of peacebuilding education should involve facilitating reconciliatory world views (Bar-Tal, Rosen and Nets-Zehngu, 2009). This necessarily involves a process of societal change, due to the fact that popular, inflammatory opinions present during the conflict can linger even after it ends (ibid.). Although teacher training should equip future teachers with practical skills and techniques, in post-conflict societies there should arguably be greater focus on empowering teachers with the transformative skills needed to carry out this societal change (Kirk, 2004). There is currently no such explicit peacebuilding material within Acehnese teacher education curriculums, or
within any division of education that I encountered. Though existing literature had already indicated this, it was confirmed by numerous students and lecturers in numerous interviews during the research process.

A limited number of explicit peace education initiatives had been previously implemented in Aceh, with some existing before the conflict ended – for example, a student during one focus group recalled taking part in a peace workshop as a young child, where she was given a book “about conflicts around the world as motivation to show [...] we have the same situation” (BT5-F). However, any kind of conflict-sensitive initiatives had been completely phased out by 2011 (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). A Civic Education lecturer at Syiah Kuala university told me how he had been involved in a group of scholars that had worked on creating a more recent peacebuilding curriculum to be rolled out to schools through “space in the local curriculum”, but it had been delayed indefinitely due to “the money issue” (CEL1-M). Funding was allegedly limited and had been prioritised towards implementing other topics into the local curriculum such as various Islamic-based electives, which will be further explained below.

The ‘Islamisation’ of Local Content – A Missed Opportunity

In 1994, the national government introduced a Local Content Curriculum (LCC) in the education system to allocate 20% of lesson time to local subject matter, as an attempt to make school content more applicable to the diversity of the Indonesian archipelago (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). Following this, the LoGA (Law on Governing Aceh), initiated as part of the MoU in 2005, stipulated that while the Acehnese education system would remain in line with the existing national system, locally relevant content such as learning about Islam, reading the Quran and learning to pray (Government of Aceh, 2007, in Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014) would also be incorporated. This religious content has mainly been introduced through the space allocated by the LCC (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014), with the effects of this “Islamisation of Acehnese education” (ibid.: 15) evident even in teacher training. A Physics Education lecturer revealed that electives offered to student teachers in her department included classes such as “Physics within the Quran” (PL1-F). Some respondents approved of such content – another lecturer wanted to introduce more Islamic electives, on topics such as “the history of Rasulullah (the Prophet)”, since she thought students did not know enough about Islam (EL1-F). Others were more critical; the lecturer who had been involved in drafting peace education lamented its exclusion from Education Faculty curricula, describing how future teachers “will not learn from the history of what happened in Aceh [...] they should know that the Acehnese experienced fighting with each other” (CEL1-M). Thus, educational space allocated by the LCC can be seen as a missed opportunity for the integration of explicit peace education, since any conflict-sensitive content or initiatives have been deprioritised in favour of religious content.

The move towards more a more Islamised education within local content is also concerning because of its potential to be isolating for other minority groups. Exclusion of other possible
religious identities within the teacher training curriculum is not conducive to building a sustainable peace, as this requires explicit recognition of these groups within the education system (Novelli et al., 2015). Concentration solely on Islamic materials also runs contrary to the 2008 Acehnese Qanun (Law) on Education, which states in Article 9 that “students at all levels of education in Aceh have the right to be taught the subject of religion in line with their faith” (IDLO, 2009: 2). While this aspect of the Qanun has been seen as evidence of respect for religious pluralism in Acehnese education (ibid.), in the field this was difficult to verify, as I did not come across any non-Muslim participants during my research, and there were anecdotally very few non-Muslim students in the universities I investigated.

We don’t talk about that in the classroom” (FEL2-F)

Even with a complete absence of explicit peacebuilding content, many lecturers I interviewed did not see any requirement for it to be incorporated into education. Instead, promoting and sustaining peace in Aceh was associated with creating an environment of harmony and tolerance in classrooms. “How to create togetherness” (DH1-M) in the classroom – a phrase that I heard often also during student interviews – was cited by one senior lecturer as an important skill to be understood by students through the practical Microteaching classes. A different lecturer from the same university interpreted the concept of togetherness and peace education as teaching students “how to be proud of being Indonesian” (EL1-F), alluding to the Pancasila ideology that was, in previous years, seen as culturally ignorant of Indonesian diversity (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014), but which still now remains at the heart of the Indonesian education system. He went on to explain that “the most important point” in achieving the aim of togetherness was to teach students that, as future educators they should not “bring up issues about differences, whether they are from races, or cultures. They shouldn’t bring this up in the class” (DH1-M).

While to some extent the idea of creating a sense of togetherness is necessary for maintaining peace in post-conflict societies, refusing to talk about the differences and variety of people that exist in society is not conducive to the recognition and reconciliation elements required for truly sustainable peace (Novelli et al., 2015). As Davies (2011) argues, issues about differences must not be ignored, but should be tackled with a politicised approach. It is important to talk about differences when a community has experienced social problems such as discrimination, inequality and lack of representation in society (ibid.) – all issues which have been associated with the Acehnese civil war and its aftermath. Such discussions would allow students to understand greater societal problems, rather than interpret differences as a separate topic that could potentially trigger tensions. In the specific context of Aceh this is difficult to address practically for various reasons, the most prominent of which are discussed here.

One possible explanation is that many did not seem to have significant experiences of the conflict, and therefore did not perceive a need for peacebuilding education. Most lecturers I spoke to were originally from outside Aceh, but had spent the peak conflict period teaching
in Banda Aceh (which escaped much of the violence experienced elsewhere). A Deputy Dean from UIN remembered feeling “peaceful…and able to teach” at the university throughout the 1990s – his reasoning was that universities in Banda Aceh were never targeted by GAM because “their children were there” studying alongside other students (ISD1-M). When the conflict came close to the city, another lecturer recalled minimal disturbances to teaching: “we could hear some bombs, but always away from here. If we heard something we usually just ignore it and carry on” (EL1-F). As will be explored in the next data chapter, this contrasts greatly with the way students described this period, as their memories of the conflict overall seemed much more traumatic and frightening.

Another potential reason to explain the reluctance of lecturers introducing topics around peace, conflict and society into classrooms is the political sensitivity associated with the current state of ‘peace’ in Aceh. A few lecturers were openly positive about peace lasting into the future. One believed in a “great intention from the community to sustain” it (CEL1-M), using a recent example of villagers in rural Aceh who reported community members belonging to Din Minimi - a criminal group formed from ex-combatants, that subsequently surrendered to the national government and agreed to an amnesty (The Jakarta Post, 2015). A senior lecturer believed that “most of the needs of the Acehnese people are fulfilled now by the government” (ISD1-M), reducing the need for discussion about the conflict. Though political achievements gained from the MoU were no doubt symbolic for many Acehnese, such views show a failure to engage with the true extent of post-conflict issues that continue to exist, therefore reducing the capacity to build sustainable peace. Dwyer (2012) notes that this attitude is commonplace within the political and professional spheres in Aceh, where moving on from the conflict is simply demonstrated by promoting post-war development and stability made possible by the MoU. Meanwhile, ordinary people continue to suffer from after-effects and are unable to move forward (ibid.). With some lecturers in the Education Faculties seeming disconnected from the realities of post-conflict effects, the likelihood of addressing crucial peacebuilding elements within education such as recognition of inequalities and reconciliation of past injustices (Novelli et al., 2015) is lessened.

Other lecturers were more critically perceptive in discussing the current state of peace, but still did not want to bring related topics into the classroom. A lecturer from UIN Ar-Raniry thought that the upcoming 2017 local elections was a period when “conflict could start again” because “sparks are still there” (EL1-F), with another lecturer from Syiah Kuala also believing that “the Acehnese are not safe” (PL1-F). Her interpretation of the current peace was that it only existed because the government had “bribed GAM” and if that were to stop then war would start again, as GAM “still have guns hidden somewhere” (PL1-F).

Acknowledgement of these “uncertain conditions” (PL1-F) in Aceh, with a perceived possibility of future outbreaks of violence echoes Galtung’s (1969) concept of negative peace – simply a current absence of violence. Törnquist (2013) agrees with the sentiment that it is negative peace which exists in the province, highlighting that the possibility of violence during future elections shows that Aceh has experienced a “backsliding” (2013: 4) in terms of increasing corruption, Islamisation of politics and failure to implement inclusive
governance (ibid.). The same lecturer also thought that in terms of societal progress, Aceh had started to “go backwards”; being aware of the uncertain, politically unstable atmosphere made her keep her opinions to herself and “stay silent” (PL1-F). Though lecturers were open to sharing their views with me, being fearful of the current political climate means it is less likely that teacher education environments are conducive to openly discussing the conflict, again reducing the likelihood of peacebuilding aspects of recognition and reconciliation existing in teacher training classrooms.

Lastly, another explanation for the lack of content about peace and conflict is that students and lecturers alike equated the concept of peacebuilding education with existing material in Civic Education classes (CT1-M, CT2-M, BIT1-F, DH1-M), which will be critically examined in the following section.

**Civic Education**

Citizenship and civic education have been acknowledged as a means for state-building in post-conflict contexts (Novelli et al., 2015); indeed, from what I gathered during the fieldwork period, the content in Civic Education courses was the only aspect of teacher education that came close to resembling explicit peacebuilding material. Civic Education is a compulsory component of all teacher education programs at Indonesian universities, with the content dictated by a national curriculum, though anecdotal information has implied that many different textbooks are available. The specific textbook analysed in this research came from my translator, who had received it during her first year of study at UIN Ar-Raniry in the English Education program. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to examine some key chapters in the book – namely chapters on Democracy and Human Rights.

