Multicultural Indonesia in Geographical and Cultural Perspectives

Dr Tod Jones
School of Built Environment,
Curtin University
Perth, Australia
T.Jones@curtin.edu.au

Abstract—This paper argues that there are unresolved tensions between the forces driving cultural diversity in Indonesia, namely Indonesia’s demographic transition and urbanization, and the state’s approach to multiculturalism. It argues that multiculturalism under the New Order can be defined as hierarchical multiculturalism, where ethnic groups are aligned with the administrative units of the state at different levels and locations. This form of multiculturalism is a key reason for the proliferation of administrative units (pemekaran) since decentralization, and is in tension with the powerful forces for socio-demographic change mentioned earlier. I suggest a place-based multiculturalism would be more appropriate for Indonesia given the trend towards increasing cultural diversity.

Keywords—multiculturalism, demographic transition, urbanization, cultural policy, Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

Explanations of Indonesian history and politics invariably use historical analysis of vertical and horizontal divisions. Horizontal divisions refer to class divisions between elite, peasant, middle and working classes. Vertical divisions refers to ethnic, religious and geographical (such as Java/outer islands) divisions. These divisions are then complicated by other binaries such as historical divisions between hierarchical agricultural societies and networked trading communities, and between the metropolitan superculture of modernity and the social structures of traditional societies. Clifford Geertz cut through this complexity with his concept of aliran or streams that grouped together parts of these divisions to explain vertical groupings and political affiliations and behaviours [1]. Political analysis that began during the Suharto period (following the work of [2]), while acknowledging these vertical groupings and political affiliations and behaviours [1], was read by some [4] as the victory of this group. However, it also be noted that the Indonesia state has pursued horizontal groupings since the 1950s that is largely “cleaned” of ethnic associations [3]. The forced resignation of Suharto in 1998 was read by some [4] as the victory of this group. However, as democratic reforms slowed then stalled during the reform era, observers returned to analysis of patronage networks to explain political behaviour and history, but following decentralisation and the ethnic and religious violence in a few provinces at this time, with a new emphasis on the lower levels of the vertical groupings [5][6].

The topic of this paper is cultural diversity, which is a set of aspects of vertical divisions that are increasingly thought of as cultural, and addressed through a range of different policies. I define cultural diversity widely here, encompassing both ethnic diversity as well as other axes along which groups define their identity including religion and gender. My focus here is ethnicity. Cultural diversity can be managed through a range of policy positions. Multiculturalism is therefore a policy position that seeks to acknowledge and manage the diversity of identities and communities that are located within a geographical area. It can be conceived at the national level, or lower levels such as the province, city/county, district or even village. Multiculturalism is opposed to assimilation, where a dominant group insists that new entrants to the area they control adopt their beliefs and practices, particularly in public spaces and forums.1

My brief overview of political analysis of Indonesia is important for understanding Indonesia’s cultural diversity for two reasons. First, cultural diversity is a structural feature of these accounts, but also was rarely used to explain recent national politics or history before the Reform Era. In fact, since the 1950s it has been the horizontal relationships between political elites in particular that has dominated analysis, and diversity has been managed through patronage. Explanations for the violence in Maluku following the resignation of Suharto, for example, have been explained by some commentators as the failure of patronage networks [7] that manage and contain these vertical divisions, and now decentralisation is being judged to have been successful not because it delivered the economic or efficiency gains expected, but because it has managed cultural diversity [8]. However, it also be noted that the Indonesia state has pursued a policy of multiculturalism since the mid-1950s that is largely ignored in political analysis due to the emphasis on patronage.

1 The famed ‘melting pot’ of the USA in the early twentieth century was a form of assimilation as it insisted that immigrants to the USA adopt a similar ethos and set of values. Immigrants went into the imagined melting pot and came out ‘cleaned’ of ethnic associations [9]. Arguably a version of this was considered for Indonesia, as I explore in the second section below.
Cultural diversity has therefore been seen as a defining characteristic of Indonesian society, but is generally analysed as the background to political networks rather than a dynamic structural force, and it is viewed as managed through dynamic and flexible patronage networks rather than official policies.

