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The Viability of Aid Scholarship-Funded Study in Australian Universities: The Case of Indonesia

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Introduction

This chapter considers the viability of aid scholarship-funded study in Australian universities through an examination of some of the major discourses and tensions around the scheme as it operates in Indonesia. Some examples of prevailing discourse are drawn from focus group interviews with Indonesians aged 19-26, conducted by the author in 1999 and 2002 on their experiences of social change and their visions for the future. These groups involved 18 young Hindu Balinese in Singaraja, North Bali, and 28 young Muslims and Christians in Makassar, South Sulawesi. Interviewees were purposively selected for tertiary education, community group membership, public speaking skills and strength of religious convictions – all qualities deemed indicative of future Indonesian political and community leaders in the provinces (Nilan 2003). One focus group question asked for discussion about moving away to take up an educational opportunity. It was evident that the question aroused both excitement and apprehension in the young people interviewed. Many of them talked about overseas study. Some of their responses are used to illustrate points in the argument advanced in this chapter. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

  Presenting the *Simons Report* to parliament in 1997, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, stated that the overall objectives of AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development) were "to advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to *reduce poverty* and *achieve sustainable development*" (Downer 1997: 3, emphasis added). The minister stressed that even though giving aid to poorer countries in the region matched Australia's altruistic "identity" (Downer 1997: 5), our long-term interests lay in ensuring political stability

in the countries closest to us, and enhancing their capacity for Australian trade (Downer 1997: 8). Echoing this, the 2003 AusAID Annual Report begins with a quote from AusAID Director-General Bruce Davis:

> Aiming for peace and stability is very much at the forefront of our work. We live in a region that is threatened with the possible challenge of *failed states* and Australia has taken a *key leadership role* (AusAID 2003: 11, emphasis added).

As Everingham (2002: 3) points out, "there is more here than just meeting the basic survival needs of the poor". The Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) scheme sits within the aid objectives articulated above by Downer (1997), which remain as core. However the latest report adds five further "guiding themes" within the two basic objectives of reducing poverty and enhancing development (AusAID 2001a). These are: good governance, accessing the benefits of globalization, effective basic service delivery for stability, promoting regional security and meeting trans-boundary challenges, and sustainable resource management (AusAID 2003: 12). The penultimate theme clearly addresses Australia's sense of security "threat" (see Davis quote above). Accordingly, as a single country Indonesia receives the highest percentage of Australian aid. In 2002-2003 this was A\$130.7 million – 27 percent of all overseas aid given (AusAID 2003: 50). Specific aid objectives for Indonesia are: improving economic management, strengthening democracy, enhancing security and stability, delivering quality social services, and basic education (AusAID 2003: 12). Of the total Australian aid budget for education, scholarships represent 44 percent (AusAID 2003: 31) and basic education (delivered in-country) only 27 percent.

In 2002-2003 about 1100 ADS-funded students commenced studying in Australia, most from Asia-Pacific countries (AusAID 2003: 80). In 2004 approximately 360 Indonesian ADS awardees will arrive. Their arrival to take up postgraduate study fulfils the dominant thesis of Australian aid for education since the Colombo Plan – to take promising candidates from 'developing' countries and place them in Australian universities (Auletta 2000, Back 1994: 21). The prevailing logic is always that they will return and assist the development of their nations toward economic progress through reducing poverty and contributing to sustainable development. This paper maintains that there is not much evidence that this occurs in any direct way. In fact, elsewhere it has been strongly argued that the very opposite effect is achieved:

> Scholarships for study in Australia in Australia are a repressive anti-poor aid mechanism because they amount to a subsidy of rich Australian universities at the expense of poor developing country ones and the funds could be better used to increase student access (Guthrie 2002: 325).

This chapter takes the claim advanced by Guthrie and examines it critically. While the arguments advanced here bear out the above claim to some degree, it is

concluded that there is some value in scholarship schemes, so it may well be a question of balance and lateral thinking rather than abandonment. Perhaps the most serious issue for critical concern is the lack of evidence that the current scheme actually fulfils its central aims. The knowledge, skills and qualifications that ADS awardees take back to Indonesia, while culturally valuable for other reasons, may have no direct impact on reducing poverty or achieving sustainable development. The logic of the aid scholarship scheme is best understood as the neo-liberal discourse of a 'trickle-down' effect (Stieglitz 2002: 80). It is imagined that the mere presence of these knowledge-enhanced individuals will somehow produce all kinds of benefits, including outcomes such as better governance, more political stability and a superior climate for globally-driven economic investment. Guthrie dismisses the ADS scheme as purely political – 'the use of scholarships as a diplomatic tool' (Guthrie 2002: 329; see also the Davis quote above). While the aims of the scheme remain highly abstract and idealized it is easy to dismiss it this way. Certainly the logic of international scholarship aid implies a theoretical rather than empirically verified link between forms of capital. The rhetoric constructs the idea that aid scholarships build human capital (see Patrick 1999: 70) through enhancing cultural capital (privileged knowledge/ skills; see Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) via a western education. The expertise and influence of overseas-educated graduates (Livingstone 1999: 173) then build up the economic capital (Apple 2001: 410) of their countries (but see Raffer and Singer 1996). It is further assumed that this kind of aid also builds positive social capital (Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993, Putnam 2000, Woolcock 1998, World Bank 2001, Everingham 2002).

