

DECAY OR SURVIVE: PRIDE IN NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY AT STAKE

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Abstract: This article presents the discussion about the position of Indonesian local or national culture among the global cultures. The Indonesian culture was frequently developed by the influences of the global cultures which entered Indonesia since the pre-history times until the modern era. The Indonesian pre-history times was followed by the era of the spreading of the Indian cultures (5th – 15th century), the Islamic cultures (13th -16th century), the Western cultures (17th-20th century), and the other foreign cultures (20th – 21st century). The Historical method is applied to find and examine the historical records to get the authentic and credible facts. The analysis of this subject is supported by the anthropological concepts to explain the aspects referred to the characteristic of the Indonesian people when they faced the influences of the global cultures. The conclusion is that there were some foreign cultural influences which destroy the local and national Indonesian cultures, especially in the field of languages and arts, because of the lack of self confidence of the Indonesian people, which can be known especially in the degradation of the Indonesian people's pride of the use of the local or national Indonesian languages and the lack of appreciations of the Indonesian people to the genuine Indonesian arts. A recommendation proposed in this discussion is that the national pride of the genuine Indonesian cultures should be strengthened and developed continuously, if the Indonesian people do not want to face the extinction of their local or national cultural identities.

Key words: Local culture, global culture, cultural identity, national character.

1. Introduction

With regard to cultural aspects, there is a good explanation proposed by Koentjaraningrat, who said that culture could be divided into three forms. Based on the conception declared by B. Malinowski (Malinowski, 1944), Koentjaraningrat stated that culture consists of 7 universal cultural elements, namely: (1) language, (2) technology, (3) economic system, (4) social organization, (5) knowledge system, (6) religious system, and (7) arts.

Koentjaraningrat explained that every cultural element has three forms of culture as mentioned below:

the cultural system or the forms of culture as ideas, concepts, and human thinking;

the social system or the forms of culture as human activities;

the physical culture or the forms of culture as matters.

As an example, a language has three forms of culture as follows:

a language as cultural system (grammar, utterance norms, and the rules of language use).

a language as a social system (speaking, communication, drama).

a language as a physical culture (manuscript on palm leaves, on paper, on micro film, etc.). (Koentjaraningrat, in Alfian (ed.), 1985: 100-105).

As regards cultures this article is inspired by a book entitled *Suicide or Survival? The Challenge of The Year 2000*, published by UNESCO in 1978. This book had been already translated by “Lembaga Studi Ilmu-ilmu Kemasyarakatan Yayasan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, and published by PT GUNUNG AGUNG, Jakarta, 1982.

Based on this book, we know that at the end of the 20th century, the world intellectual communities were worried about the lack of abilities of the developing countries to protect and develop their local cultures among the contestation with global cultures, especially knowledge, technology, and art. On the musical field, Tran Van Khe stated that music is very easy to be attacked by the advancement of technology. The tradition of singing local songs, for instance: Javanese songs, in the rice fields had been gone because of the influence of the advanced technology in the communication media, for example: radio, tape recorder, television, etc.). On the architectural field, Bernard Zehrfuss proposed that the architects should pay attention to the uniqueness of the local cultures, because this unique character could show the cultural icons of the people in the certain places, which could also strengthen the people’s pride of their cultures (UNESCO, 1978: 196, 197, 207).

The Indonesian intellectual groups should keep also on guard against the adverse influence of the expansion of these advanced global cultures. On the one hand, these advanced global cultures have endorsed the people in the developing countries to get particular enjoyments, but on the other hand, these advanced cultures can destroy the local or national cultural identity (Rahardjo, in Darmanto JT & Sudharto PH, 1986: 69).

Sartono Kartodirdjo, an Indonesian historian, asserts that cultural identity is part of the national character, that is the behaviour of an individual as part of the collective life of a nation which is based on the people's cultural values which illuminate their specialties. So, this special cultural values can be seen by other nations as the character or the cultural identity of one nation. (Kartodirdjo, 1993: 81-82).

