

INDONESIA'S POPULATION



Ethnicity and Religion
in a Changing Political Landscape

Leo Suryadinata

Evi Nurvidya Arifin

Aris Ananta

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INDONESIA'S POPULATION

The **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)** was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional research centre for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia, particularly the many-faceted problems of stability and security, economic development, and political and social change.

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Foreword

At present the population of Indonesia is the fourth largest in the world, after China, India and the United States of America. The last population census during the colonial period took place in 1930. The first population census in independent Indonesia was conducted in 1961, followed by censuses in 1971, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

These population censuses carried out every ten years provided a wealth of information on the size, composition, growth and other features of the Indonesian population as well as the population of different regions and islands. The richness of information drawn from the results of these censuses during a forty-year period enable many studies and analyses, carried out by Indonesian as well as foreign demographers, to arrive at a better understanding of many features of Indonesia's past, present and future populations.

Some of the most important changing characteristics of Indonesia's population throughout these decades relate to growth and age composition. While during the early years of independence the population of Indonesia grew more rapidly, present population data indicate a rapidly declining rate of population growth. Similarly, the age composition of Indonesia's population shows a contrasting picture: a high dependency of the young-aged during the early decades of independence as against a growing old-aged dependency in recent years.

The significant features of declining rates of growth and changing age composition are related to the rapid decline in fertility — as against a rapid decline in mortality. These developments are clearly linked to the increased awareness of capabilities and opportunities of limiting and spacing of births. In turn, this important awareness is a consequence of many developments in Indonesian society, in particular the rapid progress of the education of young women in rural as well as urban

areas. Indeed, one of the most important — if not the most important — investments in developing countries is the rapid spread of quality education among young women. It has a big impact not only on declines of fertility and infant mortality, but also on their rapidly increasing ability to join the labour force.

While the population censuses between 1961 and 1990 provide rich information of changing features of the population of Indonesia and its society, there is one feature that was lacking in these censuses: the ethnic composition of the population of Indonesia. As the fourth largest population among nations of the world, spread among so many islands and regions, Indonesia is well-known for its diversity in terms of ethnic composition. But there was no information on the ethnic composition of Indonesia's population because this feature was not included in the population censuses from 1961 to 1990. The population census of the year 2000 was the first to include information on ethnic composition.

It is indeed very heartening, therefore, that Professor Aris Ananta, a prominent demographer-economist from Indonesia, together with his colleagues Professor Leo Suryadinata and Dr Evi Nurvidya Arifin, took up the task to analyse the data on the ethnic composition of Indonesia's population as derived from the population census of the year 2000 and provide comparisons with the only available earlier data from the population census of 1930.

Undoubtedly, this important study will encourage demographers and other social scientists to take up the challenge of further analysing the population census data of the year 2000 on ethnic composition as well as other features.

Professor Widjojo Nitisastro
Professor of Economics (retired)
University of Indonesia
Jakarta

Message from the Director

Given its geo-strategic importance and recent developments in the region, Indonesia continues to be a major area of study for the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). In this regard, three ISEAS scholars, Dr Leo Suryadinata, Dr Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Dr Aris Ananta have joined forces to undertake inter-disciplinary research on the basis of information derived from the 2000 Population Census of Indonesia. Their wider research project, broadly titled "Statistical contribution to an understanding of the socio-economic and political situation in Indonesia" has resulted in the book *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*, the first in ISEAS' new series on Indonesia's Population. Within this series, the authors plan to publish books on several other aspects of Indonesia's political, economic and socio-cultural developments.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to Professor Widjojo Nitisastro, the Father of Indonesian demography, for the Foreword to this book; Mr Lee Khoo Choy, former Singapore Ambassador to Indonesia, and a scholar-writer on Indonesia for writing a comment; Professor Gavin W. Jones, a leading scholar on Southeast Asia in general and Indonesia in particular from the Australian National University; and Dr N. Haidy A. Pasay, a scholar with a background in the quantitative methods of analysis, from the University of Indonesia, for his recommendation on the use of this book. I would also like to express my appreciation of the co-operation extended by the Central Board of Statistics, Indonesia.