However, we actually know very little about the impact on social capital, or indeed any other kind of capital, of scholarship-funded Indonesian graduates returning home from Australian universities. As economic and security tensions in the region deepen post September 11th 2001, and after the anti-western bombings in Bali in 2002 and the Indonesian capital, Jakarta in 2003, we must try to find out whether developing Asia-Pacific countries such as Indonesia are actually being assisted toward economic sustainability and political stability through ADS awards. As regional inter-ethnic and religious conflicts intensify, we should also question whether the in-country selection of candidates implicitly favours the interests of particular ethnic and other elite groups. Using Indonesia as an example, this chapter argues that firstly, returning graduates may not have much effect on the economic/political profile of their country, and secondly, the selection of scholarship awardees may implicitly favour certain kinds of candidates over others. Finally it is argued that aid for education in Indonesia should not necessarily be discontinued, but that Australian aid should contribute more effectively to productive capacity building though education in Indonesia, and thereby better address the issue of economic prosperity fostering regional harmony.

Australian Development Scholarships and Indonesia

ADS awards form a significant component of Australia's educational aid budget for Indonesia. However, it is not direct aid. ADS awards are provided for return travel, tuition fees and a stipend in Australia, which may include allowance for accompanying family members. Thereby, most of the funds allocated for ADS awards in Indonesia get paid back into Australian universities and businesses (see Guthrie 2002). The idea is that Indonesia gets back a pool of skilled graduates who can build development capacity:

> Australian Development Scholarship graduates return home and significantly contribute to the development of their countries, many attaining positions of responsibility and influence. Indonesian ministers for Health, Finance and the Environment as well as the Chancellors of several prestigious Indonesian universities such as *Universitas Gadjah Mada* and *Institut Pertanian Bogor,* all held Australian Development Scholarships (AusAID 2003: 30).

As Patrick points out, "the political dimension of aid cannot be underestimated" (1999: 77). Since some key Indonesian government and academic posts are now held by ADS graduates it is imagined they are well disposed toward Australia and her interests, as one recent Indonesian Ambassador to Australia observed:

> In the next century, there will be a whole generation of Indonesians in the leadership of various professions and fields of endeavour who not only understand their immediate neighbour to the south but who also nurture an abiding affection for it (Wiryono 1998: 49).

Given the history of political tension between the two countries we can perhaps see how the ADS scheme might contribute to "promoting regional security and meeting trans-boundary challenges" (AusAID 2002: 3), although the outcomes of poverty alleviation and sustainable development are still hard to glimpse.

Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation in the world, with a population of 203,456,000 according to the 2000 Census (Hull 2001: 104). It is the nation in the world with the largest Islamic population. Over eighty per cent of the population is Muslim (Hassan 2002: 23). It has a relatively young population, and the number of young adults (20-24) is predicted to increase from 20.7 million in 2000 to 23.1 million in 2005 (Hull 2001: 109). Indonesia's economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.1 percent between 1985 and 1995. Between 1970 and 1996, the proportion of the population living below the official poverty line declined from 60 percent to an estimated 11 percent or about 28 million people (World Bank 1999). However, the Asian currency crash in 1997 crippled the economy, which has recovered only very slowly. In the second quarter of 2002, GDP grew by 3.51%, higher than for the first quarter, and inflation fell at the same time (Ikhsan 2002). However, one in ten

Indonesians still lives in poverty. This particularly affects people in the eastern islands, and women. AusAID sets aside a special quota of ADS awards for female candidates and for those from the much poorer eastern islands and provinces (East Kalimantan, Sulawesi, the Moluccas, Lombok, Flores, Sumba, Sumbawa, West Timor, and West Papua).

Australia has had an uneasy relationship with Indonesia since President Sukarno took power in 1950 (Sulaiman & Sofyan 1998: 2). The newly independent Republic of Indonesia was included in the Australian Colombo Plan aid program during the 1950s. After the failed Communist coup in 1965 Australian aid to Indonesia increased greatly, and by 1973 Indonesia was the largest recipient of aid under the Colombo Plan (Ziegler 1973: 587). Australia maintained an ambiguous stand on the question of East Timor until 1999 when tensions flared between Australia and Indonesia after the independence vote. Subsequently, diplomatic ties between the two countries came under pressure over the issue of refugees. Indonesia has been one of the countries suspected by the USA and its allies of harbouring active Muslim terrorist groups. The 2002 bomb attacks in Bali and at the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in 2003 heightened some of the pre-existing tensions. Yet throughout all these crises, Australia has continued its aid to Indonesia and even increased it to the 2004 level of A$130.7 million.

