

# State's Labels and the Challenges of Nation-State Building in the Decentralized Politics in Indonesia

DAVID EFENDI, ACHMAD NURMANDI, AGUSTIYARA

---

Received: 14 June 2017  
Accepted: 04 July 2017  
Published: 14 October 2017

Corresponding author:  
David Efendi  
Department of Government  
Affairs and Administration  
Universitas Muhammadiyah  
Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia.  
Email: defendi83@gmail.com

Achmad Nurmandi  
Jusuf Kalla School of  
Government (JKSG)  
Department of Government  
Affairs and Administration,  
UMY, Indonesia.  
Agustiyara  
Department of Public  
Administration at Faculty of  
Humanities and Social  
Sciences (HUSO), Khon Kaen  
University, Thailand.

## ABSTRACT

*This paper argues that the Indonesian state's labels are key challenges for Indonesia as a nation-state. In response to questions on whether Indonesia should be categorized as a successful or a failed nation-state, this article provides an explanation of how the country experienced the transition from colonial to independent state, transition to peace after the dual 'revolutions' of 1965 and 1998, transition from centralized 'to decentralized 'sovereignty' and from authoritarian regime to democratic state. In this essay, therefore, I have decided to use historical evidence to address on going public and scholarly debates about the form of the Indonesian state in the democracy era which is a confrontation between Islamic-conservatism and secular-liberalism. To understand Indonesia as a contemporary state, I make reference to Benedict Anderson's concepts of imagined community, power, and responsibility in the post-9/11 era of international threats. Finally, of a number of challenges to Indonesian nation-state building, the most pressing is the emergence of ethnic and religious conflicts, and separatism caused by domestic factors in the failure of economic development and the lack of democratic governance. Thus, the label of Indonesia as a multicultural state is questionable.*

**Keywords:** Pancasila, Islamic law, international threat, nation-building, democratic governance, sovereignty

## INTRODUCTION

The two terms "nation" and "state" are largely discussed in contemporary political theories. The broader discourse concerns development state theories. To maintain order, states need to build their power and sovereignty. Fukuyama (2004) introduces several concepts in this regard: the strong and weak state, failed and successful state, and the scope and the capacity of state. Of course, the notion of Indonesia as a "nation" is itself debatable. Benedict Anderson (1983) contributes to answering this question by defining the nation as "an imagined political community"—imagined as both inherently 'limited' and 'sovereign.' There are three things we need to understand in connection with this idea: the specific definitions of imagined, limited, and sovereign.

The nation as an imagined entity is a valid concept, because the members of the community never know or meet most of their fellow citizens, yet in the mind of each one lives the image of their communities. The nation is, moreover, limited because the community is limited territorially by other nations we call sovereign. This explanation is helpful in understanding a contemporary nation like Indonesia. Meanwhile, Max Weber defines a nation as "a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own" (Roeder, 2007:3).

Historically, from 1602 to 1945, Indonesia was colonized by European nations. Beginning with the arrival of Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) in the lands now called Indonesia; the kingdoms of these islands were conquered in various ways. At that time, the emotional binding or "imagined community" did not exist, so there was no solidarity when facing foreign occupation or wars in neighbor kingdoms against the Dutch. In short, people did not recognize a local sense of nationalism as a political ideology. The name 'Indonesia' itself did not exist until 1850, before which the area was called 'Dwipantara', 'Nan-hai', 'Hindia belanda' (Netherlansch-indie), and 'Insulende.' In 1849, a British expert in ethnology, George Samuel Windsor Earl (1813-1865), wrote an article that proposed two options for naming this land: Indunesia or Malayunesia ("Nesos" in Greek means "island"). Finally, Indonesia was chosen as the official name of the state.

Indonesia experienced colonial occupation over a long period of time. At least three nations exploited its natural resources: the Netherlands, Portugal, and Japan. Consciousness of the need to escape from colonialism spread after contact with other cultures and especially with developed countries. This was a logical consequence of Indonesian students studying in western countries. They adopted radicalized positions because of their recognition of the contradictory reality. On one hand, they experienced and enjoyed freedom abroad, and on the other hand, they saw their own state as colonized by another; local people were not able to enjoy freedom and equality as human beings. In addition, the Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in other parts of the world including in the United States. Nationalism then spread widely in many places as a form of local resistance to foreign powers. In this bloody revolution millions died; a very high cost for the birth of modern Indonesia as a republican nation-state and for popular sovereignty. Finally, Indonesians obtained their own 'free state' or 'independent state' on August 17, 1945, de facto, followed by de jure status in 1949.

The country is endowed with rich natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, coal, timber, and a number of minerals such as bauxite, tin, copper, gold, and silver. These resources helped Indonesia to achieve strong economic growth for some 30 years before it was hit by the Asian financial crisis in 1997-98; followed by political and social unrest. Indonesia is now emerging from its political and economic crisis and has undergone tremendous changes due to ongoing structural and political reforms since 1997. These include major political liberalization, democratization, and the 'Big Bang' decentralization system imposed by government Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 25/1999.

The Republic of Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world, having over 17,500 islands of which 6,000 are inhabited. It has a total area of approximately 1.9 million square kilometers and, in 2010, the estimated population was approximately 238 million. That is why Indonesia has become a G-16 member (Jones at all, 2009). In accordance with the concept of decentralization of the unitary state, power and authority is divided among local governments. Indonesia has achieved success in transferring power from the national to the local level. Administratively, following the reforms of 1998, Indonesia has divided its territory into 33 provinces, approximately 400 districts, 93 municipalities, 5,263 sub-districts, 7,113 'kelurahan' (villages within cities), and 62,806 villages (BPS, 2010).

The central government has designated four provinces as having 'special' status, including Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, because its people want to implement Islamic law; Papua province, because its people want to separate from Indonesia; DKI Jakarta, because it is the capital of Indonesia; and Yogyakarta due to its role in supporting Indonesia as a free state. Yogyakarta province was also the historical capital of Indonesia. Of the four specially designated areas, only three are supported on a statutory basis by means of Law No. 44/1999 Concerning Privileges of the Special Province of Aceh, Law No. 21/2001 on Special Autonomy for Papua Province (special members of parliament), and Law No. 29/2007 on the Capital Region of Jakarta as the Capital of the Republic of Indonesia.

While the Special Province of Yogyakarta has not received legal legitimacy in the post-reform era, it does have legitimacy under the declaration of two kingdoms of Yogyakarta of 5 September 1945. Traditionally, the Sultan, as regional ruler holds all power in Yogyakarta province, including both traditional and legal-formal authority (Weber, 1947). The special province of Yogyakarta was also legitimated in Article 18 UUD 1945 of Indonesia's Constitution, which mentions that the national government pays respect to areas having special status. In addition, before the independence of Indonesia, the Dutch had recognized the Yogyakarta Sultanate as a kingdom with the power to govern its own households. Politically, Yogyakarta province received its special status due to the importance of the Yogyakarta Sultanate in supporting Indonesia to become an independent state. Officially, in 1950, Yogyakarta became part of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, inherent to its special rights, with the sultan also automatically recognized as the governor.

Thus, the special status has implications for the narrowing of central authority in certain aspects of politics, economics, and culture, causing tensions between the central government and local interests to appear through political policies. In fact, the national government continues a strict form of government by exercising its military power, both directly and indirectly.

