Various activities and events organized by the state and civil organizations to celebrate diversity as the genuine character of the people and society in this archipelago appear to contradict the long cry from the elites to maintain homogeneity and unity of the nation. Constant tensions seem unavoidable between the idea of oneness (kesatuan) and togetherness (persatuan). Desires to enhance diversity and fears perceiving it as a threat have created an ambiguity in the treatment of minorities and marginal groups. Communitarianism manifested in populist politics could constitute an impediment in transforming the people (rakyat) into the citizen (warganegara). This paper is an attempt to unpack the contradiction within the nation by exploring major discourses underlying the nation-state building processes. As a nation constructed on the basis of diverse communities and a vast archipelagic geography, the state is by nature confronted by the challenge of maintaining unity or promoting federalism. Controversies on the form and structure of decentralization, such as whether autonomy should be granted at the provincial or the district level of government, show the different views among the political elites and reflect a fundamental embedded contradiction within the nation. This paper argues that unless the contradiction within this great nation is resolved the fate of minorities and marginal groups will continue to be jeopardized.

Keywords: nation, contradiction, diversity, citizen, marginal group.

In a passionate obituary to her longtime colleague, Ben Anderson, Ruth McVey expresses her admire and reflect on Ben’s famous book “Imagined Communities”. Ruth McVey, that continually struggles to unpack the tension between “state” and “nation”, cannot leave her concern and noted as the following in the obituary:

...there was a fundamental conflict between these two concepts. “Nation” meant community, a sense of togetherness, a striving towards the realization of a common self. 
“State,” however, was about control and the entrenchment of a hierarchy. In the nation-state that replaced royal dominion as the legitimate source of rule, the state seized the collective dreams of community...

Indonesia is indeed created in an emergency situation. The days prior to the declaration of independence on 17th of August 1945 were very tense. The abrupt changes after the Japanese surrendered to the allies were a political vacuum that provided room for a group of young revolutionary nationalists to exert their demand for declaring the independence. It has become a legendary heroic history when the youth decided to kidnap Soekarno and Hatta and urged them to make a proclamation for independence. Several months before the declaration of

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1 An extended abstract prepared for the panel 03 (Disintegration from within: The failure of Indonesia as a common project), The 7th International Symposium of Journal Anthropology Indonesia at Faculty of Cultural Sciences University of Gadjah Mada, July 23-26, 2019.
independence, under the auspices of the Japanese military general, the nationalist leaders – representing different political factions – conducted a series of meetings to prepare the state constitution of their imagined nation. The debate on the ideological foundation was intense and contentious. As the Japanese surrendered, the meetings ended and the constitution’s draft has to be finished. It was agreed in the final meeting that the constitution – known as UUD 1945 – is temporary and later will be revised. The UUD 1945 is therefore an unfinished constitution and therefore leaving many important issues unresolved.

The constitution opens with a preamble that is a slight elaboration of the five principles in which the notion of persatuan rather than kesatuan is incorporated. Both words derive from the Indonesian satu, meaning “one”, but while persatuan means, roughly, the process of becoming one, kesatuan means the condition of being one. Put another way, persatuan emphasises the process of unification from diversity, whereas kesatuan emphasises homogeneity. While persatuan implies the importance of differences and heterogeneity, kesatuan emphasises the concepts of oneness and uniformity. The strong engagement of the first generation of nationalist leaders with civic nationalism rather than ethnic nationalism constitutes their commitment to the enhancement of political diversity rather than just uniformity. Such nationalist feelings imply an appreciation of the “federal idea” as the basis for state formation, despite unitary structures. The political abruptness surrounding the birth of the Indonesian state heavily influenced the provisional construction of the Indonesian constitution. Although the Dutch were successful in reclaiming a large part of the territory through military action during the period 1947-49, they failed to establish a federal state. Their attempts to do so triggered a strong reaction from the masses and stimulated strong opinions about unity and unitarism. This was the beginning of a prevailing perception that Indonesia had to be formed as a unitary state.