This raises my second point; despite its importance, there are few accounts of the forces that are driving cultural diversity in Indonesia today below the national level. Cultural diversity at the national level allows broad summaries of the percentages of Muslims or Javanese, the number of ethnic groups and indigenous languages, but it gives us little detail about cultural diversity in Indonesia and the issues that Indonesian multiculturalism faces. Such analysis requires attention to lower levels. In particular, analysis of cultural diversity needs to look to contemporary trends. While this is an oversight in analysis, there are reasons why this has not occurred. The first is the legacy of the New Order’s policy of not allowing discussion of SARA: suku bangsa, agama, ras, antar-golongan. Statistics on ethnicity only began to be collected in the 2000 census after the end of the New Order era. However, the 2000 census was plagued by problems of poor execution and undercounting, with an estimated 4.5 million Indonesians not counted ([10]; see also [11]). Hence the 2010 census, which was well executed [11], is the first that will provide an accurate picture of Indonesia’s ethnic diversity, and can be compared to 2000 with some caveats to provide an indication of longer term trends.

The first section of my paper examines contemporary cultural diversity in Indonesia from a geographical perspective with a focus in particular on the social forces that are driving contemporary changes in cultural diversity, in particular urbanisation but and (as background) Indonesia’s demographic transition. I also draw attention to some of the important differences in both cultural diversity and rates of change in different areas. The second section addresses multiculturalism as a policy of the Indonesian state through analysis of cultural policy in Indonesia historically and through the new cultural policy legislation passed earlier this year. In my summary, I draw together the two sections, drawing attention to some of the tensions between what we know from the data and Indonesia’s approaches in cultural and other areas of policy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The most important driver of change in Indonesia since independence is the demographic transition of its population. Demographic transition refers to a process where a population that has more young people, low life expectancies and large families transitions, through what is thought of as four stages, caused by economic and social changes, to a population that has more elderly people, longer life expectancies, and small families. This transition is accompanied by a nutritional transition (away from locally-grown, plant-based diets with the health risks largely of undernutrition to eating more protein with the health risks largely of overnutrition), and a health transition (from communicable diseases like malaria, cholera to noncommunicable diseases like obesity and cancer). The extent of this transition is best demonstrated through the population pyramids in Figure 1 below taken from [11] comparing 1970, 2010 and 2050 (the dotted lines). Between 1970 and 2010, Indonesia’s population has shifted from being very young (43% of Indonesia’s population in 1970 was under 15) to much more evenly spread across the 0-45 age groups. This is a consequence of Indonesians living longer, becoming better educated, and women gaining more economic freedom and control over reproduction (leading to less children). The demographic transition has occurred across most of Asia, and Indonesia is transitioning slightly more slowly than other countries in the region like Thailand and Vietnam [11]. These changes reflect a greatly changed society and economy. While there are still large numbers of young people, they are a smaller proportion of the population and they are higher educated, and more likely to move for education and employment [12]. The changing economy also moves populations from rural areas to urban areas, and also between provinces and islands. These are the drivers of shifts in cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism seeks to manage the cultural diversity of relations between Indigenous ethnicities, Indigenous ethnicities and large settler populations (in settler societies like Australia, New Zealand and Canada), and increasingly the relationships between the larger settled ethnicities and smaller, more recent migrant communities. Multiculturalism in Australia tends to refer to the policies that seek to manage and assist ethnic populations who arrived in Australia in larger numbers after World War II as the result of shifts in migration policies away from, first, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and second, away from white people. The flavour of multiculturalism in Australia is therefore international. This is different to Indonesia where multiculturalism addresses the ethnic diversity that was present in the country before the twentieth century, and in particular the relationships between Indigenous ethnic groups, although we should not forget the large population of Chinese Indonesians who should also be considered when discussing multiculturalism. Due to these differences, Multiculturalism has quite different meanings in nation-states where there is consistent migration into the country (international immigration) than it has in countries like Indonesia which have consistent migration out of the country (international migration). There are between 3 and 6

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{2}} \] The number of foreigners in Indonesia only amounts to 73, 217 [13].
million people in the Indonesian diaspora (Muhidin, 2014, p. 317), so Indonesians are contributing to cultural diversity in other countries.\footnote{Skilled Indonesians migrate to developed countries like Australia, USA, the Netherlands and so on. Unskilled Indonesians migrate temporarily and sometimes illegally to countries including Malaysia, Singapore, and the Middle East.}