Indonesia, as a new nation-state, was from the very beginning given a variety of names or labels, either by its own people or by foreign observers. Some labels were pinned on

Indonesia such as; "Post-Colonial State", "Bureaucratic State," "Pancasila State," "Secular State"," Multicultural State", "Authoritarian State", "Religious State" and, finally, "failed state." I am not going to discuss all of these labels in this paper, but rather I will focus on several of them. Therefore, the following discussion is intended as an attempt to rediscover a national identity of Indonesia in response to the question of whether it has succeeded or failed in building itself as a nation-state, and whether it is a weak or strong state.

### **The Labels as the Challenges**

In Indonesia, a 'name' or 'label' is believed to be a mirror of behavior stemming from philosophical values. Certainly, Indonesia's culture has been strongly influenced by Islamic values from the Middle East and Central Asia, so that Indonesians believe that a name can carry spiritual power. Unsurprisingly, they also generally hold a view whereby state ideology should be a way of life, and the only ideology is Islam, giving them a spiritual grounding both in the world and hereafter. They argue that the symbol of a nation is important but not to 'Pancasila' because it is man-made. In the modern era, many states have made their own slogans, such as "Indonesia Ultimate Diversity," "Amazing Thailand," "Malaysia Truly Asia", "Incredible India," "Cambodia the Kingdom of Wonder," and so forth. In short, the state's label is a challenge unto itself in the recent politics of Indonesia.

This label concerns not only economic issues but also inherently ideological problems such as the conflicts between groups that embrace the ideology of the west versus that of the east, socialism versus capitalism, religious views versus secular views, and democratic versus non-democratic ideals. The emergence of Indonesia's various labels, such as "bureaucratic state," "post-colonial state," "authoritarian state" and "failed state," following Richard Robison's contributions (1990), has been strongly influenced by the globalization of educational and democratic ideologies. Not only do foreign scholars label Indonesia; labels are also assigned by Indonesians who have experienced higher education and even by ordinary people with local perspectives and values, who categorize the types and styles of political leadership.

Moreover, Indonesia has many types of leadership, particularly at the national level. In order to name a few, Herbert Feith (2006) divides the Indonesian leaders in the post-revolutionary era into two types of leadership. The first type is 'solidarity-makers' and the second 'administrators.' Sukarno was a solidarity-maker, and Muhammad Hatta was an administrator. In the Suharto regime, the dichotomy between civilians and the military was very strong. Meanwhile, ordinary people give the president a unique label, such as President Sukarno as father of the revolutionaries and the founding father, President Suharto as the father of development, and President Abdurrahman Wahid as the father of pluralism, and so forth.

### **Indonesia as a Post-Colonial State**

As a colonial state, the Dutch holdings in the archipelago led to absolute poverty in Indonesia, as was the case for other colonies in general. Nationalism became the most powerful political weapon of that period (Breuilly, 1993) in dealing with the revolutionary spirit of the time. The presence of the Japanese in Indonesia (1942-1945) further strengthened the local resolve to break away from colonial rule by a semi-military force. In

that period, President Sukarno united the people by using the magic word of Nationalism. John Roosa (2007) writes that Soekarno used charismatic power to maintain unity in Indonesia. I myself strongly believe that Soekarno, as a political leader, created his power via the notion of nationalism to influence his people to struggle against the Dutch on behalf of the freedom and sovereignty of all Indonesians.

In this section we will discuss how the nationalist movement led Indonesia to become a free state, separated from the Dutch, and the challenges after gaining this independence. Perhaps Indonesia is the only nation-state in the world that was built up from a collective declaration of young people from various ethnicities and cultures. It was a long-term process of building national consciousness among Indonesian people. This was a great movement of consciousness in Indonesian history that resulted from colonialism. They agreed to make this dream come true via the "Sumpah Pemuda" (Youth Oath), which contained the following contents as of October 28, 1928:

*Bertanah air satu—Tanah air Indonesia (One nation—the Indonesian nation)*  
*Berbahasa satu—Bahasa Indonesia (One land—the Indonesian land)*  
*Berbangsa satu—Bangsa Indonesia (One language—the Indonesian language)*

Without any doubt, one of the keys for unification was the Youth Oath, which brought together the youth of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds (including Sumatran, Javanese, Batakese, Ambonese, and Chinese) who gathered and vowed to eliminate the great divide of their racial barriers, and declared themselves to be Indonesians. This oath became a keystone in uniting Indonesia, and proved to be pivotal point in the struggle to break the shackles of colonial rule. Indonesia's political history can also be viewed as a process to fulfill the promise of nationality. With the project of nation and character building, Sukarno highlighted how to be proud of being Indonesian. In fact, Sukarno also created ideological enemies to consolidate and strengthen the bonds that the Indonesian national identity formed, as it established a concept of a strong, equitable nation that should be respected by other nations. Unfortunately, by governing as a commander, Sukarno did however fail to deliver economic prosperity, which is an essential human need.

Actually, long before 1928, an exclusive organization of indigenous people—Budi Utomo, existed, yet this organization was considered as too close to the Dutch, and therefore they had less influence over the people, since it only recruited educated and noble people. Thus, the Youth Oath had the very best chance to establish an independent state through the nationalism movement. The establishment of an 'Indonesian Language' was an important tool to unify the people in the face of diversity. People turned diversity into a reason to unify in order to fight against colonialism, either with cooperation or confrontation. Awareness of nationalism in the independence movement in Indonesia is strongly supported by Anderson's theory (1983:44-45) that argues for the role of print capitalism. In this view, print capitalism becomes the most fundamental aspect of nationalism. Anderson further argues that print capitalism influences nationalism movements in three ways. First, print languages create unified fields of exchange, which allow dialectically disparate populations to imagine themselves as part of a community through the shared print language. Second, print capitalism then gave a new fixity to language. In this way, people can read the language of past centuries and, thus, they can imagine a previous national community.

Finally, print capitalism creates new languages of power that are elevated to new politico-cultural eminence.

The new name, 'Indonesian,' was adopted by students in the Netherlands as a term for what was then called the 'Netherland Indies', as they claimed a right of independence through student movements (Lane, 2008). In 1922, the spirit of nationalism among Indonesian students in the Netherlands grew and thrived as the idea of Indonesia as an independent state caught on. This is evidenced by the birth of the organization "Perhimpunan Indonesia," as well as the "Indonesia Merdeka" magazine. Audrey Kahin (1999), states that the development of nationalism also emerged in West Sumatra, where a movement was spearheaded by Indonesian students who had returned from the Middle East. There, they built a national consciousness through Islamic education in the villages.

As we have seen, Indonesia was born through a bloody struggle in 1945, and the Netherlands admitted its sovereignty and independence in 1949. It consists of a collection of 17,504 islands (Depdagri, 2004), 490 ethnic groups (Wanandi, 2002) with 238 million people (Census 2010 from BPS), and another source shows that in 2010, the Indonesian population had already reached 242,968,342 (US Census Bureau 2010). Indonesia has over two hundred and fifty distinct languages that are spoken in the archipelago (Lane, 2008:1). In addition, Indonesia has 6 formal religions and many other belief systems. People have different regional backgrounds; others are from a small kingdom, a kingdom on the basis of religion, and so forth.