In the anthropological point of view, cultural identity is a specific characteristic of a culture, which can express its difference in the arena of cultural relationship with other culture. In the general sense, cultural identity is owned by a group, which is related to a nationality, a ethnicity, a religion, a social class, a generation, a locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinctive culture (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural_identity, quoted from Ennaji, 2005: 19-23). The people's pride of their local or national cultural identity is very important for a nation state in facing the global cultural arena, and in convincing the existence of its national position in the international relationship.

If the people of a nation state would not hold their cultural identities, consumerism would easily attack the existence of the local or national cultural identity. The people only become the consumers of the foreign products, and do not have any competence to become the producers in supplying goods or services for their needs and also for the foreign and domestic trades. People began using the term "consumerism" to mention the concept which makes a person or a community to get high levels of consumption. This definition has gained popularity since the 1970s and began to be used in these ways:

"Consumerism" is the selfish and frivolous collecting of products, or economic materialism (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/consumerism>, quoted from Swagler, Roger 1997. *Modern Consumerism*". In Brobeck, Stephen. Encyclopedia of the Consumer Movement. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO).

"Consumerism" is a force from the marketplace which destroys the individuality and harms the society. This market's force which has negative influence on the individuals or the society is frequently related to cultural globalization (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/consumerism>, quoted from Barber, Benjamin R. (Spring 2008). "Shrunken Sovereign: Consumerism, Globalization, and American Emptiness". World Affairs. Retrieved 23 April 2013.)

The development of communication technology, information, and transportation, has accelerated the expansion of the global cultures in Indonesia, and the Indonesian people face the ultimate problem: "Should the Indonesian people let the global cultures destroy the Indonesian cultures?", and if they want to save the Indonesian cultures, what should they do?"

2. Cultural Globalization: The Borderless Time and Space

Cultural Globalization refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings and values across national borders. This process is marked by the spread of commodities and ideologies, which become standardized around the world. Mass consumption serves as a facilitator between different people and cultures around the globe as a result of the exponential growth of the human population. Through the technological advancement, culture has been moving beyond borders and boundaries, transforming through locations the shared meanings of culture. Through the process of sharing the ideas and values of one culture to another ultimately leads to an interconnectedness among various peoples from various cultures.

In responding to the degradation phenomenon of national cultural identity, Sartono Kartodirdjo gave a sign that globalization that opens the opportunities for the expansion of foreign capitals may destroy national character, especially the Indonesian nationalism, because the expansion of the foreign capitals can create dependency, and furthermore, neo-colonialism (1993: 36-37).

The arrival of the wave of global cultures in Indonesia can be said as “borderless space and time”. The influences of the global cultures in Indonesia can be traced since the pre-history era until the period of the expansion of western cultures.

The research of Madeleine Colani, a French pre-history specialist, shows that since thousands of years BC, there was cultural center of the Mesolithic era., namely in the hill Bacson and Hoabinh in Tonkin, in Asia continent. One of these heritages of Bacson and Hoabinh cultures is namely pebbles (In Indonesian languages: “kapak Sumatera dan kapak pendek”). These pebbles spread to Indonesia through Thailand and West Malaysia.

The mesolithic culture was followed by the neolithic culture which already existed in Indonesia at about 2000 BC. Von Heine Geldern called this neolithic culture “the square axes culture”. These axes were found in Sumatera, Java, Bali, West Malaysia, and India. Based on these finding areas, this could be concluded that the neolithic culture came from Asia continent.

The neolithic culture was also followed by the metal or bronze culture which was called the Dongson culture. Dongson is a name of place in Tonkin where the first research about metal culture was carried out. Based on Von Heine Geldern research, Dongson culture existed in Indonesia in 300 BC.

