

Indonesian Multiculturalism: Risks and Challenges

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ABSTRACT. Indonesia is a multicultural country with full diversity. Indonesia consists of diverse culture, local language, race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, etc. There are risks and challenges of diversity in Indonesia. Therefore, such diversity must be managed properly to avoid problems and conflicts. Lately, it appears many of the problems of diversity in Indonesia. Conflicts among tribes, religions, beliefs and groups are frequent. Conflict occurs in the form of thought and physical. Although the conflict is normal in a multicultural society, the conflict will be a major issue if not managed properly. This article discusses the risks and challenges faced by Indonesia in managing cultural diversity.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Risks, Challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country full of diversity. Indonesia consists of diverse culture, local language, race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, etc. There are risks, opportunities, and challenges in Diversity Indonesia. Therefore, such diversity must be managed properly and carefully so as not to be a problem. Multiculturalism in Indonesia is a result of the socio-cultural and geographical so diverse and extensive. According to the geographical conditions, Indonesia has many islands where each island is inhabited by a group of people who form a society. The community formed a culture of the society itself. Of course this is an impact on the cultural manifestations are so numerous and diverse. The Indonesian government made a number of policies to maintain multiculturalism. Enforcement of the Act No. 40 of 2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination is a form of multicultural policies Indonesia. Government implements multicultural policies in education although it still has many obstacles. The principles of equality of citizens before the law and government are the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian law. Lately, there are many issues of diversity in Indonesia. Conflicts among tribes, religions, beliefs and groups are frequent. Conflict occurs in the form of thought and physical. Although the conflict is normal in a multicultural society, the conflict will be a major issue if not managed properly. This article will discuss the risks and challenges facing Indonesia in managing multiculturalism.

The Concept Of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism describes the existence, acceptance, or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction, usually considered in terms of the culture associated with an ethnic group. This can happen when a jurisdiction is created or expanded by amalgamating areas with two or more different cultures (e.g. French Canada and English Canada) or through immigration from different jurisdictions around the world (e.g. Australia, United States, United Kingdom, and many other countries). Multicultural ideologies and policies vary widely (Harper, 2011), ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, to a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which people of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group to which they belong (Malik, 2010).

Multiculturalism that promotes maintaining the distinctiveness of multiple cultures is often contrasted to other settlement policies such as social integration, cultural assimilation and racial segregation. Multiculturalism has been described as a "salad bowl" and "cultural mosaic" (Burgess, 2005). Two different and seemingly inconsistent strategies have developed through different government policies and strategies. The first focuses on interaction and communication between different cultures; this approach is also often known as interculturalism. The second centers on diversity and cultural uniqueness which can sometimes result in intercultural competition. Cultural isolation can protect the uniqueness of the local culture of a nation or area and also contribute to global cultural diversity (Marsh, 1997; Meyer, 2010). A common aspect of many policies following the second approach is that they avoid presenting any specific ethnic, religious, or cultural community values as central (Cotter, 2011).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative research. The data collection is done with a literature study, observation, and interviews. The research subjects consisted of people from various ethnic, religious, race and ethnicity. Analysis of data used an interactive model that consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Indonesian Multiculturalism

While the United States debates what multiculturalism is, what it should be, and whether it is even a desirable goal, Indonesia appears to have gone a long way towards conceptualizing and implementing a national vision of multi-ethnic coexistence. "Unity in Diversity" (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) was proclaimed the national motto of newly-independent Indonesia when it served the bonds of Dutch colonial rule at the end of World War II. The motto, drawn from Sanskrit and attributed to rulers of the Majapahit Empire (a Javanese polity of the 14th century), evokes ancient ties between Javanese and other powerful Asian Kingdoms. The prominent use of this motto by Indonesia's two post-Independence leaders, former President Sukarno and current President Suharto, is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it marks their early insights about the political importance of supporting a diversified multi-ethnic fusion rather than an American-style "melting pot." Second, the maxim tellingly represents how Indonesian government policies have been designed to address the political challenge of cultural pluralism through the mass manipulation of cultural ideas about a glorious common history and the harmonies present founded on important yet unthreatening social differences.

The history of post-Independence Indonesia thus offers a contrast to that of other areas a contrast to that of other areas of the world that are torn by ethnic strife. The Indonesian government has succeeded in constructing a unified, multi-ethnic state (admittedly at some costs to its ethnic minorities) with the fourth largest population in the world (after China, India and the USA) and the thirteenth largest economy, just behind Canada's.

