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A LOVE FOR INDONESIA: THE YOUTH'S EFFORT IN INCREASING HONOR TOWARDS MULTICULTURALISM¹

Shierly June² and Ekawati Marhaenny Dukut³

***Abstract:** Indonesia is a country which is full of cultures and diversities. A multicultural country usually finds and faces the same problem that is the internal conflicts and even separation. As the cultured humankind, people should see the diversity of cultures as the wealth of nations and the ancestor's heritage that should be well-kept and developed. This study is intended to discuss and analyze the multiculturalism in Indonesia, its development, and what the youth should do as the successor of the country to increase their honor towards multiculturalism as the writer sees that there are many youth who have lost their loyalty to their own cultures.*

Key words: multiculturalism, youth, diversity

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, an archipelago country which lies between the Pacific and Indian Ocean, is a country that gives extraordinary beauty of nature and great culture. The high mountains, volcanoes, hills, seas, lakes, rivers, and beaches adorn the Indonesian Archipelago. Not only is the wonderful nature, Indonesia is also rich of cultures, it is also known as a country that consists of a lot of tribes and ethnicities. The tribes and various ethnicities Indonesia brings have created unique cultures which have been bequeathed to their offspring thus making Indonesia a multicultural country.

THE NOTION OF 'CULTURE'

Most countries bring their own cultures that will be different from other countries' cultures. Etymologically, the word culture comes from the Latin word *Colere* meaning 'to process' or 'to do'. Findings from Harris clearly indicates that culture is the learned, social acquired tradition and lifestyles of the members of a society, including their patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling and acting (1983:5). Thus, it means that culture is not always represented by traditional dances, costumes, houses, or ceremonies, but it is more highlighted to how someone behaves and acts which is usually carried and is led by the cultural background they come from. In other words, everyone brings and has his or her own culture.

On the other hand, Indonesia has its own word to call culture. In Indonesian language, the word culture is translated to *budaya*. The word *budaya* itself is taken from Sanskrit word *buddhayah*. It is the plural form of *buddhi* or mind. The word *budaya* here has the meaning as all the things that relate to human minds. The further understanding of *budaya* defined as the evolved way of life which

is possessed together by a certain group and is bequeathed from generation to generation (“Pengertian Budaya”, 2010, <http://boykb.blogspot.com/2010.07/pengertian-kebudayaan.html>).

From the definitions above, it is lucid that culture is learned. The way parents talk to their children, the politic campaign, the making of advertisements, and when someone tries to communicate with people coming from different cultural background and adjust the differences, are facts that culture is always learned through many ways. Therefore, culture can be bequeathed by ancestors and learned by people when they find a new culture.

THE NOTION OF ‘MULTICULTURALISM’

Indonesia has a lot of cultures, such as those from songs, folklores, traditional costumes, dances, ceremonies, houses, festivals, food, beliefs and languages. It is considered as the wealth of multiculturalism in Indonesia. There are a lot of studies done by researchers to define multiculturalism. However, to define multiculturalism is not easy. A study by Heywood distinguishes multiculturalism into two terms:

The term ‘multiculturalism’ has been used in a variety of ways, both descriptive and normative. As a descriptive term, it has been taken to refer to cultural diversity... As a normative term, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement, even celebration, of communal diversity, typically based on either the right of different groups to respect and recognize, or to the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity (2007:313).

Here, multiculturalism is strongly stuck to what is so called “diversity”. The diversity can bring both advantages and disasters

depending on which point of view it is highlighted: the diversity to unite or the diversity to separate.

Another researcher, however, argues that multiculturalism is valuable because it uses several disciplines to highlight neglected aspects of the social history of a country (Trotman 2002:ix). Multiculturalism also can bring disasters or bad effects. A finding from Lamm (2005) indicates that “diverse people worldwide are mostly engaged in hating each other - that is when they are not killing each other”. Both positive and negative effects of the cultural diversity or multiculturalism exist and become an everlasting problem that also happens in Indonesia till nowadays.

