Harmonizing Modern and Indigenous Democracy: An Exploration of Traditional Democratic Values in Ethnic Communities of Indonesia

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Abstract:

The extended journey towards both economic and political modernization within Indonesia's democratic framework has led to a transformation of its society into an industrialized community. However, this change has largely failed to boost the economic prospects of the general populace. Moreover, the turbulent nature of Indonesia's democratic evolution has not aligned well with the principles of open dialogue and inclusive discussion, as advocated by its foundational philosophy, Pancasila. Over the last 15 years, the amalgamation of development-oriented politics and political liberalization has exerted a detrimental impact on the nation's unique cultural identity and wisdom. The upcoming research aims to revisit and revitalize the indigenous political ideologies and social values held by various ethnic groups and community structures in Indonesia. The objective is to shed light on the unexplored potential of social capital to enhance the quality of the country's democratic governance. The research will focus on two main categories for its case study: Firstly, it will delve into ethnic groups, concentrating specifically on the Wajo and Minang communities; Secondly, it will study communities that are active in a number of urban parks across the Java region. The study is rooted in the theoretical framework of consultative democracy and will utilize qualitative research methods interpreted through the lens of political anthropology to obtain nuanced, context-rich insights.

Keywords:
traditional; values; modern; democracy; communities; Indonesia

I. Introduction

The groundbreaking work of esteemed Indonesian anthropologist Parsudi Suparlan in 1975 focused on the anthropological examination of voluntary ethnic associations and their subsequent influential roles in Surname's national politics. This phenomenon is relatively unique because, often, ethnic identities, either latent or manifest, are more likely to trigger conflicts than unify a nation. For instance, in Java, cultural divisions are palpable among the Javanese people, who exhibit a robust Islamic identity known as 'Santri,' those with a more diluted Islamic belief known as 'Abangan,' and a high social class known as 'Priyayi.' Such divisions were explicitly manifest in the post-Suharto era, notably in Ngandong Village, Klaten. This conflict transcends the traditional triadic approach of Santri-Abangan-Priyayi introduced by Clifford Geertz, raising questions as to its relevance in contemporary times.

Contrastingly, the modern Indonesian society is grappling with intricate cultural evolutions, which are simultaneously accompanied by disruptions in the political sphere. Specifically, in the Javanese context, the Ngandong Village conflict engaged various societal layers, including the historically modernized 'priyayi' who harbor contemporary worldviews, alongside the 'santri' and the 'abangan' Muslims.

This discussion is not intended to stir up religious or ethnic sensitivities but aims to highlight that the village policy to construct a chapel in Ngandong was executed with inadequate community deliberation. This oversight exemplifies one of the numerous instances where democratic processes are flawed, causing a diminishment of the core values, civil principles, and traditional wisdom embedded in various Indonesian sub-cultures and ethnic groups.

Another case in point is the disengagement of public participation in the final stages of development planning through the 'Musrenbang' (Development Planning Consultation) mechanism. Although the central planning agency, BAPPENAS, initially adopts a participatory approach, the process falters at the ministry level under the coordination of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This breakdown results in legislation and democratic practices that increasingly rely on representative democracy, sidelining the nation's inherent values.

Given this context, there's a pressing need to revisit the indigenous values and norms that make up the Indonesian cultural mosaic. This reexamination aims to serve as a foundational guide to strengthen the conceptual and practical aspects of democracy, as mandated by Pancasila. For this endeavor, this study will employ consultative democracy as its theoretical backbone, representing the most current evolution in democratic theory. Furthermore, a political anthropological methodology will be used to better understand the political culture among diverse ethnic groups and communities.

In summary, this research is of both urgent and interesting nature, as it aims to rejuvenate and highlight the nation's core values within a political anthropology framework. The study will offer an in-depth interpretation, which has the potential to fortify both our conceptual understanding and practical application of democracy, as per the Fourth Precepts of Pancasila. Additionally, it aims to encourage a culture of community consultations or deliberations, not only at the grassroots level but also in formal political processes.

New research is worth doing if it touches at least one of these two traits: urgent and interesting (Siregar et al., 2021, p. 51). The contribution of this study is the shooting and re-emergence of the nation's noble values that are carried out within the framework of political anthropology, with in-depth interpretations. Then this photo will show its potential to strengthen our conceptualisation and understanding of the democratic mandate in the Fourth Precepts of Pancasila; also, it's potential to encourage the practice of community consultations or deliberation, both at the community level in the formal political process.

