

**CROSS AND MULTICULTURAL
UNDERSTANDING**

PBI

DOMINANT INDONESIAN CULTURE PATTERN

SESSION 5

MEIYANTI NURCHAERANI S.S.,M.HUM

UNIVERSITAS ESA UNGGUL

JAKARTA

2019 – 2020

Orientation

Identification. The Republic of Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, has 203 million people living on nearly one thousand permanently settled islands. Some two-to-three hundred ethnic groups with their own languages and dialects range in population from the Javanese (about 70 million) and Sundanese (about 30 million) on Java, to peoples numbering in the thousands on remote islands. The nature of Indonesian national culture is somewhat analogous to that of India—multicultural, rooted in older societies and interethnic relations, and developed in twentieth century nationalist struggles against a European imperialism that nonetheless forged that nation and many of its institutions. The national culture is most easily observed in cities but aspects of it now reach into the countryside as well. Indonesia's borders are those of the Netherlands East Indies, which was fully formed at the beginning of the twentieth century, though Dutch imperialism began early in the seventeenth century. Indonesian culture has historical roots, institutions, customs, values, and beliefs that many of its people share, but it is also a work in progress that is undergoing particular stresses at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The name Indonesia, meaning Indian Islands, was coined by an Englishman, J. R. Logan, in Malaya in 1850. Derived from the Greek, Indos (India) and nesos (island), it has parallels in Melanesia, "black islands"; Micronesia, "small islands"; and Polynesia, "many islands." A German geographer, Adolf Bastian, used it in the title of his book, *Indonesien*, in 1884, and in 1928 nationalists adopted it as the name of their hoped-for nation.

Most islands are multiethnic, with large and small groups forming geographical enclaves. Towns within such enclaves include the dominant ethnic group and some members of immigrant groups. Large cities may consist of many ethnic groups; some cities have a dominant majority. Regions, such as West Sumatra or South Sulawesi, have developed over centuries through the interaction of geography (such as rivers, ports, plains, and mountains), historical interaction of peoples, and political-administrative policies. Some, such as North Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and East Java are ethnically mixed to varying degrees; others such as West Sumatra, Bali, and Aceh are more homogeneous. Some regions, such as South Sumatra, South Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi, share a long-term Malayo-Muslim coastal influence that gives them similar cultural features, from arts and dress to political and class stratification to religion. Upland or upriver peoples in these regions have different social, cultural, and religious orientations, but may feel themselves or be perceived a part of that region. Many such regions have become government provinces, as are the latter three above. Others, such as Bali, have not.

The culture of Indonesia has been shaped by long interaction between original indigenous customs and multiple foreign influences. Indonesia is centrally-located along ancient trading routes between the Far East, South Asia and the Middle East, resulting in many cultural practices being strongly influenced by a multitude of religions, including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity, all strong in the major trading cities. The result is a complex cultural mixture very different from the original indigenous cultures.

Examples of the fusion of Islam with Hinduism include Javanese Abangan belief, the fusion of Hinduism, Buddhism and animism in Bodha, and the fusion of Hinduism and animism in Kaharingan; others could be cited. Balinese dances have stories about ancient Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms, while Islamic art forms and architecture are present in Sumatra, especially in the Minangkabau and Aceh regions. Traditional art, music and sport are combined in a martial art form called Pencak Silat.

The Western world has influenced Indonesia in science, technology and modern entertainment such as television shows, film and music, as well as political system and issues. India has notably influenced Indonesian songs and movies. A popular type of song is the Indian-rhythmical dangdut, which is often mixed with Arab and Malay folk music.

Despite the influences of foreign culture, some remote Indonesian regions still preserve uniquely indigenous culture. Indigenous ethnic groups Mentawai, Asmat, Dani, Dayak, Toraja and many others are still practising their ethnic rituals, customs and wearing traditional clothes.

History and Ethnic Relations

Emergence of the Nation. Though the Republic of Indonesia is only fifty years old, Indonesian societies have a long history during which local and wider cultures were formed.

About 200 C.E. , small states that were deeply influenced by Indian civilization began to develop in Southeast Asia, primarily at estuaries of major rivers. The next five hundred

to one thousand years saw great states arise with magnificent architecture. Hinduism and Buddhism, writing systems, notions of divine kingship, and legal systems from India were adapted to local scenes. Sanskrit terms entered many of the languages of Indonesia. Hinduism influenced cultures throughout Southeast Asia, but only one people are Hindu, the Balinese.

Indianized states declined about 1400 C.E. with the arrival of Muslim traders and teachers from India, Yemen, and Persia, and then Europeans from Portugal, Spain, Holland, and Britain. All came to join the great trade with India and China. Over the next two centuries local princedoms traded, allied, and fought with Europeans, and the Dutch East India Company became a small state engaging in local battles and alliances to secure trade. The Dutch East India Company was powerful until 1799 when the company went bankrupt. In the nineteenth century the Dutch formed the Netherlands Indies government, which developed alliances with rulers in the archipelago. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century did the Netherlands Indies government extend its authority by military means to all of present Indonesia.