Since the fall of President Suharto in 1998 the country has been chaotic and prone to fragmentation as it struggles toward democracy and tries to move beyond crippling economic crisis and debt (Kingsbury & Aveling 2002). The government of President Megawati Sukarnoputri has been making efforts to reform both the economy and civil infrastructure. One of the most significant structural reforms is the decentralization of limited financial and civil authority to the regions, a process targeted at local autonomy and self-management *(otonomi daerah)*. However, despite some improvements, a recent report on Indonesia finds that although the country is now more democratic, it remains at 110th position on the human development index (HDI), the same as in 1995 (UNDP 2002). Indonesia is one of the countries noted in the United Nations 2002 Human Development Report as a nation where public spending of all kinds is most often skewed in favour of rich people (*The Jakarta Post* 2002). This is very much so in the case of education, which varies greatly in quality between regions (Fox 2002: 300, see also Welch 2002: 36). In the tertiary sector, as Bayhaqi (2000: 241) shows, prestigious public universities in Indonesia (nearly all in Java) show a skewed distribution of students from rich families. For many of the ADS applicants, who usually do not come from wealthy families, obtaining a university qualification from Australia may be more likely than gaining entry to the most prestigious universities in their own country.

Advantages for Recipients of ADS Awards

The broad objective of the ADS scheme is the social and economic advancement of

target countries through 'helping' selected individuals so that, on return, the increased knowledge and skill capacities of key figures in the public and private sectors will directly contribute to economic development (see above). However, it is far easier to point to the immediate career and financial advantages for individuals and families than to tangible evidence of 'trickle-down' (or perhaps 'trickle-up') macro-level benefits. For example, Tiedeman (2002) reports that one Indonesian ADS awardee maintained that the scholarships were sought by public servants "so they can get a promotion and a pay rise" (Tiedeman 2002: 6). Hellstén (2002: 359-360) quotes an international student (non-ADS) as saying: "If I go to Australia I will get a really good degree that is valued in my country and so you can get a good job and make a lot of money". The personal goals of ADS awardees are unlikely to differ greatly from those of other ambitious Indonesians seeking overseas study. Other research confirms that personal and career advantages for ADS awardees include:

- Acquisition of specific technical and professional skills (Smith, Morey & Teece 2002: 38)
- Acquisition of superior English language competence (see May & Bartlett 1995, Welch 2002: 17)
- Development of a regional consciousness (see Robison & Goodman 1996)
- Improved social and professional mobility opportunities (see Daroesman & Daroesman 1992, Tin Hta Nu 1995)
- Greater awareness of the political, economic and social context of Australia (see Phillips & Stahl 2001).

These advantages multiply when ADS awardees bring their families with them, as both spouses and children gain some of these enhanced capacities. Yet the logical weaknesses of the scheme remain. The study by Daroesman and Daroesman (1992) identified problems in allocation of scholarships, selection of candidates, placement of candidates in disciplines, and appropriate thesis supervision. They concluded that the major weakness was lack of follow-up by the Australian government, but since then not much has changed. Despite some invited input from bodies such as the Australian Alumni Association in Indonesia, the problems inherent in an "altruistic, perhaps paternalistic approach" (Back 1994: 29) remain, even while the number of ADS awards to Indonesia has increased in the last five years. Few independent evaluations of success in relation to its key objectives have taken place.

If we look at relevance of qualifications, the first possible problem emerges. When candidates in Indonesia apply for ADS scholarships from the public sector, they must nominate one of the stated priority areas and explain how their chosen area and field of study in Australia will bring benefit to Indonesia. However, they often do this without a very clear understanding of the knowledge base of the selected study program. For example, many of the postgraduate degree programs offered in Australia in the broad field of social sciences deal specifically with Australian policy and practice, and even assume some knowledge of these things. Fields such as bio-

technology, business law and agribusiness are also examples of this mismatch. So it may be that in some cases the foreign skills and knowledge newly acquired will not be directly transferable to local Indonesian contexts (Welch 2002). The graduate may return to performing his or her original set of tasks with little opportunity for new knowledge input (Butcher 2002: 360). Nurhadi (1998: 183) bemoans the fact that so many students study social science and humanities programs in Australia rather than engineering and agriculture, which he maintains are most needed. One reason for this is that candidates in science and allied disciplines are much less likely to meet English Language requirements, since they do not have the same opportunities in their degrees.

The fourth benefit listed above identifies improved social and professional mobility. Certainly, whether the study abroad is relevant or not, returning graduates enjoy high social and career status. However, their considerably enhanced social status and upward mobility potential may serve primarily to strengthen the existing privileged position of elite groups (see Adams & Chapman 1998: 583, also Robison 1996, Pinches 1996). Accordingly then, in any appraisal of the effectiveness of the ADS scheme for Indonesian development, we first need to grasp assumptions about what kind of formal 'knowledge' acquisition the scheme logically implies. We need to evaluate whether the acquired 'knowledge' (formal or informal) is really likely to have any effect on the economic progress of Indonesia.

Knowledge For What?

