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## Changing Ethnic Composition and Potential Violent Conflict in Riau Archipelago, Indonesia: An Early Warning Signal

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### Abstract

Compared to locals, migrants are more likely to be risk takers and have a stronger “fighting” spirit. Therefore, migrants tend to win in the competition with the local people. If the migrants win and they come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, social jealousy may arise and conflicts can be easily provoked by outsiders. Indeed, many conflicts in Indonesia have been provoked by outsiders, utilising the relatively “balanced” ethnic and religious composition as well as socio-economic disparity among them.

Riau Archipelago is one of the richest provinces in Indonesia. It has become a magnet for people within Indonesia. Because of its history, the Malay often claim to be the *putra daerah* (the son of the land, the “owner” or “stakeholder” of the land) of the province of Riau Archipelago. However, the rising flow of migration to the province has changed the ethnic and religious composition of the province. With only 37.44% of the total population, the Malay no longer constitute the dominant ethnic group.

This paper analyses socio-economic strata of the population by ethnic and religious groups and finds out that difference by ethnicity seems to be stronger than that by religion. Furthermore, the situation of changing ethnic composition is similar to the changing ethnic and religious composition of the population in Maluku in Eastern Indonesia. Maluku used to have an equal number of Christians and Muslims, but the large flow of Muslim migrants has changed the ratio between the numbers of Muslims and Christians. Being provoked by outsiders, Maluku had suffered a prolonged “religious” conflict since 1999. This paper serves as an early warning signal to policymakers in the Riau Archipelago and cautions that the changing ethnic composition in the region may become a fertile ground for violent conflicts.

### Keywords

Riau Archipelago, internal migration, ethnicity-religion, conflicts, Indonesia

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## Introduction

As elaborated in Bookman (2002), ethnic size can be related to economic distribution in a society. A large number of population in a particular ethnic group implies greater power through various political manipulations. All things being equal, the greater the size of an ethnic group, the more control it has over the factors of production and the more its collective voice is heard by political and corporate leaders. Relative size of ethnic group may also be important in deciding the distribution of scarce resources through the distribution by “favours” or the so-called “collusion”. Though Bookman did not discuss religious groups, his argument may also be applicable to roles of religious groups in determining allocation of economic resources.

On other hand, migration is often a self-selected process, where the migrants tend to be risk takers and have a stronger “fighting” spirit compared to the locals. It is not surprising that migrants are more likely to win in the competition with the local people. If the migrants win, the migrants will have more power in deciding the distribution of economic resources. Because Indonesia is a very large and heterogeneous country, migrants typically consist of people from diverse ethnic and religious groups. The rising flow of migrants alters the ethnic and religious compositions of the region of destination. Consequently, social jealousy may arise and violent conflicts may be easily provoked by outsiders. Many “ethnic and religious” conflicts in Indonesia have been provoked by outsiders utilising the relatively fragile ethnic and religious composition as well as social and economic disparity among them.

Riau Archipelago is one of the richest provinces in Indonesia. It has become a magnet for people within Indonesia. The province used to be well known as the land of the Malay, an ethnic group which comprises 4.45% of the total Indonesian population. The Malay people are also associated with Islam and only a small percentage of Malay in this province are non-Muslims.

Because of its history, the Malay often claim to be the *putra daerah* [the son of the land or “host”, the “owner” or “stakeholder” of the land] of the province of Riau Archipelago. However, the rising flow of migration to the province has changed the ethnic and religious composition of the province. With 37.44% of the total population of the province, the Malay are not the dominant ethnic group. This paper provides an early warning signal that violent ethnic conflicts in the Riau Archipelago might arise as a result of the changing ethnic and religious composition of the population as well as its socio-economic disparity. It starts with a discussion on the emerging democracy and regional autonomy in Indonesia which, among many other things, have increased population mobility both within, from and to Indonesia. It then examines some cases of migration and violent conflicts in Indonesia, particularly with respect to those in Maluku in Eastern Indonesia. With this background, the paper examines the social and economic situation in the province of Riau Archipelago, particularly as related to ethnicity and religion. The paper ends with a warning that, if not sufficiently addressed, a conflict situation similar to the one in Maluku may happen in the Riau Archipelago.

Most of the statistical data on the Riau Archipelago is based on an analysis of the raw data set of the 2000 population census. This was the first time the population census was conducted using 100% enumeration and hence it allows a better statistical estimate at the district level. Substantively, it was also the first time that the census/survey collected information on ethnicity, previously considered as a political taboo. The census defines ethnicity according to what the respondent claims as their ethnicity. If they do not know their ethnicity, the ethnicity of the respondent is defined as the ethnicity of the father.<sup>i</sup>

Because the province of Riau Archipelago did not exist in 2000, the data for the districts belonging to the province must first be separated from those comprising the entire “old” province of Riau. The raw data set from the census is used to analyse the socio-economic strata in terms

of education, employment sector, working status, and unemployment with respect to ethnicity and religion.

### **Emerging democracy and regional autonomy**

1998 was the year when President Soeharto was forced to step down. It marked a transition from an authoritarian government to a more democratic one. *Reformasi* (reform) has been the word since the fall of Soeharto. The year 1999 saw two critical steps in the journey toward a democratic society. The first was when President Habibie, the successor of Soeharto, conducted the second democratic election of president and vice president in Indonesia, after the first one in 1955. Between 1955 and 1999, there were many general elections, but all them were mostly engineered by the government.<sup>ii</sup> However, in 1999, the people still chose their representatives in the parliament, and parliamentarians elected both the president and vice president. Then, President Megawati Sukarnoputri carried out the first direct presidential and vice presidential elections in 2004, when people chose the president and vice president directly, rather than through the parliament. Furthermore, during the period between 2005-2006, for the first time in the history of Indonesian politics, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono conducted a series of direct elections of heads of regions (governors, mayors, and regents). As was the case during the 2004 elections, the implementation of the elections of regional heads has been a relatively peaceful process without major disturbances.