The 2010 Indonesian census identified 1331 ethnic categories that [13] classified into 600 ethnic groups. Javanese are by far the largest ethnic group constituting 40.05% of the population according to the 2010 census, followed by Sundanese (15.51%), Malay (3.70%), Batak (3.58%), Madurese (3.03%) then Betawi (2.87%) (see Table 1 below from [13]. Banjarese are the tenth largest with 4.1 million people constituting 1.34 percent of Indonesia’s population. The Chinese are the only non-Indigenous group in the top 15 and constitute 1.20 percent. While these national-level statistics are important, they tell us little about cultural diversity as they do not explain the patterns of ethnic mixing within geographical regions. At the level of islands, Java is more homogenous than the other islands with the dominant ethnic group on average 87.56 percent of the population at the district level (see table 2 from [14], but there are important differences between western Java and the rest of Java due to the presence of Jakarta (which I explore below). The most homogenous populations were in Central Java (97.9% Javanese) and Yogyakarta (96.5%) followed by Gorontalo (89.1%), West Sumatra (87.3% Minangkabau), and Bali (85.5%). The most diverse provinces were North Maluku (10.8% Tobelo), Maluku (12.7% Butonese), West Papua (14.8% Javanese) and East Nusa Tenggara (19.9% Atoni). An important difference in the culturally diverse provinces is between provinces that have a large number of indigenous ethnic groups (like North Maluku and Maluku) and provinces that have a large number of migrant groups (Javanese, Bugis, Banjarese). The Javanese are particularly important due to their numbers. They constitute the largest ethnic group in 132 districts, 52 of which are outside Java.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Regional Variable} & \textbf{Minimum} & \textbf{Mean} & \textbf{Maximum} & \textbf{Median} & \textbf{Std. Deviation} & \textbf{N} \\
\hline
\textbf{Type of Districts} & Regencies & Cities & & & & \\
\hline
\textbf{Region} & Outside Java & & & & & \\
\hline
\textbf{Island} & & & & & & \\
\hline
\textbf{Tularese} & 19.0 & 21.0 & 23.0 & 20.5 & 2.0 & 100 \\
\hline
\textbf{Tanjung} & 18.0 & 20.0 & 22.0 & 19.5 & 1.5 & 100 \\
\hline
\textbf{Ujung} & 17.0 & 19.0 & 21.0 & 18.5 & 1.0 & 100 \\
\hline
\textbf{Barat} & 16.0 & 18.0 & 20.0 & 17.5 & 0.5 & 100 \\
\hline
\textbf{Pulo} & 15.0 & 17.0 & 19.0 & 16.5 & 0.0 & 100 \\
\hline
\textbf{Total} & 14.0 & 16.0 & 18.0 & 15.5 & 0.5 & 100 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 2: Percentage of Largest Ethnic Groups by Regions: Indonesia, 2010 [14]}
\end{table}

This brings us to internal migration. Internal migration can be divided into lifetime migration, or people who have migrated at some point in their life, and recent migration, or people who have migrated in the last 5 years. Internal migration is significant in Indonesia, with 27.8 million people migrating permanently [15]. This is an increase from 8.2 percent in 1990 to 11.7% of the population in 2010. Indonesians move for many reasons. While I discuss urbanisation in more detail below, its importance is apparent in Figure 2 when looking at destination provinces. The three largest destinations, Jakarta, West Java and Banten, are driven by the megacity of Jakarta and its neighbours. The employment opportunities and amenities of urban areas are the largest driver of internal migration. We can also see the effects of the transmigration policies of the 1970s and 1980s, in particular in Lampung and South Sumatra, and the attraction of the expanding resource economies of Riau Islands and East Kalimantan. The Javanese are the main lifetime movers with the majority moving to the western parts of Java (see figure 3), but also to southern Sumatra and other provinces to seek economic opportunities. The island geography of Indonesia matters more in 2010 than it did in 1990 when Indonesians decide to migrate (when Java attracted higher proportions of migrants rather than the island of origin). Turning to recent migrants, they constitute over 10 percent of the population only in Riau Islands (14.3%) followed by West Papua (8.2%). These provinces, and some others including East and Central Kalimantan, are attractive due to the economic opportunities they present. The creation of new provinces seem to have also led to an influx of migrants, such as in Bangka-Belitung, most likely due to the opening up of employment and economic opportunities. Yogyakarta attracts a sizable proportion of migrants (7.4%) as a centre of education, who leave when they finish. The age profile of recent migrants is young, peaking in the 10-24 year old age group (see figure 5). The highest proportion of migrants comes from the provinces in Java. This is complicated by urbanisation and the megacity of Jabodetabek (Jakarta’s metropolitan region that includes Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, South Tangerang, Bekasi).
Table 3: Share and Net Share of Recent Migrants by Island and Province (Percentage) [12]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/province</th>
<th>Share in population (%)</th>
<th>Net share (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumatra</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sumatra</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banten</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Banten</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banten Islands</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sumatra</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangka Belitung</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lampung</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Java</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali &amp; Nusa Tenggara</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Nusa Tenggara</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Java</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Kalimantan</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kalimantan</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kalimantan</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kalimantan</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Sulawesi</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sulawesi</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Sulawesi</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maluku &amp; Papias</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maluku</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papias</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Papias</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Fig 2: Lifetime migration by province of residence and province of birth (percentage) [15]


