# NATIONALISM IN INDONESIA: BUILDING IMAGINED AND INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRANSMIGRATION

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Transmigration settlements are planned according to Indonesian government priorities, which intend them to help build an imagined community, a unified nation. They are also places where settlers struggle to build their own vision of community as a place where they feel they belong. This article introduces the history of the Indonesian program and the place of Sulawesi transmigration settlements in nation-building. (Indonesia, nationalism, development, transmigration, community)

Since its earliest days, the Indonesian transmigration program has established, literally from the ground up, thousands of settlements. Each of these is a unique confluence of people, places, and social and structural factors. Every settlement is faced with its own particular challenges and opportunities to become a community. At the same time, the settlements also exist within the government's bureaucratic and ideological framework of variously defined objectives that have been the program's agenda. They are planned communities in the sense that physical infrastructure is calculated as a whole and put into place in accordance with the program's objectives. Despite all the planning, the settlements ultimately succeed or fail on the intentions of those involved, which is a struggle between two quite different intents: the planners' and the settlers'.

On the one hand, there are the deliberate objectives of the state to create and maintain an "imagined community," on a national scale, of unified Indonesians drawn together into a single model of citizenship. On the other hand, there are the more immediate, sometimes much less coherent, aspirations of the settlers as individuals, and to varying degrees as groups, to succeed and establish socially, economically, and ecologically viable communities in a particular time and place, according to their own designs. Only so much can be planned. Beyond that is only intent. Realistically, community cannot be planned; it can only be intended. It is evident from the many layers of emotional meaning that are attached to the word or idea of "community" that the concept has meaning that goes beyond mere geographic place or local activity. The concept implies an "expectation of a special quality of human relationship in community, and it is this experiential dimension that is crucial to its definition" (Bender 1982:6). Thus, community may be better defined experientially. A settlement location and its infrastructure are planned, but a community must be experienced.

In the case of these settlements, the state's intent is only partially realized. Where these settlements fall short of national ideological objectives, one might see an assertion of local purpose and the realization of intentional community as a distinct social phenomenon.[1] This article is based on research conducted in transmigration

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settlements of Sulawesi, Indonesia, in 1998, and analyses of government documents on transmigration and popular narratives.[2]

Beginning with the government of the Netherlands East Indies in the early twentieth century, millions of people have been relocated voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily from densely populated islands at the country's political center to sparsely populated outlying islands of the Indonesian Archipelago. These outer islands have historically lacked the direct control and influence of the central governing authority. Although liberalizing colonial and postcolonial governments explicitly declared transmigration to be in the interest of social welfare, its implicit agenda has been to build a coherent, centrally governed state. The existence of a nation-state has required a firm connection between a geographically limited space and a culture and history that are perceived as undivided and rooted. In a country as disparate geographically and ethnically as Indonesia, this process has often required containment of the history and traditions of local populations in favor of a greater heritage. Transmigration has been pursued as a way of promoting a nationalist vision and narrative of territory and culture through deliberate community-building in the name of development and progress. Transmigration settlements are meant to be the material realization of a particular model of village and civic life conceived in the social/spatial engineering of Indonesian bureaucracy. These places, Lefebvre's (1991) "socially produced space," are the sites of local production in the larger project of building imagined community.

Although studies of planned or intentional communities normally do not consider transmigration settlements, they do provide cases of intentional communities, the process of group identity formation, and cultural reproduction and change. These places are without the collective history normally associated with local community in common usage. They may be thought of as embryonic or "synthetic" (see Clauss et al. 1987) communities in which meaning and identity are negotiated and where history and experience are fragmented between the distinct life histories of the migrants, the program's order, and the place itself. They exist as contested space that links Indonesian nationalism, the specific site, and the social and ecological conditions of that site. National culture is not simply reproduced in these settlements, but may be adapted or challenged, interpreted, and shaped in the context of community-building.

Indonesia is currently the world's fourth most populous country. Its population of over 200 million is spread across an arc of 3,000 miles encompassing some 17,000 islands that range from large to exceedingly small and have at least 300 different ethnic groups and numerous local polities. More than 60 per cent of Indonesians are located on the island of Java, which constitutes a mere 7 per cent of the total land area of the archipelago. While population growth has been slowing with aggressive state family-planning programs, the rate is still upwards of 2 per cent a year. In the early 1980s, 80 per cent of the people of Java were living in rural areas, where more than a third of all land was owned by 1 per cent (Bandiyono 1982).