II. Literature Review

The first topic of focus is the concept of traditional wisdom, a term which necessitates a nuanced understanding. According to the Oxford Dictionary, traditional wisdom refers to values and conduct marked by a high degree of moral integrity, particularly in public affairs. In our society, this term is closely aligned with the concept of the nation's noble values. To dissect this idea further, it's essential to examine its components—'civic' and 'virtue.' The term 'civic' has dual implications: first, it pertains to urban or municipal governance, and second, it relates to the duties or activities of citizens within their local environments. 'Virtue,' meanwhile, denotes behavior characterized by elevated moral standards and qualities that are beneficial or admirable.

Another term closely related to traditional wisdom is 'civility.' Civility is defined by the Oxford Dictionary in two distinct ways: first, as formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech, and second, as polite remarks utilized in casual conversation. In the Indonesian context,

civility is often understood as civilized conduct in both speech and social interactions. The term originally had strong connections to the notion of civil citizenship, while the idea of polite behavior became more prominent later on, emerging around the mid-16th century from the Latin 'civilis,' which relates to citizens. In contemporary Indonesia, the term appears to encapsulate both its historic and more recent meanings, highlighting the civility expected of citizens.

Within the realm of democracy, Michael Morfit's study in 1981 uncovered the concept of consultative democracy within Pancasila, Indonesia's foundational philosophy. This latest iteration of democratic theory, abbreviated as TDD, has been developed by luminaries like Habermas, Cohen, and Bohman. Morfit concluded that the fourth principle of Pancasila has historically eschewed liberal democracy in favor of a society driven by discussion and deliberation, encapsulated by the term "musyawarah."

The principal elements that make up the concept of TDD include: (1) a focus on dialogue-centric groups; (2) the fostering of public-spiritedness; (3) the capacity for effective deliberation; (4) the engagement of a broader segment of the public; and (5) a deep understanding and consideration of local cultural contexts. Simone Chambers, in her 2003 article, highlighted that the "consultative turn" has become a conventional phrase in academic and political circles. It's crucial to distinguish between 'participatory democracy' and 'consultative democracy,' as each has unique attributes and implications.

Drawing on Dryzek's 2005 article from the Australian National University, he explores how consultative democracy has been effectively deployed in divided societies, ranging from Malaysia in Asia to Switzerland in Western Europe. Dryzek contends that consultative democracy, as a political concept, must adapt to the institutional and cultural nuances specific to each nation. Furthermore, he argues for a quality of communication that is reflective, non-coercive, and able to relate local experiences to broader normative principles or values. Dryzek also champions electoral engineering as a means to nurture democratic systems and cultures in diverse nations, offering examples such as Papua New Guinea and Northern Ireland.

Finally, Baiocchi, as cited in Wright's 2003 work, describes TDD as a theoretical framework that endeavors to create a robust version of democracy, grounded in public justifications and discourse-based governance. This calls for citizens to engage in deliberations as equals in order to legitimize political exercises. Thus, consultative democracy stands as an evolved, nuanced approach to governance, one that goes beyond the mere mechanics of voting to include rich dialogue and mutual understanding among its citizens.

The concept of consultative democracy, combined with an egalitarian culture, seems to have originated at the onset of industrialization in England. This notion parallels what Habermas refers to as a "public contemplative space," a transformation of what was previously known as a bourgeois public space. In a book review, T. Christy explores this democratic practice within the context of England's coffee shops. These social establishments relate back to the English elite's historical fondness for exotic items from Eastern civilizations, like Islamic Turkish culture, including coffee. These coffee shops have evolved into communal spaces where the general public can exchange information and engage in public discussions. Christy's review supports Cowan's arguments, which look at these social spaces through the lens of consultative democracy theory.

Cowan presents a compelling analysis of how coffee shops serve as hubs of political and social engagement in urban settings, continuing Habermas' idea that these establishments create an environment where information exchange and dialogue are prioritized over the social standing or origins of the participants. As Christy notes, Cowan, borrowing from Habermas, argues that for a "fluid" and "cool" public participation across all social classes, there needs to be a constant mixing and brewing of ideas. Such interaction is essential for building a robust civil society.

Consultative democracy, or TDD, can be viewed as the intersection between community culture and democratic theory, representing a democratic model distinct from what is offered within liberal democratic frameworks. This is evident in a thesis by a Malaysian researcher focusing on electoral democracy in multi-ethnic Sarawak. According to Sulaiman and Othman, the power dynamics during elections in the state, concentrating on "leadership, ethnicity, and safety," should be analyzed through a non-Western lens. This perspective would allow for a more nuanced approach, considering the prominence of the ethnicity factor in the elections and political development of Sarawak.