**Democracy**

Chapter Eight of the textbook is dedicated to the concept of Demokrasi (democracy) (Husen, n.d.). Beginning with the etymology of the word, the text goes on to briefly outline the teachings of key political theorists in this field, including Joseph Schumpeter and Sidney Hook. This is followed by a detailed history of democracy in the Western world, with references to a range of important developments from the Magna Carta, to social contract theory as a basis for the welfare state. The reader therefore gains a brief, yet wide-ranging contextual and Western-centric understanding of democracy, before coming to an overview of its development in Indonesia. A previous study on Civic Education in Indonesian universities similarly notes how “Islamic concepts of the state and citizenship are integrated, in varying degrees, with Western thought and practice on civil society and democratic pluralism” (Jackson and Bahrissalim, 2007: 42). This is due to a significant transition towards a more open and democratic political culture after the fall of the Suharto regime, which was characterised by an appropriation of the Pancasila ideology to restrict the boundaries of acceptable social, cultural and political behaviour (ibid.).
The chapter concludes with a discussion on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Several prominent Western scholars who have specialised in this subject are referenced, such as Samuel Huntington (1997) and Larry Diamond (Diamond, Plattner and Brumberg, 2003), continuing the theme of introducing global perspectives before local ones. Markedly, the scholars referenced are critical of Islam’s compatibility with democracy; the text contains detailed explanations of some common arguments for the incompatibility between the two systems:

“Islam and democracy are two different political systems. Islam can not be compatible with democracy because Islam is a political system that is self-contained. In the political language of Muslims, Islam as a religion is true (pure), not only regulating the issue of faith and worship, but rather regulate all aspects of human life including the life of the state [...] Islam is seen as an alternative political system to democracy.” (Husen, n.d.:120)

I was surprised to find such criticisms openly stated in a textbook used in an Islamic university, in the devoutly Islamic context of Aceh, even though the material was in line with the curriculum requirements as stated in a 2003 Education Law¹. That potentially

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Inflammatory opinions on Islam are included is testament to the outward-looking, tolerant values that the national curriculum hopes to promote. Since this is the core textbook used in Civic Education course within UIN Education Faculty, future teachers studying there would presumably be exposed to these external, contrasting viewpoints in their learning. The text continues by applying the arguments to reality, acknowledging that “the presence of authoritarian regimes (rather than democracy) in a number of Muslim countries is generally the dominant trend” (Husen, n.d.: 121). This is followed by possible theoretical reasons, inviting the reader to critically think about Islam and its relationship with democracy, and apply this to contexts outside Indonesia. This specific aspect of the teacher training curriculum can be regarded as compatible with the recognition and representation elements required by the 4 R’s framework for sustainable peacebuilding, since critical viewpoints are expressed in a respectful, logical manner, exposing future teachers to differing viewpoints and situations that exist outside of Aceh, potentially allowing them to navigate towards their own conclusions about national and religious identities.

**Human Rights**

The next chapter addresses the concept of human rights. Due to their shared approaches and methodologies, Human Rights Education (HRE) can be highly compatible with explicit peace education (Tibbitts and Fernekes, 2011), which makes it a welcome addition to the Civic Education material studied by future teachers in Aceh. Again, the topic is first approached from a Western perspective, with human rights being explained using a Lockean definition as being “given directly by God” (Husen, n.d.: 124). A historical development of human rights is outlined in Europe and from the United Nations, followed by a detailed history of its development in Indonesia in different periods. The text is critical of particular periods, such as Suharto’s New Order period, which is described as a time “fraught with human rights violations committed by the state” (Husen, n.d.: 133). Other phases are described more positively, with the post-New Order period depicted as an era of reform which saw the government ratify several human rights instruments at both an international and national level (Husen, n.d.). The contrasting rhetoric emphasises Indonesia moving towards increasingly globalised, Western-centric standards on civic issues, and indicates a distancing from ideologies associated with previous eras, such as the militarised, appropriated and delimiting version of Pancasila incorporated during the New Order period (Gunn, 1979; Jackson and Bahri Salim, 2007).

Human rights violations are described in detail later in the chapter, with a significant part devoted to various violations that define genocide. Notably, the text points out that “violation of human rights can be committed by the state officials as well as citizens” (Husen, n.d.: 138). This type of discourse can be seen as a significant step towards building sustainable peace; considering that this content is part of national curriculum, in stating such an admission the government is admitting it can be held accountable. That this is used in a region still recovering from civil conflict, where numerous human rights violations took
place from the government side as well as the rebels (Amnesty International, 2013; Aspinall, 2009b; WorldWatch, 2013), the admission can be implicitly interpreted as a reconciliatory element within teacher education, therefore fulfilling a necessary condition for being conducive to sustainable peace (Novelli et al., 2015). While it is not an explicit reconciliation in this context – this would require the government’s unambiguous admission of its committed human rights violations during the Acehnese conflict - it is arguably a step in the right direction. Yet, the significance of including the concept of government accountability in Indonesian HRE is somewhat undermined by continuing violations in other parts of the archipelago, such as Papua and West Papua (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Chapter Nine also includes an extended discussion on Human Rights in the context of Islam and Gender. In this section, human rights are defined from an Islamic perspective as granted by God and belonging to all people indiscriminately, which is reiterative of the Lockean definition mentioned earlier, highlighting a conciliation between Western and Islamic ideals, arguably legitimising a globalised Indonesian civic agenda. In the deeply Islamic context of Aceh, where post-conflict psychological and economic legacies still exist (Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2010), discussing human rights from both Western and Islamic perspectives could arguably help to build inclusionary feelings of connection and shared values. Inclusion in this way can be seen in a reconciliatory sense, as well as containing aspects of recognition and representation, which boosts the curriculum’s capacity for sustainable peacebuilding (Novelli et al., 2015). Evidence of these key elements can also be viewed in the gendered discussion of human rights and Islam in the textbook; the text states that the “status of men and women are equal before God (Surah 4:3)” (Husen, n.d.: 143) and describes male superiority as “a mere cultural product” (ibid.: 142). Gender inequality is also detailed in many forms including violence, subordination and stereotyping of and against women (ibid.)

The emphasis on more Western-centric ideals of gender equality and against female discrimination is significant considering the patriarchal, matrifocal status quo in Aceh, and gendered suffering during the war (Lee-Koo, 2012); prominently including issues around sexism in a discussion about civic ideals displays elements of all four aspects of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation needed for sustainable peacebuilding education. However, as will be discussed in the following data chapters, this gender equality not necessarily reflected in the reality of Acehnese teacher system.

Implicit Peacebuilding Education?

The topics analysed in the Civic Education textbook can be argued to contain elements of ‘implicit’ peacebuilding education, through its encouraging of social values that are conducive to sustainable peacebuilding. However, there is a lack of content that is specifically relevant to Aceh – this has also been found to be the case in other subjects such as History (Wenger, 2014). In this sense, despite the material promoting ideals associated with a truly peaceful and just society, there is no real sense of reconciliation regarding the violent conflict experienced by the Acehnese. An explicit acknowledgement and addressing of the numerous civil conflicts experienced in Indonesia over recent years is foregone in favour of unifying rhetoric that relates national civic ideals to global, Western-centric ideas.
The Civic Education curriculum used for teacher education therefore cannot be truly representative of the Acehnese, and does not recognise the diversity of their experiences. This weakens the curriculum’s capacity to qualify as sustainable peacebuilding education in terms of the 4 Rs framework.

It is also important to note that while compulsory civic education should be viewed as a crucial component of teacher education, it is already compulsory for all students in Indonesian higher education institutions (Jackson and Bahrissalim, 2007). Therefore, in its generalised form, there is no sense of how future teachers can specifically apply these learnings to their precise role in educating future generations. The effectiveness of the course is also questionable considering that it is only limited to one semester in the first year of study. Furthermore, the value and influence of Civic Education on sustainable peacebuilding cannot be determined solely from the analysis of this particular textbook. Though all Civic Education textbooks should, in theory, contain the same nationalised content, there is evidence that this can differ across universities; for example, those following the Muhammadiyah system – one of Indonesia’s largest, most prominent Islamic organisations - have been documented using Civic Education textbooks that are more tailored to the organisation’s social, political and educational aims, incorporating a curriculum that focuses on the creation of good Muslim citizens specifically (Jackson and Bahrissalim, 2007). The role of lecturers in civic education is also crucial in determining how the curriculum affects future teachers – after all, textbooks are only as effective as the teachers that use them (Cole, 2007), indicating the need for greater research within this area of Indonesian education. Continuing this theme, the next section explores how the curriculum, along with lecturers’ perceptions and motivations, affects their strategies for teaching.

**Teaching Future Teachers: Lecturer’s Motivations and Strategies**

Though I spoke to far fewer lecturers than students in the Education Faculties at both UIN and Syiah Kuala, I found that the lecturers had a wider variety of motivations and reasons for entering their profession. Three lecturers cited passion for their subject as their motivation to teach it within the Education Faculty – an English lecturer at UIN simply told me “I love it (English)!” (EL1-F). Similarly, an English lecturer from Syiah Kuala told me she had developed a love for teaching English after graduating from the same department years ago (EL2-F). As will be discussed in the following data chapter, whereas many student participants expressed their conflict experiences as influencing their motivations to become teachers, the lecturers I spoke to did not seem to have such political sources of motivation. The only comparable reflection came from a Civic Education lecturer from Syiah Kuala University, who was motivated by the “multiculturalism and diversity in Indonesia” (CEL1-M). He went on to describe the pertinence of his role as “integrating different backgrounds into one Indonesia, and improving tolerance, because there is so much momentum here that can trigger conflict” (CEL1-M).
It was interesting to hear that many respondents had not even intended to have a teaching career at all, let alone become a lecturer in the Faculty of Education. Both of the most senior lecturers I spoke to had seemed to just ‘end up’ in their positions through a long but “natural process” (ISD1-M) in academia i.e. pursuing an undergraduate degree, followed by a postgraduate and then doctoral program within the same university (ISD1-M, DH1-M). A female Physics Education lecturer admitted that she became a teacher “by mistake” (PL1-F); a Bachelor’s degree in Physics Education had been an arbitrary second choice for her, with her first choice being Medicine. When she did not get the required grades to study Medicine, she reflected that it was the “will of God” and that she would never know the “lesson” behind this path (PL1-F). These lecturers were not completely unenthusiastic in their perspectives towards teaching – on the contrary they still acknowledged the importance of their role, with one of the senior lecturers telling me he was pleased to “give a contribution” towards society and that he considered teaching to be “noble work” because it was the “foundation for all professions” (ISD1-M). However, discovering that within my small respondent group there were lecturers who had not really aspired to this career means there are likely to be other Education Faculty members in similar situations.