Given what has been considered a longstanding imbalance in population distribution between the inner islands of Java, Bali, and Madura and the rest of the archipelago, as well as problems of land ownership, the governments of Presidents Sukarno and Suharto continued the Dutch colonial policy of population resettlement. The policy was intended to spread population, consisting mostly of ethnic Javanese, more evenly over the region and to integrate the country's entire population through promulgating a homogenizing national culture. This process of integration was part of the Suharto government's "New Order" agenda for rural development (see Anderson 1983).

Emerging from post-World War II decolonization, the Indonesian nation-state was a distinctly modernist institutional and ideological formation. Among its first acts, the nascent state wrote a history of itself that stretched into a distant past. By incorporating local ethnic traditions as elements of national heritage, the history defined the nation and gave it authenticity (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Handler 1988). It rationalized and legitimated the present in terms of the past, which might be construed as tradition,[3] and the past in terms of the present (cf. Williams 1977).

President Suharto provides an example of a narrative strategy that powerfully employs an image of the past to give shape to the present. In his biography, he says that it was critical to establish a domestic satellite-communications system in order to "facilitate communications in this vast *Nusantara* [the archipelagic vision of Indonesia] which is rapidly on the move in the age of development" (Ramadhan and Dwipayana 1989:323; my translation). Suharto explains how he "remembered the history of Prime Minister Gadjah Mada [of an empire that incorporated much of Indonesia's present territory] who vowed that he would not eat the *palapa* [fruits of labor] until the unity and integrity of the Majapahit Kingdom had become a reality. Today this unity and integrity of Nusantara are manifest. Nevertheless, we need to strengthen them" (Ramadhan and Dwipayana 1989:323; my translation). This was achieved with the launching of the Palapa satellite, so named to "symbolize our success in bringing to reality Gajah Mada's vow to unite Nusantara, our island nation" (Ramadhan and Dwipayana 1989:323; my translation). The state's declaration of an Indonesian father/motherland (*Tanah Air*), together with the doctrine of an "archipelagic outlook" (*Wawasan Nusantara*), have provided the equivalent of a Manifest Destiny for Indonesian territory in accordance with an imagined community of Indonesians inhabiting thousands of islands.

Incorporating local or ethnic traditions as a component in narrative visions of national heritage and progress is how development projects were legitimated; i.e., promoting "tradition" on the one hand while simultaneously eliminating meaningful cultural distinctions on the other. These distinctions are consumed in the capitalist and nationalist transformation of Indonesian societies under the banner of development, often with the unwitting aid of international agencies (cf. Pigg 1992). A statement within a government social-impact analysis of transmigration in South Sulawesi suggests that integration between Indonesian populations should entail a "process of social and cultural unification which would bring certain groups together

into one territorial unit and which would promote the national identity . . . [and] a social entwining in their everyday lives until there is no difference between them, in keeping with the [state] motto of Unity in Diversity [*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*]" (Mangunrai 1977).

In a declaration before the meeting of transmigration officials and the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), Martono, then Minister of Transmigration, linked the goals of transmigration with the mythic power of the struggles of early nationalist leaders who fought against Dutch colonial rule:

On 28 October 1928, a Youth Congress was held which concluded that "We are one nation, the Indonesian nation; we have one native country, Indonesia; one language, the Indonesian language." By way of Transmigration, we will try to realize what has been pledged: To integrate all the ethnic groups into one nation, the Indonesian nation. The different ethnic groups will in the long run disappear because of integration and there will be one kind of man, Indonesian. (Anonymous 1985:11, 41)

Similarly, Boenyamin, a Director of Transmigration for Sumatra, was also quoted as saying that transmigrants "should not think of themselves as Javanese, Sumatran, or whatever, but instead should think of themselves as Indonesians" (quoted in Shennon 1992).