TDD aims to refresh and invigorate democratic theories by focusing on meaningful public discussions that prioritize content over personal interests or the identity of the speaker. It calls for a revival of democratic politics, putting emphasis on the quality of what is being discussed rather than who is discussing it.

In Taiwan, the characteristics of consultative democracy are embodied in what is known as Dharma democracy, as described by Lin. This involves government-sponsored consensus conferences as a method of citizen participation. Additionally, Farrelly from Queen's University, Canada, elaborates on Zurn's theoretical concept, stating that consultative democracy emphasizes the state's reasons-responsiveness.

The scale of participatory models has also evolved. Originally confined to local decision-making as noted in Fung's work, it has expanded to a city-scale. Examples include the Porto Alegre experiment in Brazil, community-level practices in the U.S., and sectoral initiatives in Brazil's health sector. These examples indicate that there is a multi-level approach to consultative democracy.

Another vital aspect is the role of voluntary associations in democratization and local governance efficiency. Driven by dissatisfaction with existing governance structures, citizens in Canada have adopted methods for drafting citizen-based legislation. The influence of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as catalysts for democratic governance has been discussed by experts like Jan Bucek and Brian Smith. These organizations serve as platforms for citizen education, for amplifying community bargaining power, and for facilitating open, democratic governance.

In summary, consultative democracy serves as a multi-faceted and evolving approach to governance, one that places a premium on public dialogue and community involvement, while allowing for cultural and societal nuances.

III. Research Method

In the study under discussion, a qualitative research methodology is employed to comprehensively examine the subject matter. Instead of just collecting data, the research process is intricately entwined with the conceptual development of various categories related to the

subject at hand. These categories are not arbitrary; rather, they are rooted in well-established principles that guide the research.

The source material for this research is drawn primarily from secondary data. An extensive review of existing literature is conducted, including a meticulous examination of both books and scholarly articles that delve into traditional wisdom. This literature review serves as the foundation for data collection and allows the study to build upon previously established knowledge in the field.

The categorization of materials isn't a haphazard process; it is systematically organized around key concepts integral to the democratic culture and the functioning of social-democratic institutions. This methodical organization helps in creating a structured framework within which the research is conducted, enabling a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

Central to this research is the lens of consultative democracy theory, which is operationalized through multiple dimensions. First, there is an emphasis on the participation of a wide cross-section of society to ensure that the data and subsequent analysis are representative of diverse viewpoints. Second, the research champions the principle of deliberation, advocating for thoughtful discussion and dialogue as a means to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Third, there's an underpinning of public spiritedness, reflecting a commitment to social good and collective welfare rather than individual or sectarian interests.

Finally, as the research progresses, the development of these conceptual categories allows for the possibility of crafting empirical generalizations. These are not mere abstractions but have the potential to be applied more broadly, thereby contributing to the extant literature and providing valuable insights that can inform future research or practical applications.

By integrating these various components—qualitative methodology, an organized system of categorization, a multi-dimensional approach rooted in consultative democracy theory, and the potential for empirical generalizations—the study aims for a comprehensive, nuanced, and deeply insightful exploration of its subject matter.

IV. Results and Discussion

In the scholarly work by Zuhro et al. (2009), attention is drawn to the Wajo Tribe, an integral community within the Bugis people. The tribe is geographically situated in central South Sulawesi Province, occupying a mere 4% of the entire province's landmass. One village, in particular, Tosora Village, is highlighted for its historical importance as it houses remnants of an old mosque situated directly behind the Village Head Office, signifying early Islamic influences in the region.

Building on various research studies that delve into the pre-historic era of Indonesia, the Wajo people are recognized for having a socio-political structure rooted in communal values. Upon these communal values, the Wajo Kingdom was established. Over time, the interactions with other kingdoms in the Indonesian archipelago led the Wajo community to transition from animistic belief systems to embracing Islam. This transformative journey had two significant implications. Firstly, it brought a new doctrinal framework to the community. Secondly, it led to the assimilation of Islamic tenets of justice and equality into the pre-existing cultural fabric of the Wajo people. A unique form of Islam, termed 'accommodative Islam,' evolved as a result of this

assimilation, according to Hasanuddin (2013). The evidence of early Islamization around the year 1610 is noted through various historical remnants such as an ancient mosque in Tosora, a number of Mushollas (prayer halls), and the Gedong, which was a building used for storing ammunition.