III. RISKS AND CHALLENGES

The Political Challenges After Independence

On August 17th 1945, Indonesia was proclaimed an independent republic with Sukarno as its first president. The new government faced the challenge of politically uniting almost 100 million people comprising approximately 300 ethnic groups who spoke an estimated 650 local languages. Moreover, this heterogeneous mixture was spread out over 6,000 inhabited islands encompassing almost 2 million square kilometer archipelago roughly as broad as the United States. The country's population was distributed very asymmetrically with approximately 60% of the population clustered on the central or "inner islands" of Java, Madura, and Bali which comprise only 7% of the nation's land mass. By world standards the citizens, were impoverished and had been kept largely illiterate by the elite-oriented Dutch colonial education system.

The newly independent government inherited from the Dutch regime few tools with which to forge an ethnic union except a basic legal code, the administrative use of Malay as a lingua franca, and a set of arbitrary political boundaries running from the island of Sumatra in the west up to the island of New Guinea in the west up to the island of New Guinea in the east. And aspect of genius in the Sukarno regime, which would be further developed under President Suharto, was its ability to orchestrate public policies which engaged virtually all ethnic groups in the process of constructing new national identities. Ultimately these identities were drawn toward the aim of stable and uniform economic development. Although sporadic ethnic rebellions broke out in many areas of the archipelago between 1950 and 1964, virtually all these incidents were motivated by struggles for higher political status within the new Indonesian nation, not for a separation from it (Anderson 1983:120).

The Indonesian government channeled the revolutionary fervor and diffuse nationalism of its citizens in the post-Independence period into feelings of pride in the illustrious heritage of past Javanese and other, smaller regional kingdoms. The army, dominated by Javanese, was given an unusual dual role in implementing national defense (including internal security) and economic development. At the same time the government sought to defuse inter-ethnic tensions through a continuing mass media and public education program and focused not only upon literacy and skills but on a common platform for "moral development," largely emphasizing the government's national philosophy, the Pancasila. Outlined by President Sukarno in 1945, the Pancasila (meaning "Five Principles" in Sanskrit) are: belief in a supreme God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy, and social justice. By inserting the term Tuhan yang Maha Esa ("God who is the Great One") into the Pancasila doctrine other than the Islamic term Allah, Sukarno intentionally encompassed the legitimacy of Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist minorities of the country to offset the potentially volatile political power of the 90% Muslim majority.

Despite his early revolutionary vision and personal charisma, Sukarno lost control over his "Old Order" government in September 1965 during what was labelled at the time as an "aborted communist coup." Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey later reinterpreted the event as an internal army purge designed to depose Sukarno whose alliances with the Indonesian communist party (PKI) became unacceptable to the armed forces and leading Islamic groups. No matter who was responsible for the "abortive coup," the controversial event was followed by devastating anti-communist, anti-Chinese riots particularly on Java, Bali, and Sumatra.

The social explosions of 1965 resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians and Chinese. The tensions which sparked these attacks often have been traced to Sukarno's economic policies, which resulted in hyperinflation, increased hardship for the average citizen, and billions of dollars of foreign debt for

the nation. Moreover, the ethnic rage which was visited on those of Chinese descent was fueled by the disproportionate Chinese control of the nation's business enterprises and wealth - resources upon which political leaders in Java depended, and continue to depend. For Suharto's succession to the presidency to succeed, he desperately needed both real economic gains for the majority and a mean to neutralize incendiary discourses about ethnic, religious, political, and wealth differences among the nation's citizens.

Suharto's Vision Of Diverse Unity And Its Cultural Implementation

The New Order government's early emphasis on the improvement of national infrastructure ensured that outer island ethnic minorities were not only subject to greater social controls but also received some benefits from expanding services such as roads, schools, and health clinics. President Suharto has achieved further successes in controlling the military, revamping the national economy, and securing virtual self-sufficiency in rice production. He has been praised for establishing productive foreign relations with other Southeast Asian nations and the West, but his acumen in handling the internal "politics of culture" is even more noteworthy (Liddle 1988; Pemberton 1989; Kipp 1993). Under the New Order regime, certain aspects of ethnic difference have been concealed while others have been promoted, coopted, and even invented to serve the twin causes of national stability and economic development.

While citizens of the United States are currently discussing the necessity and constitutionality of regulating ethnic "hate speech" on college campuses and elsewhere, Indonesia decided in favor of a government-regulated code of "political correctness" decades ago in order to curtail ethnic unrest. The Indonesian government's interpretation of the Pancasila philosophy has entailed the suppression of all overt ethnic and religious sectarianism in public political forums since the 1970s. In the mid-1980s Indonesian political parties and religious organizations were further required to acknowledge the Pancasila doctrine as the primary philosophical foundation for their organizations. Although such government pressures set off brief incidents of Muslim rioting and terrorism, Suharto moved swiftly to punish "extremists," thereby assuring cooperation from the majority who were urged to avoid "tribalism" (sukuisme).