Of course, it was not easy to combine all of these cultures into one state, one language, one land and water in the frame of "Bhineka Tunggal Eka," a slogan of the State of Indonesia which means "Unity in Diversity," or which may also be translated as "Many, Yet One." Many people are optimistic that diversity is a source of strength for the nation-state, and now many are starting to ask, in contrast, whether many riots in Indonesia were caused by the mismanagement of diversity. They are convinced that diversity in Indonesia does not provide a benefit at all for the advancement of democracy and prosperity. In addition, Indonesia now has a wonderful new national slogan: "Ultimate Diversity," highlighting that we are different and united because we are not only unique but also different. However, Indonesia also experienced government as a federal state (the RIS or Republic of United Indonesia) under Dutch colonial rule that included Madura, Sumatra, Pasundan, and Java. Unfortunately, most Indonesians, with nationalism, fought against this form of the state, and they succeeded. This confirmed what Kohr (1986) argues, namely, that nationalism is a political movement that aims to grab power or regain sovereignty and legitimacy.

Sukarno, as the first president, declared that the Indonesian nation should not be "a nation of coolies and a coolie among nations" (Lane 2008:277). Before 1945 was the hardest time for Indonesia as a nation-state, because it was still under the control of colonialism by the Netherlands. The founding fathers of Indonesia worried continuously about the possibility of failure in building a new nation-state. They wanted Indonesia to be a powerful nation, independent, and sovereign. The sovereign state, according to Hobbes (1651), means that the state must control civil, military, judicial, and ecclesiastical powers. However, other philosophers such as Kant (1795) or Arendt (1951) have also drawn attention to the need for freedom and equality. In Indonesia's case, freedom is not identical to equality.

The first president, Sukarno, was a solidarity maker in the nation state project in Indonesia who tried to keep an equal distance from all interest groups, including nationalist organizations, religions, and the communist party. Sukarno argued strongly for nationalism through the 'Nasakom' (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism) movement. This combined all of the groups within the governmental body. Sukarno was then deposed in 1965 by General Suharto who supported anti-communist propaganda at that time. Social and political unrest occurred throughout the nation, and military power and Islamic organizations cooperated to fight against those who were suspected of being PKI members, resulting in an estimated 500,000 deaths. With military power, Suharto formally became president in 1968 and stepped down in 1998 due to the "people power" movement, marking Indonesia's so-called reform era.

Suharto's regime created a strong political machine, Golkar, a pro-government party based on bureaucratic and military interests. He embarked on a development program that focused on economic growth, and he banned the involvement of civil society in political issues. In doing so, the central government limited political parties by recognizing only three parties, with activities at the provincial and district levels. By the 1990s, Suharto's family and cronies were the major beneficiaries of state privatization schemes and in many cases ran business monopolies (Robison, 1978). Soaring inflation and unemployment following the Asian financial crisis of 1997 prompted urban riots in 1998, and Suharto was forced to resign. His successor, President B. J. Habibie, imposed several laws and policies in order to give the press and people freedom to expression, freedom to speak, and opportunities to build political parties. Hundreds of political parties rose after this reform. The Habibie administration gave the option to the East Timorese people to choose whether they intended to join with Indonesia or to become a free state (Huang & Gunn, 2004). As the result of this referendum, the East Timorese choose to form an independent state.

Shortly after independence came a few debates between the leaders of the State. First, they discussed the importance of the "Jakarta Charter", which proposed Sharia Law (Islamic Law) as the highest constitution of the state. But this proposal ultimately failed due to the strength of groups who promoted a respect for all religious communities in all parts of Indonesia. Nonetheless, theoretically, Indonesia has still been heavily influenced by the ideas of theocracy or acknowledgement of the state as divine (Hobbes 1651), in which the state recognizes only six religions in Indonesia. The highest constitution of Indonesia states that the nation's independence is only because of God's will. At that time, Indonesian leaders tried to look for a viable form of government, whether unitary or federal state, republic or monarchy, presidential or parliamentary. Finally, the 'national' leaders decided that the proper form of government is a unitary state, a republic, with a president.

Indonesia's vision to promote world peace was written in the preamble of the 1945 Indonesia constitution in order to protect the people, to promote prosperity for every person without discrimination, to provide education for all, and to actively participate in making world peace (Preamble, UUD 1945).

In addition, the developments of post-independence 1945 and post-reform 1997-8 are still stained by ethnic wars, power struggles between regions, as well as national and local conflicts, which together justify Max Lane's findings (2008) that Indonesia, as a nation-state, is not yet finished, also proving that because of nationalism, consciousness is nothing but an "imagined community" in the modern state theorist view, with an artificial nature, as Hobbes

(1561) pictures in his *Leviathan*. On the other hand, there is a strong feeling that nationalism must be maintained to keep 'popular sovereignty' and the principled existence of the State, as Hegel and Arendt argue, whereby freedom and absolute equality among nations are correlated with other nations. This is consistent with Indonesia's constitution, which was ratified in June of 1946.

The militaristic regime of Suharto in Indonesia has provided enough lessons for Indonesians that a negative peace is not real, long-term peace. Suharto was too confident that military power could be a 'guarantor' of nation-state building (Roosa, 2007). In fact, the worsening of relationships among citizens in Indonesia after his fall is proof that the threat from the military was not an effective tool to maintain peace. In Aceh, for instance, military operations were chosen to maintain "peace" and "order" by combating "the rebellion", but this only maintained peace for a short time (Jemadu, 2004; Huang & Gunn, 2004). The distrust of the Aceh people toward the Javanese, for example, has increased based on fact that most of the military personnel sent there were Javanese. A general bias was created whereby the Indonesian Javanese were seen as colonizing Aceh for years and, for that reason, GAM was seen as having a legitimate right to drive out the Javanese from Aceh, regardless of their individual status as civilians or military personnel. Meanwhile, the government of the Suharto era tended to believe that military operations were the best option. In my opinion, negotiation was impossible at that time, because the government set other groups as enemy organizations.

This is precisely in line with Breuilly (1993), who argues that nationalism in Indonesia was often used as a tool to conquer political opponents. In practice, nationalism is nothing but politics, insofar as it has been applied since the Sukarno era under the so-called Old Order, which was a strain of nationalism more closely aligned with socialism and communism. This political tool was then used by Suharto to drown out various social upheavals in the military, while the military was considered the only means of legitimating the state's monopoly on physical violence on behalf of the integrity of the nation and the State. The intent was, on behalf of nationalism, to force different groups and movements to obey the law at the risk of being banned.

As we have seen, the context of the emergence of nationalism is closely connected with the phenomenon of competition among the nations of the world. The emergence of nationalism is inseparable from the emergence of racial theories that have been put forward hundreds or thousands of years ago about superior and inferior races that could threaten each other. Hitler was one of the genuine nationalists who were influenced strongly by social Darwinism. In the context of the period of revolution in Indonesia, nationalism was a tool of propaganda against the colonial Dutch, though it caused millions of ordinary people to die. Mohammad Hatta, as vice president of Indonesia, rejected this form of nationalism, one that only leads to go to war rather than contributing to the world order. Yet many people recognize that nationalism as an ideology is essential to free all mankind from slavery, because every human being was born inherent with his/her rights.

### **Bureaucratic State**

Generally speaking, the post-colonial state tends to be a 'bureaucratic state' with a complicated administration and followed many practices of corrupt behavior (Rondinelli

1983; Chema 2010). It has been influenced by the role of the revolution in bureaucratizing France (Pfaf, 2004), but Skocpol argues that revolution eliminated the "medieval rubbish" of parochialism and privilege that hampered the creation of the "modern bureaucratic state". Moreover, Anderson (1983) labeled Indonesia, under Suharto, as a "military state" with complicated bureaucratic agencies. Meanwhile, Hadiz and Robison named Indonesia as an "authoritarian-capitalist state". This means that Indonesia is governed by a capitalist class, with even the politicians and the state both engaging in business.