A fragile political agreement between a strong nationalist group (the Republicans) and those promoting federalism was temporarily formed. The Republicans asserted that the formation of a federal state was only a Dutch strategy to weaken the nationalist movement to explain their rejection of the imposition of a federal state format on the young republic. Sporadic protests against the Dutch in Makassar and Medan around this time led to the collapse of the agreement. On August 17 1950, the deal between the Republicans and the so-called Federalists ended, as the nationalist leaders decided to form a unitary state rather than following the federal idea. The perception among the Indonesian nationalist leaders that the Federal State of Indonesia was only part of hidden Dutch tactics to recolonize the country left a strong negative impression surrounding federalism in Indonesia, presenting major difficulties for those who attempt to advocate the federal idea in Indonesia today. The idea of persatuan implied in the preamble of the constitution subsequently shifted towards the idea of kesatuan, in which the notion of unity is advocated and differences should be avoided. The format of the Indonesian state moved from

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4 I borrow the term “federal idea” from Rae (2003). Robert Rae argues that the “federal idea” provides more room for discussion while the “ism” in federalism has a way of limiting debate and understanding.
5 According to Schiller’s (1955: 4) study of the process of formation of Indonesia’s federal state, the first constitution of the Republic of Indonesia was based on the federal constitution of the United States of America.
6 On the rejection of the federal idea, Schiller wrote in 1955 that “recent writers have rightly recognized that opposition to the federal state in Indonesia was largely due to the fact it was ‘Dutch-inspired’, or ‘Dutch-imposed’, rather than because of absence of intrinsic merit in the pan” (Schiller, 1955: 9).
7 I would like to thank Dr. Edward L. Poelinggomang, a historian at Hasanuddin University in Makassar, for his insightful inputs into the discussion of this contentious issue of persatuan vs kesatuan during a conversation with the author in mid-September 2006 in Makassar.
the Republic of Indonesia (1945-1946) to the Federal State of Indonesia (1947-1949) and finally to the Unitary State of Indonesia (1950-present). August 17 1950 was thus a defining moment in the history of state formation in Indonesia.

In 1955, a decade after its abrupt declaration of independence, Indonesia’s first general election was conducted to elect peoples’ representatives to the parliament. The first task of the elected parliament was to draft a new constitution. However, the long process of political debate and deliberation among the members of parliament on the one hand, and the increasing regional rebellions on the other, created a feeling of distrust towards the politicians within the military elites. This, in turn, pushed the president to issue a decree on July 5 1959 abolishing parliament and returning to the first constitution of Indonesia. Indonesia then entered its long period of authoritarian government. Since then, military influence over the nation has been pivotal in Indonesia politics.

The tensions between the military and the communist party that resulted in the tragic loss of life of 1965 forced then-President Sukarno into a corner and elevated Suharto to become the new president, enabling the authoritarian regime under the first constitution to continue. The Suharto period of government strongly based on a centralistic bureaucratic polity, economic technocracy and military leadership, intensified the mystification of the unitary state format. Indonesia that is born with strong spirit of civic nationalism that promises to enhance plurality and differences is currently facing new challenges to survive its ideal. In the analysis of political development demography—in particular its composition by ethnicity and geographic distribution—is rarely considered as having an important influence in the dynamics of the politics both at the national and local levels.

The recent political development in which decentralization has become the most contested notion Indonesian observers also failed to understand how the politics of decentralization and the violent communal conflicts that followed is in fact cannot be understood without seriously considering the politics of demography that is deeply involved. Every region, province or district, is a small part of a very big country namely Indonesia. Although its seemed becomes truism that communal conflict that occurred—religious or ethnic—is ‘highly locally concentrated’. Isolating communal conflict and perceive it mainly constituting local dynamics however would be misleading as the event clearly show the interconnectedness between the national decentralization politics and the local responses. The implementation of new regional autonomy laws has restructured the distribution of power and authority in the region. These new political situations open the opportunity for the local elites to manipulate locals’ grievances as a means to achieve their economic and political short term goals. The expression of local grievances is varies according to their differences in the dynamics of its local politics that in some instances influence by the ethno-religio-demographic configuration of the society and population.