The second critical step was the issuance of two laws on regional autonomy by President Habibie. These laws were intended to make the government closer to the people. Law no. 22/1999 and Law no. 25/1999, implemented by President Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001, have provided much opportunity for a drastic change in the running of local governments at the district level (*kabupaten*-regency- and *kota*-city) in Indonesia. As argued in Rasyid (2003), the implementation of regional autonomy was a fundamental step toward a democratic society. There were three reasons for this. First, the provincial and district parliaments were given the power to elect and fire regional heads of governments. Second, local communities were given greater opportunities to be involved in decision making in their own regions. Third, there was a substantial increase in the level of accountability of local governments to local parliaments, thus maximizing the probability that the interests of the local people would be fulfilled. Pratikno (2005) explained that, with the increase in regional autonomy, the national government maintained control over only five areas: international affairs, defence, monetary policies, religion and the judiciary. Law No. 25/2000 listed details of activities carried out by central and provincial governments. The autonomy is at the district level, not the provincial level. The provincial government dealt only with inter-district matters. The government at a district is not sub-ordinate to the government at the province, indicating the strength of the government at the district. Furthermore, the local parliament has the highest position in implementing the local autonomy.

Sulistiyanto and Erb (2005) argued that the demand for this reform existed before the fall of Soeharto. People were unhappy with the centralistic “New Order” Soeharto government that monopolised the use of resources in many regions in Indonesia. People outside of the Island of Java (Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is located in Java) were particularly frustrated with the centralistic government. They felt that they had never enjoyed the fruits of development and probably never would because the people in Jakarta were “taking and eating most of the fruits.” The great political concentration in Jakarta was also seen as the fulfilment of the Javanese concept of power. (With 41.71% of the total Indonesian population, the Javanese comprise the largest ethnic group in Indonesia with Yogyakarta, Central Java and East Java—all three located in Java—as home provinces.) Therefore, the fall of Soeharto paved the way for change and led to an outpouring of frustration. President Habibie, the successor of Soeharto, responded to this challenge by issuing two new laws on regional autonomy. It can be noted here that the demand

for regional autonomy was especially great in resource-rich provinces such as Aceh, Riau, East Kalimantan, and Papua (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003).

As a result of the increase in regional autonomy, resource-rich regions like Riau,<sup>iii</sup> obtained a better share of revenue from their natural resources (Alisjahbana, 2005). Aceh and Papua, two restive and resource rich provinces, received a special autonomy, where they get 70% of the revenue with the rest going to Jakarta. Regional expenditures increased after decentralisation: 30% of the central budget was allocated to the regions after decentralisation and 15% before decentralisation. Regional autonomy brought with it other challenges. Ray and Goodpaster (2003) noted, for example, that local interests helped by local governments had emerged. If left unchecked, this tendency might be detrimental to the national economy, inter-regional harmony and equality of citizenship. The laws on regional autonomy have been too loose to allow everybody to have their own interpretations which benefit their own interest. Many people, including the elites, do not understand what regional autonomy is. Some use the regional autonomy laws to unnecessarily maximise their regional revenues from taxation and retributions and/or exploitation of natural resources. Therefore, in these cases, regional autonomy has not reached the goal of getting closer to the people. It has become a rising burden for the people.

The rising power of the districts has also resulted in the establishment of barriers on inter-district movement of goods, services, capital, and labours in some districts. Inter-district barriers have been imposed in some districts, often taking the form of tax, tariff and non-tariff barriers. This inward-looking tendency becomes worse when policy is also associated with *putra daerah* (“local people”), ethnicity, and religion. Eventually, inward-looking policies may threaten national unity via an increase in political instability.

### **Migration and violent conflict: some cases in Indonesia**

As Coppel (2006) rightly pointed out, violence on a large scale is not a recent phenomenon in Indonesia. The mass-killing of the leftists in 1965-1966 can be seen as one of the worst massacres in the world. Even long before 1965, during the 350-years of Dutch occupation, Indonesia had witnessed large scale violence such as in Aceh and Bali. Between 1942-1945, large numbers of Indonesians were killed during the Japanese occupation. Shortly after independence in 1945 many people lost their lives in regional rebellions to establish an Islamic state (e.g., in West Java, Aceh and South Sulawesi).

However, the authoritarian New Order government of Soeharto, 1967-1998, was able to repress the latent ethnic and religious conflicts from erupting into large scale violence. Therefore, the fall of Soeharto and the ensuing *reformasi* and regional autonomy may have contributed to an increase in large scale violence in Indonesia. Davidson (2005) pointed out that regional elites were deeply involved in power struggles during the regional autonomy period. They competed to capture the newly acquired power, utilizing various means such as altering the constitution via legislation and fighting at the street level (e.g., taking control over illegal businesses and networks using violent mass mobilisation). Davidson argued that the first source of violent conflict was rising competition over local resources and growing importance of locals (including the rise in the importance of *putra daerah*). The second source of violent conflict, according to Davidson (2005), was the demarcation of “business activities” along ethnic lines.

“Who are we?” “Who has claim over the area and all of its resources?” These two questions were asked by growing numbers of people in the regions, particularly during the era of rising inter-district/provincial migration. This was especially the case when the migrants came from very different cultural and religious backgrounds. Then, as described by Loveband and Young (2006), the issue of identity politics became exceptionally important during *reformasi* and regional autonomy. Because penalties on expression of local aspiration had been removed and the district officials had been given greater power, all latent ethnic and religious conflicts emerged at the local level.

It should be mentioned, however, that conflict may also occur because of different personalities between the indigenous and migrant groups. An illustration is the violent conflict in the province of West Kalimantan in the 1990s, especially between the Madurese, comprising 3.37% of the whole population in Indonesia, and the Dayak, constituting 0.11% of the whole population in Indonesia. The Madurese ethnic group is exclusively Muslims, while the majority of the Dayak are Christians. Kalimantan is the home to the Dayak. The home of the Madurese is the island of Madura, northeast of the island of Java. The Madurese were, however, not the only migrants to West Kalimantan. The Malay and Javanese, who are also mostly Muslims, constituted a large portion of the migrants in West Kalimantan. In addition, the Chinese comprised another significant ethnic group in West Kalimantan. Yet, the Dayak did not attack the Malay, Javanese (who are also migrants) or the Chinese, the latter often seen as “foreigners” regardless of how long they have resided in a particular area. Indeed, some Chinese and Malay helped the Dayak in attacking the Madurese communities.

Kuntowidjojo (as cited in Loveband and Young, 2006) explained that the conflict between the Dayak and Madurese is more between two very different personalities of the local population and the Madurese. The Dayak, the indigenous group, is more compatible with the personality of the local Chinese and both the Malay and Javanese migrants. What happened in Maluku during 1999-2002 was devastating and is a clear example of the contribution of migration as one important determinant of violent conflict.<sup>iv</sup> A considerable number of large and violent conflicts resulted in thousands of deaths. It was often called a “war between Muslims and Christians”. Yet, large-scale-violent conflict between Muslims and Christians is actually a rare phenomenon in Indonesia—a country where Muslims comprise 88.22% of the total population and Christians (Protestant and Catholic) comprise 8.92% of the total population (as of 2000). Some small violent conflicts have taken place in the past, but they were not sustained. There were many such small scale violent conflicts in the 1990s. All churches in Situbondo, East Java, were destroyed or damaged in a few hours on 10 October 1996. The Christians did not retaliate, most likely because Muslims formed 98.89% of the population of the regency of Situbondo.