Furthermore, the Wajo community has a long-standing tradition of entering into social contracts for political governance. According to historical records, the term 'Wajo' was initially used about 605 years ago to signify a self-governed, sovereign community. A pivotal moment was the social contract enacted under the shade of a bajo tree, where community members and traditional leaders consented to form what is now known as the Wajo craft.

The socio-political ethos of the Wajo people also embodies the democratic value of equality among its citizens and in its leadership selection process. Zuhro et al. (2009) emphasize that leaders are chosen based on their competencies and abilities, often coming from ordinary backgrounds. Another key democratic practice is that of collective deliberation. Historical accounts tell us that communal issues were discussed openly under a Bajo tree, giving birth to the term "major-wajo."

Political activism and participation are also valued, with mechanisms in place for community members to protest against unjust rulers. Over time, the political structure evolved to include formal contracts or agreements for appointing kings, a practice that distinguished the Wajo Kingdom from other kingdoms in South Sulawesi.

In terms of democratic governance, two key principles are outlined: The first principle is 'Saiyo Saketo,' which signifies that while diverse opinions may exist within the community, the ultimate aim is to reach a consensus through contemplative dialogue. The second principle relates to the designated areas for these collective deliberations, often open spaces referred to as 'Kurisu Salapan' or 'Medan nan Ayahaneh

As society grew more complex, particularly during the Islamic and colonial periods, the Wajo people began to place increased trust in their leaders, known as 'penghulu,' to convene and discuss a range of issues from governance to conflict resolution.

In closing, Zuhro et al.'s study also mentions the Nagari Minangkabau community, drawing parallels as it is considered a cultural and social epicenter for the broader Minangkabau society. Situated in Batusangkar City, the Nagari Minangkabau community has a diversified economy based on agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry. This community is particularly captivating to scholars because of its democratic values and ancient history, making it a compelling subject for understanding democracy in the region.

In an in-depth analysis by researchers, among them Zuhro et al., it has been discerned that the governance framework of the Minangkabau community underwent a significant transformation over time. Initially rooted in two distinct models — Bodi Chaniago's democratic ethos and Koto Piliang's aristocratic principles — the community's political system evolved to become increasingly democratic. The merging of these two traditional systems of governance is believed to have gained momentum following the advent of Islam in the Minangkabau region. Drawing from the insights of the renowned sociologist Mochtar Naim, Zuhro et al. argue that the Islamic faith introduced a level of egalitarianism that shifted societal focus from hereditary status and roles to piety and devotion to Allah. This was similar to the values of equality

advocated during seminal Western revolutions such as the French and American Revolutions, as well as the leadership model practiced by Prophet Muhammad in the 6th century AD.

When it comes to traditional governance, the Minangkabau have a tiered system led by the penghulu, a chieftain chosen from among the tribe's members and entrusted with the welfare of the tribe. The next in line for this role is usually a nephew or the son of the penghulu's sister. The penghulu doesn't operate in a vacuum; he is aided by junior chiefs known as 'penghulu penongkat.'

The authority structure also shows variations derived from the Koto Piliang tradition, featuring a quartet of collective leaders known as urang ampek jinih, consisting of a penghulu, a priest (an authority in religious affairs), a manti, and a Hulubalang (an authority in customary laws). Alongside this, there exists another mainstream variant, the triad leadership model in the Nagari system, referred to as the furnace tigo sejarangan. Here, the penghulu oversees the social system, religious matters are led by the ulama, and intellectual affairs are directed by experts in socio-economic and educational fields.

Turning our attention to the unique example of Bungkul Park in Surabaya, researchers Faridah da Rahman and others found that the park serves as an arena for community-driven, consultative democracy. For the average Indonesian, the activities in Bungkul Park might seem commonplace, but for academics well-versed in the shortcomings of representative democracy and theories like Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere, the park holds particular interest. In this park, which covers more than 3000 square kilometers and is a project by the Surabaya City Government aimed at enhancing local tourism, groups like the SENAPATI community discuss issues ranging from local news to state policies. Faridah & Rahman have noted that these conversations often mature into actionable recommendations presented to the local government, like the case of establishing a bicycle lane in response to a tragic hit-and-run incident.