Further, the time went to the era when the written artifacts have already existed. The oldest artifact about the existence of the Indonesian Kingdom is the seven inscriptions in Kutai, Eastern Kalimantan. These inscriptions which date back to 400 AD, show that the influence of Indian culture came to Indonesia since the beginning of the 5th century. These inscriptions were written in Pallawa letter and Sanskrit language. The King of this kingdom had a title Mulawarman, although he was actually an indigenous man of Kutai. This fact can be known from the name of his grand father: Kundungga, the indigenous name of Kutai. (Maziyah, 2014: 38-39). At the beginning of the 5th century there was also Tarumanegara Kingdom in West Java, and its king also holds the Indian name, Purnawarman. All of the inscriptions of Tarumanegara Kingdom are also in Pallwa letters with Sanskrit as its language ((Maziyah, 2014: 38, 39, 41). Furthermore, it could be said that many kings in Java used the Indian name, among others: Sanjaya (717-746) and Samaratungga (812-833) (both of them were the King of Ancient Mataram Kingdom / 8th - 10th century), Nararya Sanggramawijaya Sri Maharaj Kertajasa Jayawardhana (the First King of Majapahit Kingdom/ 1293-1309) (2013, : 37-114.). These phenomena of using Indian names show that at the era of the expansion of Indian culture, the local people in this archipelago considered the Indian culture as the more valuable and prestigious cultures.

The period of the Indian influence ran very long time, from the 5th until the 15th century. But, during this period, since the 11th century the Islamic influence began to appear, which can be seen in the gravestone of Fatimah Binti Maimun in Leran, Gresik, dated 1082 AD. The real information about the influence of Islam can be seen in the chronicle of Marco Polo, the Italian adventurer, who stated that when he came in Perlak, North Sumatera, in 1292 he had already met

Moslem Community and Moslem traders. He also came in Samodra, where he saw the gravestone of the King of Samodra: Malik Al Saleh, who died in 676 After Hijrah or 1297 AD. At the end of the 15th century there was an Islamic kingdom in Demak, The Sultanate of Demak. All of the sultans of Demak were Moslems. During the expansion of Islam, the kings in Java used the Arabic names: Raden Fatah (the First Sultan of Demak), Sultan Hasanuddin (the Sultan of Banten), Syarif Hidayatullah (the Sultan of Cirebon), the kings of Mataram used the title Khalifatullah Sayidin Panatagama, although they were all indigenous people of Java. From these phenomena, it can be understood that the Arabic names were considered more valuable than the local names, so the local people were eager to change their original names or released themselves from their former names that came from their local language.

The 17th century can be seen as the beginning of the western culture influence. The king of Mataram kingdom began to imitate the life style of the Dutch: using leather jackets and wearing feather hats, and this new style was also followed by the Mataram kingdoms' relatives, in Central Java.

The rapid changes in Indonesia took place in the beginning of the 20th century, which was marked by the intensification and expansion of western education, especially in the ring of the youths in many cities. For either their behaviour or spiritual life, they imitate the western life style model: the rationalism, the individualism, the freedom of thought and the expressions of opinion. The ability to speak and write in Dutch became the parameter of high social prestige (Wertheim: 1999: 230, 236, 237). In the beginning of the 20th century, the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia created a new system of administration, namely municipalities (gemeente) and provinces. Until now, this system of administrations has been still adopted by the Indonesians.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the arrival of global cultures can not be protected, especially the influence of the civilization of Western countries, Korean, Japan, and China. These influences can be seen especially in the use of modern technology in communication and transportation. By using internet and handphones, people can communicate internationally. The advancement of the technology of transportation caused the people change their habit: from bicycle to motorcycle. Many people think that they can get more prestige by driving a motorcycle than a bicycle.

The Indonesian archipelago is an open area for the arrival of the influences of global cultures. The assets of Indonesia, especially mining and agriculture's commodities, have the power to attract foreigners to come to this archipelago to reach these world market commodities. Because of these commodities assets, Indonesia became the meeting place of religions which came together with the process of trades.