While one might agree that the intense and rapid development of human capital for economic progress relies on substantial expansion and extension of higher education (Welch 2002), this does not tell us what kinds of knowledges are most useful for a sustainable economy and polity. Upgrading of skills has been identified as strategic for economic and social advancement (Phillips & Stahl 2001). Yet this may be better done at a local level. Capacity building around the process of decentralization is new in Indonesia, a country which has always operated as a centralist state in both the public service and in business. Surakhmad (2002: 23) argues that in contemporary Indonesia, capacity building should be "defined as an educational strategy to uplift the professional competence of every member of society within the framework of decentralization". According to a variety of Indonesian and international commentators, capacity building must include: skills of political debate (Antlov 2002), local public service provision and accountability, balancing fiscal inequalities (Rasyid 2002a), drafting laws to deal with significant local environmental threats (Lay 2002), budgeting for economic sustainability (Colongan 2002) and even dealing with regional separatist and militia movements (Malley 2002). One can see that not all of this capacity-building can be handled under a study abroad scholarship scheme. For example, Malley's claim might be addressed by training exercises with the Australian Defence Force, or better still retraining the local military as peace-keepers. Given significant differences in legal systems (Sulaiman & Smith 1998: 305), Lay's point

above would certainly be best met by in-country training. In fact, it can be argued that nearly all these emerging human resource needs are best met by forms of in-country training, yet Australia devotes almost half of its educational aid budget to scholarships for study in Australia.

Further specific capacities toward successful decentralization include: small-scale local management of government finance and personnel, community-based planning, entrepreneurship for small-to-medium enterprises, urban planning and skills in information technology. It should be noted that the economic survival of poor and lower-class people in Indonesia during the post 1997 crisis was due to the strength of the informal sector, local trade and entrepreneurship and small-to-medium enterprises (Mietzner 2002). Obviously, professional expertise in engineering, science, health, education, sustainable agriculture and manufacturing appropriate to each province and region will also be necessary. Most of these skills already exist in the labour force, but are in need of refinement and specialization. This process may be best achieved either in-country, or in neighbouring countries which have faced similar challenges, rather than in an English-speaking western country such as Australia which faces an entirely different set of economic, political and legal circumstances. Furthermore, graduates from disciplines most crucial for economic rebuilding frequently lack the English language competence necessary to obtain an ADS award.

Indonesia itself has at least seven universities theoretically capable of delivering world-class education and training (in the national language) in fields relevant to rapid modernization and decentralization. Yet they are all in desperate need of financial assistance. Three of these (*Universitas Indonesia*, *Institut Teknologi Bandung* and *Institut Pertanian Bogor* – all headed by overseas educated academics) planned to introduce expanded places for full-fee-paying students from 2004 in order to cope with demand and to improve their extremely sparse educational resources. *Universitas Gadjah Mada* is expected to follow suit soon. Like many other developing countries, the higher education sector in Indonesia suffered in the past from prevailing World Bank/UNESCO imperatives that universities and higher education should not receive development funding – probably a legacy of Cold War thinking (Heyneman 2003: 322).

Rasyid (2002b), the Indonesian Minister of State for Regional Autonomy from 1991 – 2001, names local economic management, human resource management and technical expertise as three areas in which public servants should take Masters coursework degrees to facilitate the process of decentralization in Indonesia. These degrees are all readily available in Indonesia, and probably their content is more directly relevant to capacity-building for regional autonomy. However, while the academic quality and resources of Indonesian universities remain so low, the prestige of a western tertiary qualification remains strongly attractive. In 2002, there were 18,000 Indonesians studying in Australia, predominantly at postgraduate level (Jalil 2002), most of them privately funded, and enrolled in business, management and information technology programs.

The Hegemony of Western Knowledge and Qualifications

The basic ideological premise which drives Indonesian students to head overseas for western education is the same as it has always been. We can see this in the history of Australia and elsewhere in the British Commonwealth. Even up to the early part of the twentieth century, upper-class Australian males were sent to Britain to get a 'superior' education with which they returned to enlighten the intellectually and culturally impoverished local inhabitants. The ideological assumption is that a western (or mother country) education is implicitly superior to anything one might get at home:

> I have always had a great ambition to study outside Bali, or even abroad, such as in Australia and the United States of America, as their educational quality is excellent. Australia and America's educational quality is better than ours since they are developed countries (Dewa Ayu Eka, prospective ADS awardee, Bali, 1999, author's translation).

> Of course if I was given a scholarship to study abroad, in England or Australia for post graduate studies, I would go and study there. The reasons are obvious! Firstly, the quality of education in Sulawesi is different from education in England, Australia or America. Of course the quality is higher and better there (Sili-Suli, prospective ADS awardee, Sulawesi, 2002 author's translation).

These comments confirm that the canon of western scientific and intellectual tradition (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991: 41) still holds considerable symbolic status (see Bourdieu 1985) in non-western countries. Yet we must question whether the enthusiasm of prospective ADS candidates is justified in terms of knowledge content. Anecdotal evidence from returning ADS awardees indicates that some find the courses they undertook at Masters postgraduate level in Australia rather irrelevant to the work situations to which they return (Tiedeman 2002). Admittedly this is not just their problem. Many Australian students completing postgraduate coursework might make the same claim. Universities everywhere are struggling with increasingly limited resources to ensure that the knowledge sets which comprise their professional and applied degree curricula keep pace with work force needs. As Schapper and Mayson (2002: 168) point out, curricula are now supposed to meet both the needs of domestic students and those of a highly diverse cohort of international students at exactly the same time (see also Rizvi & Walsh 1998).