Bureaucracy is also seen as the elites' interest to gain and defend their power in society via rationality and authority. To Max Weber, this is a characteristic of the modern state, which governs society by imposing legal tools. In Indonesia's case, the strongest and most powerful bureaucracy was implemented along with the dictatorship from 1965 to 1998. As for Indonesia, according to Vedi R Hadiz (2000:4,10) and Robison (1990), in a period of more than 32 years, a bureaucratic-authoritarian state that led to state capitalism was characterized by the proliferation of activities of the government and authorities in the capital and accumulation of efforts to manipulate the law in order to maintain power. In this situation, Diamond (2008) refers to a "predatory state", that is, the behavior of elites as cynical and opportunistic. In such a system, as Robert Putnam wrote in his classic *Making Democracy Work*, "corruption is widely regarded as the norm", while political participation is mobilized from above, civic engagement is meager, compromise is scarce, and "nearly everyone feels powerless, exploited, and unhappy." Predatory states cannot sustain democracy, for sustainable democracy requires constitutionalism, compromise, and a respect for law. This phenomenon commonly occurs in countries that are in transition from post-colonialism.

The bureaucracy in Indonesia has been powerful in keeping the political and social order. This, then, has contributed to a deep gap between state and society, and it has concentrated economic power in certain groups of power holders and owners of capital (Robison, 1978; Hadiz, 2005, 2007). Theoretically, such a regime is similar to that described by Barbara Geddes (1999), who states that there are three types of regimes: military juntas, one-party states, and personalized regimes. Each is subject to different pressures and tends to end in different ways. Most people do not want power in the hands of the military, but they want the military to become the unifying symbol of the nation-state, to provide public order, and to protect the people as a whole. The relationship and the role of military vis-à-vis nation-state building are explained by various scholars, including Hashim (2008), Kim (2010), Alexander M. Golts and Tonya L. Putnam (2004), Zeo Scoot (2007), and Bernazzoli and Flint (2009).

As a result, the state bureaucracy has been a military-dictatorship with absolute power, leading to the abuse of power in the form of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Lord Acton, 1949). The authoritarian state, as a label for Indonesia, is valid actually not only for the Suharto era (1965-1998) but also for the Sukarno era of so-called guided democracy (1959-1966). However, Suharto was the most authoritarian president in Indonesia. He, through military power, murdered 3 million people on behalf of the anti-communist cause (Anderson, 2008). Under this regime, democracy was used as an instrument of legitimacy, and the government thought that the economy was more important than freedom in establishing democracy. Studies have labeled this period as that of an authoritarian state, when the State was stronger than society and it dominated to preserve their power and authority. As

a consequence, the bureaucracy became powerful and strict; corruption was acute due to patron-client relationships at the center of government. I can say that general elections were held only to gain legitimacy from the public and build an image of the state as firmly democratic, hiding the 'state of terror' from its own society and people. This era was called as 'quasi democracy' or what Schumpeter has labeled 'procedural democracy' (Dahl, 1963).

President Suharto led a regime that was supported by the military with a strict bureaucracy. Unlike Sukarno, who maintained unity in Indonesia by nationalism, Suharto resorted to military force and coercion during his regime, killing 3 million people who were considered members of dangerous groups, on the pretext of combating communism (Anderson, 2008). Other sources mention that these actions were sponsored by the US Central Intelligence Agency and by Britain. Both the US and Britain wanted the army to act against the communists (Curtis, 2002). In this period, the state agency used the military as a tool of legitimacy to control the people and, at the same time, monopolized economic resources rather than freeing them up for the cause of freedom and welfare. Moreover, the New Order regime was a "Leviathan" in Indonesia, with full sovereignty. As a result of a strong bureaucracy, then there is the proliferation of patron-client relationships in the central government as well as corrupt practices. I can say that, in this period, the general election is only to declare to the world that Indonesia was a democratic state. There is no doubt that Indonesia held general elections by a schedule as provided in the concept of "procedural democracy" or "electoral democracy" (Dahl, 1963). However, these elections only produced a 'predatory state' in which "there are elections, but they are contests between corrupt, clientelistic parties. Elections are only democratic if they are truly free and fair. There are parliaments and local governments, but they do not represent broad constituencies. There are constitutions, but not constitutionalism." (Diamond, 2008)

In reality, regarding the orientation of power, politics in Indonesia before and after the reforms did not change significantly. Actually the struggle for power can only be justified if it can be shown that, in practice, we could use these powers in a way that brings benefit to the people. The emergence of Leviathan, extraordinary powers that could impose the submission of all parties, can only be justified if it can avoid a war of all men against all men. Without proposing and realizing the intended use of that power, it is rationally justifiable, then, that the power struggle is none other than the realization of a lawless society that will only result in a match between forces that will not guarantee social order, because it only won for capitalists and rulers, who only think about their own interests rather than those of the people (Diamond, 2008). In order to unify the people's imagination, Anderson (1991:243) writes, President Suharto needed to build the three strong institutions: the census, the map, and the museum, continuing what the Dutch colonial state had already built in Indonesia for the same purposes.

After the 1998 reform, there was a shift in political society, which was originally seen as more governmental activity in the interests of the state, but oriented to the interests of society. Civil society groups succeeded in forcing President Suharto to step down from his throne. However, the old elite remain too powerful to defeat. They have tended to restore a political party that is dependent on state funding (Imawan, 2004). This is partly because of the financing of political parties, which basically do not rely on the power of the party itself through the contributions of the members, but instead rely heavily on state funding.

To sum up, the strongest national issue for post-Suharto Indonesia is territorial integrity (Roosa, 2007). This has brought strong military power back into the realm of politics, for instance, concerning the battle between the Indonesian army and GAM (Free Aceh Movement) in Aceh and the military violence to the OPM (Papuan Freedom Movement) in Papua.

### **"Pancasila" State, Secular State vs. Religious State**

Pancasila, the state ideology of Indonesia, means Indonesia is as a "Multicultural State" or "Pluralist State" because of its cultural diversity across the nation. This part of the paper uses the theory of a "multicultural state" to build an understanding of Indonesia as a nation. The republic of Indonesia carries a national philosophy, 'Unity in Diversity,' with five principles of the state, namely, 'In one God we trust', humanitarianism, unity of nation, representation of the people and social justice (Indonesia's Constitution; Lanti 2006). However, the hardliner and extremist Islamic groups have tried to force Islamic law as the national law as part of the "Jakarta Charter" movement. These groups are strongly against the secular and 'Pancasila' state as the final form of the Indonesian state (Maarif, 2008; Wahid, 2009). In conservative Islamic groups, Pancasila is viewed as a secular and liberal state by connecting them into the Western concept of state. For example, the Acehnese asked the national government to implement its own Islamic law in Aceh province (Jemadu, 2004).

To date, the biggest question, which does not have an exact answer, is whether Pancasila should be the final State Ideology of Indonesia. The groups on either side of this question argue for Indonesia as either a religious (Islamic) state or a "Pancasila" (multicultural state). The "Pancasila" state is often understood as a secular state by many Islamic fundamentalists. However, both sides actually agree that Indonesia is neither secular nor liberal. Unfortunately, the discourse about the type of state is still unresolved. Hill and Weidemann (1989) argue that Indonesia is one of the most diverse and heterogeneous countries in the world. This country was born in a bloody struggle in 1945 and recognized by the Dutch as sovereign in 1949. Muhammad Hatta (2008), the first vice president of Indonesia, said that independence was not given by others, but rather it was because of the serious efforts of Indonesians and because of God ("theocracy"), whereby God blesses Indonesians. This means that Indonesians strongly believe in what Hobbes said about "divine power". This statement is echoed in the preamble of the Indonesian constitution (UUD 1945).