Fig 4: Age profile of recent [15]

Migrants seek opportunities, and those opportunities are increasingly in cities. Migrants move to cities at a ratio of 3:1 (20.4 million compared to 7.6 million) [15], and 72.7 percent of lifetime migrants live in cities (see figure 6). Indonesia had an urbanisation rate of 4.5% per annum since 1960, which is very high [16]. It has slowed in the last decade (see table 3). Nonetheless, Indonesia has gone from a predominantly rural to having an urban population over 50 percent in two generations (49.7% in 2010 census, which now would be over 50%).

Urban areas increased (through migration and reclassification of rural areas to urban) by 39 percent between 2000 and 2010. Urban growth was higher on the islands outside Java (3.8%) than Java (3.1%) [10]. Cultural diversity will increasingly be located in Indonesia’s cities. However, these cities are not without problems. Jabodetabek constitutes five of Indonesia’s 11 cities with over a population of one million. The movements between Jakarta, West Java and Banten are generally between these cities, with Jakarta losing population to West Java and Banten as people move out from the urban core to the satellite cities. There are issues with water,
flooding, transporation, enforcing spatial plans and coordination [17]. Cities, with all of their opportunities and problems, are the drivers and places of cultural diversity in Indonesia. This is demonstrated in Table 2, where the average percentage of the largest ethnic group in cities (62.50%) was almost ten percent below the same figure for regencies (71.90%). Cities should be the focus of multiculturalism.

### Table 2: Total and Urban Population in Indonesia, 2000-2010 [12]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Java</th>
<th>Outer Islands</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>120,429</td>
<td>83,027</td>
<td>203,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rate of population growth, 1990-2000 (%)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (000)</td>
<td>58,874</td>
<td>26,370</td>
<td>85,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population living in urban areas</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of urban population (%)</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rate of urban population growth (%)</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010:
| Total population (000) | 136,611 | 101,031 | 237,641 |
| Annual rate of population growth, 2000-2010 (%) | 1.25 | 1.98 | 1.49 |
| Urban population (000) | 79,549 | 38,373 | 118,322 |
| Proportion of population living in urban areas | 0.668 | 0.379 | 0.498 |
| Share of urban population (%) | 67.6 | 32.4 | 100.0 |
| Annual rate of urban population growth (%) | 3.10 | 3.79 | 3.33 |


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The government will protect the freedom to partake in culture, the arts and science. Respecting this principle, the government will, to the greatest extent possible, promote the development of cultural freedoms.

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3. Cultural policy as multiculturism: A historical perspective

Cultural policy in Indonesia began during colonialism. The study of Indigenous ethnic traditions (adat) began with the amateur endeavours of colonial administrators but by the twentieth century was a state-sponsored undertaking that sought to divide Indonesia into understandable and governable regions for Dutch administrators [18]. The colonial state then used ethnic divisions as a way of dividing both the population and the geographical expanse of Indonesia. Unlike today, Europeans ranked cultures hierarchically with European cultures at the apex, and other cultures considered on a developmental path to the same destination. According to Governor-General De Jong in 1936, Indonesians needed another 300 years before they were sufficiently developed to have full autonomy from the Netherlands. The colonial cultural institutions for Indonesians, like Balai Poestaka, produced different language publications for the large ethnic groups in order to try to ‘educate’ them, including combating popular (and often nationalist) publications that were considered unethical or inferior in quality. Colonial era multiculturalism divided the Indonesian population into ethnic groups with different languages, customs and regions, but broadly similar developmental paths. This suited the Dutch understanding of their role as coordinating a set of smaller populations, and had its strongest expression in the negotiated plan for short-lived Federal Indonesian Republic (Republik Indonesia Serikat) in 1949; a set of ethnically divided provinces that sat within an Indonesian federation.