I commend the three scholars for their dedication in researching on an area of contemporary importance. I wish them further success in their endeavours to enhance the understanding of Indonesia.

K. Kesavapany

Director

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Singapore

Acknowledgements

We owe a number of individuals for the publication of this book.

First of all, we would like to thank the participants of the seminar "Ethnic and Religious Composition of Indonesia in the 21st Century: Findings from the Results of the Recently Published 2000 Population Census Data", who have made useful comments. We would like to thank particularly Mr Santo Koesoebjono of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), for sharing his insights on Indonesian demography and ethnicity. We would also like to thank Mr Wien Kusdiatmono of the Central Board of Statistics, Indonesia for the discussion on the Indonesian population censuses.

Our special thanks are due to Mr K. Kesavapany, Director of ISEAS, for his generous support, and Professor Wang Gungwu, Chairman of the ISEAS Board of Trustees, for his constructive comments.

Lastly, we would like to express our deep appreciation to Mrs Triena Ong, Managing Editor of ISEAS, who not only recognized the usefulness of this "frontier work" and suggested publishing the manuscript as a book, but also served as the editor of this volume.

While we acknowledge the advice and kind assistance of many who have been involved in this work, we alone are responsible for the opinions expressed and any errors in selection and interpretation.

Introduction

Origins of the Book

This book is an outgrowth of a seminar on "Ethnic and Religious Composition of Indonesia in the 21st Century: Findings from the Recently Published 2000 Population Census Data" by the authors, conducted on 27 September 2002 at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. The great interest expressed by the seminar participants inspired the authors to do further work on the material and present the results in this current format.

The last comprehensive population census that included data on ethnic background was in 1930 during the colonial period. From the time of Indonesia's independence in 1945 up to 1999, the Indonesian Government conducted four population censuses, namely in 1961, 1971, 1980 and 1990. However, these censuses never included any direct information on ethnicity. Demographers had been attempting to find statistical data on ethnicity, but they could only use some indirect ways to measure ethnic groups, such as deducing ethnicity through the religion and language spoken.

Therefore, before the several volumes in the set of publications on the results of the 2000 Indonesian population census were released to the public in mid-2002, all quantitative discussions on ethnicity in Indonesia had to depend on the information from the 1930 census, as if the Indonesian population had not changed much during the intervening 70 years. If changes were believed to have occurred, the quantitative information was derived as an extrapolation from the 1930 data with some expert judgment.

What were the reasons for not including ethnic information in the censuses? During the New Order under President Soeharto when Indonesia was at the stage of nation building, the concept of SARA

(*Suku Agama, Ras dan Antar Golongan*) was considered sensitive, especially ethnicity and race. Discussion on issues related to ethnicity and race was discouraged. Questions on ethnic background would only make the population ethnic-conscious, and this would be harmful to national unity. The absence of quantitative information on ethnicity was expected to prevent conflict arising from differences in ethnicity, and national integration would be better achieved without such information.

The fact is just the opposite. Issues and conflicts on ethnicity did not disappear. On the contrary, they increased during Soeharto's rule. After the fall of Soeharto in 1998, ethnic information was no longer considered sensitive. The 2000 population census eventually included ethnic information.

Leo Suryadinata, one of the authors of this book, has extensive knowledge of the interaction between politics and ethnicity, and has published widely on the topic. However, his works have had to rely on the information from the 1930 population census. It was therefore with great excitement and anticipation that he proposed this present study, using Indonesia's 2000 population census, by combining the detailed analysis of population data by Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta with his analysis of ethnicity and religion in a changing political landscape.

Significant Features of the 2000 Population Census

The most significant feature is that it contains the first direct information on ethnicity since 1930. The previous censuses relied on indirect information such as language spoken and religion, from which one had to deduce ethnicity.