Twenty seven Christian buildings were damaged and 14 died on 22 November 1998 as a result of fighting between Protestants and Muslims in Ketapang, Central Jakarta. The violence was not prolonged and there was no retaliation from the Christians as the Muslims constituted 83.82% of the population in Central Jakarta (85.74% of the population of Jakarta as a whole). However, the Christians in the city of Kupang in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, where Muslims only formed 14.02% of the population, did retaliate the violence in Ketapang, Central Jakarta. East Nusa Tenggara is the province with the largest percentage of Christians (87.67%). On 30 November 1998, anti-Muslim violence occurred and damaged 15 mosques and many shops in Kupang. The violence was not sustained and there was no retaliation from the Muslims in Kupang.

Nevertheless, a different situation started on 19 January 1999, which happened to be the *Idul Fitri*, the Islamic holiday ending the *ramadhan* (fasting month). It began as a “small” incident between gangs of young men in the heart of the city of Ambon. The Christian Ambonese initially labelled it as a fight against Muslim non-Ambonese. Yet, unlike previous small “inter-religious” conflicts in Indonesia, the fight continued and became wider and changed into a purely religious war between Muslims and Christians regardless of migration status. The fighting then spread to the regency of Southeast Maluku. By the end of 1999, after almost a year of internal war, the war had reached a very dangerous point as each group had been provided with semi-automatic rifles. Initially, combatants were only equipped with primitive homemade guns. Early 2000 witnessed a decline in violence in Maluku. The local population of Maluku might have been exhausted with the wars. Then, in May 2000, as shown by Loveband and Young (2006), a very large number of Laskar Jihad (“Holy War” Muslim Forces) came from Java to help their Maluku Muslims brothers in the fight against the Christians. This resulted in the second stage of

the war. Large numbers of armed Muslim migrants from the Laskar Jihad tilted the balance with Muslims far outnumbering Christians.

It can be noted here that Muslims constituted 26.21% of the population in the city of Ambon in 2000. Ambon is the capital of the province of Maluku, where 49.05% of the population embraced Islam. Maluku is one of the few Indonesian provinces with a large percentage of non-Muslims. It borders with the province of North Maluku, where Muslims constituted 85.25% of the population with Ternate as the capital. The provinces of Maluku and North Maluku used to be one province. It split into two provinces when Law No. 46/1999 was passed in 1999. In the year 2000 Muslims formed 62.38%<sup>v</sup> of the population in both the provinces of North Maluku and Maluku together, a large increase from 49.88% in 1971,<sup>vi</sup> indicating a large flow of Muslim migrants into these regions during the 29-year period.

The conflict in the province of Maluku spread to the province of North Maluku. The violence began between two different religious groups during 18-20 August, 1999, in the Halmahera peninsula, the main island of the province. One of the fighting groups was the largely Protestant ethnic group (comprised of the Kao, Jailolo, and Tobelo). This group was the indigenous population in the peninsula and claimed to be loyal to the Sultan of Ternate. The other combatant was the mostly Muslim transmigrants from Makian Island to the Kao district in the Northern Halmahera.<sup>vii</sup> This group was not as loyal to the Sultan of Ternate as the first group was. Furthermore, the Makian had filled most of the provincial bureaucracy and were backed by the Sultan of Tidore, the rival of the Sultan of Ternate.<sup>viii</sup>

Therefore, Klinken (2006) argued that any explanation of the violent conflict in Maluku should start from statistics on the ethnic and religious composition of the population. The labour market in Maluku is not based on meritocracy but on a patronage network that utilizes place, religion and social hierarchy as important ethnic markers. Using limited statistics, Klinken detailed how some Protestants depended more on civil service jobs, while Muslims tended to work in the private sector. Because civil service jobs are seen as tenured jobs, it has always been desirable to work in civil service jobs. Yet, the recruitment is well known to be corrupt and competition is very difficult. In addition, this type of recruitment results in fragile and strained ethnic and religious relationships. The Ambonese Christians, for example, complained that the Muslims were about to take most of the civil service jobs. The Muslims argued that the Christians occupied most of the civil service jobs, not because they deserved it, but because of patronage.

As described by Loveband and Young (2006), the seed of the conflict had been planted a long time ago. Actually, the people in Maluku (in the provinces of both Maluku and North Maluku) used to have rich, multi-cultural experiences. From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese, and British were trading in the area, governed by Muslim kingdoms. The political map changed in the early nineteenth century with the significant Christianisation carried out by the Dutch colonials. The Dutch recruited Christians to be soldiers and occupy important administrative positions.

Loveband and Young also showed that after the independence of Indonesia, particularly during New Order (1967-1998), a large number of migrants came to Maluku. Most of them were voluntary Muslim migrants from Sulawesi (rather than transmigrants). These migrants worked mostly in the informal sector. On the other hand, migrants from Java, also mostly Muslims and more educated, occupied key bureaucratic and administrative positions. The changed demographic composition and the important political and economic roles of the recent migrants led to the perception by the "local" Christian population that the Muslims migrants had stolen their "cake" in terms of jobs and bureaucracy and that Islamisation had penetrated Maluku.

### **Malay-Muslim identity in Riau Archipelago**

The province of Kepri (*Kepulauan Riau* --Riau Archipelago) is a maritime province; it is a resource-rich province. The province is located in the Island of Sumatra, one of the large islands

in the archipelagic country of Indonesia. The province borders with the rich country of Singapore. It used to be part of the old province of Riau, which then split into the new province of Riau and the province of Riau Archipelago. Riau Archipelago was officially started on 1 July 2004, though it had been legalized since 25 October 2002, with Ismeth Abdullah as the acting governor.

Historically, Riau (both the provinces of Riau and Riau Archipelago) was associated with Malay and Islam.<sup>ix</sup> Wee (2002) mentioned that the Malay in Riau believed that they had been the owners of Riau for at least 800 years. Not surprisingly, Malay people considered themselves as the *putra daerah* (“indigenous son” or “host”) in Riau. Yet, they felt that their ownership had been eroded with the arrival of the Javanese and Batak migrants. In the year 2000, 4.45% of the whole Indonesia population claimed that they were Malay.<sup>x</sup> The Malay was the third largest ethnic group in Indonesia as a whole.