Indonesian nationalists strongly opposed the colonial model of Indonesian multiculturalism, and indeed to some degree the concept of multiculturalism itself due to their emphasis on unification. In 1928, the Sumpah Pemuda called for ‘one Fatherland, Indonesia; one nation, Indonesia; one language, Bahasa Indonesia, the language of unity.’ Similarly, both sides in the Polemik Kebudayaan in the mid-1930s assumed that a single national culture would emerge with the new nation. Indonesians rejected the 1949 federal model, and in 1950 a new constitution. While the 1945 constitution gave the state the power to make cultural policy, it had little opportunity to do so until the end of the war of independence, at which time Indonesia’s new leaders formed a new constitution. The 1950 Constitution sought to guarantee cultural freedoms in clause 50:

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4 The trend of migrants moving to cities is not uniformly the case. In some districts in new provinces, such as North Mamuju in West Sulawesi and four districts in Papua, there was high migration to rural districts, which drives cultural diversity in rural districts. Ref [12] posits this migration is likely to be due to the opportunities that new provinces are thought to generate for migrants.

5 This information, with the exception of my analysis of the 2017 cultural policy legislation, is taken from [19].

6 While the 1945 constitution gave the state the power to make cultural policy, it had little opportunity to do so until it was returned in 1957. Hence I leave my discussion of the 1945 constitution until after the 1950 constitution.
that gave definition to ‘Culture’:

This clause was accompanied by a now-familiar clarification

clause 32:

The 1945 constitution included state direction of culture in
reinforced by the Sukarno-led return to the 1945 Constitution.

was replaced by recognition of indigenous cultures. This was
more essential to the articulation of cultural policy as synthesis
culture was conceived. From 1956 regional cultures became
to shifts in both political leadership and how Indonesian
particular the divisions between Java and the other islands) led

nationalist youth.

promoted throughout Indonesia as an appropriate dance for
national culture was the promotion of Serambling Duabelas,
at this time that demonstrates their commitment to a new
creation of a new national culture with an emphasis on

The emphasis of cultural policy at this time was on the

policy. In the contemporary national arts, artistic groups and

events of 1965 stopped political mobilisation in cultural

Due to Sukarno’s emphasis on mobilisation and revolution,

that can develop and enrich the culture
cultural achievements [Lit. peaks of
culture] in regions throughout Indonesia
and is] considered the culture of the
nation. Cultural effort must be directed
to the advancement of civilization,
culture and unification, and should not
reject new materials from foreign culture
that can develop and enrich the culture
of the nation and raise the level of
humanity of the Indonesian nation.

This model of Indonesian multiculturalism is still important
today.

The application of this model of multiculturalism in
cultural policy was very different in 1960-65 than after 1965.
Due to Sukarno’s emphasis on mobilisation and revolution,
party-affiliated cultural groups (such as LEKRA, LESBUMI,
etc.) took the lead in interpreting Sukarno’s directives, leading
to strongly political art within ethnic artistic traditions. The
events of 1965 stopped political mobilisation in cultural
policy. In the contemporary national arts, artistic groups and
individuals who argued that art should not be political were
allowed to create new national arts institutions like Taman
Ismail Marzuki. In the regional arts, many arts stopped
totally due to their previous political affiliations and returned
under the patronage of political leaders and military figures
affiliated with the New Order regime. The economic growth
of Indonesia under the New Order, first through international
aid and then through oil revenues, allowed the state to hugely
expand its cultural policy initiatives. By 1998, the cultural
bureaucracy recorded that it employed 74,722 people
throughout Indonesia, all reporting to Jakarta.

New Order multiculturalism tied ethnic groups to different
state administrations within Indonesia. This could be at the
provincial level, such as the Minangkabau in West Sumatra
and the Balinese in Bali, or at the district level, such as occurs
in Cirebon. Cultural policy was developmentalist in
orientation, with its primary justification being to prepare
Indonesians for development through the removal of cultural
barriers and strengthening indigenous cultures to withstand
threats from western popular culture. One way of
demonstrating these alignments is through the cultural
competitions (lomba) that were run in the Cultural Centres
(Taman Budaya) throughout Indonesia during art week (pecan
kesenian).

The preparations for Arts Week began months ahead with
a request for each regency and city to choose a group of artists
from an indigenous genre to represent it. Either a competition
was held at the city or regency level or a group was chosen by
a committee to perform at the Arts Week festival in the
provincial capital city, and then a representative would win the
opportunity to represent the province in a performance in
Jakarta. The following list shows the criteria used to assess
performances at the West Java level in Arts Week in 1983
[20]:

- Qualities of the genre of art that was considered to
increase the prospect of positive interest from
observers, the jury and spectators;
- The extent to which the art is authentically West
Javanese when viewed from a national viewpoint;
- The extent to which the art still contains its ambience
or the spirit of traditional community art after there is a
process of ‘training’ from peers; and
- The extent to which the art, and its accompanying
music, is established and has received ‘training’.