While the symbolic capital of privileged western knowledge remains attractive, in an increasingly globalized world economy and culture (Appadurai 2001), the very nature of knowledge itself has changed, even in western countries. In trying to grasp the international context of contemporary education, we should avoid imagining Bourdieu's notion of privileged knowledge sets and genres, that is, cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990), as a fixed entity. Cultural capital in late modernity is best conceptualized as fluid and dynamic. The status and sophistication of a fixed set

of qualifications in relation to types of work is contested and fragile. Castells (1996: 17-18) maintains that it is no longer the acquisition of knowledge, but the pursuit of knowledge and information that characterizes the informational age. Moreover, possessing cultural capital probably now indicates the stylish and confident capacity to identify what a certain body of knowledge or skills is turning into, or is about to change into. Rapid learning and refining of new skills amounts to more than flexibility in a given contemporary labour force; it amounts to constantly shifting definitions of task, and approach, as well as ever-changing constitutions of self in relation to those things.

So what does this mean for ADS awardees who return home with a set of new skills and capacities acquired from postgraduate coursework at an Australian University? In the first place it may not be clear that there is any relationship at all between what they have studied and the demands of their job in the new context of a decentralizing Indonesian state. Second, it may be some time before they get to apply any aspects of their new knowledge in the workplace, as they rarely return to instant promotions. The field of international knowledge may have already moved on by the time they attain the necessary promotional rank to make changes. Third, they may try to apply their knowledge, skills and capacities to situations where they are not appropriate, or they may find considerable local and/or cultural resistance to new, western-derived ideas. This is particularly likely to occur where the returning ADS awardee is a woman, since traditionally women do not occupy high status managerial positions in the workforce. Gender should be a significant factor in any appraisal of the transformative potential of returning ADS awardees (World Bank 2001: 89). For example, even though the selection procedure in Indonesia insists on gender equity, statistically fewer females than males take up public sector ADS awards (AusAID 2002: 3). More women than men drop out of programs, and male awardees report more rapid promotion on return to their public service jobs. "This is a reflection of the male dominance of public sector organizations" in Indonesia (AusAID 2002: 5).

Personal Gain and Upward Mobility

It is claimed that in the UK, overseas "students are not buying degrees; they are buying the benefits that a degree can provide in terms of employment, status, lifestyle etc." (Binsardi & Ekwulugo 2003: 319). If this is so, then what are Indonesian ADS awardees getting from their funded study in Australia? Anecdotal evidence suggests that specific skills and capacities directly related to their work are way down in the list of benefits. Instead they talk about improved English skills, information technology skills and the cultural experience of living and studying in Australia. Once back home, they seem mainly concerned with the social and economic advancement of themselves and their families, made possible by the symbolic value of the study-abroad experience itself, which has a long history in Indonesia dating back to the Dutch. The history of Indonesians studying in countries like Holland (for example Djelantik 1997)

and accruing symbolic capital for their families by assumed familiarity with the canon of western intellectual/scientific tradition (Aronowitz & Giroux 1991: 41) has imbued the experience with particular and lasting cultural meanings which encode a myriad of social mobility possibilities. For example, a tangible sign of the value (either symbolic or actual) of study abroad is the association of high quality Indonesian tertiary education with universities where the majority of senior academics have completed doctoral study overseas, especially in English-speaking countries. The topics of their actual doctoral research theses usually matter less, it would seem, than the symbolic value of the foreign location and language in which they were completed.

So if we examine the list above of individual advantages for public servants who study in Australia under ADS awards, then it is really the acquisition of superior English language competence (see May & Bartlett 1995), and improved social and professional mobility opportunities (see Daroesman & Daroesman 1992, Tin Hta Nu 1995) which are the most tangible outcomes for individuals. One might also add computer and information technology competence to this list. In Indonesia, English language competence and computer skills constitute the new cultural capital that leads to social and professional mobility. In the experience of the author of this chapter it is the highly competent demonstration of these two generic capacities that are considered by employers and policy-makers to point iconically to the overseas graduate possessing a range of more specific capacities and knowledge sets. These two skills in particular are equated in the popular imagination with enhanced human capital.

Human Capital and Overseas Qualifications

Human capital theory is a neo-liberal discourse (Apple 2001: 410) that theorizes people's learned capacities as comparable to other natural resources involved in the modern industrialized production process. Thus, "when the resource is effectively exploited the results are profitable both for the enterprise and for society as a whole" (Livingstone 1999: 173). In the context of a developing nation, human capital theory equates workers' knowledge levels with the measure of their formal education. The economic 'return' of different levels and kinds of education can then be calculated quantitatively to show relative advantage of education to the development and nation-building project (Livingstone 1999: 173, but see also Heyneman 2003). However, these calculations are usually performed internally on national systems of education. It is difficult to find any reports which attempt to calculate the benefits to a nation of externally-funded overseas tertiary study. Accordingly, the human capital benefits to a developing country from international aid scholarships cannot be calculated or measured using the usual empirical tools. The claim that ADS awards build human capital in Indonesia therefore exists at the level of rhetoric around regional strategic relations (Guthrie 2002) rather than fact.