Sporadic nineteenth century revolts against Dutch practices occurred mainly in Java, but it was in the early twentieth century that Indonesian intellectual and religious leaders began to seek national independence. In 1942 the Japanese occupied the Indies, defeating the colonial army and imprisoning the Dutch under harsh conditions.

On 17 August 1945, following Japan's defeat in World War II, Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declared Indonesian independence. The Dutch

did not accept and for five years fought the new republic, mainly in Java. Indonesian independence was established in 1950.

Economy

Basic Economy. About 60 percent of the population are farmers who produce subsistence and market-oriented crops such as rice, vegetables, fruit, tea, coffee, sugar, and spices. Large plantations are devoted to oil palm, rubber, sugar, and sisel for domestic use and export, though in some areas rubber trees are owned and tapped by farmers. Common farm animals are cattle, water buffalo, horses, chickens, and, in non-Muslim areas, pigs. Both freshwater and ocean fishing are important to village and national economies. Timber and processed wood, especially in Kalimantan and Sumatra, are important for both domestic consumption and export, while oil, natural gas, tin, copper, aluminum, and gold are exploited mainly for export. In colonial times, Indonesia was characterized as having a "dual economy." One part was oriented to agriculture and small crafts for domestic consumption and was largely conducted by native Indonesians; the other part was export-oriented plantation agriculture and mining (and the service industries supporting them), and was dominated by the Dutch and other Europeans and by the Chinese. Though Indonesians are now important in both aspects of the economy and the Dutch/European role is no longer so direct, many features of that dual economy remain, and along with it are continuing ethnic and social dissatisfactions that arise from it.

One important aspect of change during Suharto's "New Order" regime (1968–1998) was the rapid urbanization and industrial production on Java, where the production of goods for domestic use and export expanded greatly. The previous imbalance in production between Java and the Outer Islands is changing, and the island now plays an economic role in the nation more in proportion to its population. Though economic development between 1968 and 1997 aided most people, the disparity between rich and poor and between urban and rural areas widened, again particularly on Java. The severe economic downturn in the nation and the region after 1997, and the political instability with the fall of Suharto, drastically reduced foreign investment in Indonesia, and the lower and middle classes, particularly in the cities, suffered most from this recession.

Social Welfare and Change Programs

The responsibility for most formal public health and social welfare programs rests primarily with government and only secondarily with private and religious organizations. From 1970 to 1990, considerable investment was made in roads and in health stations in rural and urban areas, but basic infrastructure is still lacking in many areas. Sewage and waste disposal are still poor in many urban areas, and pollution affects canals and rivers, especially in newly industrializing areas such as West Java. Welfare programs to benefit the poor are minimal compared to the need, and rural economic development activities are modest compared to those in cities. The largest and most successful effort, the national family planning program, used both government and private institutions to considerably reduce the rate of population increase in Java and other

areas. Transmigration, the organized movement of people from rural Java to less populated outer island areas in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and West Papua, was begun by the Dutch early in the twentieth century and is continued vigorously by the Indonesian government. It has led to the agricultural development of many outer island areas but has little eased population pressure in Java, and it has led to ecological problems and to ethnic and social conflicts between transmigrants and local people.

The State of the Physical and Social Sciences

The development of science and technology has formed part of Indonesia's five-year plans and is directed toward both basic science and applied technology, with emphasis on the latter. Health, agriculture and animal husbandry, defense, physical sciences, and applied technology have had priority. The Indonesian Institute of Sciences has its headquarters and main library in Jakarta. Its task is to oversee and encourage research in diverse fields, to coordinate between institutions, and to advise on national science and technology policy. It also approves research by foreign scholars. Indonesia's major scientific research training centers are the Technological Institute, in Bandung, and the Agricultural Institute, in Bogor, founded in the colonial period, which draw top secondary school graduates.

Among social sciences, economics has received the greatest attention since the 1950s when the Ford Foundation launched a major program to train economists abroad. These so-called technocrats rose to great importance during the early decades of the New Order and molded economic policy throughout the country's growth period, from

the 1970s through the 1990s. Social sciences are included in the national mandate largely as they contribute to supporting development activities. Fields such as political science and sociology received far less attention during the New Order, owing to their potential for, and actual involvement in, social and political criticism.

Learning about the culture of this exotic archipelago will not only ensure a more pleasant traveling experience, it will also enrich the way you perceive the world. From religious aspects to social habits, discover the things you should know about Indonesian culture.