Some lecturer respondents were aware of and concerned about disparities between teacher motivation levels; selecting a degree within the Education Faculty as a ‘back-up option’ was confirmed as common practice among prospective students by one lecturer, who noted that it can “become the second or third choice” (CEL1-M) for students during the application process. Because of this, the importance of truly wanting to be a teacher was emphasised in many of the conversations I had with lecturers, with one senior Faculty member at UIN suggesting that there should be a teaching skills test and an interview for any prospective student applying to become a teacher (DH1-M). Only accepting prospective future teachers that were enthusiastic and motivated about the role was seen as important for the motivation of their future students (CEL1-M). This is aligned with research that has shown teacher enthusiasm has a positive relation with the intrinsic motivation of students to learn from them (Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, 2000). In a post-conflict context like Aceh, it could therefore be argued that a teacher’s genuine enthusiasm was necessary if attempting to effectively incorporate any notions of sustainable peacebuilding in education.

Though this research aimed to primarily focus on the potential peacebuilding agency of student teachers in relation to the educational structures and context within which they were contained, it seemed that their lecturers themselves also had, in some cases, much less space for manoeuvre than I had expected. One lecturer described herself as feeling constrained by numerous “restrictions” in her job, ranging from the physical in terms of what she was expected to wear, to constraints in the way lecturers were supposed to think, “especially related to culture and religion” (PL1-F). Even as a female lecturer in the slightly more secular Syiah Kuala university, she was expected to wear skirts; her response was to wear jeans and tell her female students that they could also wear jeans, because she did not want to be a hypocrite (PL1-F). Her view was that as long as students behaved and completed assignments, there was no need to impose clothing rules in class, and that
wearing particular clothes “does not show what is inside” (PL1-F). Her actions reveal how, despite constraints, some lecturers can take control of their learning environment to incorporate their own perceptions into the classroom and share these with students. Gender issues building on similar patriarchal expectations of women in schools will be further discussed in the final data chapter.

While discussion about post-conflict matters did not seem to be a priority for most of the lecturers I spoke to, two individuals spoke about actively finding ways to encourage students to discuss contemporary issues. An English Education lecturer told me how, by following curriculum guidelines on teaching debating skills, she had organised a debate about LGBT rights in Aceh during a recent class, with the students split into two teams for and against promoting these rights. She told her students “not to bring Quranic verse into the debate - this is about critical thinking” (EL2-F). I was surprised to hear about such controversial and taboo issues being discussed openly in classrooms within a deeply Islamic society; this choice in teaching method seemed to be bold and outward-looking. Though choosing the topic was “not about right and wrong” (EL2-F) and was apparently chosen purely to assess speaking and debating skills, the choice is still significant in terms of contributing towards an implicit peacebuilding education; such activities would allow for future teachers in that particular class to understand and recognise the rights of marginalised communities in Aceh, potentially setting a precedent for acknowledging societal inequalities as part of a wider transformative peacebuilding process.

Similarly, another English lecturer described adapting her lessons to incorporate current affairs, explaining that “when you are teaching, communicating with the students, the way we deliver our speech – you can direct it towards certain ends” (EL1-F). While she believed that one person was “like a drop of water in the ocean” in terms of their impact on sustaining peace in Aceh, she acknowledged that teachers have “small particular roles” when it came to making their students aware of current issues. Regarding conflict and peace, in her opinion there was an obligation to include materials or articles on these subjects in her lessons whenever possible (EL1-F). These individual approaches demonstrate the possibility for Acehnese lecturers and teachers to strategically shape a curriculum according to their own interests and priorities - in this case shaping a curriculum with no explicit conflict-sensitive material into one that included relevant and topical discussions around those themes more implicitly. For trainee teachers, this is a positive implication for building sustainable peace – in such lessons they are exposed to critical debates and discussions about wider societal issues, which they may replicate in their own classroom activities in the future.

Unfortunately, I realised that moulding lessons to incorporate certain topics and discussions was probably only possible within a few subject areas – the two lecturers that mentioned this were coincidentally both English Lecturers. Having lesson plans that often involve reading English articles from abroad facilitates exposure to content and viewpoints from outside Aceh, and this is also anecdotally the case in Civic Education. Conversely, when I
spoke to a Physics Education lecturer about whether it was possible to implement similar strategies in her classes, she felt it would be very difficult to “integrate social issues, because [...] the physics students feel that, we should just learn physics” (PL1-F). Therefore, such behaviours and teaching strategies are completely dependent on how the lecturer perceives and acts within the structural constraints of their subject area, highlighting the need for explicit focus on peacebuilding materials to be initiated at all levels across different groups of actors, from government policymakers to school leaders (Sayed and Novelli, 2016). At the moment, it is likely that only a small number of outward-looking lecturers make the effort to include topical subjects outside the basic curriculum, meaning that only a limited number of future teachers are exposed to such materials. This was confirmed elsewhere, as I was told by one student that some of their lecturers occasionally did bring up issues around the conflict and peace during classes, while others did not (BT2-F). Lastly, though I did not encounter any evidence of this within Aceh, in the absence of any explicit peacebuilding initiatives it’s important to note how agency can conversely be used by teachers to shape education towards ends less conducive to peace. This is described by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) as one of the ‘two faces of education’ in conflict-affected settings, where teachers in such scenarios can be used as part of more divisive strategies in schooling.

**Participatory Opportunities**

Education can be seen to contribute to the strength of civil society by teaching citizens how to participate in it (Davies, 2004). This is especially important in post-conflict contexts, where civil society and institutions are weakened or non-existent, and simply rebuilding education institutions is prioritised over structural issues of governance, quality and access (Davies, 2004; Novelli et al., 2015). I encountered many examples of student participation at the universities, ranging from extracurricular activities to compulsory practical components of their study program; such features constitute another aspect of the strategically selective context in which future teachers act. Many research participants talked about student associations, which existed for every subject department in the Education Faculties, and served as a formal way for student representatives to communicate with academic staff. A Civic Education student from Syiah Kuala told me about his involvement in a national student’s union for all students enrolled in that particular subject specialisation:

“We have space for critical thinking and sharing opinions. Me and my friends joined in an Association for Citizenship Education students. The Association is for students from all over Indonesia who are taking this Citizenship teaching program at University. Every Citizenship program in every university in Indonesia has some different subjects and slightly different curriculums, so we want to unite all of the Citizenship programs [...] Before curriculum-makers decide to change anything with the curriculum, the students have to first agree to the proposals” (CT1-M).
Allowing future teachers to determine their own education in this way creates a channel to clearly recognise the diversity of their contributions and represent their interests politically. It also is demonstrative of future teachers acting to shape the structural boundaries in which they are located. These features of the teacher education system can arguably be seen as conducive to sustainable peacebuilding through creating arenas for critical dialogue and transformative ideas (Novelli et al., 2015). Despite this, it was unclear whether all teaching subjects had equally developed channels of communication between students, lecturers and policymakers, and as the following findings chapters will explore, examples of barriers to participation for women and lack of dialogue between lecturers and students portray a more negative picture of participation within teacher education.

All teacher training programs also contained key practical elements dictated by national requirements – these usually consist of compulsory Microteaching classes and a practical placement period (PPL) in an allocated school. I was granted permission to sit in during a two-hour English Microteaching class at the UIN Faculty of Education, allowing me to observe how teaching skills were taught in practice, as well as the interactions between students and the lecturer. Learning was student-centric, with the main activity consisting of individually choosing topics from the board to prepare a lesson plan, with an emphasis on identifying the age level and skills associated with the topic. Students were then randomly picked to present their material by ‘teaching’ their classmates in a mock classroom scenario, followed by comments and criticisms from their peers. The exchange of ideas, feedback and criticisms amongst the students further indicated a sense of dialogue, enabling future teachers to develop reflective skills in teaching (Kuswandono, 2014). By encouraging participation in this way, it also facilitates a teaching environment that is representative of the students themselves, and more conducive to building sustainable peace (Novelli et al., 2015).

Practical placements, known as Program Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL) or the Field Experience Program, are also an integral part of future teacher’s education, involving the student spending their seventh semester (the first half of their final year of study) as a teaching assistant in an allocated school. The role of PPL is to implement the theoretical and practical skills learnt previously to develop lesson plans and execute them in real classrooms, as well as learning to find their own creative, personal teaching style to meet everyday challenges in school (USAID Indonesia, 2016). At UIN university, the location of practical placements was allocated randomly, with posts located across a large area of the province. The allocation process occurred just before I left Aceh; my translator Farah was placed in a rural area around an hour away from her home in Aceh Besar. Her reflection during this time was that the placement was “very challenging”, but that she was getting used to “handling the naughty and uncontrolled students”². A similar sentiment was also expressed by a Counselling Education student who had already completed her PPL – she noted that in conflict-affected areas, sometimes children with ex-GAM family members

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² Reflections sent by email after leaving the field.
would bully others and be unruly in class, because they felt “more power and stronger than other children” (CT1-F).

Undoubtedly such experiences are difficult learning periods for future teachers, but they also highlight the value of PPL, not only in improving the practical skills of future teachers, but also in a redistributive sense. Conflict-affected rural areas in Aceh are less exposed to outsiders, educational resources and the cosmopolitan benefits that are associated with those living in urban areas like Banda Aceh. Therefore, children in rural areas benefit from a redistribution of teaching resources that can address underlying inequalities, which often exist even during states of ‘negative peace’, and can contribute to the re-emergence of conflicts (Novelli et al., 2015). In turn, future teachers are exposed to the reality of post-conflict effects still present in schools, from which they can learn to adjust their teaching skills to actively address such challenges.

**Findings Chapter 1- Concluding Reflections**

To what extent are aspects of sustainable peacebuilding education incorporated into Acehnese teacher training curricula?

How do Acehnese teacher trainers’ perceptions about the conflict, present state of peace and their role in educating future teachers affect teacher education in practice?

In responding to the above sub-questions, the findings demonstrate that future teachers operate in a context where politically charged subjects of peacebuilding, conflict and the current state of peace are not included formally. If they are included, it is implicitly and at the discretion of individual, outward-looking lecturers, who themselves form strategies for teaching in relation to their own political perceptions and constraints from the Acehnese cultural, political and economic context. Lecturers’ agency to shape syllabus content in this way seems most feasible only within a narrow scope of teacher education subjects such as English and Civic Education, therefore reducing the likelihood of future teachers in other subject areas gaining exposure to material outside their curricula.