Hindu and Buddha were the first religions that came to the Indonesian archipelago, and then they were followed by Islam, Catholic. and Protestant. Kong Fu Tse came together with Chinese migrants, but this religion could not grasp huge Indonesian indigenous followers. These religions have rooted in the people of Indonesia and profoundly influenced their socio-cultural life. As an example, in the cultural system of Islam, people should use the Arabic language as a religious communication, to link to the Arabic culture in Middle-East lands; Catholic should be linked to Rome; Protestant to Ancient Palestine, Dutch, German, and American; Hindu and Budhha cultural systems are still associated to India.

The secular cultural systems also came to Indonesia, especially came from Holland, England, America, China, Korean, and Japan. These secular cultures have become the national culture of Indonesia, especially: knowledge, technology, and arts.

The Degradation of Pride of The Genuine Indonesian Culture

As explained in the introduction, culture has some definitions, but this discussion will be focused on language and arts, because these two subjects have very important functions as local or national cultural identities (Koentjaraningrat, 1985: 114). The discussion below will talk about the condition of the Indonesian language and arts when they faced the arrival of global cultures.

The Degradation of the Use of Local and Indonesian language

The arrival of the foreigners in Indonesia that has happened since thousands of years ago, has influenced the development of the local and national language of Indonesia. As mentioned before, when the people of India came to Indonesia together with their religious system, many kings in Indonesia considered that it was crucial to change their native names to Indian names, for example: the king of Kutai had a title Mulawarman. He used no Kutai name, although he was the grandson of Kundungga, the indigenous man of Kutai.

When the cultural system of Islam came to Indonesia, the King of Samodra Pasai used a title Sultan Malik Al Saleh; the king of Demak had a title Sultan Fatah, etc. This phenomenon shows that there was a consideration that the local name could not be used to reach the parallel position in the international relationship, so the identity should be changed to stand parallel with the foreigners.

This phenomenon also happened, when the influence of Western cultures arrived in Indonesia. There were many indigenous people of Indonesia used the Western names: Angelina, Tabita, Maria, Johannes, Christian, Julia Perez, etc.

In 1970-s, the new phenomenon arose in the local language, especially in the Javanese ethnic. There were a number of Javanese families that did not use some aspects of the Javanese language anymore as a daily way of communication. This change of behavior could be said as the forms of democratization and modernization. The Javanese language was viewed as feudal and ancient. The characteristic of feudalism could be seen in the stratification in using Javanese language: Kromo Inggil (the high level of Javanese language), Kromo madya (the middle level of Javanese language), and Ngoko (the lowest level of Javanese language). Kromo inggil is used to speak with honoured people; Kromo madya is used to communicate with people who have the same status; and Ngoko was used to speak with people who have the same or lower status.

The will to be modern (western style) raised the negation of some aspects of the Javanese language. Some examples are as follows:

The words Bapak and ibu (father and mother), bapa and biyung/simbok (father and mother used to the lowest level of Javanese people) were changed into “papa” and “mama”, “papi” and “mami”, or “abi” and “umi” (father and mother used to moslems). The users felt to be more modern and religious; they did not want if there were images that they were ancient and

villagers. This phenomenon shows that the western language (Dutch and English) were viewed as more modern and prestigious.

Many Indonesian people do not use any more the Javanese names (such as Budi, Setya, Pratama, Sri Lestari, Astuti, etc), because they prefer to use the names of Islamic or Arabic, Christian or Western, and Hindu/Buddha or India nuances.

Many people often replace some Indonesian words with some words that are from English language, when they are talking in Indonesian language, although they frequently speak in the pronunciation errors, for example: the word mawas diri is replaced with the word intropeksi (it should be pronounced: introspeksi; this word is from English word: introspection), the word perundingan is replaced with the word negoisasi (it should be pronounced: negosiasi; this word is from English word: negotiation), the word bersifat wanita is replaced with the word feminim (it should be pronounced: feminin; this word is from English word feminine), etc. These pronunciation errors are often carried out by public figures, so most of the citizen who make the same errors get their justification from such examples. There is an impression that the ability of using foreign language is considered as more intellectual and more prestigious then just using their own language.