Pancasila as the ideology of the state does respect diversity. In other words, Indonesia promotes pluralism among its citizens. As stated above, multicultural roots built the nation-state. Indonesia is often associated with the 'magic and political' slogan, 'Unity in Diversity,' which means that Indonesia is built from many different aspects that are different kingdoms, languages, ethnicities, races, etc., all of which mix together in the form of a 'unitary state' rather than a federal form. We can see this from the "Youth Oath" (1928), which calls for a united Indonesia regardless of racial background, religion, and class. However, challenges and resistance against the 'multicultural state' later resurfaced due to the presence of fundamentalist Islamic groups and Islamic radical groups, who want to uphold Islamic law in Indonesia. Their argument is in favor of a Muslim majority state.

Indonesia's government officially recognizes Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism as the formal religions. Every single man and woman must choose one of these as his or her religion. Members of unrecognized religions are banned, and atheism is not accepted. The national government has often failed to respond to religious intolerance in recent years. For example, the discrimination and violence against Ahmadiyah—a heterodox Islamic sect with 400,000 Indonesian followers—increased in 2008 after the Religious Affairs Department recommended that the group be banned. Seeking a compromise, the government banned Ahmadists from proselytizing, but the sect has been banned outright in several districts and in the province of South Sumatra. Some 130 Ahmadis remained in shelters in 2009, after sectarian violence in 2006 had forced them from their homes in Mataram, Lombok. Separately, violence between Christians and Muslims in Poso continued to decrease in 2009, although underlying grievances and low public confidence in government remain unaddressed. The Wahid Institute reported 232 incidents of religious intolerance in 2009 (Wahid Institute Report, 2009).

Competition between interest groups in forming the future state of Indonesia has always existed, and they not only compete in making laws at the national level, but also in local governments, in order to force the national level to adopt changes already in place in local states. This will lead to the "multicultural state" becoming an "interest group state", with contestation between the religion (Islam) and the state as observed by Hefner (1999) before and after the fall of the Suharto regime in May 1998. He notes:

*20 years of Islamic resurgence has not created a Muslim political community consensus. Nor have those years united Muslims around a common leader. But it is important to recognize this much in Muslim Indonesia politics; years of struggle against the Suharto dictatorship deepened mainstream commitment to democracy, constitutional law, civil independence, and peaceful reformation. (Azra, 2001:67)*

As stated by Mohammad Hatta (2008), Indonesia is facing two major ideologies, capitalism and socialism, and Indonesia needs to take 'the third way' because neither ideology fits with the culture of Indonesia. In 2010, the parliament and the media re-enlivened the discourse on whether or not Indonesia should become a religious state or remain secular and liberal (Kompas, 11/26/2010).

Many Islamic groups denounce Pancasila as a state ideology. They charge that the state is not happy if Islamic groups run the government. Under The New Order, the state killed many Islamic group members, and their leaders, for example in Aceh, Priok, and Sulawesi. Unsurprisingly, the debate has emerged in an era during which democracy as a political and governmental system is widely accepted. Democracy can survive because it provides another mechanism of control, and is reluctant to be controlled. The check and balance mechanisms between state institutions and its citizens uphold the ideology of state laws that protect the diversity of society. In their understanding of the law, people do not exist above it. At any given moment, the law is needed to achieve public order. That is the main reason why the state has the authority and power to use coercion when maintaining the state constitution (Weberian; Skocpol, 1985), or to enforce the law in terms of making people obey the law (Thomas Hobbes). While the Indonesian constitution has clearly embraced the

multicultural state, in this case, it also means the state has the right to prevent those who oppose the idea of Indonesia as a Pancasila state.

But this fact is not easy to understand, because pro-Jakarta charter groups call for a return to the "original" Constitution in accordance with the Jakarta charter, implementing Islamic law for its believers. These groups are categorized as Islamic "hardliners" who are members of various Islamic organizations in cities or in villages. They are loudly hostile to pluralism. These views are likely influenced by Islamic views from the Middle East, where Islam is considered a universal religion that will not harm non-Islamic groups, because Islamic law is only applicable to Muslims. Thus, if Indonesia imposed Islamic law, they strongly believe, this reform would not disturb minority groups.

Some community leaders have said that Indonesia does not need to be a state of extremes, whether religious or secular. For many nationalists and moderate Islamic communities, they adhere to a view in which it is necessary to stimulate further progress by arranging the power for diverse groups in Indonesia to effectively control each other. In addition, in their opinion, the current constitutional form of the state should be final.

To sum up, the consequence of the democratic state, in my opinion, has led hardliner Islamist believers to argue forcibly for the implementation of Islamic Law. They argue that in a 'democratic state' the biggest community has the majority rule to run the society. Nevertheless, the "Pancasila state" is a choice that can avoid chaos in debating whether Indonesia should be labeled as a secular or "Religious State", and it is reasonable to foster a multicultural society in Indonesia. I also argue that cultural diversity and multi-religious society is faced with a dilemma; on one hand, multiculturalism strengthens the Indonesian nation as a united state, and on the other hand, it also has the potential to weaken state power. The national government, as the executor of sovereignty given full mandate by the people under the democratic state, should perform the main function as Weber's ideas to materialize social and politic order, even by coercion. In developing countries like Indonesia, the state's role is central, and the country will succeed if it can enforce rules that are able to meet the diverse interests of the people while appreciating differences and protecting them as much as possible.

### **Indonesia: a Failed State?**

The building of states and the strengthening of institutions is one of the most important issues for the world community (Fukuyama, 2004). The rise and fall of nation-states is not new. Today, there may be as many as six to eight hundred active nation-state projects, and another seven to eight thousand potential projects (Ibid, p. 3).190 nation-states have achieved sovereign status (Roeder, 2007:3). But, according to Rotberg (2004), in a modern era when national states constitute the building blocks of world order, the violent disintegration and palpable weakness of many states in Africa and Asia threaten other states as well as their own systems. It is simply understood that less development, or failure, by a government in one place can pose a threat to others in different parts of the world.

Although the term 'failed state' has no established definition, there are many criteria and characteristics that can define a failed or failing state. Thus, the criteria one chooses will distinguish a failed state from successful state. For example, a failed state can be described as a decision making center of government that is paralyzed and inoperative, where laws are not made, order is not preserved and societal cohesion is not enhanced (Sorensen,

2003). As a territory, it is no longer assured security by the central sovereign organization. It has lost its legitimacy as an authoritative political institution. To Jackson (1998), a failed state is a state that cannot safeguard the basic needs of its citizens such as peace, order, and security. So, a failed state seems to be a political failure in governing important sectors such as security, basic needs, and education. This argument is also supported by Susan Rice (2003), who defines a failed state as one that has ineffective control over its people.

Following Robert I. Rotberg (2004), finding the best ways to strengthen weak states and prevent state failures are among the most urgent questions of the twenty-century. Yusuf Wanandi (2002) in his article questions why and why not Indonesia should be considered as a failed state. According to his view, Indonesia is already close to becoming a failing state, and will probably become one. Yet we need to examine his view by identifying the characteristics of state power in Indonesia. The characteristics of strong or weak state alone depend heavily on how the state can 'feed itself, govern itself, and defend itself.' If they do this well, it means there is a strong state with total sovereignty.