Politics in Indonesia after Suharto have gone into the seemingly new politics in which the member of the society and the regions can articulate their political aspiration with greater freedom than before. The state management no longer in the hand of one person or the central government but has been disperse into a diverse political organization, most notably the parliaments and the local government. A series of new amendments to the constitutions have been ratified that provide a new basis for the creation of new political system that in theory should have a better

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8 See Ricklefs (1983), especially Chapter 18.
chance to accommodate the people’s need rather than only serving the ruling elites. The new political system that is characterized by strong drive for decentralization have proliferated local enthusiasms as reflected in the creation of substantial number of new districts. The creation of new territorial boundaries as a response to the new regional autonomy laws however could be seen as a process of the fragmentation of the nation-state. In this process of “disintegration from within”, ethno-religio-demographic configuration is becoming a crucial factor that is potential for political manipulation.

Insular ethno-religio sentiments that began in the beginning of the 20th century as the new impetus for the educated indigenous population to form social and political organization seemingly to revive in the beginning of 21st century in the form of identity politics following the demise of Suharto from power in 1998. The long contending source of power since the colonial time, orthodox Islam, resurgence and challenged the civic principles of the nation-state. Islam that was described by Wertheim (1980) as the majority with minority mentality has been asserted its muscle throughout the New Order after Sukarno and the communist was defeated.9 In the last five years, mass mobilization led by small but fanatical Muslim group, most prominently FPI (Front Pembela Islam or Islamic Defender Front) have successfully, among others, toppled down Ahok, a Chinese Christian Jakarta Mayor, in the election against Anies Baswedan, a Muslim Arabic descend, in 2016. A similar move is adopted in the 2019 presidential election against Jokowi by backing up Prabowo, but failed.

The recent mobilization of Islamic orthodoxy in the guise of populist politics is flagging up the embedded contradiction of the nation as embodiment of a common self. Furthermore, its encroachment into various states’ institutions is a strong sign of possible penetration of Islam in expanding its control into the social fabrics. The resurgence of Islam as a representation of majority religion constitute the ruptures of the nation-states as indicated by Ruth McVey that in turn will further marginalized the conventional minority groups, such as other religions, Islamic religious minorities, indigenous or folk religions, ethnic minorities and adat communities; as well as the new marginal groups such as LGBT.

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9 John T. Sidel (2006) have provided a comprehensive analysis on increasing phenomena of religious violence between 1995-2003 in his book Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia, especially chapter one “From Ethnic Conflict to Islamic Terrorism?”.
Marginalization often occurs in Indonesia, and it makes people gradually consider marginalisation as a natural phenomenon. Female porters are one of the marginalized groups in Indonesia. They have been marginalized by others, but they do not realize it. This paper analyzes and describes the dilemmas and kind of marginalization faced by female porters in Pabean Surabaya market. The methods used in this study were qualitative, including direct observation and in-depth interviews. The results suggest that female porters marginalized by getting differential treatment by other people, they cannot negotiate their wages with customers which makes the income they earn incommensurate with their hard work, which is also exacerbated by the wage differential between female porters and male porters. They also face some dilemmas related to their work such as having double burden as housewives and workers, limited skills so they cannot choose better job for them, insufficient income for daily needs, social pressure from fellow workers and other people.

Keywords: dilemma, marginalization, female porters

INTRODUCTION

Diversity of cultures makes Indonesia become a rich and beautiful country that has its own uniqueness compared to other countries. It rich of local languages, traditional foods, traditional clothes, traditional dances, etc. Since it is very diverse, the cultural values are also diverse. Each cultural group has its own values. As a consequence, sometimes the diversity also brings some problems that may harm the unity and cause a disintegration from within. Marginalization is one of the problems caused by diversity. It is not only happening in rural area, but also in the big city such as Surabaya, the second biggest city in Indonesia.

Eventhough Surabaya is a metropolitan city with all the modern facilities to provide the community life, but traditional markets still have not lost its charm as the best place that sell groceries with low price. The customer is not only the commoners but also people who have large business in food sector. Since, there are many people from many social classes come to traditional market, the marginalization can happen even without them realize it. That is because marginalization has happened in a long time and in many places in Indonesia. In this paper, the research was focused on female porters in Pabean Surabaya Market because Pabean Surabaya Market is the oldest traditional market in Surabaya also the sellers and porters from this


Wertheim, W.F, 1980, “Moslem in Indonesia: Majority with Minority Mentality”, in South East Asian Studies Committee, James Cook University, Townsville.