2.2. The Degradation of Pride to Local Architectural Style

One of the important local or national cultural identities is local architectural style, because this can become the local or national tangible icon or identity. The phenomenon of the degradation of Indonesian people's pride to local architectural style was expressed by Totok Roesmanto in a daily newspaper, Semarang Metro, 4th May 2007, as follows:

Consumerism can raise the trend of preferring the new model. This can be seen in many cases, which include the preferring of building design. The development of information technology has pursued the Indonesian people to prefer the world or the global architectural style. On the one hand, this information technology development has positive influence in the development of knowledge, but on the other hand this has destroyed the existence of local or national architectural style. Nowadays this phenomenon has already happened. The Indonesian people does not take care of their local culture ("SEMARANG METRO" in Suara Merdeka, 4th May 2007).

This statement of Totok Roesmanto shows that he is afraid of the elimination of the local cultural identity, especially in the field of architecture. Now, it is very difficult to see new buildings which are built in local architectural style. There are many local traditional buildings that have been destroyed and changed to the global or American architectural style. Here are some good examples. Semarang has many building heritages that still have "Semarang traditional architectural style", that we can find in Kampung Kulitan, Kampung Malang, Mertojoyo, Kauman, etc. Because of the lack of cultural and historical knowledge of the owners of these places, they have renovated their houses with the modern architectural styles, without realizing that this traditional architectural style has high value to strengthen national cultural identity.



A house with Semarang architectural style which still remains in Kampung Kulitan Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia; this house owned by Tasripin Family, the indigenous Javanese millionaire in the early of the twentieth century. From this building, it can be seen the unique characteristic of the acculturative coastal society, namely the mixing of Javanese, European, Chinese, and Islamic cultures.

The extinction of the local cultural identity is the concern not only of the academic circles, but also of the low class people, for example Jayadi. He was one of the artists of “Gambang Semarang Performing Art”, and he also worked as a pedicab driver (Jayadi had passed away in May 11, 2012). In 1980’s, he expressed his concern of the unique cultural identities of Semarang city through a song which was presented in “Gambang Semarang Performing Art”. The song is entitled “Semarang Tempo Doeloe” (The Past of Semarang), and the lyrics of this song can be translated in English as follows.

Semarang city in the past, many places with funny names.

“Greja Blenduk”(the name of the oldest church in Semarang), “Kretek Berok” (The bridge of Berok), “Lawang Sewu”(the building with thousand of doors), “Rumah Setan” (the house of satans),”Pasar Ya’ik” (Ya’ik market), “Gedung Batu” (stone building of Chinese temple).

When I was a child, I amazed with the building of “Kantor Papak”(flatten building).

The city square with its Banyan tree, was a place where I played happily with my friend.

But now what could I say, some of them have already gone.

Gone away swallowed by the time.

The cultural heritage is extinct already.

Poor, poor, a thousand times poor, Semarang is just in a glance.

Semarang is reputedly of its tamarinds, but now its tamarinds have gone away.

The above song indicates that Jayadi appreciated the unique building heritages of Semarang city, but at the same time, he also expressed his gloom over the disappearance of some of these heritages.

Here is another example of building heritage in Javanese architectural style which now no longer exists.



The picture of the house of the Regent of Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia; this house was called “Kanjengan”, located in the southern side of the “alun-alun” (the city square of Semarang region); in 1976 this house and this city square was already gone and changed to “Kanjengan” shopping center and market, “Ya’ik” shopping center and market, and “Metro” hotel.



The picture of the shopping center and market “Kanjengan”; in 2016 this “Kanjengan” shopping center was on fire.