Another significant feature of the 2000 census is its 100% coverage for all questions. Therefore, the information of variables covered in this census has a much smaller sampling error than the previous ones. The earlier censuses consisted of two stages of enumerations, namely complete (100%) enumeration and sample enumeration (Surbakti, Praptoprijoko, and Darmesto 2000). The complete enumeration used a short form of questionnaire containing basic information (age, sex, and relationship to the head of household). The sample enumeration covered more detailed information such as age, sex, place of birth, occupation, religion, educational attainment, migration status, fertility and mortality related questions. The size of sample enumeration had improved from census to census; 3.7% sample enumeration in 1971 and 5.8% in both the 1980 and 1990 censuses (Muhidin 2002).

Important Features of This Book

The first important feature is the relatively “fresh” data this book uses. The results of the 2000 population census were released to the public in the middle of 2002 though the publication date is stated as December 2001 (Badan Pusat Statistik 2001*a*–2001*ae*). The census is published in 31 volumes, with one for Indonesia as a whole and one for each of the 30 provinces. Since 1976 Indonesia had 27 provinces but during the *reformasi* era the number of provinces changed. East Timor became independent and four new provinces were created. Therefore, the provinces called West Java, South Sumatra, North Sulawesi and Maluku in the 2000 population census have different geographical coverage from those in the previous censuses. Banten is split from West Java, Bangka-Belitung from South Sumatra, Gorontalo from North Sulawesi, and North Maluku from Maluku. The newly born province of Riau Archipelago, split from Riau province, is also discussed in this book, although the province of Riau Archipelago was still part of the province of Riau at the time of the publication of the results of the 2000 population census.

The second important feature of this book is the user-friendly presentation resulting from the thorough and detailed examination of the published data. The published data as issued in the 31 volumes by the Badan Pusat Statistik (Central Board of Statistics) may not necessarily be easily understood by non-statisticians. This book has combined information from different tables and volumes, calculated some information, and produced simple graphs and tables. The examination of the data and the presentation of the results are carried out in such a way as to make the published data much more meaningful to the understanding of ethnicity and religion, especially as related to the study of politics in Indonesia.

The third important feature is the more comprehensive picture of ethnic groups in Indonesia with the “recovery” of 101 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups from the published data. The census has prepared records of 1,072 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups (Badan Pusat Statistik 2000). However, it is impractical to publish the data on all of the ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. Therefore, the Badan Pusat Statistik only published data on the eight largest groups in Indonesia in the volume at the national level, and the eight largest groups in each province in the 30 volumes at the provincial level.

In this book we use our data analysis to “recover” the composition of the Malay, Batak, and ethnic Chinese at the national level. From the published data (Badan Pusat Statistik 2001*a*), the Madurese is the

third largest ethnic group in Indonesia. However, our data analysis reveals that the Malay is the third largest ethnic group in Indonesia.

The fourth important feature of the book is the finding that the percentage of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is estimated to be around 1.50%, much lower than previously thought. This book has a special chapter to deal with the ethnic Chinese due to several reasons. Firstly, the number and the percentage of the ethnic Chinese have recently been a matter of debate. Some maintain that there are 6 million ethnic Chinese, constituting 3%, if not less, of the Indonesian population. Others have estimated that the ethnic Chinese numbered 10 million and formed 5.0% of the Indonesian population, and argued that the ethnic Chinese have become the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia, only next to the Javanese, Sundanese and Madurese. The former argument was presented by some scholars while the latter was expressed by some government leaders and ethnic Chinese community leaders.

Secondly, the ethnic Chinese are perceived to be economically significant, as they are often seen as the engine behind Indonesian economic growth. However, there is no reliable information on this issue, especially at the level of various provinces. Thirdly, the ethnic Chinese are often seen as a minority which refused to be assimilated, or declined to change their ethnic identity. Through more detailed studies, we may be able to get some answers as to whether the above assumptions hold true.