The existing pluralism of cultures in Indonesia is usually followed by some factors such as how the cultures in the world are created. The condition of Indonesia’s nature becomes the basic reason for this case. The condition of Indonesia’s nature, such as the archipelago landscape and the humid atmosphere, demands Indonesian people to live and survive with all kinds of ways for it. For example, acknowledging the fact that we live within an area where there are nearby mountains, natural disasters such as the earthquake and the cold mud or lava coming from the volcanoes should already become an anticipated cultural knowledge. Thus, there is no wonder if there are diversities among the output culture made by the Indonesians.

The other reason is, Indonesia consists of many tribes and ethnicities and live in a certain conditions of lands. So, the tribes whose people have the same cultural background will express their art and culture adjusting to the place and natural condition they are living. According to Sullivan:

The culture concept developed from ideas of a community of shared values and behavior knowingly elaborated by the participants as right, just as civilized (2006:257).

Because of this, it is not surprising that some of the tribe members are trapped by same values and behavior, which accordingly sets them apart from others.

With a good study and understanding about culture and in turn multiculturalism, and its effects in Indonesia, it becomes a significant basis to observe the condition of multiculturalism in Indonesia nowadays. Looking upon what happens to the cultures and the youth' attitude toward it, which seems neglecting the culture, has intrigued the writer to focus and try to repair the negative aspects of multiculturalism.

THE BIRTH OF MULTICULTURALISM IN INDONESIA

The youth are the successors of the country who have to respect their own cultures. So, one of the aim of this paper is to open up the youth's mind in honoring and becoming more sensitive to the multiculturalism issues in Indonesia. With that idea, it is expected that the youth will show more of their love to Indonesia.

Indonesia is a country that has a long history in the unity of their cultures. The cultures, which are so many, have passed a long and very heroic process to be tied as the national culture of Indonesia. People who come from regions in Indonesia gathered and they declared themselves as Indonesian, they did not bring their cultural-regional identities, as they were one heart to reach the Indonesia independence although they come from the different cultural backgrounds. Through the *Sumpah Pemuda* in 1928, the national culture of Indonesia was built. The notion of national culture is defined as the sharing of an historical destiny, personal qualities, languages, heroes, territory and institutions (Smith 1991; Anderson 1983, as cited in Helly 2002:79).

It can be stated then that to be cultured is everyone's right. People live and deal with culture through out of their life. The

existence of culture-right is even declared in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right Article 27, 1996, which states that:

In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities should not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language (Inglis 1995).

It is vividly asserted that cultural diversity is inevitable since the freedom of each individual to make decision about his or her life creates infinite diversity. However, since there's no link and understanding amongst each other, the risk of violence and inequality are permanent, so a compromise needs to be found.

THE INDONESIAN YOUTH'S ROLE FOR THE COUNTRY

The role of the youth as the successors of the country is badly needed to overcome the violence and inequality experienced by some Indonesians. The youth is known for their critical thought and bravery, which usually arises from the ideas and actions to make a better future. Moving backwards to the colonialism era, the Indonesian youth took a very big role in realizing the Indonesian independence. The youth forced Soekarno and Hatta to immediately proclaim the independence of Indonesia and create a country with its native cultures without the involvement of the colonialism ideology or foreign cultures. The mix of cultures in Indonesia then was proposed in a national motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, or "unity in diversity" (Cunningham 2002), whereby every Indonesian is asked to respect each others' indigenous cultures such as the Batakese, Sundanese, Javanese, and Buginese.

In the Reformation era in 1998, the youth' role was again involved in destroying the power of New Order that was considered tormenting the Indonesian people because of the government's corruption and injustice treatment towards the Chinese culture whose development was prohibited at the time. In May 1998, there was deliberate massacre or slaughtering of the Indo-Chinese descendants as victims. As a result, there are youth organizations struggled for justice and reformation.