Findings in this chapter also indicate that, in the absence of any explicit peacebuilding education, the content within Compulsory Civic Education seems to implicitly contain aspects of the reconciliatory, recognition and representation elements from the 4 Rs framework. This is mainly through presenting balanced and informative discussions on topics such as the concept of democracy, human rights, and gender issues. Limitations arise when considering that the values embedded in the text are simply part of a nationalised civic agenda, and contain no localised material to indicate Aceh’s very recent history of conflict; without specific acknowledgement of past conflict issues, the content cannot achieve the transitional justice needed for true reconciliation. Practical and participatory aspects of teacher education are representative of some (but not necessarily all) of the students, and while this can encourage a redistribution of education resources, in the
absence of explicit peacebuilding material to compliment these features, it’s unclear how effective these program are in promoting truly sustainable, positive peace.

**Findings Chapter 2:**

*Photograph 6: Dusk on the streets of Banda Aceh*
Having analysed the strategically selective context in which future teachers are located, this chapter aims to establish how they position themselves within it, therefore determining their agency with regards to developing ideas about and practicing forms of sustainable peacebuilding. Findings in this chapter thus relate to the following sub-question:

*How do Acehnese future teachers perceive their training, the previous conflict and present state of peace? How does this influence their outlook on the teaching profession and sustainable peacebuilding?*

Data related to this chapter was gathered directly from current student teachers taking part in semi-structured interviews and focus groups; discussions centered around, but were not limited to the topics of motivations, perceptions of teacher education, conflict experiences and observations on the current state of peace. The topics covered were often similar to those covered in interviews with lecturers, enabling a multi-layered understanding of how the same strategically selective arenas (provided by the curriculum the post-conflict, Islamic socio-political context and additionally, the lecturers themselves) have separate implications for the agency of future teachers in facilitating sustainable peacebuilding.

**Perceptions of Teacher Education Process**

“The course and subjects are already good, but the implementation of how lecturers actually teach in the class must be improved.” (BIT1-F)

The above reflection summarises the majority of the respondents’ perceptions regarding the teacher training programs at both universities. Most students expressed overall satisfaction with their university courses, with “good theory” (IST1-F, ET1-F) being used as a common phrase to describe the teaching materials and program structure. The university environment was seen as conducive to learning, with Syiah Kuala University described as having “very good infrastructure” (CT2-M) in terms of access to books, technology and teaching space. One lecturer revealed that the spacious, modern teacher training campus of Syiah Kuala had been built after the tsunami by USAID (EL2-F)³. Though I did not receive specific information about UIN Ar-Raniry, where the Education Faculty buildings were slightly shabbier, the students there also expressed similar levels of satisfaction. Despite most students being satisfied with their teaching structure, I made a point during each interview or focus group to ask if there were any aspects of their education that needed improvement. Any constructive feedback that was given usually centered around the practical ‘Microteaching’ aspect of the training, with one student pointing out that practicing teaching skills with friends at university was not comparable to the “reality” of teaching children by themselves, admitting that “not all techniques...will work well” (BIT1-

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³ I later spotted a commemorative plaque which confirmed this
Given the unpredictable nature of teaching in a real-life classroom, she conceded perhaps an initial learning curve is to be expected when making the transition from theory to practice.

In contrast to the generally positive perceptions of the teacher training process, satisfaction with the lecturers themselves was noticeably less. Overall, lecturers were not seen as role models or “good examples” (PT1-F, IST1-F) for the students to learn from themselves. The main reason for this was a perceived lack of professionalism; I was told that lecturers were often “not on time, they are not disciplined, they are smoking” (AT2-M). One student remarked that there had been times when lecturers did not turn up to classes (IST1-F). There seemed to be a disparity between how a teacher should ideally behave, and the way students perceived the actual behavior of their lecturers in the Education Faculties, resulting in a situation where “when they teach students, they cannot train the character of students, because they have a bad character themselves” (AT1-M). Research has shown the importance of perceived ‘good teaching’ when students evaluate their learning environment, with a positive response to teaching quality associated with students adopting ‘meaning-based’ strategies and outcomes from their academic learnings (Lizzio, Wilson and Simmons, 2002). The presence of seemingly disinterested lecturers could result from the fact that many did not originally have career aspirations in this field, as discussed in the previous findings chapter. In the sensitive and vulnerable post-conflict context of Aceh, where teachers are often perceived as societal role models, it is concerning that many of the students interviewed could not see their main educators as good examples for themselves.

Another notable student perception on the teaching training process was the existence of a “social range between students and lecturers” (MT1-F). Observations from the students I interviewed created a sense of unapproachability surrounding the lecturers; in particular, this perceived ‘gap’ separating trainee teachers from their lecturers suggested that the former were uncomfortable in directly approaching the latter. Beliefs that lecturers would not take students’ opinions seriously were common – when I asked about student-teacher dialogue and discussion within university, in one focus group I was told that “some lecturers will maybe accept our critiques and our comments, but some lecturers would say ‘I am the director, you are just a student’” (ET1-F). Another student remarked that “there are some lecturers that can accept the critiques, but there are others who accept the critiques but then the scores of the students might decrease” (BIT1-F). Though there was general acknowledgement that not all lecturers were like that – “different lecturers have different characters” (ET1-F) – a learning environment where future teachers feel distanced and uncomfortable in terms of speaking with their educators cannot be conducive to sustainable peacebuilding, where dialogue is critical.

This lack of dialogue and sense of hierarchy between future teachers and their lecturers could be explained by cultural factors which shape perceptions of senior educators. One student I interviewed explained that in Aceh, “the teacher for society is the same as the
ulama” (CT2-M). With contemporary Acehnese culture and society being strongly influenced by its “judicial Islamic orientation” (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014: 14), a comparison of teachers to the dominant religious authorities reveals the authority and respect that teachers or lecturers can yield, simply by being in an educational position. Given that the ulama in Aceh have had a prominent guiding role in society for decades (Alfian, 1975; Aspinall, 2009b), this viewpoint also suggests a similar veneration for teachers, resulting in an unwillingness of students to challenge their teachers on hierarchical grounds. Though perceptions surrounding teachers will be further explored later on in this chapter, this observation demonstrates how education systems cannot be separated from their local context (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). The combination of the CCPEE and SRA framework is especially useful here in highlighting how Acehnese societal norms concerning religious authority embed themselves into educational structures, which causes the actors within – in this case, future teachers – to adhere to strategies of obedience and limited interaction, a strategy that Bjork (2005) notes is perceived as the most effective way to succeed in Indonesian education systems.

The ‘Sound of Guns’: Conflict Experiences
The majority of students I spoke to were originally from outside Banda Aceh, so it was unsurprising that they recounted a wide array of conflict experiences. As most of the students I spoke to were around 20-21 years old, this meant that they were born during the conflict, and were still very young during the peak in violence in the early 2000s. Despite this, their memories from this time remained vivid:

“I still remember one night when we heard the sound of guns, so we had to hide and my mother asked us to get down, and we had to sleep on the floor” (ET1-F).

The sound of conflict, especially hearing the noise of gunfire “everywhere” (GT1-F) was a lasting impression among many students I interviewed, with one describing it as a time where he constantly heard “boom boom boom” (ET2-M). Numerous students also remembered close encounters with soldiers; one student recalled her house being searched by the military for her policeman father, who hid in her grandmother’s house (IST1-F), while another remembered her father being arrested by soldiers, suspected of being a GAM militant simply because of his “physical appearance” (PT1-F). Given these experiences, it was not surprising that animosity towards soldiers was often expressed as a memory from period: “I was very very afraid of soldiers. When you see a uniform, we were always really scared about that’ (CT2-M). More lasting and far-reaching effects of these conflict experiences were evident when some students talked about the consequences on their families – one student noted how “since then, my family felt so traumatic and really against anything relating to armies or soldier, like we are banning to marry a soldier or we cannot be a part of the army” (PT1-F).
As well as having effects at home, the conflict seemed to pervade many aspects of the student’s lives, including school. Low school attendance was a widely reported memory of the conflict for many students:

“I remember education was very difficult at this time, student attendance in the schools was very small. The teachers found it very difficult to teach because of the conditions. Even some days I did not go to school” (ET1-M).

Though motivations on becoming a teacher will be further explored in a below section, the difficulty of attending school and receiving a normal education during the conflict was a common incentive I heard from students explaining their career choice. Being prevented from going to school and being “forbidden to leave the house” (BT3-F) created a present-day emphasis on the importance of education in Aceh. One student expressed her desire to “keep increasing education after this conflict” (AT3-M). Another student remembered the conflict as a time when, in terms of achievement, students “cannot get anything” (BT3-F), but wanted to use this to show her future students that in the present day, “you can study hard, you can get a better education”.

As well as preventing students from going to school, one student explained how the conflict affected her day-to-day life at school in terms of social experiences:

“Based on my experience, I would consider myself a victim of the conflict, because my father was arrested by some of GAM. When I went to school, some of my friends did not want to be friends with me anymore, so I was being isolated. But my teacher during that time made me strong” (BIT1-F).

The ostracisation experienced by this student reveals one of the multitude of ways in which violence and war can manifest into smaller scale conflicts within society, particularly within an educational context (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2010). The student elaborated on the anecdote later on, revealing that because of the accusations against her father, her mother became depressed, “so I could only share my problems with my teacher, the teacher provided a space where I could share anything” (BIT1-F). In this case the teacher became a positive element in an otherwise isolating situation, highlighting how teachers are able to “locate their work within broader social parameters and construct their profession [...] as someone who has social responsibilities” (Vongalis-Macrow, 2006: 106). This anecdote also introduced the idea that memorable or significant conflict experiences can influence students in terms of their decision to become teachers later on – a notion that will be further discussed later within this chapter.

**Perceptions of the Current State of Peace**

Examining how future teachers perceived the current post-conflict period in Aceh helped me to understand how they interpreted notions of peace. Therefore, talking about the
students’ conflict experiences was often followed by discussing the aftermath of the MoU and their perceptions on the current state of Acehnese society. For most of the topics I covered in student interviews, including conflict experiences, the respondents seemed willing to share their thoughts. However, when prompting a discussion about the current state of peace or introducing peacebuilding education to schools, students became noticeably more reserved in their answers. Very much still a political topic in Aceh, the sensitivity of talking about peace was evident when one respondent asked if we could conduct the remainder of the interview in English, because he did not want other people in the crowded coffee shop to listen and understand what we were talking about (CT2-M). Despite the general wariness with which the students approached these topics, there were some shared themes and interpretations of the current peace that arose from the participants’ answers.