Recent political history suggests that the most serious challenges to Indonesia's political unity derive not from the existence of hundreds of small ethnic minorities located on the outer islands, but rather from the explosive dynamics of centralized Javanese political power working in conjunction with the business wealth of non-Muslim, ethnic Chinese (Kipp 1993:109). Thus the New Order government has sought to mask from public view aspects of ethnic difference that reveal discrepancies in economic opportunities, including political nepotism within the Javanese-dominated government bureaucracy and economic nepotism within lucrative Chinese business enterprises.

The government's efforts to legislate unity by disguising certain aspects of ethnic, religious, and class differences have been complemented, paradoxically, by a simultaneous effort to showcase other aspects of regional cultural diversity. Although the numerically small ethnic Chinese minority - associated with foreignness, disproportionate wealth and a still-dreaded communism - is completely ignored by government efforts to highlight the nation's ethnic diversity, other ethnic groups throughout the archipelago have been drawn into a national campaign to celebrate their seemingly timeless "traditional" customs. Most particularly, the Ministry of Education and Culture has sought to identify and display the most apolitical features of regional identity such as local costumes, dances, handicrafts, and architecture. These plastic elements are then presented to both locals and foreign visitors as the visible and meaningful bases of regional ethnic identities and differences.

In the early 1970s at the nation's political center in Jakarta, President and Mrs. Suharto began construction of a Disneyland-inspired "Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature" theme park (Taman Mini "Indonesia Indah") in which each province and its major ethnic groups are defined uniformly and a historically by "traditional" costumes and houses. The architectural and cultural displays from each region surround a Central Javanese style auditorium and miniature replicas of "national treasures" such as the ninth century Javanese Buddhist temple called Borobudur. President and Mrs. Suharto justified the vast expense of this theme park (which did not go uncriticized) by invoking in nation's need for spiritual as well as material development (Pemberton 1989:218-20). The form of the park, however, implies not only national unity and cultural richness, but also a tight control by the nation's political center over the very cultural identity of outer island ethnic minorities. Regional displays at the park are organized according to the twenty-seven national provinces such that the material culture of less populous or less photogenic ethnic groups is either overlooked or assimilated with that of more prominent neighboring groups - just as the exhibits on the minority groups included are set up to model the Javanese presentation.

Indonesian government-sponsored cultural exhibits, including those mounted abroad, in Jakarta, and in Indonesian provincial centers, are designed in part to appeal to foreign tourists and enhance what has become a multi-billion dollar "ethnic tourism" industry. Yet, local exhibits also compel the attention of Indonesians themselves - both the citizens whose culture ostensibly is being defined through the displays and members of

other wealthier, "more developed" Indonesian ethnic groups who observe or participate in planning the presentations. It is the effects of these cultural proclamations upon local Indonesian minorities that are most socially significant and often unsettling.

In areas actively being developed for "ethnic tourism" such as Toraja in South Sulawesi, locals find that their houses, villages, and even funerary monuments become removed from their control when these aspects of their lives are designated as "tourist objects" by planners from Java or the neighboring Bugis and Mandar ethnic groups (Adams 1990; Volkman 1990). In more remote areas that have not yet experienced a tourist influx, regional officials sometimes demand that local ethnic minorities invent represent their region in provincial and national culture contests (Acciaioli 1985). In areas such as Central Sulawesi where the indigenous techniques of barkcloth production have declined with development, new "traditional" costumes have been manufactured from imported sateen or Javanese batik cloth ornamented with plastic sequins for official performances (Aragon 1990).

Some scholars have suggested that the contrived aspects of these cultural displays and government-sponsored performances not only fragment and "aestheticize" the cultural identities of ethnic minorities but also serve to pry the indigenous performing arts away from the precolonial religious ideas through which the ritual arts originated (Acciaioli 1985). Other evidence indicates that even rites modified under the influence of political and world religion leaders still provide ethnic minorities a means through which to renegotiate their ties to their ancestral cosmology as well as to the outside political forces pressuring them to format their "culture" along nationally conformist lines (Aragon 1992 and forthcoming).

Despite the government's emphasis on unthreatening aesthetic and portable material aspects of minority cultures, Indonesian education programs do formally encourage tolerance of ethnic and religious diversity and they instruct children about some historical and cultural features characteristic of the more populous or prominent ethnic minorities. Moreover, Indonesian educational and media programs are shrewd enough to discuss social differences as features of ethnicity (a flexible constellation of cultural features) rather than follow the United States' misplaced anxiety about, and emphasis on, race (supposedly, a genetically fixed constellation of biological features).