Faucher (2005) argued that one motivation to the separation of the province of Riau Archipelago is the creation of a Malay province. The people of Riau Archipelago did not consider that the population of the old province of Riau as Malay, because it overlapped with the Minang and Batak, two other large ethnic groups in the Island of Sumatra, where Riau Archipelago is located. The Malay in Riau Archipelago perceived the existence of Minang and Batak as partly the result of non-Malay migrants.

In Riau Archipelago, as Faucher further described, being Malay is intrinsically associated with *alam melayu* (the Malay world). The Malayness was based on genealogical affinities with the Malay royalty. Members of the aristocracy referred to themselves as “the real Malay”, distinguishing themselves from the Malays of the neighbouring nation-states of Malaysia and Singapore where ethnicity provides contextual membership. “Real Malay” believe that the commoner Malay are the descendants of the Islamised migrants who had merged into Malay culture.

Because Riau Archipelago is seen as an important part of the *alam melayu*, the Malay believe that they have the right to occupy the land by virtue of ancestry. Indeed, most of the middle-range positions in the civil service were taken by the “real” Malay. The jobs were transferred from one generation to another, leaving other ethnic groups with little opportunity to obtain the jobs. Therefore, the establishment of a separate province of Kepri was expected to fulfil the desire of the aristocrat Malay to form a “pure” Malay province. This has caused a considerable degree of worry among non-Malay and non-aristocratic-commoner Malay.

Faucher mentioned another motivation for the split, related more to the economy. The establishment of a separate Riau Archipelago was seen as an opportunity to have economic cooperation with both Singapore and Malaysia, two richer neighbouring countries. Before Riau Archipelago was annexed to the “old” province of Riau, Riau Archipelago used to have an extensive economic relationship with Singapore and Malaysia.

The question is who will benefit, the Malay or the migrants. The issue of *putra daerah*, which has emerged in many regions in Indonesia as a side effect of regional autonomy, was also found during the campaign of the gubernatorial election of the province of Riau Archipelago. A pair of candidates, Nyat Kadir and Soerya Respationo, campaigned for the importance of Riau Archipelago to be governed by *putra daerah*, though they also argued that the *putra daerah* ought to pay attention to other groups. Nyat Kadir is a Muslim Malay. And Soerya Respationo is a Catholic Javanese. Both argued that the Riau Archipelago had been governed by a non-*putra daerah* Ismeth Abdullah, a Javanese who was the acting governor and the head of BIDA (Batam Industrial Development Authority). BIDA is an institution which has been known to successfully develop the city of Batam, the capital of the province of Riau Archipelago and one of the most important and promising cities in Indonesia.

Actually, Soerya believed that he could be a better governor than Nyat Kadir, but he realised that he is not a *putra daerah* and therefore he was satisfied to be the candidate for the vice

governor. Yet, during the election, they lost to Ismeth Abdullah and HM Sani, a pair that was favoured by the migrants.

### **Ethnic and religious groups by migrant status**

Riau Archipelago is a migrant province. As shown in **Table 1**, almost half of the population were life-time migrants, those not born in the districts where they lived in 2000. About a quarter were recent migrants, those who came to the districts during the period of 1995-2000. Furthermore, most of the migrants were inter-provincial migrants, coming from other provinces. Only a few migrants were intra-provincial migrants (i.e., coming from within the province of Riau Archipelago).

Because most of the migrants were from other provinces, the province of Riau Archipelago has a multi-ethnic and religious population. In 2000, the five largest ethnic groups constituted 87.45% of the population of the province.

As presented in **Table 2**, the number of Malay in this historically Malay region was much less than half of the population, comprising 37.44% of the population. Still, they formed the largest ethnic group in this province. Measured with recent migration (whether they lived in the province in 1995 or not), most (93.39%) of the Malay were non-migrants, a finding consistent with the concept that the Malay people are *putra daerah*. A similar conclusion is reached when migration is measured with life time migration, that is whether he or she was born in the province of Riau Archipelago. See **Table 3**.

As shown in **Table 4**, the Malay in the province were almost exclusively Muslims. Only 1.71% were non-Muslims. The Muslims in the province formed 80.72% of the population—a relatively large percentage despite the large inflow of migrants to the province. The fact that a high percentage (around 80%) of migrants were Muslims may explain the still relatively high percentage of Muslims in the province. The high percentage of Muslims among the migrants partly reflects the fact that Muslims constituted 88.22% of the total Indonesian population in 2000. In short, the inflow of migrants has changed the ethnic and religious composition of the population. But the change in ethnic composition (Malay versus non Malay) is more significant than that of religious composition (Muslims versus non-Muslims).

The second largest ethnic group is the Javanese (22.20%) who were, as of 2000, the largest ethnic group in Indonesia. At the same time, the Javanese constituted 41.71% of the population of Indonesia. In the province of Riau Archipelago, the Javanese were mostly Muslims, with only 2.99% as non-Muslims.

The home provinces of the Javanese are Yogyakarta, Central Java, and East Java—all in the Island of Java. It is worth mentioning here that, even though Javanese is the largest ethnic group in Indonesia and the Javanese people are found in all provinces, the Javanese language is not the national language of the Republic of Indonesia. Instead, the Republic of Indonesia made the Malay language (known as *Bahasa Indonesia* and which has been the main language used for business in the archipelago for centuries) the national language.

Javanese culture has importantly impacted both national culture and politics. This was especially true during the Soeharto era. Many people thought that Soeharto was behaving like a Javanese king and had “Javanised” Indonesian culture. The period under Soeharto was seen in Indonesian politics as a battle between the Javanese versus the non Javanese. With the step-down of Soeharto and the emergence of *reformasi*, efforts were made to “de-Javanise” Indonesia. Now, anti-Javanese feelings can be expressed openly, especially outside of Java.

In 2000, Chinese people made up the third largest ethnic group in the province with 9.73% of the population, though in Indonesia as a whole they only accounted for between 1.5% and 2.0% of the population.<sup>xi</sup> The number of Chinese in the census may be underestimated due to the fear of admitting themselves as Chinese. The estimate between “1.5% and 2.0%” for the national



level already took into account the possibility of the under-estimation. Hence, if a similar upward adjustment is made, the percentage of the Chinese in the province of Riau Archipelago can be up to about 15.0%. However, the probability of underestimation may be minimal as the possibility of fear of exposure may be much less in Riau Archipelago than in Java. Therefore, whatever the estimation, the Chinese cannot be seen as a minority in the province of Riau Archipelago. This situation is different from Indonesia as a whole where the Chinese make up the largest foreign minority in Indonesia. The Chinese in the province were also very likely to be non-migrants. Measured with recent migration, 94.36% of them were non-migrants; with life time migration, 85.26% of them were non-migrants. With this indicator, the Chinese could also be regarded as the locals or *putra daerah*. Nevertheless, some (or many) Indonesians still think of the Chinese as *pendatang* (visitors) regardless of how long they have been staying in a particular area in Indonesia.