So we return to inspecting the logic of the ADS awards scheme. If the objective is to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in the target countries

(AusAID 2001b: 1), then according to the arguments I have presented so far, there is little evidence available that this actually occurs in any measurable way. Knowledge, skills and qualifications acquired in Australia may not prove relevant or valuable even though the actual study opportunity has strong symbolic cultural value. Even if some returning ADS awardees can see the relevance of their study in Australia and do try to apply it, then we need to consider how much impact a tiny number of public servants and others can have on reducing poverty or achieving sustainable development at either the national or the local level. In short, the logical link between the ADS scheme and its larger foreign aid objectives cannot be understood except as a neo-liberal discourse of 'trickle-down' human capital effect where the mere presence of these culturally enhanced individuals will somehow make for better governance, more political stability and a superior climate for economic investment. The already dubious probability of this effect is further diminished by processes of preliminary award selection which implicitly favour certain elites.

Award Selection and Elites

In any country, if no scholarships of any kind were available for tertiary study abroad, then those students who did travel overseas to complete postgraduate coursework and research programs of study would inevitably come from the privileged elite, the really wealthy strata of society, since a great deal of money is involved. However, where a range of scholarships for tertiary study abroad is available, this theoretically provides an open opportunity for academically excellent students from poorer, lower status backgrounds to complete postgraduate education overseas. Quotas are in place to ensure that less privileged candidates are equitably represented in ADS award selection. Yet there are subtle mechanisms prior to the formal selection process which favour the interests of privileged groups over less privileged groups. The first group is men. Each year, fewer women than men get awards. Women often seem to lack the confidence or ambition to apply. Fewer women apply, and more drop out after selection because of family reasons. In 2001, females (n=117) were over-represented in the open category (academic excellence only) compared to males (n=70). Females (n=219) were under-represented in the public sector (government employees) compared to males (n=304) (AusAID 2002: 23). Those in the open category were younger, so we can see a skewing of age and gender in the scheme toward preservation of the dominance of older males in the Indonesian public sector. More males are selected to complete doctoral research degrees (n=23), which carry much higher status than a coursework Masters. In developing countries, elitist tertiary education (even if acquired overseas) tends to perpetuate and legitimate gender, social and wealth divisions (Adams & Chapman 1998: 583).

A second effect in the informal process which precedes selection has to do with certain kinds of candidates routinely failing to make applications, failing to meet English language standards, or failing to meet academic criteria. This has to do with

the quality of some universities in Indonesia, with the high cost of English language training and testing, and with issues of patronage and support. As Bayhaqi (2000: 241) shows, prestigious public universities in Indonesia show a skewed distribution of students from rich families. Regional, and private universities (usually Islamic), on the other hand, show a skewed distribution of students from poorer families. Raysid (2002b) maintains that since 1998, in all but the best Indonesian universities, the quality of education has become progressively worse (see also Fox 2002: 300) due to disorganization and resource scarcity. So it is applicants from the most prestigious, high quality universities who are most likely to present the winning combination of: (a) a competitive undergraduate grade point average, (b) better English language skills, (c) specific information about the field priorities and mechanisms of the scholarship scheme, and (d) information about Australian universities. To get accurate infor-mation, potential candidates need to be competent in information technology search and retrieval skills. This is another capacity, which less privileged applicants may not possess to any great extent.

ADS Scholarship Selection at Hasanuddin University

As an example of the scholarship selection process, consider the case of Universitas Hasanuddin in Makassar, South Sulawesi. The observations referred to below derive from fieldwork conducted at intervals in Makassar between June 1999 and January 2002, by the author. Universitas Hasanuddin is the only university in the eastern islands region with a fully-functioning postgraduate program and an international reputation. Consequently, most of the scholarships awarded to eastern province candidates go to open category candidates from this university, and to public category candidates from this city (most of whom are directly connected with this university). Makassar has an ethnically and religiously diverse student and worker population. Although the local Buginese ethnic majority dominates (Antweiler 2001: 17), students and minor public servants come from all parts of Sulawesi. Others come from Irian Jaya, the Moluccas, Ambon, Kalimantan and Flores. Many of these candidates are Christian and/or Melanesian. There are also many Indonesian Chinese living in the city. Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are rarely found in the public service. Although often wealthy as a result of family business ventures, they suffer from racial prejudice (Mackie 1999, Kian Wie 2001). According to Nesdale, Simkin, Sang, Burke and Frager (1995), up until the mid 1990s in Australian universities, the vast majority of self-funding overseas students were ethnic Chinese from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia. Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are oriented to privately-funded overseas study, often accompanied by a desire to emigrate. Although they often have good English language skills, they do not tend to apply for ADS awards, possibly because the conditions mandate return, and possibly because the priority areas of scholarship study do not match their ambitions.