Many students’ attributed lasting peace in Aceh to the power of the MoU. A male Citizenship Education student told me that the reason GAM were now inactive was because they “respect the promise” of the signed contract, and that this agreement was “still trusted” by them (CT2-M). Reflecting on the effect on Acehnese society, he noted how the province had become a place where “there is low criminals, economics has increased, and people are not scared anymore” – in his view this was “proof of the MoU” and its positive effects. The view that people had benefitted greatly from the peace agreement was repeated amongst other students; echoing one lecturer’s (ISD1-M) sentiments in the previous findings chapter, a Bahasa Indonesia Education student told me, “most needs of the Acehnese government are now fulfilled by the government”, with her defining “needs” as “specialised positions, our rights and authority […] our natural resources” given to Aceh as part of the deal (BIT1-F). That many student participants viewed peace from a strongly political perspective was interesting, especially considering that a 2009 study on community perceptions surrounding the MoU had found that respondents who spoke positively about the peace process were mainly just focused on the “pragmatic and everyday benefits of the peace rather than the politics” (Grayman, 2009). It’s possible that different perspectives arise from the fact that the university students I interviewed were expected to read and engage with current affairs more (as noted in the previous chapter), giving them more exposure to political issues.

Other students’ interpretation of the current state of peace was more outward looking, in the sense that they saw peace in Aceh being the result of a more open, changing society - “a new era” (CT2-M). A future English teacher thought that increased communication with national institutions in Jakarta and outside Indonesia had been an important factor in maintaining peace in Aceh (ET3-M). Due to the lack of media and international presence in Aceh during the conflict (Lee-Koo, 2012), open communications were not possible at this time, resulting in an environment that felt “too closed” according to one student (ET1-F). Without the same restrictions in the present, another explained that “it is easier to understand others”, and that society had learnt “it is better to communicate if we have problems rather than fighting” (ET3-M). Considering this young generation grew up during
the creation of a peace agreement facilitated by an increasingly present, post-tsunami international community (Burke, 2008; Gaillard et al., 2008; Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2010), perhaps such views are unexpected.

Very few students took a negative view of the current state of peace, possibly linked to the general reluctance to speak about the subject. The Citizenship Education student who had been extremely positive regarding the MoU and its effect on peace did acknowledge that, in terms of underlying societal tensions “maybe there is still something” (CT2-M). The problem was that they were often hidden – he told me “we don’t know” about them (CT2-M). A female student shed more light on this by revealing that Aceh was like an “iceberg” in her view, due to many problems hidden under the surface (CT1-F). In her opinion, conflict in Aceh was ongoing in the form of disputes over people gaining influential or powerful positions:

“Intelligent people of Aceh, some of them went abroad during the conflict and studied, so when they come back to Aceh, they can get higher positions...but GAM members, some of them just finished high school, how can they become the leader when they only just finished high school? They don’t really master a subject like economics or something. Intelligent people who really know about economics, politics, just kept silent [...] because maybe if they take these higher positions they will trigger some other conflicts with GAM members. It’s not fair” (CT1-F).

This was perhaps the frankest opinion I encountered from a student about the current political environment in Aceh; as an insight into youth opinion on current political happenings, it revealed continued animosity towards ex-GAM members alongside a high level of status attached to people who have achieved higher levels of education. Though these themes will be explored further in the final section of this chapter, it is worth noting that to some extent these views do reflect the reality of the post-conflict period, with many elite members of GAM rising to political prominence after the civil war (Aspinall, 2009a; Barron, 2008).

**Perceptions on Peacebuilding Education**

After discussing their experiences of the conflict and perceptions of the post-conflict period, I asked students about their opinions on bringing such topics explicitly into the classroom. Explicit peacebuilding initiatives in classrooms are crucial in building positive peace because children are arguably at their most formative period in being relatively open to different worldviews, and schools are usually the only institution where peace education can be formally carried out across a community (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Student’s opinions on this topic fell into one of three categories; the first category was made up of students who saw talking about these subjects as a potential “trigger” (FTD1-F), and were extremely reluctant to bring these topics into a school environment. One student in this category believed that talking about the conflict in schools would “trigger again the tension among students and
society” (FTD1-F), while elsewhere it was described as a very “risky” (GT1-F) idea; rather than talking about conflict, teachers “should forget and move on” (ibid.). Another student feared that, in the event of those topics being discussed in class, her fellow classmates would question why she was living here, because her parents were not Acehnese (ET1-F).

The second category of students recognised the importance of reflecting on conflict experiences, but viewed this as a personal exercise rather than one to be shared with others in classrooms:

“We should not talk about the conflict in teaching. I think that, we should keep politics out of teaching. We learn about the conflict at home, through our own experiences, knowledge about the conflict is important but we should keep it out of the schools” (ET3-M).

Similarly, another student said that while teachers must know about conflict-sensitive issues, there was simply “no need to have a required subject” (BIT1-F) about the topic in school curriculums. The existence of perceptions like these and those from the first category amongst students could potentially be explained by a lingering culture of fear that continues to exist long after war, encouraging political apathy and inaction across civil societies (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). This would make sense given the constant threats of punishment and violence that are experienced by societies during war (ibid.), amongst the other traumatic conflict experiences suffered by many of the students I interviewed – memories of life at this time may cause them to be cautious in bringing up such politically charged topics in public spaces, even years later.

Thirdly, the final category of respondents on this topic comprised of individuals who were least responsive to the questions posed, and saw no need for conflict-sensitive material to be implemented into schools due to its perceived insignificance or irrelevance. With limited teaching hours in university, one student questioned why they should be learning about such topics, when other subjects such as the core teaching methodology were “very much more important” (CT2-M). Another did not seem to think that post-conflict issues still existed, claiming that because the Acehnese “already live together with people from different religions” (BIT1-F), there was no need to discuss ideas about peace and togetherness in the classroom. What was surprising about such viewpoints was that they did not necessarily come from students with no significant experiences of the conflict. Conversely, numerous students in this category did think of themselves as conflict victims. One way of explaining these views could be that the interviewees considered school-based peacebuilding education to be unimportant because they did not have a clear, distinct idea of what it entailed, even though I tried my best to convey this through the translator. A lack of understanding would be unsurprising given the extremely limited number of conflict-sensitive programs that were introduced in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami and 2005 peace agreement (Shah and Lopes Cardozo, 2014). Interestingly, out of 24 students interviewed, none of them thought it was a good idea to explicitly discuss topics such as peace and conflict in school environments. Highlighting how socially and politically sensitive these
topics still are, this also emphasises the need to widely promote education in post-conflict societies as a potential (yet not unproblematic) key component of peacebuilding processes (Novelli et al, 2015).

‘The Noble Profession’ – Student Motivations and Reflections on the Role of Teachers

Career motivations of students in the Education Faculties and their reflections on the significance of the role were often interlinked, giving insight into their potential capacity to practice sustainable peacebuilding. There were a few students who chose teaching because it was seen as a stable career path with “less competitors” (BIT1-F); for the majority of students I interviewed, it seemed that their insights and motivations surrounding teaching were directly linked to their experiences and perceptions of the previous conflict. Motivations to become teachers for many students stemmed from a view that the Acehnese people had been subject to many limitations and injustices during the civil war, and that teachers had a responsibility to right some of these past wrongs:

“When our rights were taken from us, we don’t have to settle, we don’t have to give up, we have to take back the rights which have been taken away from us. The role of every teacher is that we have to teach that we know what is our rights, I want to do this in my teaching” (AT1-M).

Using teaching as a way of addressing past injustices was repeated by other students - one female student noted how some women were prevented from pursuing education during the conflict, so her goal was to “continue studying as high as possible” (BT1-F) and encourage her future students to also do this. Though the gendered implications of this will be further elaborated in the following findings chapter, it is worth noting here that such sentiments strongly echo the redistributive elements outlined in Nancy Fraser’s social justice theory (2005) and the 4 R’s framework (Novelli et al., 2015). There was a sense that students were looking for a break from the past, with MT3-F telling me that “I don’t want my children in future years to feel like I did”.

Reflecting on differences between the past and present, and subsequently using this as a motivation to teach can be seen as “making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical” (Giroux, 2003). Future teachers view pursuing their education as a political act, with the intention of passing this sentiment on to their future students. Giroux argues that being a “reflective practitioner” in this way allows teachers to become “transformative intellectuals” within society (2003), which establishes the potential for building a truly positive peace by addressing structural causes of conflict. However, considering the lack of exposure to explicit materials and ideas about peacebuilding in their education structure, it is unclear to what extent future teacher can be encouraged to form such ‘transformative’ ideas. It is noteworthy that students did not connect the redistributive tendencies in their motivations with the idea of peacebuilding education. Though going to
university might have been viewed as a political act, it’s possible that the educational structure itself was not viewed from a political perspective, as is evident from the student’s absence of criticism and their unwillingness to incorporate peacebuilding education into it – perhaps further indication of the culture of obedience that pervades Indonesian education systems (Bjork, 2005), arguably further limiting their transformative capabilities.

Perceptions surrounding the students’ wider roles as future teachers were also often linked to making societal progress after the conflict. One student told me that “after the conflict, the most important point to teach is respecting others” (ET3-M), with another explaining this was needed in order to create an environment in which teachers can “implement the values of being together” (BT1-F). For teachers to achieve these aims it was necessary to be both a “role model” (BIT1-F, IST1-F, ET3-M) and a “character-builder” (AT1-F, AT2-F, MT1-F) for society – two phrases that I heard numerous times from various students. As well as sharing knowledge, a teacher was expected to practice good deeds and be an example to their own family members, in addition to their students (AT2-F). Using the local socio-cultural, post-conflict (political) context to strategically frame their perceptions and objectives surrounding the teaching role demonstrates how students can aspire to ideals associated with being a good teacher. As was discussed in the previous chapter, since some curricula are slightly flexible with regards to incorporating the lecturer’s input, this could provide opportunities for future teachers to interact with these structures using their own strategies (Hay, 2002; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006), though it is also important to note that such strategies may not always be supportive of sustainable peacebuilding.