These two groups, the Malay and the Chinese, altogether comprised 47.17% of the population and were actually the “host”—if migration is the criterion. The percentages for the Malay and Chinese in Riau Archipelago were relatively high compared to only 4.45% for the Malay and between 1.5% and 2.0% for the Chinese in Indonesia as a whole.

The fourth and fifth ethnic groups are the Minang (9.24%) and the Batak (8.84%). The Minang were from the province of West Sumatra. They were exclusively Muslims, with only 0.58% of the Minang population in the province as non-Muslims. The Batak came from the province of North Sumatra and 64.11% of the Batak in this province were Protestants. However, each of Minang and Batak formed only about 3.0% of the total Indonesian population. The Minang and Batak are famous for their *merantau* traits—a tradition in which men leave their home areas to earn money and then return to their home areas.

In contrast to the Malay and Chinese, the three ethnic groups (Javanese, Minang, and Batak) are more likely to be migrants. Measured with recent migration, the percentage of non-migrants among the Javanese (the second largest ethnic group in the province) was only 68.37%; the Minang (fourth largest ethnic group), 63.59%; and the Batak (fifth largest ethnic group), 55.35%. Measured with life time migration, the percentage of non-migrants was even lower. Obviously, with migration as the criterion, the Javanese, Minang, and Batak were *pendatang*.

However, the *putra daerah* is also often meant to be a Muslim. Nevertheless, less than half (45.59%) of the Muslims in this province were Malay. The rest of the Muslims were the Javanese (26.68%), Minang (11.38%), and many other smaller groups in the province. This fact may reveal that a Muslim may not necessarily be a Malay and hence a Muslim is not necessarily a *putra daerah*, especially if the Muslim came from Java.

Muslims make up the largest religious group (80.72%) in the province of Riau Archipelago, followed by Buddhists (8.90%), Protestants (7.38%), Catholics (2.46%), Hindus (0.37%), and others (0.17%). This composition was different from that for the whole of Indonesia where Muslims constituted 88.22% of the entire population. The second largest religious group, the Protestants, only comprised 5.87% of the total population. Buddhists and Hindus were a tiny minority in the whole of Indonesia.

In the province of Riau Archipelago, the Buddhists had the smallest percentage of migrants, with only 5.30% of the Buddhists as recent migrants. A tiny minority group, the Hindus, also had a low percentage (12.59%) of recent migrants. The percentage of migrants among the Muslims (20.05%) was higher than those among the Hindus and especially the Buddhists. The Protestants had the highest percentage of recent migrants (42.32%), while 76.79% of the Protestants was the Batak. In other words, in terms of migration status the Buddhists may be more eligible to be considered as *putra daerah* in the province of Riau Archipelago.

In short, the Protestants and the Batak had the largest percentage of migrants and the Buddhists, Chinese and Malay the smallest percentage of migrants. Because migrants often come from the selected few among the population of origin and tend to be risk takers, being migrants may be related to a larger probability of achieving economic and political success. The Protestants and

Batak might belong to the higher socio-economic strata; while the Buddhists, Malay and Chinese, in the lower socio-economic strata.

The relatively high percentage of locals (non-migrants) among the non-Malay and non-Muslims might have strengthened the sentiment of the Malay as the *putra daerah*, arising from the fear of being swept away by the non-Malay and non-Muslims. The Malay might want to strengthen their roles and rights as the *putra daerah* in their home land, the province of Riau Archipelago.

### **Education by ethnicity and religion**

There was an almost equal percentage of those with a low education (never achieving primary school education), middle education (completing primary school or junior high school education), and high education (completing senior high school education or above) in the whole population of the province. If those with the lowest education attainment can represent the lower socio-economic strata, then about one third of the population in the province of Riau Archipelago belonged to the lower socio-economic strata. See **Table 5**.

However, there was a relatively large variation of educational attainment within each ethnic and religious group. The smallest variations were seen among the Muslims and the Javanese, with the Javanese having better educational attainment than the Muslims. The largest variations were seen on the Batak and Protestants, heavily reflecting those with high education, and on the Chinese and Buddhists, strongly indicating those with low education. The relatively high education of the Protestants might be associated with the relatively high education of the Batak, given that the Batak constituted 76.79% of the Protestants. On the other hand, the relatively low education of the Buddhists might be related to the fact that the Chinese formed 92.68% of the Buddhists and that the Chinese had a low education, with a very high percentage (42.45%) of them having only attained a primary school education and 13.57% having only completed a senior high school education.

The Minang had the second highest educational attainment, followed by the Javanese and Malay. As discussed earlier, these three ethnic groups were almost exclusively Muslims and this fact is consistent with another one that the educational attainment of the Muslims was higher than the Buddhists, but lower than the Protestants.

In other words, if low education is an indication of lower socio-economic strata, then the Chinese and the Buddhists were in the low socio-economic strata in the province of Riau Archipelago. In contrast, the Batak and Protestants were in the high socio-economic strata. Others were in between.

### **Employment by ethnicity and religion**

As shown in **Table 6**, 35.19% of employed Malay population worked in the agricultural sector, a sector usually associated with low productivity and low earnings. On the other hand, the percentage in each of other ethnic groups working in agriculture was very small: 1.54 % among the Minang and 1.72% among the Batak. The second largest percentage (11.13%) was among the Chinese, but still relatively very low compared to the Malay. Furthermore, both the Batak (39.94%) and Minang (31.79%) had a high percentage of workers in the manufacturing sector, often associated with high productivity and earnings, while the lowest percentages were found among the Chinese (6.81%) and Malay (12.35%). This suggests that the Malay and Chinese might belong to the lowest socio-economic strata, while the Batak and Minang might belong to the highest socio-economic strata. Other ethnic and religious groups were in between.