There's no such thing as an 'Indonesian Culture'

Before we get into anything further, this is an important disclaimer. 'Indonesia' is a singular term that names a particular nation, but there's nothing uniform about its culture. There are at least 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia, each with their own set of customs and distinctive cultural objects. That doesn't mean there aren't any similarities or tendencies between one culture to the other, but when reading this phrase keep in mind the diversity that comes with it. Often what considered as Indonesia's culture is in fact an image of a dominant one or reflects an amalgamation of certain similar cultures.

Families are as close as they come

No matter how old or independent they are, Indonesians tend to keep tight relationships with members of their family. For many Indonesian youths, moving out of parents' house is simply not a thing, even when they already have a stable income of their own.

Many choose to live under their parents' roof unless they absolutely have to (many Indonesians leave their hometown to get a job in the city). And it's not necessarily a sign of dependency, it just shows the values and principles the nation has when it comes to family.



An Indonesian family during Eid © Phalinn Ooi / Flickr14958842902_d2e2d48625_k

Some households even consist of extended family — you'll see grandparents, aunts, uncles, and nieces living together or staying in the same neighborhood just to be close to each other.

Religious commitments come first

When in Indonesia, you'll see Balinese present their offerings first thing in the morning, or employees dropping everything for prayer time. No matter what religion they

uphold, Indonesians are generally very spiritual. They take their religious practices very seriously, and that is reflected in daily rituals, ceremonies, even the grandness of their places of worship.

There are six religions in Indonesia

Indonesia is notorious with its huge Muslim population; the largest in the world despite being a secular country by law. But Islam is just one of six official religions acknowledged in the country — Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In Bali, for example, the dominant religion is Hinduism, and there are localities where there are more Christians than Muslims.



Monks doing Pindapatta before Vessak Day in Indonesia © HermitiantaPrasetya Putra/Flickr

... and hundreds of traditional belief systems

Indonesia's diversity extends to the variety of belief systems as well. Many communities still live traditionally and still uphold the religions and practices of their ancestors, often unique to the locality. But to categorize, many belief systems draw from animism, dynamism, and totemism. In some communities, those beliefs interact with traditions or influenced by another mainstream religion, resulting in a myriad of unique practices.



© Putu Bagus Susastra / Culture Trip

Indonesians are collective

Since its earliest history, Indonesians have always been communal. Farmers work together to cultivate their lands and manage resources, villages keep close-knit

communities and take care of each other, and cultural values push forward principles of collectivism. Even in modern settings like the office workplace and modern communities, you'll see the inclusiveness and friendliness of Indonesians.

Indonesians love spicy, savory food

The archipelago is rich with herbs and spices, which shape traditional recipes to utilize the abundance of those ingredients. In fact, many Indonesian dishes may come out strong to tourists' tongues. Recipes do vary from one locality to another, according to the main crops in the area. Javanese, for instance, tend to like sweeter meals due to the abundance of cane and palm sugar. But many other locales like Padang, Manado, and Bali, sure do not hold back on their chili and spices.



Every place has a legend

It's fascinating to learn the geological processes that make mountains, hills, and rivers. But Indonesians go beyond tectonic plates and erosion to explain how natural landmarks came to be. In most places, you can talk to the locals and dig stories of gods, spirits, royals, or hermits that contribute to the forming of a particular spot like natural features, temples, or other cultural landmarks.



Prambanan Temple, Indonesia © Berry/Flickr5761943774_1398ff6ec2_b

Indonesians celebrate everything

From a child's first step on the ground to certain months of pregnancy, many cultures in Indonesia has special ceremonies for even the tiniest milestones. Many

cultures also make a huge deal out of life events like weddings and funerals, mixing them with mesmerizing traditional customs and celebrations. There are also communal celebrations like a myriad of different ceremonies of harvest or thanksgiving, and special dates associated with legends or history.

Indonesians are traditional

And no, we're not talking about those living in traditional remote villages. Many Indonesians who find themselves in modern settings still find ways to integrate their traditions and cultural values into the contemporary lifestyle. Some companies still consult traditional almanacs or spiritual elders to determine a good day to do business, and many young professionals still throw traditional ceremonies for their weddings, whether out of the family's demands or out of their own volition, but the traditions live on.



Indonesians love making and performing arts

Indonesia's rich culture begets so many inspired works of art — paintings, sculpture, music, dance, theatre, and more. From the ancient times to contemporary era, Indonesian artists keep drawing inspiration from the archipelago's culture, values, and nature, ensuring the art scene stays alive and progressing.

REFERENCES

Richard, E. Porter. 1995. Cross Culture Understanding. California. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Claude, Jean. 2000. Cultural Diversity. American; a Model of Cultural Dynamics.

Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia , 1970.

Read more: <https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Indonesia.html#ixzz6Erw6xP3Z>

Emmerson, Donald K., ed. Indonesia beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition , 1999.

Fox, James J. Harvest of the Palm: Ecological Change in Eastern Indonesia , 1977.

<https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Indonesia.html>

<https://theculturetrip.com/asia/indonesia/articles/11-things-you-should-know-about-indonesian-culture/>