Many students were motivated to become teachers because the role was seen as valuable in itself; teaching in Aceh is seen as a selfless and “noble profession” (AT2-F) due to the idea that teacher “give all they have to others” (AT2-F), completely “dedicating themselves to society” (MT1-F). Expressing similar beliefs in the value of teaching, three different students I spoke to had aspirations to offer free schooling for the poor in their home villages after becoming qualified (BT5-F, MT1-F, MT3-F). Such initiatives were seen to be complementary to the necessary “kindness” that teachers should implement in their daily lives (MT1-F). Again, such perspectives hint at the potential to fulfill redistributive measures needed in post-conflict education (Novelli et al., 2015), similarly to the required PPL practical placement outlined in the previous chapter. Initiating social work of this nature is also likely to be religiously motivated: the importance of zakat (charity) was often highlighted during conversations about religion with both friends and interviewees. Teaching was interpreted by some students as a pious activity, because “in Islam we share everything with others, instead of putting yourself first” (MT2-F). Using these perspectives to initiate socially transformative projects demonstrates how future teachers’ have the potential to expand their social agency beyond the boundaries of school, into a social-political sphere (Vongalis-Macrow, 2006).

A final observation on the perceptions and motivations on teaching is a sentiment that was repeated throughout my research amongst the students - the view that “being uneducated
is a factor of conflict” (MT3-F); in other words, there was an explicit association between being uneducated and being part of GAM. Though in reality, many of GAM’s senior leaders had a university education (Schulze, 2004) the prevailing view amongst the students I spoke to was that GAM’s reasons for causing conflict arose because the vast majority of ex-combatants were uneducated. A lack of schooling was seen to make it “easy [...] to be engaged with militants” (BT2-F) and to create “foolish students that will trigger conflict” (MT3-F). The somewhat unsympathetic view of GAM members could possibly be explained by the fact that my research was based in Banda Aceh, where GAM had much less support during the conflict compared to other areas of the province. Nevertheless, it shows an unwillingness on the part of the students to freely engage with a significant group of actors involved in the conflict. One student did acknowledge how the militant group had suffered after the war, reflecting that “many of the ex-GAM people are unemployed right now [...] it’s our obligation to educate and create a job field for these people.” Though such sentiments could be seen as a positive step towards the key reconciliatory aspects outlined in the 4 R’s framework (Novelli et al., 2015), they were not widespread amongst students.

Findings Chapter 2: Concluding Reflections

How do Acehnese future teachers perceive their training, the previous conflict and present state of peace? How does this influence their outlook on the teaching profession and sustainable peacebuilding?

In answering the above sub-question, the findings in this chapter indicate that future teachers’ outlooks and strategies within education, like their lecturers, are informed by personal perceptions and experiences of the socio-cultural, post-conflict context in which they operate. Conflict experiences were described much more vividly than their lecturers, and appear to be more influential, motivating factors in terms of choosing the teaching profession as a career. Education itself is seen by many Acehnese future teachers as a political act; pursuing higher education highlights the societal progress achieved since the conflict period, whereas a lack of education is associated with GAM and viewed as a potential cause of conflict, diminishing the chance for reconciliatory, positive relations associated with sustainable peacebuilding. These perceptions, along with a cultural respect for teachers that elevates their status as ‘knowledge sharers’ and ‘role models’ with social responsibilities, encourages many students to frame their aspirations in terms of recognising the potential benefit to society; for some this was in a redistributive sense, where helping disadvantaged communities was a future goal. Such sentiments have positive implications for future teachers being able to implement a redistribution of educational resources and recognition of social inequalities needed for sustainable peacebuilding (Novelli et al., 2015).

Most students, despite being aware of current political affairs, described the present state of peace in a positive sense, with little critical reflection – possibly due to the sensitivity of the subject, and lack of understanding about what constitutes peacebuilding education.
There was therefore a widespread view that explicit peacebuilding material should not be incorporated into Acehnese classrooms; with reported overall satisfaction with the education structure, very few leading examples of lecturers including such topics in classes, and a cultural unwillingness to challenge educational hierarchies (Bjork, 2005), it seems unlikely that students, as future teachers, would be inclined to incorporate explicit peacebuilding initiatives into their own classrooms. Lastly, despite some participatory student opportunities outlined in the previous findings chapter, in reality it seemed that everyday communications between lecturers and students were limited, again due to an unwillingness from the students to breach socio-cultural educational hierarchies. Lack of dialogue and a perceived unapproachability of lecturers therefore reduces the likelihood of Acehnese teacher education being truly representative of student teachers, meaning that the necessary representation element of sustainable peacebuilding is unfulfilled. It could also be argued that future teachers are likely to replicate the same hierarchies within their own classrooms, further diminishing the potential to practice representative, sustainable peacebuilding education in future.
Findings Chapter 3:

Photograph 7: A village fair in Lhoknga, Aceh Besar
This chapter presents findings related to gender, using interview data from both future teachers and their lecturers. As described in the Introduction and Theoretical Framework chapters previously, exploring a gendered aspect of peacebuilding is necessary because of the exclusionary peace process in Aceh, in which gendered aspects of conflict were ignored and men were the dominant actors (Lee-Koo, 2012). At a policy level, in many post-conflict recovery approaches a gender-neutral position is taken, which is unrepresentative of the variety of impacts and experiences across all groups, or where the experiences of men are taken to be representative of the whole community (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Meanwhile, notions of women during and after war are often ‘essentialised’, labelling them with a homogeneous identity related to motherhood which supposedly makes them suitable for peacemaking (Väyrynen, 2010). It is important to acknowledge that women and men experience, perceive and respond to disasters in unexpected ways (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008) which can then help to deconstruct socially embedded ideas in order to better understand the process of peacebuilding and its gendered dynamics (Väyrynen, 2010).

This chapter explores the deeply-rooted associations between the teaching profession, Acehnese matrifocal motherhood, and a partriarchal society, showing how traditional gender expectations placed upon female student teachers can limit their capacity to enact transformative elements of peacebuilding, while for others, training to be a teacher is empowering. A discussion of various obstacles facing women in teacher education is also included, highlighting how patriarchal perceptions can limit women’s opportunities and agency. The chapter ends with an assessment of women’s space for manoeuver within teacher training structures, drawing links between the underlying effects of their limited agency and and the system’s potential for promoting sustainable peacebuilding.

**Teaching and Motherhood**

My conversations and discussions about gender expectations with research participants revealed a strong association between teaching and motherhood amongst the Acehnese community, both on conceptual and practical levels. This somewhat explained why the Education Faculty in both universities was made up of an overwhelmingly female student body – up to 90% in certain subjects (PL1-F). A perceived ‘softness’ of character was the main reason cited by students for women being most suited to a teaching role. For example, when I asked students why it seemed there were more female students than males in the Education Faculties, ET1-F told me that women have “more soft feelings” towards children than males, which made them “more caring” and therefore more suitable for the role. A notion that women were naturally fonder of children than men was thought by many interviewees to be the reason for more female students than males in the Education Faculties (IST1-F, CT2-M, ET3-M). This was surprising given that very few female interviewees had mentioned a love of children as one of their main motivations for choosing to study a teaching degree, as is evident from the previous chapter. However, such perceptions are in line with the matrifocal culture present in Aceh; that women are, by their
own nature, expected to fulfill the teaching role by being “more sweet” (CT2-M) than men, alongside their universal “love” (IST1-F) for children, is indicative of the traditional gender roles present in Acehnese society being perpetuated by what Judith Butler (1990) calls gender performativity. Motherhood and teaching are also valued in nationalistic discourses as part of the Ibuism ideology, with the term ibu bangsa (mother of nation) emphasising the responsibility placed on women to prepare the next generation (Jauhola, 2010).

Future teachers’ perceptions that women’s suitability for teaching arises from characteristics associated with motherhood are reflected in the work of Sara Ruddick (1989). She argues that women’s maternal tendencies include being caring and protective towards all forms of life, therefore making them well suited to peacebuilding processes (Ruddick, 1989). In a sense this idea was shared by numerous student and lecturer interviewees, who saw teachers linked to peacebuilding only through a means of their role in creating harmony and togetherness in the classroom (BT1-F, DH1-M). Such perceptions are problematic because, in a post-conflict context where the majority of current and future teachers are female, this type of thinking provides limiting and pigeonholed stereotypes of women already in the profession (Kirk, 2004) and postulates women as inherently pacifist, in turn reinforcing militaristic masculine stereotypes (Väyrynen, 2010). Considering that there are numerous instances of women having active roles in the conflict – for example, Inong Balee was a prominent female combatant wing of GAM (Lee-Koo, 2012) - these perceptions are not an accurate representation of the reality of gender roles in Aceh. In terms of achieving sustainable, gender-just peace through education, it is imperative to move beyond ideas that women are natural carers and therefore automatic peacemakers for society.

A slightly more practical interpretation of the link between women and teaching was given by a male English Education student, who reasoned that they were more suitable “because they have already raised babies, they (women) are better at teaching, it is natural for them” (ET3-M). On the other hand, for men it was less natural – “Sometimes […] the male teacher does not know what to do” (ET3-M). One senior lecturer, having observed many colleagues over the years, believed that many women chose a career in education because they feel able to “teach both at home and in the classroom” (ISD1-M). Teaching, as opposed to other careers, was generally perceived to be compatible with fulfilling maternal and familial duties in the home; with many school schedules finishing in the early afternoon, some respondents highlighted the possibility for women to finish work and then attend to their family for the rest of the day (AT1-F, BT2-F, CT1-M). This corresponds again with matrifocal roles assigned to women in traditional Acehnese society, where women are expected to manage the household and bear most of the responsibilities associated with educating children, whereas fathers do not have as much interaction (Srimulyani, 2010). A different lecturer thought that teaching was a sensible career choice for married women because it meant there was guaranteed work if the husband needed to move away for a new job (EL2-F). While finding other kinds of work after moving was assumed to be much more difficult, teaching was a safe choice because “in every regency there’s an opportunity to teach” (EL2-
The fact that this was expressed in terms of the husband having the freedom to move around, rather than the wife, reveals how Acehnese matrifocality encourages additional familial and behavioural expectations to be placed on female teachers.