The fifth important feature of this book lies in its focus on the ethnic and religious composition of some selected provinces. Jakarta is selected because of its importance as the capital of Indonesia. Central Java is home to the Javanese, the largest ethnic group in Indonesia (although they are also found in significant numbers outside Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java); West Java, is home to the Sundanese, the second largest ethnic group. Riau is examined in detail because of the anticipated free trade area, especially the free trade agreement between the USA and Singapore, including Batam and Bintan in Riau. The book also focuses on some turbulent provinces: Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Papua, Maluku, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi. Bali is selected not because of the bombing tragedy on 12 October 2002, but because of its relative tranquility and prosperity. West Kalimantan is given special treatment because of its important border between Indonesia and Malaysia.

The sixth important feature of the book is the collaboration of different but complementary expertise of the team. Leo Suryadinata is a political scientist; Evi Nurvidya Arifin, a social statistician; and Aris

Ananta, a population economist. The three authors worked closely together to write this book and hence are collectively responsible for the final product. Nevertheless, there has been a division of labour in preparing individual chapters.

Caveats

The authors would like to point out some caveats in this study. First, this is a preliminary study and more in-depth studies should follow. Second, the 2000 population census has some “non-response” population and “estimated” population. Hull (2001), for example, mentioned that “rising democracy” during the *reformasi* era has made some people perceive that they have the right to refuse the interview. All surveys conducted during this *reformasi* era may have suffered from the existence of some non-response from the population. Surbakti, Praptoprijoko and Darmesto (2000) describe how turbulence in Indonesia especially in the provinces of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Maluku, Irian Jaya and Central Sulawesi has made some parts of the population inaccessible and therefore those populations must be estimated. Understandably some provinces had an “estimated number” of population.

Third, caution should also be exercised when comparing the 2000 population census with the 1930 population census. The quality of the data for population outside Java in 1930 is questionable. Information was based on feedback from local heads of administration, village heads, and guesswork. There was no real interview in the outer islands in 1930.

However, despite some limitations, the published data from the 2000 population census have provided a significant breakthrough in the understanding of ethnicity in Indonesia. Readers should not be discouraged from using the data, simply because there are some weaknesses in it. The completeness (the 100% census) and the only available quantitative information on ethnicity since 1930 far outweigh some of the weaknesses mentioned above.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into six chapters. All three authors contributed to all chapters of this book. Some chapters, however, had greater input by each of the different authors as indicated in the parentheses that follows. Chapter 1 (prepared by Aris, Evi and Leo) deals with population change

and continuity in Indonesia. It discusses ethnic identity in Indonesia. An ethnic “map” comparing composition of ethnic groups in 1930 and 2000 is constructed. It shows the number and percentage of each of the 101 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups recovered from the published data. The ranking of the ethnic groups is shown to be different from that of the BPS census publication (Badan Pusat Statistik 2001a).

Chapter 2 (prepared by Evi and Aris) presents the profiles of eleven major ethnic groups in Indonesia, covering the Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Madurese, Batak, Minangkabau, Betawi, Buginese, Bantenese, Banjarese and Balinese. It includes information on the size, growth, and composition (by age, sex, and geography) of the population.

Chapter 3 (prepared by Aris and Leo) highlights the profile of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, comparing their number in 1930 and in 2000. The ethnic Chinese appear in the published figures as one of the eight largest ethnic groups in only 11 provinces while no figure is available in the other 19 provinces. Therefore, some estimates are made on the number of this ethnic group. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the percentage of ethnic Chinese has declined for various reasons, though the absolute number is still increasing. This chapter also presents an analysis of the Chinese in the eleven provinces.

Chapter 4 (prepared by Evi, Aris and Leo) deals with the religious composition of the Indonesian population. Five major religions have been identified in the 2000 census and this chapter is concerned with the profiles of these religious groups in terms of their geographical distribution and age. It compares the situations in 1971 and 2000.

Chapter 5 (prepared by Aris and Evi) provides detailed analyses of 11 selected provinces for their ethnic and religious compositions. They are selected for the ethnic and political significance.

The book concludes with Chapter 6 (prepared by Leo), presenting the relevance of the preliminary analysis on ethnicity and religion for political studies in Indonesia.

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