The youth nowadays are much more fortunate by living in a better era compared to the youth living in the colonialism and reformation era. The youth do not need to physically fight for independence and social justice. Youth nowadays have the time and energy to keep and continue the struggle and spirit of the previous youth generation by maintaining the pluralism of Indonesian cultures through improving the sensibility and honor toward multiculturalism and also preserve it as the realization of the feeling of love to Indonesia.

However, as it is clearly seen in the daily life today, the youth tend to be interested and be drowned to the euphoria of 'pop culture', that is "the shared knowledge and practices of a specific group at a specific time" (Dukut 2010: 8), which they consider is awesome and modern. The youth even leave their own native culture and move to the culture where they consider it as more 'civilized'. They start to lose the faith and sensibility to their own culture and surely to the others' culture as well. A simple example is when the booming of the Japanese Harajuku style and Korean Wave, a lot of youth change their hairstyle, haircolor, dress and even their original name to Japanese and Korean name. This kind of condition is supported by the study of Nozlopy (2005) in her study which points out that:

The most obvious and visible identifier of such individualist, material youth culture are the cell-phone,

motorbikes, Nike trainers and other fashions consumed and coveted by young people ... These fashions are the domain of the Indonesian ABG, the '*anak baru gede*' or 'kid who just got big'.

The dissemination of popular culture among the Indonesian youth is caused by what is so called 'globalization'. The mass media nowadays are also encouraging the youth to do culture abrasion in which they are led to be an idol or celebrity who exposed by gossip, glamour, controversial and sensational actions.

As a result, the youth pursue the most up to date fashion, go clubbing, addict to drug and free-sex so they are pushing the Indonesian culture away. As a result, there are just a minuscule number of youth who still hold to the culture.

The severe condition attracts the other country to 'steal' the Indonesian culture whenever the youth are busy with the modern dance rather than their own traditional dances. They prefer to go to play-stations and Timezones rather than *kuda lumping* and *dakon*. Also, they prefer to eat at Mc Donalds and KFCs rather than enjoying traditional food such as *wingko babat*, *pecel*, and *tahu ketoprak*.

It has been spread out to the world that our neighboring country, Malaysia, has unfortunately claimed some of Indonesian culture such as the song "Rasa Sayange", Reog Ponorogo, the song "Soleram", gamelan music instrument, Kuda Lumpung dance, Batique, Angklung, Pendet dance, etc. as their culture. ("Daftar Kebudayaan Indonesia yg Diklaim Malaysia", 2009). This vividly shows how weak the culture-resistance of Indonesia is. It may be caused by the weak sensibility and tolerance to hold on to the existing multiculturalism in the Indonesian youth.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF LOW APPRECIATION TO MULTICULTURALISM

The lack of sensibility and tolerance towards multiculturalism in youth creates some behavior. The first is 'ethnocentrism' or the narrow fanaticism in which someone makes judgement about another race (racism) and culture using the standards of one's own (Crowther 1995:393). Here, ethnocentrism creates a particular assumption that a culture is better than other cultures because of the rules of the judgments.

This condition and behavior that is expanded in Indonesia's social, politics, and economics fields make worse the relationship of each ethnicity in Indonesia, so in turn it also creates an external threat of being stolen by other countries. The gaps, social prejudice and ethnic discrimination are everywhere. The sensitivity to respect the other's culture is very weak.

Beginning in the 1980's, the debate changed. Racial, linguistics, religious and ethnic discrimination were no longer the object of controversy about socio-economic and political inequalities, but about the right to express minority cultural orientation without social prejudice and (since the 1990's) about their effects upon the sense of belonging to a society (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000: Introduction, as cited in Hell, 2002).