However, the main indicator in measuring whether a state should be categorized as a failed state or a success, weak or strong, is largely determined by its sovereignty. Sovereignty, in terms of international threats means responsible sovereignty to provide international security or world order (Jones et al, 2007:8-9). Francis Deng (1990) defines responsible sovereignty as a situation in which "national governments are duty bound to ensure minimum standards of security and social welfare for their citizens and be accountable both to the national body public and the international community." Such a standard concerns military power and technology. National security will be determined by development and economic growth, particularly in the agricultural sector (Smith, 1776). Security, according to the United Nations, is defined as freedom from want and freedom from fear (Dahal, 2009). International security or responsible sovereignty, according to Bruce Jones (2007), can only be given from capable, strong states. Failing states cannot serve even their citizens' basic needs. It is simply understood that this will pose a threat to other states in different parts of the world.

Indonesia was apparently a failed state when reformation took place in 1998, following Indonesia's monetary crisis, as well as social and political unrest (Klinken, 2007). When crisis happens, as in wartime, people do not obey the law, and they reject government institutions directly or indirectly. As a result, conflicts happened every single day at that time. Thus, the nation-state failed insomuch as it was consumed by internal violence and ceased delivering positive political value to its inhabitants. Governments lose credibility if a particular nation-state itself becomes questionable and illegitimate in the hearts and minds of its citizens (Rotberg, 2004:1). To date, the religion and ethnic conflicts have continued, the number of citizens in poverty has increased to 39 million (Indonesia National Statistic, 2010). It seems that the crisis, then, is still going on. In this case, the government has failed to feed its citizens. In other words, the national government has lost its food sovereignty.

Nevertheless, if electoral democracy indicators are to be used in assessing the failure or success of the state, on the one hand, Indonesia should be classified as a success, because it conducted general elections peacefully from 1999 to 2009. On the other hand, although Freedom House in 2010 reported progress in law enforcement in Indonesia, we should also note that press freedom is still hampered by violence, either physical or non physical, and

the rule of law is still enforced in a discriminatory fashion. But somehow, the implementation of democracy in Indonesia is better than elsewhere, as compared to the practice of democracy in other Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia— although these two countries are stronger in terms of economy and defense.

National security essentially means the state of the health of the nation, within which citizens enjoy life, liberty, property, and participation in the productive life of society. Political stability, economic well-being, and equitable distribution of resources are essential preconditions. If any society has a high incidence of death, violence, crime, murder, or Kidnapping, whatever the causes, the citizens living there will never feel safe. Ordinary citizens measure the standard of national security through the ability of national leaders "to rise above the narrow and special economic interests of parts of the nation," and "focus their attention on the more inclusive interests of the whole" (Wolfers, 1968:148). The peacefulness of the national environment stems from sound civil defense, a modicum of trust among citizens themselves, and the national institutions of governance. The sources of international threat can be extra-systemic (such as inter-state tension, cross-border terrorism, climate change, fuel and financial crises, and refugees) or intra-systemic (e.g., civil war; poverty traps; inequality; and exclusion of citizens from ecological, social, economic, and political resources). One source of threat reinforces the other systemically, and they are likewise linked with macro and micro issues. The comparative and competitive strengths of any nation in material possessions, such as hydropower, ecological diversity, tourism, manpower, and productive potential, as well as the proper utilization of these resources, can contribute to its viability.

Indonesia itself tries to create national security in dealing with political conflicts between the national and local levels as well as conflicts within societies. In so doing, Indonesia followed the system of decentralization called 'Otonomi Daerah.' According to Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 25/ 1999, each region has its own autonomy to manage natural resources and tackle its own problems. It is clearly understood that Indonesia is trying to democratize government by local and civil engagement as much as possible. International funding has come to Indonesia to help its government make democracy work by implementing concepts like clean governance. Meanwhile, Nordholt (2003) has argued that 'a shift from a centralized to a decentralized government is not synonymous in implying a shift from an authoritarian to a democratic rule.' Therefore, the state and society should work together to address this issue in order to avoid the return of old powerful elites who could bring back dictatorship in the new 'democratic society.'

In addition, some people argue that, because Indonesia has a larger and more diverse territory, this has led to difficulties in dealing with local problems and local identities, such that many conflicts of interest arise. People have different views concerning what democracy is. Indonesia, as a new democratic state in South east Asia, has succeeded in holding general elections without serious problems, but as we know, its Human Development Index (HDI) is very low, ranking 182 out of 187 countries in the world in 2009 (World Bank, 2009), though it is listed as 108 out of 189 countries in 2010 (UNDP, 2010). Freedom House in 2010 published a report on the development of democracy and the rule of law related to terrorism and corruption in Indonesia, which stated:

*"Security forces in September killed terrorism suspect Noordin Mohammad Top, the alleged mastermind of twin suicide bombings that had struck hotels in the capital in July. Separately, the chief of Indonesia's anticorruption commission went on trial for murder during the year, and two of his deputies were accused of extortion, but their case led to the exposure of an apparent conspiracy by police and prosecutors to undermine the commission. The parliament passed legislation in September that would weaken the authority of the commission and a related anti-corruption court. In addition, the parliament began investigating a controversial bailout of Bank Century in November, which pitted the House of Representatives against the Yudhoyono administration and shrunk his ruling coalition."*

Given these facts, Indonesia has faced challenges to contribute to the world order. To some degree, Indonesia has succeeded in combating terrorism both domestically and transnationally. The American and Australian governments support the eradication of terrorism in Indonesia. In line with this, the Indonesian government established Detachment 88 and, in a short time, Indonesian government agencies managed to arrest a group linked with international terrorism. At least a dozen terrorists were caught, and three people have been put to death. In this context, we can refer to the opening of the 1945 constitution, which says that Indonesia should contribute to the orderliness of the world in various ways. This has so far been carried out via rehabilitated and reconstructed forms of Indonesian foreign policy. It is clear that the philosophy Indonesians adhere to is a state constitution in line with that initiated by Kant (1795), promoting a liberal peace, based on three factors: (1) states must be republics; (2) they will gradually establish peace among themselves by expansion of a "pacific union;" and (3) all states must respect a "cosmopolitan law" about how they treat foreigners in their midst.

### **The Contemporary Challenges of Nation-State Building**

Considering recent events of mass violence in Indonesia, it seems essential to rethink how to provide a sovereign state that can uphold the sovereignty of the people. Indonesia clearly needs to bring the 'Leviathan' back into the society. I borrow this term from Skocpol's essay, 'Bringing the State Back In,' only in order to argue for a strengthened state and its sovereignty to bring wealth for the nation as a whole.

There are at least two main challenges for Indonesia today. The first is the unfinished debate about whether "Pancasila" (secular state) or a religious state (in favor of Islamic group interests) should be the guiding aim for the national regime. Diversity, in addition to being a reason for unity, is also a trigger device for conflict. Ethnic and religious conflicts are widely believed to be driven by economic gaps between the haves and the have-nots and between the state and society. The campaign to combine democracy, pluralism, and multiculturalism are rejected by militant groups that resist anything exported from the West. Because the West consists of liberal states, they add that Western culture does not respect Islamic society. They then counter pluralist efforts by creating new terms such as anti-liberal, anti-pluralism, and so forth. In addition, they engage in political and economic policy-making where, for example, in the arena of economics, they have begun to practice Islamic law. This confirms that Islamic groups in Indonesia have experienced a remarkable

proliferation in the post-reform period, including in expressions of belief, propaganda, and forms of organization (Wardana, 2010; Hamayotsu, 2006; Tanuwidjaya, 2010; Kolig, 2005).