The picture of the fire of “Kanjengan” shopping center and market in 2016

Resource: jateng-tribunnews.com/2016/06/18/breaking-news

3. The Safety Valve

As the impacts of the development process, the society faces rising dynamics of the following phenomena such as people mobility, modern communication media, modern services and facilities, etc. All of them can raise socio-cultural changes, which are also followed by the changes of individual orientations, and furthermore the crisis of the national cultural identity. To solve the problem of the crisis of the national cultural identity, there are some efforts to be done.

Sartono Kartodirdjo has stated that among the cultural elements, language has important functions to strengthen the national cultural identity, because of many reasons, as follows:

- (1) a language can show the style and ethic of civilization;
- (2) a language can express the soul of culture and the character of a nation;
- (3) a language is the medium of communication;
- (4) a language can express the aesthetics filling;
- (5) a language is the medium to develop idea, consciousness, thought, memory, and human imagination (Kartodirdjo, 1987: 17-18).

Based on these important functions of the language, some efforts have to be done to save the local and national languages in the ways mentioned bellow:

Developing the competencies of the teachers or lecturers to teach the Indonesian language continuously through training, workshop, etc.

Developing the competences of the students to write and speak in the Indonesian language.

Doing research on local languages to compose dictionaries and local language lessons.

Performing competitions on writing and reading of poetry, drama, and the writing of scientific paper in the Indonesian and local languages.

Improving a communication quality between teachers and students by using Indonesian or local languages, which should be based on the Indonesian or local language grammar.

Besides language, art is also the element of culture which has an important function as the national cultural identity. Sartono Katodirdjo (1987: 19) and Koentjaraningrat (1974: 107-108) have claimed that arts are the elements of culture that can show unique character and quality to the global society, and can be the medium to unite the global nations. Through the arts (dance, local costume, sports, song, traditional music, architecture, drama, poetry, etc), people can express their happiness, appreciation, their will and creation which are based on their characteristics and identities of their local communities; and through arts brotherhood relationship among nations can be developed.

Based on these important values of the local or national arts, some efforts should be done as follows:

The government should give facilities to groups of Indonesian arts which have unique values and good qualities. These facilities are important to develop achievement and innovation in Indonesian arts.

All of the stake holders (the government, artists, arts managers, communication media) should do the promotion of the arts creations.

All of the stake holders should improve the movement of art appreciation, for example: through the extra-curricular activities in schools, campus, etc.

There should be a movement of cultural revitalization, especially for the culture that had been almost exterminated, for example: wayang wong (Javanese drama based on Ramayana and Mahabarata Epics), wayang kulit (shadow show with leather puppet), ketoprak (Javanese Drama based on the Indonesian history), kerawitan (Javanese or Sundanese music), local style of architecture, kulintang music, angklung (bamboo music), etc.

4. Conclusion

Indonesian people can never escape from the foreign cultural influences and nowadays many people often worry about the deterioration of the local or national cultures because of the foreign cultural pressures. Along with the expansion of global cultures, there also emerges the degradation of admiration and loyalty toward the local cultures, and the implication is that the Indonesian nation can lose its national cultural identity.

Art is one of the cultural elements that has an important function to strengthen the national identity or character and as an asset of the creative economy, because the art can show its distinctive character and quality in the relationship with the world society. Furthermore, arts can also be the medium of integration between the ethnic groups and nations, and express feeling, initiative, and creation based on the character of their community or their cultural identities, for

example through dances, songs, drama, creative industries (clothing, embroidery, batik, sculpture, jewelry, culinary), and architecture (the art of building). Having admiration and the pride of one's own cultures, one nation will be able to demonstrate a strong character in the interaction arena among nations without a feeling of inferiority complex.

Recommendation

The destruction of the local or national cultural identity should not happen, if the people could pay attention and perform two principles as mentioned below:

Cultures that will be inherited by the next generation can not be alive passively. The old values of this inherited cultures should be explored, analyzed, and should be developed with the new spirit of the new era so that they can be accepted and endorsed by the new generation.

If there is no such movement, it is sure, the local or national cultural identity can not be alive or will be totally destroyed.

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