Christian and Muslim communities have long co-existed in the eastern islands, but violent religious conflict has been a feature of the past ten years. The result has been a turning inward, an inclusionary process in Sulawesi which has seen Universitas Hasanuddin in the south become identified as the favoured major public university for Muslims on the island, while Universitas Sam Ratulanggi in Manado in the north has become identified as the favoured major Christian university. However, only Universitas Hasanuddin has a comprehensive postgraduate program. Historically, Universitas Hasanuddin, like many other public institutions in South Sulawesi and Makassar, has been dominated by the Buginese. As a result, it is rare to find a successful ADS award candidate from Universitas Hasanuddin who is not Muslim and is not from a Bugis ethnic background. One Christian alumnus from Ambon described his experience of religious bias as follows:

> When I finished my education at the university, I was given a choice of working either in Makassar or Java. I chose Java because I had been in Makassar all through my study. Here in Makassar they employ the local people. And Muslim religion is important. But in Java, employment is based on skills. Skill is considered the most important thing. Not ethnicity, religion or the like (Rudi, an accountant in a private firm, Sulawesi, 2002, author's translation).

Rudi's point holds true for the implicit local pre-selection of ADS candidates. The most academically able Christian students complete undergraduate study at the northern university. If they come south to Universitas Hasanuddin for postgraduate study they are relatively unknown and have no kin contacts among university staff. Addressing large gatherings of potential ADS awardees at Universitas Hasanuddin over a number of years, this author was aware that all but a few were Buginese Muslims, despite the diversity of students in the postgraduate centre. While all ADS applications go to Jakarta for evaluation, it was clear that in South Sulawesi certain applicants are encouraged over others to apply. Whether open category or public sector, the candidate must feel that he or she has a good chance of success. Many instances of mentoring were observed and all of these involved Buginese Muslim academics encouraging and informing students from the same ethnic and religious background. In Indonesia, patronage is a very important factor in any career or pathway to upward social mobility. This patronage extends beyond mentoring to financial support, which is important because there are substantial costs in applying for ADS awards. The only acceptable English language test is expensive, as is the formal medical examination. High costs for an uncertain outcome tend to favour candidates from homes with better incomes, or with better lateral kin connections to obtain loans. There is also a certain measure of skill and cultural capital in locating the ADS website, determining deadlines, accessing relevant information and filling out forms properly. So even the process of applying is facilitated by appropriate family background, mentoring, and lateral kin/religious links. Finally, there is the question of English language competency. If the candidate does not have sufficient

language skills, which many outside the disciplines of Arts/Humanities do not, then he or she must take intensive language classes, which are very expensive.

In short, successful ADS candidates from Universitas Hasanuddin were observed to be helped and encouraged over quite a long period of time by sympathetic lecturers or mentors who had studied overseas themselves. It seemed unlikely, given the ethno-religious local loyalties of South Sulawesi, that mentoring by senior university academics and public servants from a Muslim, Buginese background would be given to candidates from other faiths and from other racial or ethnic groups. It is important not to misunderstand this phenomenon as simple prejudice. Patronage is a cultural and moral expectation on the part of Buginese of all ages and backgrounds (Robinson 2002: 155). However, the effect of these "asymmetries of information" (Stieglitz 2002: xi), and the specificity of local ethno-religious patronage, is sufficient to create a situation where Muslim Buginese candidates tend to be the ones who submit winning ADS applications to Jakarta. They then go to Australia and return metaphorically crowned with laurels to eventually take up governance positions in education, politics, the local public service, and even religion, thus reinforcing Buginese hegemony in South Sulawesi. In this way, ADS awards at the local level can operate to favour the consolidation of an ethnic elite, strengthening social capital bonds that tend to exclude others.

Building Social Capital and Australia's Foreign Policy

Indonesia is strategically important in Australia's regional foreign and trade policy. Patrick argues that the focus of Australian aid is "largely influenced by trade, commercial and strategic factors" (1999: 91). Agafonoff (1994: 72) argues that political objectives often override development objectives in the allocation of funds for aid programs. Guthrie describes the ADS scheme as a diplomatic exercise of limited value (2002: 328). Yet the scholarships are extremely well-regarded by the Indonesian government, even though the aid money really flows back into Australia in the end. It is obviously a significant public relations exercise to annually fund 360 ADS awards for Indonesia, since this is important symbolic evidence of Australia's continuing commitment to friendly relations between the two countries, despite tensions and flare-ups.

Nevertheless, Australia is not only trying to directly stimulate economic capital, but seeking to implicitly reinforce lateral or 'bridging' social capital through the ADS scheme. Social capital in global aid discourse is defined as "the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions" (World Bank 2001: 1). It is further defined as 'social cohesion' which lies at the heart of civil society and good governance. We can see that the idea of promoting social capital can be logically linked to the objective of good governance in developing nations. Hadiz (2002) expresses this logic as follows: good governance arises from rational choice which is facilitated by 'good' social capital, which is

inclusive rather than exclusive (see the Universitas Hasanuddin example above). Education theoretically provides the knowledge sets and ways of thinking that favour rational over non-rational ways of thinking. The effect should be even better (theoretically) if the educative process takes place in the setting of an ideal example of good governance in practice – a western democracy. Indonesian civil society is imagined to be strengthened by "students carrying home favourable impressions of Australia" (Guthrie 2002: 330).