The association motherhood with teaching did have some more empowering aspects that were emphasised during the research period. A majority of lecturers and future female teachers I spoke to seemed genuinely happy to be part of the teacher training faculty. Though seeing large numbers of young women in the Education Faculties was initially surprising, it made sense given that Aceh, unlike other impoverished regions in Indonesia and around the world, has achieved equal school participation rates for both sexes through to senior high school, with females even outnumbering males at the tertiary level (UNDP, 2010). One reason for this may have a religious grounding – an English student described an Arabic proverb that describes mothers as “the first school” (ET1-), connected to the national Islamic ideology of matrifocal liubism. Viewed in this way, teaching presents an opportunity for female educators to gain status and respect (Kirk, 2004), especially in communities that may be otherwise conservative in their attitudes to women. Furthermore, according to some students, becoming a teacher and being educated to university level were desirable characteristics in a female, because men wanted to marry “women with a title” (BIT1-F). Pursuing teaching as a career made sense for women in other ways too. During a focus group discussion, one female Biology Education student revealed how her career choice had been strongly encouraged by her mother as a way of achieving empowerment and independence. Describing herself as coming from a “broken home” where the mother struggled to make ends meet after divorcing the father, she explained the reasoning behind her career choice:

“It’s very important for women to be educated and independent, so that she has her own money, and she does not have to rely on her husband. If something bad happens then the woman can support herself and her children.” (BT5-F).

In addition to qualifying as a teacher, the student was determined to pursue a Master’s degree and PhD. The student’s decision and her mother’s strong encouragement to become a teacher in order to achieve independence and agency can be seen as a strategic pursuit of personal goals, demonstrating how teaching has the potential to be a transformative process for women (Kirk, 2004). In this way, teaching can also be seen as a transformative opportunity for mothers to assert their own independence and agency, even whilst managing family duties at home. That female future teachers readily expect to be able to continue working when they have families is indicative of an education system that is redistributive in terms of being able to offer mothers employment opportunities, as well as participation in economic structures. It is also potentially representative in terms of inclusivity and the chance to participate in the transformative politics of education (Novelli et al., 2015).
“Males have no limits. A gentleman can do anything”: Male Privilege within Acehnese Teacher Education

With a widely-held belief in Aceh about the union between teaching and motherhood, and an overwhelming majority of students in the Education Faculties being female (except for small number of subjects such as Engineering), it was somewhat surprising to find that the teacher education system was dominated by male privilege and discourse. It is no coincidence that out of all the lecturers I interviewed, the two most senior participants were male, while all except one of the more junior staff were female. Based on anecdotal information, the vast majority of senior and management roles in the Education Faculties of both universities are filled by men. This is also the case among students who want to pursue a Master’s or PhD after undergraduate level – candidates are more likely to be male. When I raised these issues with the senior male participants, the responses were interesting. A recently appointed Deputy Dean within the Education Faculty at UIN told me that personally he would “love to see an equal number of positions between males and females in this university” (ISD1-M). Thinking aloud, he also asked “Why don’t more women work in the Deputy programs?” (ISD1-M). Similarly, while discussing university admissions procedures, and the situation of having disproportionately more male candidates for certain subjects and Masters/PhD programs, a male Head of Department from the same university said that “I don’t think too much about referring to gender, I would just like those who are competent to be students in my department” (DH1-M).

Though such statements probably were well-meaning, they display a clear disconnect between senior males in the Education Faculties and the reality of career obstacles faced by Acehnese women in the same departments, both as students and lecturers – these obstacles will subsequently be discussed below. A lack of acknowledgement from the male perspective about these obstacles mirrors the societal absence of recognition of the gendered suffering experienced by thousands of women during the civil war (Amnesty International, 2013; Lee-Koo, 2012). Since one of the key components in the 4 R’s framework for sustainable peacebuilding specifies “recognition of institutionalized cultural hierarchies” (Novelli et al., 2015: 13), the failure of senior male staff to recognize the existence of these within the Education Faculties renders Acehnese teacher training less conducive to building a truly inclusive, sustainable and gender-just peace.

I listened to many anecdotes from students and lecturers about various obstacles faced by women in the Education Faculties, reiterating the lack of understanding about gendered disparities within education from a higher level, as made evident by the senior male lecturers. From the students’ side, I listened to anecdotal evidence about female students not being allowed to take senior or leading positions within student committees – a Bahasa Indonesia Education student from Syiah Kuala university told me that “sometimes a female student cannot be head of an organization in campus” (BIT1-F). Though I was not able to verify this, even if it were not true the fact that female students believed this reveals psychological barriers to progression faced by Acehnese women in education structures. That women feel discriminated in this way indicates the pervasiveness of patriarchal
attitudes throughout Acehnese society, which have permeated through to the teacher training system. I was also told about instances of discrimination against female lecturers who pursued promotion. A female English lecturer from UIN university told me about a colleague who had missed out on one such opportunity:

“A girl, in one example I know, there is a chance for her to be chosen for more senior role. They have the same capabilities as the male candidate, in fact the woman was more senior than the male. And she had very few weaknesses, but still the male candidate was chosen. That happens. But the thing is, we female lecturers, we would like to choose a female leader. With 20-25 females, and 27 men in the department, they will win, because the male voters are more than girl voters [...] we can’t force, it depends on the members, the more males there are, the more opportunity for a male leader to be chosen. So, this is still a problem in the academic situation, I have seen this.” (EL1-F).

Such anecdotes are aligned with Dr Asna Husin’s (2015) observations on the Acehnese Education system; as a current professor at UIN Ar-Raniry, she notes that it is an “insignificant” (2015: 327) number of women that progress to become Deans of academic departments, and that there are currently no female Rectors or even Rector candidates in any Acehnese university (ibid.). Whenever I asked student participants why women were outnumbered by men in these contexts, there were numerous answers. A common theme was that the overall status of men was higher than that of women, based on “the principle of Islam” (BIT1-F). According to this principle, it was argued that “females can compete with males in some positions, but not all of them [...] some positions are more suitable for men.” (BIT1-F). The frequency of encountering students with similar viewpoints during the data collection process demonstrates the importance of Islam in shaping the cultural context in Aceh, which in turn has visible discriminatory effects against women in the teacher training system; the role of local Islamic culture is highlighted as a “constitutive element and contingent factor” (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a: 528) in the actions of those operating within teacher education. Though traditional Acehnese matrifocal culture sometimes contradicts Islamic teachings on gender roles (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008; Srimulyani, 2010) - for example, Islam dictates that men are head of the household - in recent years, women’s roles have arguably been further confined within Acehnese society due to the growing prominence of Islam and the ulama’s influence in determining gender roles (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008).

The unsuitability of women for certain roles in the workplace was also attributed to generalised personality traits. From the interviews, it was clear that certain perspectives about women being mentally incompetent and unsuitable for the workplace existed amongst some male respondents. During one focus group with male English Education students, I was told that there are fewer women in senior university positions because “men have more wisdom [...] for having general perspective [...] it’s more difficult for them (women) to see the bigger picture” (ET2-M). Similarly, a Citizenship Education student thought that women had a problem of being too ‘moody’, which interfered with their jobs
(CT2-M). When I pointed out that men could also be subject to ‘moodiness’, he admitted this was true, but that that men “were smarter to control those moods” (CT2-M). In this way, men were seen to have “no limits” – this particular participant told me that “a gentleman can do anything” because of their superior perceptions and mindset (CT2-M). Though not all male respondents shared these views – for example, in another interview a student expressed that he thought women should be equal to men in society, and that women are generally better at “thinking tasks” (ET1-M) – the existence of such views is representative of known patriarchal viewpoints in Acehnese society. Widespread beliefs that women are inferior in some ways to men will continue to marginalize and prevent them from being represented at higher levels within the education system. A lack of female representation in this way is incompatible with building an education system that can promote sustainable peacebuilding in the post-conflict context of Aceh; since the education system is a key state institution, and often one of the first community organisations to function after crises, it is imperative they set high standards for gender equality in staffing (Kirk, 2004).

**Future Female Teachers – Agency and Space for Manoeuvre**

On a superficial level, women in Acehnese teacher training systems are perceived to have the same opportunities as men – many students I spoke to believed that, within higher education at least, women and men had the same opportunities (ET1-F, AT1-M, AT2-M). However, the various obstacles discussed in this chapter that women face within the teacher education system arguably means that they have limited space for manoeuvre in terms of agency, compared to their male counterparts. In addition to their limiting associations with motherhood and their perceived inferior personality traits, they are subject to other behavioural expectations, arising from dominant patriarchal views in society: I encountered a clear example of this when the subject of inappropriate teacher behavior was brought up amongst students during a focus group discussion. Though it was a mixed focus group, inappropriate behavior was mainly described in terms of actions perceived to be inappropriate specifically for female teachers. Examples of this included “dressing inappropriately, like in short skirts or skinny jeans” (AT2-F), “flirting” (AT1-M) and “sitting on the desk” (AT2-M). That inappropriate behavior specific to male teachers was not mentioned was revealing, highlight how the influence of the patriarchal, socio-cultural context on teacher education affects expectations of female teachers. Locating Acehnese women in the teacher education system involves taking into account these behavioural expectations as constraints that bind them and shape the conditions under which they can exercise agency (Lopes Cardozo and Shah, 2016a). This underlines the strategically selective nature of the structural, educational context in which they operate, allowing only certain actions to come into effect (ibid.) – in this case, this is reflected by women being reluctant to engage in “distasteful competition” (Husin, 2015: 327) with men for important positions, and aligning the teaching role to fit alongside traditional notions of motherhood.
Though I encountered some individuals who seemed determined to challenge the expectations placed on them as female teachers, in terms of rebelling against dress codes (PL1-F), or aiming to be financially independent (BT5-F), a constrained space for manoeuvre for women in teacher education has implications for the system’s compatibility with sustainable peacebuilding. Limited agency in terms of being able to pursue leadership roles within universities means that the teacher education system cannot be representative if female students and lectures do not possess the fundamental freedoms to be involved in key decision-making processes (Novelli et al., 2015). It also means that structural inequalities within teacher education continue to persist, failing to fulfil the need for redistribution of power at the higher level (ibid.). With the construction of education being critical in post-conflict contexts in determining its transformative abilities for society, contributions are needed from both men and women – women need to be given equally important roles within education as an important part of reconstructive peace processes (Kirk, 2004). Thus, the limited scope for women to exercise their agency in achieving more senior positions mirrors their exclusion from the peace process surrounding the MoU (Lee-Koo, 2012), and reinforces perceptions that their societal role merely revolves around the household, or in a limited capacity within schools.

