

Research proposal on “Essays on decentralization and e-Government in a developing country”

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It is widely agreed that decentralisation in Indonesia at the turn of the century is unprecedented in scale and scope in the history of modern states. Although scholars in Indonesia and abroad are working to examine various aspects of this political decision, much still need to be understood. The research will put decentralisation, essentially a political event, as the central focus. It will also organise a series of essays about its antecedents and consequences. This design is necessarily limited and the purpose of this proposal is to delineate the scope of the work by providing a list of topics which constitute the research.

1. **Development and decentralisation or putting Indonesia’s decentralisation experience in context** What do the development and politics literatures say about why government decentralise, what for, under what conditions, and how do countries fare? Is there a model explaining what countries are likely to decentralise and, if there are assessments about decentralisation’s conduct, is there a model explaining which countries tend to succeed? Can these models explain why Indonesia had decentralised? My guess is these models have very little to say about Indonesia’s decentralisation experience, a necessarily individual and political decision. If that is the case, what could reasonably be expected of the Indonesian’ experiment with decentralisation? **Data:** Decentralisation database, cross-country experience, country governance and decentralisation experience, sequencing, scope, etc.
2. **Decentralised administration, local government corruption and capacity, and public service performance** I examine the nature and extent of decentralised administration in Indonesia. Based on the above models or reformulated models, what factors should contribute to local public service performance in a decentralised administration? How does corruption at the national level permeates and

being transformed into local institutions and practices? How does it affect local public service delivery? I propose a set of measures to probe local government capacity and the extent of local corruption. Two or three public services are examined specifically: public health (family planning or other health care), primary education, and new business establishment. **Data:** GDS1, 1+, 2, and perhaps 3.

3. **e-Government innovation and adoption** I probe even deeper by looking at a specific practice of public service delivery. The aim is to understand the timing, scope, extent, and performance of public service delivered specifically as part of the e-Government services. Anecdotal evidence abounds about e-Government services in Indonesia; thus systematic examination of available evidence is needed. Although it is a study of district and city (*kabupaten* and *kotamadya*) governments in Indonesia, comparisons will be made with India and the UK. The purpose of this comparison is to highlight the broad spectrum of contemporary e-Government services in the world. **Data:** Online survey of e-Government services delivered by districts and cities over three successive years.

References

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