The other attitude springing out is the intolerance towards multiculturalism in Indonesia which causes the war tribes and religion that sacrifices a large number of victims. The biggest war religion happened in Ambon where Christians and Moslem followers competed to destroy each other. One influential reason for this is because in Ambon, there are areas which are specifically for Moslem inhabitants, and on another side, there are those only for Christians. So religion wars become inevitable. A lot of sadistic murders, unknown corpses, mutilations, and bomb-

explosion are also evident in Indonesia. The war tribe such as those for the Sampit and Maduranese people was also the result of intolerance towards multiculturalism. A further impact is the separatism movement, which forcedly ask for a homogenous culture in an area, such as in Aceh and Papua. So, the worst thing that can happen is the genocide like that experience by Sudan, Africa. Because of this, Ovando and McLaren (1999) as cited in Gorski (2000: xix) indicate that:

As long as we continue to operate within the existing capitalist social relation of the larger society, there is good reason to believe that racism and social injustice will continue to pose a serious threat to democracy and that the dream of social equality will remain largely unrealized.



Picture 1: War religion in Ambon

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/asia-pacific/2243896.stm>)

Low appreciation towards one's own culture may be a "too" much respect to a certain culture. This means that the native culture can be isolated as a result of totally imitating a new culture. For example, in order that teenager is seen modern, she would make use of an Indonesian language with English accent and use as much of English vocabularies in her Indonesian statements. Unfortunately, for some Indonesian elders, this teenager's action is

regarded as dishonoring her own native Indonesian language. It is an obligation to respect others' cultures, but if someone does it too much, he or she will kill his or her own native cultures. This is supported by the study of Taylor (1996), as cited in Helly (2002), which states, "Each person's sense of self-esteem depends upon the acceptance of his or her culture by society. If this does not happen, then the dignity or self-respect of the person will be endangered".

However, opposing to the aforementioned facts, there is still a number of youth who still try to keep the existence of multiculturalism in Indonesia. Some youths show that they still keep their native culture and respect the others' cultures. Some also mix the cultures and it creates integration among the cultures. For example, first, the Javanese Barongsai dancers who are involved in the Sin Cia or Chinese New Year celebration, second, the event of "Buka Puasa Bersama" done by churches youths activists, and third, the creation of "Lontong Cap Go Mek" where "Lontong" is Javanese traditional food but it is used by Chinese in their celebration. To keep the stability of the cultural pluralism in Indonesia, some policies have been done, for instance, the holding of cultural events such as seminars on culture like the Faculty on Letters' international seminar on CELT (Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature), annual traditional dance competition at school, and the transmigration program, such as the Javanese families who transmigrated to Sumatra or Papua.



Picture 2: CELT International Seminar held by the Faculty of Letters, Soegijapranata Catholic University

(<http://www.journalcelt.com>)

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The writers believe that increasing youth' sensibility and honor toward multiculturalism in Indonesia can be reached through:

A. KKN, KKU, KAPKI programs

Starting from our very own environment in Soegijapranata Catholic University, for example, the programs of KKN, KKU and KAPKI can be used for students to learn different cultures because they directly deal with the conditions of the people in the villages who are mostly from the lower class society, so that a feeling of solidarity will grow among the students.

In the KKN program, the students can hopefully learn and study about the culture of people at the certain village and make some improvement relating to the cultural, educational and economy aspect. In the scope of cultural improvement, for those who like to teach, can teach and introduce the kinds of Indonesian culture to the uneducated children of the village such as by teaching Bataknesse folksongs, telling Sumatra folklores, and playing Javanese puppet shows.

Based on the writers' experiences, this kind of teaching technique is effective to attract the projected students' interest in learning culture. In a PKM-M program for the handicapped, three techniques were used to show the importance of honoring multiculturalism: drama, song and handicraft. All materials in the teaching and performances were given and done using English in Ciputra Mal, Semarang. The students received an enthusiastic response from the viewers, parents, teachers, and also the handicapped students themselves because it is a rare opportunity to see the Indonesian handicap students make good use of English language throughout their performances.

Whereas in KCU program, the students can help and assist the microeconomic enterprises in developing the villagers' or certain communities business, for example, the traditional food such as *wingko babat* to be more durable and sold internationally as a typical food from Semarang. Students from the Food Technology department can give their recipes and techniques in making longer the preservation of the *wingko babat*. Then, students from the Management program can teach the community on how to make effective marketing strategies.