Economic Development and Minority Problems

The New Order approach to national development may be seen to have two faces: the creation of Indonesian businesses that interface with the global economy and draw foreign cash back to the government, and the management or guidance of a "modern" citizenry that cooperatively and productively participates in the growing economy. Both of these aims have disproportionately impacted outer island ethnic minorities, sometimes with deleterious consequences.

Indonesia's potential wealth lies in its huge labor force and varied supplies of natural resources. Although the world oil shortages of the early 1970s helped catapult oil-rich Indonesia towards initial economic prosperity, Suharto was astute enough to pursue economic diversification in the profitable areas of mining, timber, cement, and steel manufacture as well as in more familiar plantation pursuits such as rubber and coffee. Foreign aid and investment were welcomed and large-scale, high-technology development projects were implemented, albeit with scarce concern for the ethnic minorities living in the territories from which resources were to be extracted.

Given that untapped natural resources often were to be found in the most undeveloped outer island regions, territorial exploration and expansion became of great "national interest." The Suharto regime pursued and obtained control over the western half of the large island of New Guinea in 1969, renaming it Irian Jaya. The incorporation of the region into Indonesia occurred despite local resistance and objections by the Free Papua Movement which proclaimed that the indigenous were much more culturally and racially similar to Papuans than to Indonesians. The Indonesian government once again sought to minimize ethnic, and in this case racial, differences by invoking the social justice philosophy of Pancasila democracy and purported territorial claims dating back to the colonial and precolonial eras. Indonesian mass education programs were introduced to accessible areas of Irian Jaya with the aim of integrating the coastal populations, while Western Protestant missionaries were permitted to enter to most isolated highland regions to "civilize" the remote tribes.

Aside from ecological disturbances wrought by mining and forestry activities and cultural disturbances introduced through missionization and new political controls, Irian Jaya also has been a target for the nation's famed "transmigration" program. Transmigration involves the government-sponsored relocation of poor rural families from the overpopulated inner islands of Java, Madura, and Bali to sparsely populated regions on the outer islands such as Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya. In the eyes of the government, this transfer of ethnic groups is not only advantageous for the migrants needing land but also for the indigenous people who can benefit from the modernizing influences of migrants emanating from more developed regions of the country. If the government sends as many Javanese as planned to Irian, the indigenous peoples will themselves become the ethnic minorities of their own province. Irian people already complain that they cannot obtain

government jobs in their own communities because their candidates are overlooked in favor of less qualified Javanese. Even in regions such as Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi where migrants do not become an ethnic majority, transmigration projects often remove segments of the indigenous' former farming or hunting territories with minimal compensation provided in terms of either direct social benefits or future work opportunities.

In addition to redistributing the nation's young and growing population President Suharto decided that regulating births was necessary to retain the benefits of economic gains. Thus, in addition to moving families from one island to another, the government has not been shy about entering peoples' homes, their sleeping quarters, and even their bodies to adjust fertility rates and thereby reduce the nation's population growth. Family planning has entered casual public discourse and become familiar to virtually every Indonesian citizen through mass media campaigns proclaiming cheerfully that "Two Is Enough" and "Small Families Are Happy."

Indonesian birth control programs, designed initially with the overpopulated Javanese in mind, sometimes have appeared confusing or unwanted among lowdensity ethnic minority populations who depend upon numerous children to undertake farming tasks. In some areas during the early 1980s, IUD devices already outlaws in the West such as the Dalkon Shield were inserted seemingly indiscriminated during mass "safari" campaigns accompanied by little medical education or follow-up. In other regions, birth control devices were so poorly understood and monitored that women of minority communities were able to appear to cooperate without actually ingesting any of the birth control pills provided by the government program (Tsing 1993:104-109).

Indonesian ethnic minority populations cope with the pressures to "develop" in a variety of ways: by appearing to cooperate, by doing what they wish while remaining relatively invisible in their remote regions, or by attempting to negotiate with the government on its own terms through invocation of locally favorable interpretations of the Pancasila doctrine (Bowen 1986; Warren 1990). Although most Indonesians never criticize the national philosophy or rhetoric directly, they may interpret them strategically, or occasionally take a jab at the government's own shortcomings in keeping with the Pancasila principles of humanitarian social democracy. Mocking an incident of local government corruption associated with a development project, a Central Sulawesi highlander once concluded her criticism with a clever pun saying, *Ini bukan Pancasila tetapi Pancasilaalah*, meaning "These are not Five Principles, but Five Wrongs."