Franz M. Suseno (2010) stated that Indonesia, as a nation state, is a state that is in danger. He argues that a sense of nationhood is the only force that unites the hundreds of ethnicities, tribes and communities, as well as religious adherents into one Indonesian nationality (Kompas 10/17/2010). This is related to recent facts about the emergence of violence, which may pose hidden dangers like an iceberg, or even like a time bomb that could explode at any time and spread to various places. This proves that traditional nationalism has not been able to answer the challenges of the times. Sukarno's nationalism is a concept that emphasizes the similar fate as a nation, colonized, as a tool of unity of people, but this no longer works. If this concept was successful during the era of revolution and independence, as suggested by Breuilly (1993), this does not change the fact that nationalism may be less effective as a current political tool of propaganda.

The threat to Pancasila as a state ideology in the process of nation and state building is due to the worsening domestic economy. As is often mentioned by political scientists, the central government is weak and unstable, and a fragile economy results in serious problems of regional insurrection and communal violence (Legge 1961; Mackie 1980). Indeed, conflicts based on ethnicity and religion can threaten the existence of the nation-state. From 1997 to 2010, 'wars' between ethnic and religious groups occurred as many as a dozen times, with casualties of more than 10,000 people (Klinken, 2007:4-5). This can be roughly broken down as including (among others) the conflicts in East Timor, Aceh, as well as the conflict of Islam vs. Christianity, etc. Those conflicts have caused thousands of people to suffer. From 2008 to 2010, more than 400 cases of religious violence occurred (Tempo, 2009), and hundreds of people died because of both ethnic and religious conflict in Indonesia. Gerry Van Klinken (2007) wrote that the main causes of conflict are the distribution of income, political gaps between central and local entities, and economic inequality. When the state was weakened by certain interest groups it was as Barbara Harris-White has pointed out, trapped in a 'black economy.'

The failure of the central government to deliver public and political goods to its citizens as a whole is another issue. Under the Suharto regime, by military force, Indonesia failed to keep the unity of Indonesia in East Timor, Papua, and Aceh. East Timor obtained its own independent state, while the Acehnese and Papuans continue to struggle for their own states. The national government is still looking for a way to address these problems. Many studies assume that the main problem might be how to reduce poverty. For a long time, natural resources have been monopolized by the government and by capitalist groups (Robison 1986, 1992), who do not pay much attention to the development outside of Java, causing many rebellions among local people in other areas (Klinken, 2007). Decentralization, as Klinken said, does not mean democratization and prosperity for all fellow citizens. Decentralizing reforms in the period of 1999-2001 were associated in some places with communal warfare, which was both religious and ethnic. The connection can be better understood by considering the dynamics of resource mobilization instead of looking for the stated ideologies of the grievances (Klinken, 2007: ii).

Since 1999, Indonesia has followed a system of decentralization in governance. According to the government Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 25/1999, each region has its own autonomy to resolve legal issues. This decentralized government is trying to

democratize itself via civic involvement as much as possible. In addition, international funding has come to Indonesia to help the government make democracy work by applying the concept of good governance. Meanwhile, Nordholt (2003) is of the opinion that 'the shift from centralized to decentralized government is not the same means of a shift from authoritarian rule to democracy.' Therefore, the state and society must work harder together to solve this problem to avoid a resurgence of militarism or the rise of a harsh regime against the people that would allow violations of human rights.

There are four kinds of freedom, as declared by the US President F.D. Roosevelt in 1941, namely, freedom from poverty, freedom from fear, freedom of opinion and freedom to serve in accordance with conviction. In Indonesia, reforms have brought significant changes and improvements in the freedom of speech and expression and freedom from fear, but they have not yet contributed meaningfully to freedom from want. The economic crisis of 1998 still impacts the high level of poverty, now at 40 million people (Indonesia's Statistics, 2009). In one sense, this shows that the 1998 reform is more socio-political and socio-cultural, rather than economic reform. Similarly, freedom to worship still often leads to social conflict. Violence between ethnicity and religion has become the most dangerous threat to the unitary state that declares itself as having a background of cultural diversity.

Political reforms in 1998 opened Indonesia to a number of changes. The media, for instance, has gained the freedom to disseminate news to the public. This freedom also helps most Indonesians to understand what is really going on in their country. But the problem remains that there are only a few media channels that are able to enlighten the society about how to understand conflict resolution in more peaceful ways. Most of the news stories stop at the fact that violence appears within the entire society. These incomplete stories actually tend to make people easily unsettled by the current conditions.

Even though the government under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has granted better economic and political access through special autonomy, distrust toward the government is still apparent. The Indonesian government has made mistakes in the past, which has added fuel to distrust among certain groups in Indonesia. The Papuans, for example, feel that the central government has been unfair. Funds allocated to the local governments haven't fulfilled the needs of the Papuans. Having tremendous natural resources and one of the biggest mining companies in the world, has not granted real prosperity for Papua, since it is controlled by Freeport, a multinational corporation. So far, Papua is still struggling to gain their rights by promoting the idea of an independent state, beyond its current special status. At the very same time, Yogyakarta as a special province is fighting back against the national government because the national state wants to erase the special status of Yogyakarta. In short, in the decentralization era, local governments tend to be stronger and play more important roles in society. This has led the national state to lose power and authority. The definition of sovereignty is no longer as an undivided power (Thomas Hobbes, 1651).

Max Lane (2008) has said that Indonesia is an 'unfinished nation,' meaning that Indonesia is open to the possibility as to whether it will become a strong or weak state, secular or religious state, centralized or decentralized state, and an authoritarian or democratic state. Now, racial and religious conflicts threaten Indonesia as a multi-ethnic community, and thousands have died. The state, to some degree, is failing to feed its self, govern independently, and build the security of its territory and its citizens. If the national

government continues to fail to manage this issue, I can predict that sooner or later this unitary state will be separated in to another form of state.

To conclude, Indonesia's current problems are not only concerning political sovereignty, but are also about the economy and cultural sovereignty. In dealing with these, Indonesia needs to bring military, civil society, religious leaders, and the government together to discuss and examine solutions and face the future of the nation. In other words, every single part of the nation is a guarantor of national unity.

Some political scientists argue that the weakness of Indonesia's sovereignty stems from its vast territory, and that it is not supported due to an inability to manage conflict and abundant natural resources. As a result, local areas have argued for separation from the unitary state, as has already happened in Timor Leste, and which is ongoing in Papua and separatist Aceh. The idea of federalism for Indonesia has again risen to the forefront, and I think probably that way is still a viable option. Consider the historical fact that Indonesia, under Dutch rule, already experienced a federal system, albeit under certain limitations that reduced nationalism and regional rebellions at that time. In the present era of democracy, Indonesia is using a system of decentralization, but the central government has severely limited the authority of local governments, so that local areas are still dependent on the center, though the center is also dependent on the natural resources in local areas. The issue of poverty in many regions has intensified, so there should be a change of the political system. In my opinion, the most rational model would be to impose a federal system. However, the local government can actually build economic independence and sovereignty in their own way. Doing so could bring the state, as an institution, closer to its people, as owners.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Republic of Indonesia carries a national philosophy "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity), with five principles of the state, i.e., in one god we trust, humanitarianism, unity of the nation, representation of the people, and social justice. Although I strongly argue that Indonesia, as a post-colonial state, has many challenges to being considered as a strong state in the near future, how Indonesia looks today is not too far from its labels that have been given in the scholarly literature.