**Findings Chapter 3: Concluding Reflections**

The final findings chapter explored data relating to the following sub-question:

*How are gendered roles established through teacher training, and how does this affect notions of sustainable peacebuilding in teacher education?*

The findings reveal that patriarchal ideals present throughout Acehnese society are reproduced within the teacher education system, shaped by the local context of conservative Islam and matrifocality that has cultural, economic, political and agential implications for women in these structures. Teaching and motherhood are widely perceived by students and lecturers alike to be compatible life choices, due to a common belief that women have ‘softer’ personalities which makes them suitable for such roles, as well as the fact that the practical demands of a teaching job can be balanced alongside familial duties. Such perceptions are problematic in their reinforcing of expectations placed on women in teaching, as well as emphasising peaceful, docile female stereotypes (Väyrynen, 2010), which are not necessarily representative of real life gender roles in Aceh. Viewed from another perspective, Acehnese teacher education has been representative and redistributive in terms of affording women greater economic and social agency, status and respect through the teaching profession.

More straightforward outcomes can be seen from the existence of numerous social and cultural barriers to progression for women within teacher education. In Aceh, higher level academic roles remain dominated by men, due to a combination of gendered politics, lack of interest from senior leadership and conservative interpretations of Islam that prevents
women from feeling able to ‘compete’ with male candidates. Additionally, considering the
continued circulation of patriarchal, imposed behavioural expectations on female teachers
and assumptions about their inferior capacities, it is evident that female students and
lecturers in teacher education structures have less agency and space for manouevre than
their male counterparts. Thus Acehnese teacher training does not fully recognize the
contribution of women as educational stakeholders, is not representative of them at higher
levels and fails to be redistributive by offering equal opportunities. Worryingly, with such
ideas being reproduced within Acehnese education and few people contesting them, these
perceptions and limited spaces for female manoeuvre may continue to be replicated by
future teachers. Therefore, reconciliation in terms of acknowledging injustices against
women and building positive relations to move forward also cannot be achieved, rendering
sustainable peacebuilding education in Acehnese teacher training unattainable from a
gendered perspective.
Discussion of Findings

Photograph 8: Another scene taken during a student’s practical field placement (PPL), in a primary school in Aceh Besar. Credit: Farah Hanum
This final section aims to address the main research question:

*To what extent can Acehnese teacher training facilitate practicability of sustainable peacebuilding amongst future teachers?*

Recognising the role that education can play in sustainable peacebuilding, the goal of this research has been to contribute to wider understandings of the importance of teachers in post-conflict contexts, building on work reflected by Sayed and Novelli (2016) as part of the Research Consortium of Education and Peacebuilding, as well as contributing to knowledge about the role of teacher training institutes in driving societal change (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). In concluding this specific research and its general findings, it is useful to return to the words of the student quoted at the very beginning:

“I want to change the views of society, that is the role of a teacher. But if I depend too much on the lecturers or faculty, I won’t have a big effect. If I want to do this, I have to do myself.” (CT1-M).

Overall, the findings from this research have indicated that Acehnese teacher education in its current form is unlikely to facilitate the practice of sustainable peacebuilding amongst future teachers in an explicit sense. The Civic Education student quoted here seems to have understood that, as a future teacher, his immediate educational influences – his program and his lecturers – have limited contributions to his agency to act towards societal change. With localised curriculum only existing in the form of Islamic-based education rather than specific peacebuilding material, and teacher trainers generally reluctant to go beyond the constraints of their curriculum to introduce post-conflict content into classrooms into classrooms, in terms of hypothetical next steps for implementing such topics into Acehnese education, it would need to be introduced from a policymaking level. As decisions concerning curricular content are made both nationally and locally, it is decision makers at these levels who would need to address this. Without a comprehensive understanding and endorsement of explicit peacebuilding education at the curricular level and amongst lecturers, students are unlikely to initiate it in the future themselves.

Building on the work of Lopes Cardozo and Shah (2016b), who argued that during the Acehnese conflict teachers’ agency was constrained by cultural, political and economic factors resulting from being positioned between national and Acehnese identities, this study has shown that local contextual constraints continue to be deeply embedded in Acehnese education and affect the agency of educational actors. Cultural, political and economic aspects of the Acehnese context are entrenched in the teacher education system through the circulation of perceptions, beliefs and motivations amongst lecturers and students. An underlying culture of obedience and religiously-influenced, educational hierarchies generally discourages the redistribution of resources in terms of student-representative dialogue between lecturers and future teachers. This underlying culture is further evident in future teachers’ lack of critical reflection on the current state of peace and their relative
reluctance to discuss topics related to explicit peacebuilding, which hinders processes of reconciliation and recognition.

Cultural constraints to the agency of both future teachers and lecturers exist in Acehnese teacher training institutes as a result of the Islamic, matrifocal societal context, reflecting the wider influence of Islam and matrifocality in Acehnese education as highlighted by Sriumulyani (2010, 2013). However, this research additionally suggests that restrictions existing in the form of gendered inequalities and stereotypes are especially prevalent, highlighting a strong patriarchal influence, severely limiting the ability for teacher education to be conducive to the representative, redistributive, recognising and reconciliatory aspects of sustainable peacebuilding. This is despite Civic Education materials explicitly advocating gender equality from both a Human Rights and Islamic perspective, as evidenced from the discourse analysis carried out in Findings Chapter 1. In this sense, it seems in Aceh cultural perceptions are more influential compared to the Western-centric, nationalistic values promoted in the Civic Education material. Therefore, until gender disparities and stereotypes are challenged in Acehnese socio-cultural, political, and economic realms, female future teachers will continue to have very limited agency and be left out of decision-making processes, meaning that Acehnese teacher education will remain unconducive to sustainable peacebuilding.

More positively, the Acehnese teacher education system has showed potential to facilitate implicit notions of sustainable peacebuilding. While it does not constitute explicit peacebuilding material, discourse used in Civic Education implicitly promotes aspects of the 4 Rs, and content about universalised concepts such as Human Rights and gender equality can provide a questioning of deep-rooted societal norms in Aceh. There appear to be some contextual influences, such as conflict experiences or more critical perceptions on peace, that have notable effects on the agency of individual future teachers and lecturers to take on transformative roles within teaching. Individual lecturers may create some space for manoeuvre in terms of including lesson content beyond the set curriculum, while the previously mentioned Civic Education student noted his capacity for social change depended on himself (CT1-M). Indeed, numerous students expressed a very personal desire to exercise agency to benefit society – whether becoming role models to build characters, or by redistributing education to impoverished communities. In the absence of a teacher education system that is explicitly conducive to sustainable peacebuilding, personal motivations can widen the agency of individual future teachers to practice it implicitly.

**Theoretical Reflections**

Reflecting on the 4 Rs framework for sustainable peacebuilding, it could be argued that there is a missing necessary, explicit element of critical thinking. This research has implied that barriers to sustainable peacebuilding – including, but not limited to patriarchal-influenced gender constraints, a cultural sense of obedience, and unwillingness to discuss post-conflict issues – are topics rarely subjected to critical engagement. With such
perceptions embedded in the Acehnese status quo, there is a necessary step in firstly challenging these views, in order to get to a position where redistributive, recognising, representative and reconciliatory measures can actually be implemented. Furthermore, as Davies (2008) notes, religious-based education has the tendency to teach certain beliefs as eternal truths, which compromises the ability to think and question critically. In the devoutly Islamic context of Aceh, a more explicit focus on critical thinking within teacher education could therefore help to challenge the socio-cultural, political and economic status quo and overcome some of the barriers to sustainable peacebuilding.

In presenting a group of actors exercising agency within a particular context, the SRA analysis does not reflect the whole picture of Acehnese teacher training. Though Jessop (2005) notes that actors can, over time, reorganise structures over time according to their selectivities, in the Acehnese teacher education context, for future teachers such agency also depends on the agency of lecturers, revealing that there can be multiple levels of agency within the same structure. These levels of agency among actor groups are not necessarily equally connected – in the findings of this research, while students very much depended on the agency of their lecturers to be exposed to content outside their curriculum, the lecturers themselves did not seem to be very influenced by the agency of future teachers.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Over the course of this study, numerous research gaps emerged from the data collection and analysis processes. Recommendations for future research are suggested below:

- A follow-up study examining the agency of newly qualified teachers in their first official teaching placements.
- A study focusing on the Program Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL) field placement period: understanding the challenges teacher trainees face during these posts and the strategies they use to tackle them.
- A comprehensive study on the effect of decentralized education on sustaining peace in Aceh, with particular attention to the Islamic-oriented local content.
- A comprehensive study of Civic Education classes in Aceh, with particular attention to how the nationalised material is taught and interpreted within classrooms.
References


Amnesty International. (2013). Time to face the past: Justice for past abuses in Indonesia’s Aceh Province. Executive Summary. 


Finch, J. (1986) *Qualitative Research and Social Policy: Issues in Education and*


## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Operationalisation Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Future Teacher Agency    | Teacher Training                 | Curriculum                                                                 | - Local curriculum  
- National curriculum  
- Religious aspects of curriculum                                                                                                           |
|                          | Context of education institute   |                                                                            | - Location  
- Intake and admissions process  
- School structure  
- Local culture, politics, economics                                                                                                           |
|                          | Participation in education       |                                                                            | - Opportunities for feedback on teaching methods and curriculum  
- Opportunities for critical thinking  
- Perceptions on teacher education  
-practical aspects                                                                                                                               |
|                          | Personal background              |                                                                            | - Social background  
- Gender/age  
- Motivations  
- Religion and beliefs  
- Perceptions of gender roles/previous conflict/peace/role of teachers                                                                 |
|                          | Social networks                  |                                                                            | - Relationship with other students  
- Relationships with supervisors  
- Gendered networks                                                                                                                              |
|                          | Lecturer agency                  |                                                                            | -Lecturer perceptions and reflections  
-Lecturer teaching strategies and methods, motivations                                                                                     |
| Sustainable Peacebuilding Education | Teacher Training | Redistribution                                                              | - open career admissions process  
- Re-allocation of teacher training resources to disadvantaged/underrepresented groups                                                                 |
|                          | Recognition                      |                                                                            | - Discussion of conflict-sensitive material within curriculum  
- Acknowledgement of social inequalities  
- Discussion of plurality of Identity  
-Acknowledgement of different gender roles                                                                                                      |
Appendix 2: Table of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Respondent Type</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Gendered Codes</th>
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<tr>
<td>UIN-Ar-Raniry</td>
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<td>DH1-M</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ISD1-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>BT1-F, BT2-F, BT3-F, BT4-F, BT5-F</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>ET1-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>PT1-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syiah Kuala</td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>EL2-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Civic Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CEL1-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>GT1-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MT1-F, MT2-F, MT3-F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lecturers     | 7               |
| Students      | 25              |
| **Total**     | **32**          |