Unfortunately, this reassuring chain of logical outcomes does not always follow from developing country students studying in western countries. Falk and Kanach (2000) give the example of Iran. Under the regime of the United States-backed Shah (1941-1979), modernization was the main thrust. Students were sent away to Europe and North America to gain the skills and training needed for Iran's rapid industrialization and expansion into the world market economy. In fact, the educational experience outside Iran largely encouraged the Islamic revolutionary zeal which eventually brought down the Shah. The young people "became highly politicized while outside their country" (Falk & Kanach 2000: 2). After the Islamic revolution (1979), the majority seem to have enthusiastically endorsed the "education of Iranians at home under a strict religious and cultural tutelage" (Falk & Kanach 2000: 2). Of course, by virtue of their western education, returning graduates took a prominent, and probably lucrative, role in this tutelage. Falk and Kanach (2000: 2) conclude that "it seems desirable to reformulate the goals and benefits of study abroad in a manner that is sensitive to the altered conditions brought on by globalization". This example is interesting because, although currently a secular state, Indonesia is the largest Islamic nation in the world, and the anti-western backlash alluded to in the Iranian example is strongly prevalent in many quarters of Indonesian society (Nilan 2003), and implicated in the recent terrorist attacks on western targets. Although Indonesia seems unlikely to ever follow the Iranian example of a single fundamentalist Islamic state, it does serve as a reminder that familiarity with the West may breed contempt as well as the comforting bonds of enhanced social capital.

This example also demonstrates the fallacy of assuming that education and training can ever, in themselves, provide a quick solution. As Chapman (2002: 35) states, in developing Asia, education and training are often "offered as a remedy for problems that arise from deterioration of political influence or lack of needed funds to make the necessary changes". It is doubtful whether the vast and complex issues which underlie the economic and political crisis currently facing over 200 million Indonesians will be alleviated much at all by an external agent such as Australia offering 360 overseas study scholarships a year to candidates who already enjoy some measure of privilege.

Conclusion

Despite the assertions made above, this paper is not arguing for a cessation, or even a

redirection, of aid funding away from education in Indonesia. On the contrary, education remains not a short term quick-fix solution to the ills of a nation, but an excellent long-term investment in future economic prosperity and political stability, as long as it is relevant, and perceived as fairly distributed. In its optimum form, education builds both appropriate cultural capital and positive (bridging) social capital. This paper has examined some of the questions that might be asked about the extent to which the current ADS scheme is contributing effectively to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in Indonesia. The tentative conclusion offered here is that the current scheme of scholarships for overseas study is not the optimum program for achieving these goals. ADS awards are costly, and only 360 candidates in Indonesia a year are selected. A tentative proposal is for at least some of the AUS$30 million dollars worth of travel costs, tuition fees and stipends which currently get paid back into Australian universities and the Australian economy per year on behalf of Indonesian scholarship students instead be paid into Indonesian universities through in-country support for education, including internal scholarships. For example, in the early 1990s an AusAID project set up significant resources and staff for the teaching of 'polytechnics' (Nurhadi 1998: 181) at Universitas Hasanuddin. More of this kind of direct funding for higher education needs to occur. There is also the issue of increasing access to higher education. The Virtual Colombo Plan (VCP), a distance education scheme developed by AusAID and the World Bank, already hints at the possibilities for increased in-country postgraduate education using information technology, even though, as Ninnes (2004, this volume) demonstrates, the framing rhetoric of VCP encodes many of the same faults of colonialist logic that inhere in the ADS scheme. Finally, it is clear from a recent *Bappenas* (Indonesian Ministry for National Development Planning) initiative for a 'sandwich' postgraduate program in local planning and policy offered between selected Australian and Indonesian universities (Coelen 2003), that the Indonesian government wants to see many more Australian-Indonesian joint tertiary programs offered in-country.

There is a danger that any move away from ADS-style scholarships might be seen as a backward step in Australia's foreign relations, since they are popular with the Indonesian government, and Indonesian candidates are very enthusiastic about study overseas. Yet as we move into an era characterized by deeper, and yet more complex, regional relationships (Sulaiman & Sofyan 1998: 4), it is vitally important that Australia, as a privileged and wealthy Asia-Pacific nation, really does give substantial aid to the higher education sector in the region, especially if "accessing the benefits of globalisation" (AusAID 2003: 12) is a real foreign aid objective. In the current world economy, facilitating the competitive advantage of enterprises in developing countries such as Indonesia demands the education of a workforce capable of rapid and flexible responses to market change. It is also necessary for culturally and locally appropriate processes of good governance to be developed that ensure stable conditions for economic growth. It is argued here that much of this capacity-building toward economic sustainability should be undertaken in local contexts, so that the content is directly relevant and can be flexibly adapted to new laws and regulations as

these evolve. However, this can only happen on a wide scale in Indonesia if the training and education institutions are capable of delivering the goods. It is therefore most important that countries like Australia develop aid schemes which can build up the educational access and resources in Indonesian tertiary institutions.

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