Among those working in agriculture, Protestants (2.35%) and Catholics (9.2%) accounted for the two smallest percentages. The highest percentages were found among the Muslims (19.15%)

and Buddhists (11.76%). Nevertheless, Protestants and Catholics had the two highest percentages working in the manufacturing sector, while the Buddhists and Hindus had the two smallest percentages working in manufacturing sector. In other words, the Batak, Minang, Protestants, and Catholics seemed to be in the high socio-economic strata; the Malay, Chinese, Buddhists, and Muslims or Hindus might be in the lowest socio-economic strata.

Muslims worked almost equally in agriculture, manufacturing, trade, and service, each at around 20%. Though the percentage of Muslims working in agriculture was the highest among all religious groups, the percentage was relatively low (only 19.15%) when compared to the Malay (35.19%). Muslims might have relatively lower earnings than other religious groups, but the gap was not as large as that between the Malay and other ethnic groups. In other words, the gap seems to be found more among ethnic groups rather than among religious groups. It should be born in mind that not all Muslims were Malay—the Malay constituted only 45.59% of the Muslims in the province at the time of the 2000 population census.

**Table 7** shows that about half (50.82%) of the employed persons in the province worked as regular employees. The second largest percentage (38.02%) were self-employed. The smallest percentage (1.34%) were those who worked as employers with regular employees. If formal sector, often considered as being in the higher socio-economic strata, is defined as those working as employers with regular employees or those working as regular employees, then 52.16% of the employed person worked in the formal sector. In other words, those in the lower socio-economic strata (who are in the informal sector) contributed to almost half of the employed persons in the province.

In general, as indicated by the percentage in the formal-informal sector, those in the highest socio-economic strata were the Batak, with 68.36% working in the formal sector, followed by the Minang (58.73%) among the largest five ethnic groups; and the Protestants (67.63%) followed by the Catholics (61.08%) among the religious groups. Those in the lowest socio-economic strata were the Chinese (42.06%) and Malay (41.04%) among the ethnic groups; and Hindus (46.23%) and Buddhists (41.85%) among the religious groups.

The ability to afford to be unemployed, that is, not working but looking for jobs, is one way of assessing the labour market. The ability of being choosy in the job market may reflect a better financial condition. In Indonesia, open unemployment rate is not positively correlated with poverty. In fact, only those who can afford to be unemployed will be unemployed. In this sense, the unemployment rate may be positively correlated with financial security. A critical discussion on the problems with the statistics on unemployment rate in Indonesia can be found in Ananta (2005).<sup>xii</sup>

**Table 8** shows that the Malay had the highest unemployment rate (6.97%), much higher than the second largest (5.50%) among the Batak. The data may indicate that the Malay and Batak might in fact enjoy the best financial conditions because they could afford to be unemployed, even though they wanted to work. In other words, the Malay and Batak might have been the choosiest group in the labour market in this province. The Chinese were the worst in term of affordability to be unemployed, possibly indicating that the Chinese might have the narrowest choice between working at whatever jobs they could get and working at desired jobs.

As is the case of Malay in the discussion of ethnicity, the Muslims also had the highest unemployment rate (5.85%) among the religious groups. Furthermore, as the Batak, the Protestants also had the second largest unemployment rate (5.70%). The Muslims and Protestants might have been the choosiest in the labour market and might have enjoyed the best ability to choose the jobs. The Hindus might have been the worst in choosing the job, they might have been forced (by their economic condition) to accept whatever jobs available to them.

In other words, seen from the relative choosiness in accepting jobs, the Minang, Batak, Muslims and Protestants were in the highest socio-economic strata, while the Chinese and Hindus were in the lowest socio-economic strata.

## Conclusion and recommendation

The inflow of migrants, mostly from other provinces, was the main source of population growth of the historically Malay-Muslim province of Riau Archipelago. The heterogeneity of ethnic and religious groups in Indonesia transformed this province into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious province.

The manner in which the ethnic and religious composition of the population changed in the region may hold similarities to what happened in the province of Maluku after the 1970s, long before the eruption of violent conflict in 1999. Maluku used to have an equal numbers of Christian and Muslims until a large flow of migrants, mostly Muslims, changed the religious balance and the distribution of political and economic resources in the province.<sup>xiii</sup>

In Riau Archipelago, the Malay claimed that the province belonged to them. But the Riau Archipelago was already a multi-ethnic and multi-religious province. Therefore, the distribution of political and economic resources changed and will continue to change to the detriment of the Malay. Furthermore, the change in ethnic and religious composition was accompanied by a change in population composition by socio-economic strata, particularly as measured by educational attainment and employment. It can be noted that there are clear relationships between ethnicity and religion in Riau Archipelago: almost all of the Malay, Minang and Javanese are Muslims; a large majority of the Chinese are Buddhists; and the Batak are overwhelmingly Protestants.

**Table 9** summarises the discussion on the socio-economic strata by ethnic and religious groups in the province of Riau Archipelago. It uses five indicators: educational attainment, working in agricultural sector, working in manufacturing sector, working in formal sector, and choosiness in the labour market. A ranking from 1 to 5 is utilised, with 1 referring to the highest socio-economic strata and 5 to the lowest one.

The Protestants and Catholics were consistently in the two highest socio-economic strata. The exception was when measured with the choosiness in the labour market. The Buddhists were always in the lowest strata, at most in the next to the lowest when measured by percentage of those working in the agricultural sector or choosiness in the labour market.

The socioeconomic strata of the Muslims was not very clear. Measured by education, working in the manufacturing sector, or working in the formal sector, the Muslims were always in the middle. Nevertheless, they were the lowest strata when measured with working in the agricultural sector. On the other hand, they were in the highest strata when indicated with the choosiness in the labour market.

The picture among ethnic groups is similar. The Batak and Minang were always in the highest strata except when measured with the choosiness in the labour market. The Malay were the choosiest in the market, followed by the Batak and Minang. The Chinese and Malay were always in the two lowest strata, except for the Malay when measured with choosiness in the labour market. The Javanese were consistently in the middle.

Furthermore, the Protestants and the Batak, who were in the highest socio-economic strata, had the largest percentages of migrants. On the other hand, the Buddhists, the Chinese and Malay, who were in the lowest socio-economic strata, had the smallest percentages of migrants. However, because many of the migrants were also Muslims, the religious gap—particularly between Muslims and Protestants or Catholics—will not be as large as that among ethnic groups, especially between the Malay and non-Malay.

Politically, the ethnic issue, particularly the *Malay* sentiment, may become a latent issue. It is a challenge for the government of the province and the Republic of Indonesia to reduce or eliminate the negative sides of ethnic diversity and to optimise the assets emerging from rising religious and ethnic heterogeneity. The issue is that more migrants, including foreigners, will come to this promising province. Unless the local government can capitalise on current and

future migrants, development may be slowed and ethnic or religious conflicts may arise. If managed properly, the large inflow of migrants to the province will contribute a lot to economic growth, poverty reduction and welfare in the province.