To sum up, Sukarno succeeded in uniting the people of Indonesia with the spirit of nationalism, and Suharto failed to maintain unity through military force. The biggest challenge now is how to maintain the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, to build the economy in accordance with the 1945 constitution, creating prosperity for all Indonesians without exception. If the problem is still unequal economic distribution, the government has to mobilize its power; using authority in other ways contrary to this would run the risk of failure to unite the nation, which would indeed repeat past failures. Moreover, a federal form of government could be a rational choice in the near future.

---

**REFERENCES**

- Anderson, Benedict. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso edition & NLB.
- Anderson, B. (2008). Exit Suharto, Obituary for a Mediocre Tyrant. *New left review* 50 March-Apr 2008.
- Bernazzoli, Richelle M. and Flint, Colin. (2009). *Power, Place, and Militarism: Toward A Comparative Geographic Analysis of Militarization*. Journal Compilation © 2009 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Breuilly, J. (1993), *Nationalism and the State*, Chicago.
- Curtis, M. (2002). US And British Complicity in Indonesia 1965. October 21, 2002. Retrieved on Dec 9 from available source: <http://www.country-studies.com> or [http://www.wirantaprawira.de/pakorba/bagian\\_4.pdf](http://www.wirantaprawira.de/pakorba/bagian_4.pdf)
- Dahal, Dev Raj. (No year). *National Security Sector Reforms and Civil-Security Relations in Nepal*. Retrieved November 27, 2010 from [http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/civic\\_education/Civil-Military%20relations.pdf](http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/civic_education/Civil-Military%20relations.pdf).
- Dahl, Robert A. (1956). *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0-226-13425-3 (paper).
- Dahl, Robert A. (1972). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press
- Dalberg-Acton, John Emerich Edward. (1949), *Essays on Freedom and Power*, Boston: Beacon Press, p. 364.
- Diamond, L. (2008). *The Democratic Rollback, the Resurgence of the Predatory State*. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008.
- Doyle. 1983. Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs. *Philosophy and public affairs* 12 (summer and fall): 205-35, 323-53.
- Elson, R.E. (2010). Nationalism, Islam, 'secularism' and the state in contemporary Indonesia. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 64, No. 3, pp. 328\_343, June 2010
- Feith, Herbert. (2006). *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*. Jakarta & Kuala Lumpur: Equinox Publishing.
- Fukuyama, F. (2004). *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Fukuyama, F (ed). (2006), *Nation-Building: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*. Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University press.
- Hill, H (1989). *Unity and diversity, Regional Economic Development In Indonesia Since 1970*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Huang, R. & Gunn G.C. (2004). *Reconciliation as State-Building in East Timor*. *Lusotopie* 2004: 19-38.
- Hamayotsu, K. (2000). *Islam and Nation Building In Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Indonesia in Comparative Perspective*. The Asian Studies Association of Australia.
- Hobbes, T. (1968). *Leviathan*. London: Penguin Books.

- Jemadu, A. (2004). Democratization and the Dilemma of Nation-building in Post-Suharto Indonesia: The Case of Aceh. *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 5, number 3, October 2004.
- Jones, Sidney. 29th August 2006. "Papua Shrouded by Misperception". <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4360&l=1> . retrieved on 25th November 2010.
- Jones, B, Pascual C, & Stedman S.J. (2007). *Power and Responsibility; Building International Order in An Era of Transnational Threats*. Washington, D.C. Brooking Institution Press.
- Indonesia Tidak Perlu Ekstrem (Nov 26, Kompas). Retrieved Nov 26 from <http://cetak.kompas.com/read/2010/11/26/04183324/indonesia.tidak.perlu.ekstrem>.
- Indonesia 2010, Country Report. Freedom house. Retrieved Nov 25 2010 from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7841>.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Itaca: Cornel University Press.
- Golts, Alexander M. and Putnam Tonya L. 2004. *State Militarism and Its Legacies, Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia*. *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 121–158. The President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Hashim, S Mohsin. (2008). *State Building, Military Interventions and Political Development in Islamic Societies*. Conference Papers -- North-eastern Political Science Association Date:01/01/2008.
- Imawan, R (2004), *Partai Politik di Indonesia: Pergulatan Setengah Hati Mencari Jati Diri*, (naskah pidato Guru Besar Ilmu Politik UGM, Indonesia)
- Kim, Jinwung. (2010). *Participating in Nation-Building: The Role of the 'Military Government Police' in South Korean Politics, 1946-1948*. *The Journal of American-East Asian relations* ISSN:1058-3947 Date:10/01/2010.
- Kleden, Ignas. (2003). *Indonesia Setelah 5 Tahun Reformasi*. Center for east Indonesian Affairs/CEIA, Jakarta, 16 Mei 2003) retrieved November 21, 2010 from <http://freedom-institute.org/id/index.php?page=profil&detail=artikel&detail=dir&id=101>
- Klinken Gerry V. (2007). *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia, Small-town Wars*. New York. Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia.
- Klinken. G.V. (2007). *Communal Conflict and Decentralisation in Indonesia*. The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict. Electronic copy available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1025846>
- Kolig, Erich. (2005). *Radical Islam, Islamic Fervour, And Political Sentiments In Central Java, Indonesia*. *IJEAS* 4.1. Also available online—[www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl).
- Krouse, Richard W. (1982). *Polyarchy & Participation: The Changing Democratic Theory of Robert Dahl*. *Polity*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (Spring, 1982), pp. 441-463. Published by: Palgrave Macmillan Journals
- Lane, M. (2008). *Unfinished Nation, Indonesia Before and After Soeharto*. New York: Verso.
- Nordholt Hank S. (2003). *Renegotiating Boundaries; Access, Agency, and Identity in Post Soeharto Indonesia*. Leiden: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 159, no. 4, 550-589.

- Robison. R. (1990). *Power and Economy in Suharto's Indonesia*. Manila, Philippines and Wollongong, Australia. Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers.
- Roeder, Philip. G. (2007). *Where Nation State Come From, Institutional Change in The Age of Nationalism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Rotberg, Robert I. (Ed). (2004). *When State Failed, Cause and Consequences*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Roosa, J. (2007). Finalising the nation: The Indonesian military as the guarantor of national unity. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol.48, No.1, April 2007.
- Seers, Dudley. (1983). *The Political Economy of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983
- Smith Anthony D. (1979). *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press.
- Sensus Penduduk Indonesia 2010 [Indonesia Census 2010]. Retrieved Nov 12 2010 from <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/broker>.
- Skocpol, T. et al.ed. (1985). *Bringing The State Back In*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, Zoe. (2007). Literature Review on State-Building. May 2007. University of Birmingham International Development Department-Governance and Social Development Centre.
- Tanuwidjaya, S. (2010). Political Islam and Islamic Parties in Indonesia: Critically Assessing the Evidence of Islam's Political Decline. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* Vol.32, No.1(2010), pp.29-49.
- UU 1945, Indonesia Constitution.
- Vedi R H. (2002). *Dinamika Kekuasaan, Ekonomi Politik Indonesia Pasca-Soeharto [The Power Dynamics, Economics Politics Post-Soeharto Indonesia]*. Jakarta: LP3ES
- Wanandi, Yusuf (2002). *Indonesia Failed State?. The Washington Quarterly*. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Wardana, Amika. (2010, Nov). Religions decline and proliferate. Retrieved from the Jakarta post online, Nov 12,2010. Available on <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/11/12/religions-decline-and-proliferate.html>.