Picture 3 and 4: Wingko Babat Semarang
(<http://www.agsfoo.net>)

Meanwhile, the Faculty of Letters students can make use of their expertise in English language to promote and advertise *wingko babat* internationally. And lastly, the students from the Science of Technology and Law can devise user friendly website and regulation that speed up the national and international proclaim of *wingko babat* as Semarang's very own, unique, traditional food.

Similar to KCU, in KAPKI program, the students can apply the knowledge they get in lectures and practice it by making programs so the society becomes more encouraged to make their own enterprise and make a better living. The enterprise should be something which focuses on the maintenance of their traditional cultures, such as the encouragement of Pekalonganese batik, Solonese batik and Balinese batik.

The party that can be involved to realize this idea is the P3M (Pusat Pengabdian dan Pengembangan Masyarakat) office. Along

with its initial goal, P3M can highlight the cultural side to be more developed.

B. TV Sinetron, Movies, and *Opera van Java* program

With the increase of gossip shows, *sinetron* (soap opera) and foreign movies or programs which expose the glamour of the celebrities that adopt the foreign and pop culture through their fashion, lifestyle, actions, attitudes, and speech, the youths nowadays prefer to imitate the style of the celebrities or idol to make them become modern, up to date and fashionable. Yet, at the same time, unconsciously they forget and lose their native culture as Indonesian. For this condition, it is fortunate that there are some programs on TV that still brings up the elements of the Indonesian traditional culture. For instance, the *Opera Van Java* program that displays *wayang orang* (Javanese puppet show acted by people), who are directed by a *dalang* (director), supported by the *sinden* (singers) and gamelan orchestra, often mixes some culture in its shows. It often plays the story of Indonesian folklores from Sabang to Merauke that is supported by the costumes and stages, so not only Javanese folklores are performed. The other examples of TV programs which support the description of Indonesia's multiculturalism is in *Jelajah, Belajar Indonesia, 1001 Dongeng, Legenda, Wisata Kuliner*, etc.



Picture 5 and 6: Opera Van Java

(http://profile.ak.fbcdn.net/object3/775/52/n65992392976_6424.jpg and Private Collection)

Taking the basic idea of the aforementioned examples, it means that students can also involve some traditional music by making the fusion of some traditional music instruments such as the Javanese gamelan with *angklung*, *kulintang* or *sasando*.



Picture 7: Nikkimuzieku
(<http://journalcelt.blogspot.com>)

This idea is inspired by the existing example of “Nikkimuzieku”, a music traditional group from Faculty of Letters at Soegijapranata Catholic University, which combines Javanese gamelan with Taiko (Japanese traditional drum).

In brief, the appreciation of Indonesia multiculturalism can be reached by making mini *Opera Van Java* or Nikkimuzieku groups in schools. If as early as elementary students are exposed to a number of multiculturalism activities within their art and handicraft class, then we can look forward to a generation who highly honor the positive aspects of Indonesia’s multiculturalism. With this activity, the motto of Unity in Diversity can be assured.

In conclusion, hopefully, from the idea proposed, the Indonesian youth can start to dig out and revise their sensibility and honor toward multiculturalism. The writers believe that it must start now, so that the influence of pop culture that may fade away the unique Indonesian multiculturalism can be decreased. So in return, the youth can show more of their love to the beloved country of Indonesia.

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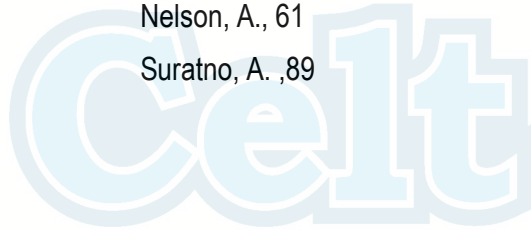
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