Learning from past experiences in Indonesia, especially those in Maluku, “ethnic or religious” conflicts are usually ignited by people residing outside the regions having the conflicts, utilising fragile religious and ethnic composition. The rapidly changing ethnic and religious composition of the population of Riau Archipelago can be seen as an early warning signal. Policymakers in this dynamic society should, therefore, place high priority on creating ethnic and religious harmony in the province. One way to reduce the likelihood of violent conflicts in the province of Riau Archipelago is to enlarge the “cake” of economic development and to better distribute the “cake” among various ethnic and religious groups.

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## Tables

**Table 1**  
**Decomposition of Migrants<sup>1</sup>**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, Indonesia, 2000**  
**(In percentages)**

	<b>Recent Migration</b>	<b>Life-time Migration</b>
<b>Non-migrants</b>	77.16	51.74
<b>Intra-provincial migrants</b>	2.17	4.98
<b>Inter-provincial migrants</b>	20.48	43.03
<b>International migrants</b>	0.19	0.25
<b>Total</b>	100	100

**Note:** 1. The unit of analysis is district

**Source:** calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 population census

**Table 2**  
**Ethnic and Religious Composition:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago and Indonesia, 2000**  
**(In percentage)**

	<b>Province of Riau Archipelago</b>	<b>Indonesia<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Ethnic Group<sup>1</sup></b>		
Malay	37.44	4.45 <sup>4</sup>
Javanese	22.20	41.71
Chinese	9.73	1.5
Minang	9.24	2.72
Batak	8.84	3.02
<b>Religious Group<sup>2</sup></b>		
Muslims	80.72	88.22
Buddhists	8.90	0.84
Protestants	7.38	5.87
Catholics	2.46	3.05
Hindus	0.37	1.81
Others	0.17	0.20

**Note :** <sup>1</sup>It consists of the five largest ethnic groups in the province of Riau Archipelago, forming 87.45% of the population in the province.

<sup>2</sup>In 2000 population census, Confucianism was recorded separately.

These five largest religious groups constituted 99.83% of the population in the province.

**Source :** <sup>3</sup> Suryadinata, Arifin, and Ananta (2003)

<sup>4</sup>Ananta and Arifin (2005)



**Table 3**  
**Migrants by Ethnic and Religious Group:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 2000**  
**(in percentage)**

	Measurement of Migrants <sup>1</sup>	
	Recent Migrants	Life-time Migrants
<b>Ethnic group<sup>2</sup></b>		
Malay	6.61	15.40
Javanese	31.63	64.76
Chinese	5.64	14.74
Minang	36.41	77.13
Batak	44.65	80.16
<b>Religious group</b>		
Muslims	20.05	43.02
Buddhists	5.30	23.11
Protestants	42.32	75.95
Catholics	33.19	65.30
Hindus	12.59	27.94
<b>Indonesia</b>	20.67	43.28

**Note:** 1. The unit of analysis is province.

2. These are the five largest ethnic groups in the province of Riau Archipelago

**Source:** calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 population census

**Table 4**  
**Religion of Ethnic Groups:**  
**Riau Archipelago, 2000**  
**(in percentage)**

<b>Ethnic Group<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Muslims</b>	<b>Buddhists</b>	<b>Protestants</b>	<b>Catholics</b>	<b>Hindus</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Malay</b>	98.29	0.59	0.57	0.48	0.06	0.02	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>45.59</i>	<i>2.49</i>	<i>2.87</i>	<i>7.25</i>	<i>5.66</i>	<i>4.39</i>	<b>37.44</b>
<b>Javanese</b>	97.01	0.19	1.45	1.26	0.06	0.03	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>26.68</i>	<i>0.48</i>	<i>4.37</i>	<i>11.42</i>	<i>3.37</i>	<i>3.35</i>	<b>22.20</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	4.44	84.76	3.92	3.17	2.63	1.09	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>0.54</i>	<i>92.68</i>	<i>5.17</i>	<i>12.56</i>	<i>68.93</i>	<i>61.01</i>	<b>9.73</b>
<b>Minang</b>	99.42	0.07	0.35	0.13	0.01	0.01	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>11.38</i>	<i>0.08</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>0.48</i>	<i>0.30</i>	<i>0.52</i>	<b>9.24</b>
<b>Batak</b>	26.92	0.27	64.11	8.55	0.02	0.13	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>2.95</i>	<i>0.27</i>	<i>76.79</i>	<i>30.73</i>	<i>0.46</i>	<i>6.87</i>	<b>8.84</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.72</b>	<b>8.90</b>	<b>7.38</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

**Note:** 1. These are the five largest ethnic groups in the province of Riau Archipelago. The “total” refers to the total of population, including those outside the five largest groups.

**Source:** calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 Population Census

**Table 5**  
**Education of the Ethnic and Religious Groups:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 2000**  
**(in percentage)**

	<=primary school education	Junior high school education	>=senior high school education
<b>Religious Follower<sup>1</sup></b>			
Buddhists	42.87	44.37	12.72
Hindus	35.17	41.80	22.76
Muslims	34.88	36.11	28.97
Catholics	28.33	28.78	42.88
Protestants	22.23	14.25	63.48
<b>Ethnic Group<sup>2</sup></b>			
Chinese	42.45	43.91	13.57
Malay	44.18	38.49	17.28
Minang	23.54	25.80	50.62
Javanese	25.13	35.79	39.06
Batak	20.54	14.29	65.15
<b>Total Population</b>	34.52	35.06	30.37

**Source:** calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 Population Census.

**Table 6**  
**Population 15 years and over by Sectoral Employment, Ethnic and Religious Groups:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 200**  
**(in percentage)**

	Agri- culture	Manu- facturing	Trade	Service	Transport	Others	Total
<b>Ethnic group</b>							
Malay	35.19	12.35	13.66	18.78	3.05	16.97	100.0
Javanese	10.09	24.19	25.40	23.58	3.92	12.81	100.0
Chinese	11.13	6.81	41.82	21.42	3.52	15.31	100.0
Minang	1.54	31.79	30.78	19.50	7.46	8.93	100.0
Batak	1.72	39.94	29.49	17.39	4.12	7.34	100.0
<b>Total</b>	16.70	20.84	23.51	21.25	4.02	13.68	100.0
<b>Religious group</b>							
Muslims	19.15	19.93	20.84	21.61	4.16	14.31	100.0
Buddhists	11.76	6.95	41.17	20.65	3.44	16.03	100.0
Protestants	2.35	38.46	29.94	18.04	3.86	7.35	100.0
Catholics	9.72	27.16	26.12	23.04	2.72	11.25	100.0
Hindus	11.50	11.45	38.41	25.81	1.76	11.06	100.0