Multiculturalism in this model changes ethnic culture to
accord with state-defined ideas about development, and ties it
to a specific region and administration. The ‘peaks of culture’
model therefore aligned administrative and a dominant ethnic
culture together. This model creates problems when two or
more ethnic cultural groups are of a similar size, and makes
the representation of minority cultures in official programs
symbolic at best. We can think of this as hierarchical
multiculturalism.

The problem with hierarchical multiculturalism is that it
struggles to cope with cultural diversity at the level of the city,
and at times province. Indonesia’s demographic transition in
particular places pressure on hierarchical multiculturalism. As
increasing numbers of younger Indonesians gain higher levels
of education and migrate to seek new opportunities, their
destinations become increasingly culturally diverse. These
destinations are for the most part cities. While cities in Java,
due most likely to higher levels of development, were favoured destinations in the 1980s and 1990s, the higher level of development in the islands outside Java has shifted migration patterns towards these locations, slowing inter-island migration. However, the migration of the Javanese from Central and East Java in particular has continued for the last 30 years and shows little sign of slowing down. A major issue that stems back to the 1990s is the lack of investment in infrastructure in cities [16]. While Indonesia has invested in cities at a rate of 3–4 percent of GDP, this trails other countries with high levels of urbanisation like China and India. This has led to lower returns on urbanisation in Indonesia than is the case in other countries. In short, there are issues with migrants’ prospects in their new locations.

An important outcome of hierarchical multiculturalism is the creation of new administrative units, or pemekaran, that followed decentralisation in 2002. The provinces that split tended to have two large ethnic populations. For instance, Banten separated from the Sudanese in West Java, Gorontalo from the Minahasa in North Sulawesi, and the Tobelo in North Maluku from the Butonese in Maluku [14]. There are also instances of indigenous ethnic groups splitting from regions that have large Javanese populations, such as Bangka-Belitung from South Sumatra, and North Kalimantan (Buginese) from East Kalimantan. One reversal of this was the separation of West Papua (Javanese) from Papua (Dani). This has also occurred at the district level, with an increase from 340 in 2000 to 514 in 2014 [14]. Hierarchical multiculturalism drives groups when they become large enough to establish an administrative unit that they can control. However, this could continue indefinitely (although at a slower rate) as migration will continue in Indonesia, driven by Indonesia’s demographic transition.

These are not the only issues that confront Indonesia’s hierarchical multiculturalism. First, the underinvestment in infrastructure in cities affects the living conditions of new, young migrants, and could exacerbate tensions between migrants and inhabitants. Political agitation and violence is most likely where livelihoods and living conditions are difficult. Second, hierarchical multiculturalism does not support the expression of cultural diversity within a city. Ref [21] has highlighted the trend amongst some hard-line Islamic groups to repress opinions and practices that they oppose through large and at times violent protests. He argues that these Islamic political operatives are changing public space in Indonesia in ways that has serious implications for these tensions are being managed, although this has also undermined the efficiencies and better governance that decentralisation has brought elsewhere [8][22]. Ref [8] has argued that this constitutes a success for decentralisation. While this maybe the case in the short term, and setting aside the failures of decentralisation, hierarchical multiculturalism does not address these underlying processes of cultural diversification.

However, through education there is an opportunity to explore and advocate for a more appropriate form of Indonesian multiculturalism. This multiculturalism should be based on place rather than ethnic group, and seek to emphasise contemporary experiences, practices and issues. It should embrace all of the ethnic practices present in the place, whatever their origin, and also include contemporary cultural and artistic expression. This multiculturalism is already present in many locations in Indonesia due to residents’ responses to the forces I have been discussing, but it struggles to penetrate into government policy. This place-based multiculturalism should be the focus of research and educational efforts, with an emphasis on how different groups work to claim local rights (what [23] calls urban citizenship). Empowering local government to dialogue with these groups in tandem with existing residents and their organisations is how Indonesian cities will realise the full benefits of urbanisation. The new cultural policy legislation (UU 5 2017 Pemajuan Kubdayaan) holds within it the seeds of this approach as it empowers local groups to articulate their ideas and concerns to local government, which then shapes cultural policy. These types of activities can help to offset tensions between hierarchical multiculturalism and demographic change, but they are most effective within a place-based multiculturalism that encourages the expression of cultural diversity and reduces barriers to Indonesians seeking opportunities, wherever they may be.

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