This particular bicycle lane initiative faced delays and corporate involvement, drawing both scrutiny and debate among the community members. However, it ultimately came to fruition, serving the greater public good. Faridah & Rahman emphasize that the phenomenon at Bungkul Park is not an imported concept but a local manifestation of consultative democracy, one that validates the capacity for Indonesian societies to adapt and create democracies rooted in their own socio-cultural contexts.

In summary, the examination of these distinct but interconnected democratic systems highlights the potential for a dynamic, multi-layered approach to governance and community engagement, ranging from the Minangkabau's traditional structures to the grassroots activism seen in Surabaya's Bungkul Park. These examples challenge us to look beyond Western models, acknowledging that effective democratic practices can indeed emerge from the cultural and historical contexts of communities like those in Indonesia.

Rendra Wahyu Kurniawan's research reveals the history of the function of the square: from the part of public space when the Mataram Kingdom ruled Tulunagung Regency to being a location for street vendors during the independence period, and now its function is returned as a public space. However, during the Dutch colonial period, a fence or barrier surrounding the field became a symbol of limiting the rulers and the people. Also built a prison near the square. The prison has been relocated to the south of the Heroes' Cemetery. Besides being created for children's play facilities, the Tulungagung District Square is planted with shady trees and

decorated with ornamental plants. "During the day, hundreds of pigeons become entertainment for visitors who want to provide food in the form of corn… while in the afternoon, some visitors take advantage of playgrounds and outbound…." The Breaking Rooster Crew, Skate Board Community, and BMX Bike Lovers are among these communities. There is also a community of reptile and weasel lovers.

Kurniawan described various communities and residents of Tulungagung in building public discourse as follows: "The emergence of various creative groups and communities from young people of Tulungagung Regency such as the Young Union Union (PSM), Tulungagung Grafitty Community, Creative Young Community (KMK), Etc., is one of the results of the successful use of the square as a public space. Although some communities are not involved in politics, they often respond to political issues in the area when they gather. This is a form of building political participation from young members of each community".

The Pendopo (the regent's official residence) is also used to provide a forum to capture aspirations. In each panel, it is ensured that there is a representative from each village. So, the aspirations that are absorbed can be fully absorbed. At the same time, the practice of deliberation in public spaces is also not only in the square of Tulungagung Regency but also in public areas in several coffee shops: "…, the flood of coffee shops in Tulungagung Regency has also become a new location that can be used as a public space for the community".

Second, the practice of political contracts that has been practised by one of the studied ethnic groups is very advanced. With this social capital, there is hope and opportunity that the current political contract would also be of higher quality and be obeyed by the parties. Third, the practice of family deliberation at the community level is social capital in grassroots communities. Moreover, social capital produces political interactions that can influence local government policies (in the case of the community in Taman Bungkul Surabaya) and is also the initial capital to be used as procedures and developed beyond the interests and concerns of the internal community. With the development of attitudes and behaviour as citizens of the city, this social capital can foster peaceful and quality political participation to influence local government public policies.

V. Conclusion

In a comprehensive exploration, this study illuminates the deep-seated presence of democratic principles and values within the ethnic communities under investigation. These are not merely theoretical constructs but are actively practiced and embodied in the everyday lives of these communities. Traditional social organizations within these ethnic groups are essentially democratic in nature, exhibiting sophisticated systems of governance that have organically evolved over time. By employing the theoretical framework of Consultative Democracy, this research highlights the untapped potential that resides within these ethnic communities in Indonesia for fortifying the practice of democracy. It argues for a democracy that is not imported but cultivated from the rich soil of indigenous cultural wisdom.

However, the study also cautions against a monolithic approach to democratization, especially from the Central Government. The advent of modern democratic ideals and institutions, predominantly influenced by Western thought, should not lead to the negation or marginalization of existing traditional democratic practices. Instead, contemporary democratic reforms and regulations should be enacted with a keen awareness of the pre-existing cultural repositories of democratic thought and practice. In doing so, there is a need to prioritize the

compatibility between modern democratic systems and the long-standing democratic traditions that are already deeply rooted in local communities.

Therefore, when contemplating the adaptation of modern democratic institutions and values, policymakers should approach the task with a nuanced understanding. They should take into account the culturally ingrained democratic practices that have been flourishing independently for generations. Specifically, there should be an effort to avoid the imposition of one-size-fits-all policies in democratic governance by the Central Government. A more pluralistic and respectful approach would entail recognizing and integrating these traditional forms of democracy into the broader national framework. This approach acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between modern democratic values and indigenous democratic traditions, fostering a more holistic and resilient democratic practice for the future.

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