**Source:** calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 population census

**Table 7**  
**Population 15 years and over by Working Status, Ethnic and Religious Groups:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 2000**  
**(in percentage)**

	<b>Self Employed</b>	<b>Self Employed assisted by Irregular Workers</b>	<b>Employer with Regular Workers</b>	<b>Regular Employees</b>	<b>Unpaid Family Workers</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Ethnic Group</b>						
Malay	48.84	4.88	1.03	40.01	7.24	100.0
Javanese	32.80	3.68	0.85	57.98	4.70	100.0
Chinese	41.60	6.68	5.38	36.68	9.65	100.0
Minang	34.56	3.13	1.02	57.71	3.58	100.0
Batak	26.84	2.39	0.68	67.68	2.41	100.0
<b>Religious Group</b>						
Muslims	39.25	4.12	0.98	50.08	5.57	100.0
Buddhists	40.87	6.68	5.07	36.78	10.60	100.0
Protestants	27.15	2.62	1.01	66.62	2.60	100.0
Catholics	30.91	3.52	1.53	59.55	4.48	100.0
Hindus	43.04	5.01	3.96	42.27	5.72	100.0
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>38.02</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>50.82</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 Population Census.

**Table 8**  
**Population 15 years and over by Unemployment Rate, Ethnic and Religious Groups:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 2000**

<b>ethnic group</b>	<b>unemployment rate</b>	<b>religious group</b>	<b>unemployment rate</b>
Malay	6.97	Muslims	5.85
Batak	5.50	Protestants	5.70
Minang	5.37	Catholics	5.06
Javanese	4.38	Buddhists	4.10
Chinese	4.11	Hindus	2.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.67</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.67</b>

Source: calculated from the raw data set of the Indonesian 2000 population census

**Table 9**  
**Socio-economic Strata by Ethnic and Religious Groups:**  
**Province of Riau Archipelago, 2000**

	Education*	Agriculture**	Manufacturing***	Formal****	choosy-ness*****
<b>Ethnic group</b>					
Batak	1	2	1	1	2
Minang	2	1	2	2	3
Javanese	3	3	3	3	4
Chinese	4 - 5	4	5	4	5
Malay	4 - 5	5	4	5	1
<b>Religious group</b>					
Protestants	1	1	1	1	2
Catholics	2	2	2	2	3
Muslims	3	5	3	3	1
Hindus	4	3	4	4	5
Buddhists	5	4	5	5	4

**Note:** 1 refers the highest strata and 5, the lowest one.

\*The smaller the percentage of mostly finishing primary school and the higher the percentage of finishing senior high school, the higher is the strata.

\*\*The smaller the percentage of working in agriculture, the higher is the strata

\*\*\*The higher the percentage working in manufacturing, the higher is the strata

\*\*\*\*The higher the percentage of working in formal sector, the higher is the strata

\*\*\*\*\*The highest the unemployment rate (and hence the choosy-ness), the higher is the strata.

**Source:** compiled from **Tables 5 – 8.**

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Ethnicity is a vague and general concept. It may refer to a group of people sharing the same language or dialect, religion, kinship, history, ancestry, and physical contiguity or territory. However, the rising mobility of people may make it difficult to apply such a definition. One approach is the emphasis on consciousness. If one group of people claims they are of a certain ethnic group, then others should respect this claim. (Mackerras, 2003). Statistically, the most convenient way to measure the individual consciousness of his/her ethnicity is to ask what the respondent claims as his/ her ethnicity. The quantification through the use of statistics may miss many important aspects of ethnicity. However, a wise use of the statistics may importantly contribute to a better understanding of ethnicity, to complement the qualitative understanding on ethnicity.

<sup>ii</sup> See Ananta, Arifin, and Suryadinata (2005) for a discussion on the emerging democracy, seen through the changing electoral behaviour, in Indonesia.

<sup>iii</sup> As mentioned later in this paper, the “Riau” refers to the old Riau province, before it split into the current Riau province and the Riau Archipelago province.

<sup>iv</sup> In the following paragraphs, the information on the events was based on Klinken (2006); while the statistics on population and religious followers, from Ananta, Arifin, and Suryadinata (2004).

<sup>v</sup> Calculated from Badan Pusat Statistik (2001 a) and Badan Pusat Statistik (2001 b).

<sup>vi</sup> Calculated from Badan Pusat Statistik (1974).

<sup>vii</sup> The Makian was transmigrated from the Makian island, in the south of Ternate, to the Kao district of Northern Halmahera in 1975.

<sup>viii</sup> It is a 500-year old rivalry between the Sultan of Ternate and Sultan of Tidore. Both of them no longer have any official power but still acquire large informal influence on the people in the province of North Maluku. The Sultan of Ternate is used to protect the Christian minority in the Northern Halmahera.

<sup>ix</sup> As mentioned earlier in this paper, the statistics on Malay and other ethnicities refer to what the respondent claimed to be his/ her ethnicity. It should also be noted here that it is not easy to define who the Malay is. For example, the Malay in Indonesia is different from that known in Singapore and Malaysia, where Malay is state-defined. The Singapore ‘Malay’ may be known as the Indonesian Javanese, Minang, Baweanese, Acehnese, and other ethnicities, in addition to the Malay themselves, as many of the Singapore ‘Malay’ are descendants from the Indonesian non-Malay ethnic groups. See Chua (2003) and Kahn (2006) for a discussion on Malay in Singapore and Barnard (2004) for a deeper discussion on Malay identity.

<sup>x</sup> The percentage for the Malay in Indonesia is cited from Ananta, Arifin, and Bakhtiar (2005).

<sup>xi</sup> See discussion on the estimate of the Chinese in Indonesia in Suryadinata, Arifin, and Ananta (2003).

<sup>xii</sup> Many policy makers and academicians still follow what I argue as a wrong interpretation of Indonesian statistics on unemployment rate. They follow the standard macro-economic text books, which do not match the situation in Indonesia. In Indonesia, unemployment rate has always been increasing since 1971, regardless the economic condition.

<sup>xiii</sup> In this paragraph, “Maluku” refers to the old province, before it split into “Maluku” and “North Maluku”.