The national regulation and fostering of world religions has been an integral feature of Indonesia's development program. Not only was a strong religious component necessary to the Pancasila doctrine to appease the Muslim majority, but the introduction of any world religion is seen by the government as useful in forestalling communism and dissociating small tribal groups from their "backward" state as "isolated ethnic minorities". During the 1970s and early 1980s, for example, large numbers of Western Protestant missionaries were given long-term visas to missionize in remote regions of Irian Jaya, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan where they could introduce the benefits of consumer goods and government-guided school curricula as well as monotheistic religion.

Although the Pancasila philosophy is praised by some ethnic minorities, such as Central Sulawesi Christians who say it protects them from majority pressures to convert to Islam, its insistence upon monotheism has been onerous for ethnic minorities still intent on practicing their precolonial "animist" religions (Atkinson 1983). In the New Order, legitimate religion only includes Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Therefore, unconverted minorities must either convert, at least nominally, to one of these five choices to else lobby for their indigenous religion (now labelled by the government with a derogatory term meaning "beliefs, superstition") to be reclassified under one of the legitimate categories such as Hinduism.

The government's fostering of different religious sects which crosscut ethnic and class ties is sometimes viewed as a divide-and-conquer strategy, redolent of Dutch colonial tactics, which prevents any political or religious group from becoming so powerful as to threaten the government's authority. Research on the Karo group of North Sumatra illustrates how members of at least some ethnic minorities have moved from a formerly unified ethnic/religious/class identity to a more dissociated, "modern" national identity wherein ethnicity does not necessarily correlate with religious affiliation or wealth (Kipp 1993).

Recent Trends and The Definition Of Human Rights

In the mid-1980s Islamic unrest caused the Indonesian government to maintain close control of public demonstrations and the media. In 1989 a new period began of official "openness" in public discussions about political policies, environmental degradation, military responsibilities, and other controversial topics previously avoided by the press. President Suharto's public approval of this turn of events in 1990 seemed to indicate his confidence in the government's stability and a willingness to engage in greater dialogue about national policies. That willingness was distinctly interrupted on June 21st, 1994 when the government shut down the nation's three major news magazines (*Tempo*, *DeTik*, and *Editor*), the Indonesian equivalents of *Time* and *Newsweek*, for reporting on sensitive issues. Most specifically, the magazines had run stories about the inordinate profits obtained by one of Suharto's ministers through the purchase and rehabilitation of some German-made military ships. Subsequently, demonstrators, in Jakarta who protested the press bans were beaten and jailed by the

military. Such events incite increased anxiety about the stability and succession of the seventy-three year old Suharto who was elected to his sixth (and in his own words final) consecutive term as president in 1993.

During the five years between the proclaimed openness and the present closed condition of the Jakarta media, Indonesian progress in the realm of what Westerners identify as human rights issues has not unfolded smoothly. The army's 1991 shootings at a secessionist leader's funeral on East Timor, a new ethnic minority province seized by brutal military occupation in 1975, drew harsh criticism from the West, particularly the Netherlands. Suharto's peevish response to the foreign criticism was to spurn all further investment monies from its former colonial rulers, a motion which would result in embarrassing economic losses to the Dutch themselves (Frederick, 1993:xxxix-xlv).

The ambivalence of Western nations, particularly the U.S., about making human rights a requisite for profitable business relations was dramatized in the renewal of China's "Most Favored Nation" trade status in March 1994. The decision was no doubt monitored closely by the Indonesian government which is also under scrutiny for its violations in the arenas of labor rights (for violence against strikers and labor leaders and for not enforcing minimum wage regulations) as well as minority oppression in outer island regions such as East Timor. The Clinton administration, however, has identified Indonesia as one of ten "Big Emerging Markets" warranting special attention from business leaders in the U.S. Popular sentiment based on a general ignorance of global conditions leads American consumers to find inexpensive textiles and tennis shoes, and American businesses to find cheap and nimble-fingered labor, far more significant than the human rights of Indonesian workers or East Timor citizens.

For their part, Asian governments are quick to argue that the exact definition of human rights held by Westerners should not be imposed on their very different societies. To do so, they say, amounts to nothing less than a continued cultural imperialism. Spokesmen for Asian governments also point out that their repressive acts are motivated by the need to preserve the national stability conducive to the economic growth demanded not only by their own increasingly middle class citizens but also by Western nations and their investors.

IV. CONCLUSION

There are many challenges facing Indonesia's smaller and poorer minorities. They must negotiate artfully with the government over their cultural and economic interests if they are to benefit rather than simply withstand physical or cultural damage by the bulldozer of development.

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