Development in Indonesia has been widely interpreted as both meaning and necessitating change. What is perceived as "old and unchanged, is reflexively categorized as undeveloped. This especially applies to culture. Traditional cultures and lifeways are regarded as clear signs of underdevelopment and as formidable obstacles to necessary socioeconomic advancement" (Dove 1988:1). Similarly, Hefner (1990:221) describes how a new Indonesian religiosity took shape during the later years of the New Order that emphasized "belief in a supreme being, the need to replace 'wasteful' ritual festivals with simple acts of devotion, and stricter bureaucratic controls over rural religion." Together, these beliefs have been referred to as *agama pembangunan* (development religion). In accordance with the scriptures of agama pembangunan, a fundamental part of development planning in Indonesia has been the devaluing and attempted revision or even elimination of traditional culture. Local practices that express meaningful difference have played little or no role in development planning. Tradition legitimated as the distinctly modern form of *tradisi,* however, was of central importance in the agenda of the New Order.

Although the direct translation into English of *pembangunan* is "development," the meaning conveyed is not entirely the same. When used in statements of New Order agencies, this term takes on greater meaning. Steedly (1993:75) suggests that pembangunan is the New Order's "special mantra and its symbolic alternative to uncontrolled and therefore destructive forces of *politik.*" Here *politik* stands for political activity in the sense of public and emotional displays of difference. Pembangunan links the stability of a strictly controlled political arena with the national goal of economic progress. In the rhetoric of the New Order, "social stability is a prerequisite for orderly infrastructural transformation; the directed economic changes of pembangunan in turn promise to make national stability a future

reality. Change guarantees continuity, in other words: progress makes nothing happen" (Steedly 1993:75). After taking power, Suharto quickly adopted the development strategy that, beyond its potential to increase foreign aid to Indonesia, helped restore a sense of normalcy to life through stabilizing the economy. Adopting this strategy was perhaps even more essential for "reconstituting the discipline, cohesion, efficacy, and power of officialdom" (Anderson 1990:111-12). Hill (1994) describes how institutions, symbols, order in general, and ritualistic behavior among civil servants in particular were important parts of the New Order's efforts at nation-building in and through bureaucracy.

A report on the national elections produced by the Election Committee for the government district that included my study area provides a glimpse into the New Order mind as applied in that time and place. This region had previously distinguished itself as having defied central government authority under Sukarno in the late 1950s with a movement known as *Perjuangan Semésta* (Total Struggle), typically known as *Permésta*. With the influx of several ethnic groups through government-sponsored and spontaneous migration, the area was seen as being at risk for the factionalism that unchecked politik might generate. This anxiety is evidenced in the committee's statement on the elections made barely four years after the opening of two of the three key settlements in my study:

The political condition through the administrative completion of the 1977 elections may be considered stable. The proof for Kabupaten Bolaang Mongondow is that the elections, not only technically but also politically, went smoothly, safely, orderly, and successfully. The way was paved by "pre-conditioning" and "conditioning" [English text original] in several aspects of the social life of the people conducted before and after the elections by the local government.[4]

A decisive supporting factor that contributed to the success of the 1977 national elections in this area was a change in the attitude and thought processes of the inhabitants from thinking politically [*berpikir politik*] toward a more development-oriented [*berorientasi pembangunan*] way of thinking. In other words, the way of thinking of the people of this area may be characterized now more as "development heading" [text original] as opposed to "political heading" such that the appearance of *side-effect politik* will not become a reality. At least the conditions that could contribute to such an unfortunate situation have been eliminated. (Panitia Pemilihan Daerah Tingkat II Bolaang Mongondow, 1977:3; my translation)

Pemberton's (1994) analysis of Java from the colonial period through the New Order provides additional insight into the logic of the Suharto government, particularly its treatment of traditional culture within the context of development in Indonesia. Tradition in the New Order appeared largely "as practices recollected and executed . . . as instantiations of 'traditional ritual' [*upacara tradisional*] performance." Local customs became "inscribed within the centralized New Order cultural system through the operation of a wide variety of projects aimed at *pembangunan* where this inscription is never wholly complete yet always pursued" (Pemberton 1994:11, 240). This sense of incompleteness and the potential for rupture in the effort to provide a continuous, underlying, and stabilized culture motivated the New Order preoccupation with micromanaging cultural expression (and the assumed roots

of politik) through establishing the authenticity of "traditional ritual," categorized as upacara tradisional.

Pemberton's history of the colonial encounter in Java describes how traditional ritual came to be separated and displaced from the cultural background (cf. Adams 1993). The emergence of the category of upacara signaled a shift in knowledge and power from "local sites and practices disclosing empowered specifics to the authority of a singular logic that claims diversity while arranging its subjects as variously constituted instances of uniform types" (Pemberton 1994:193). This might be viewed as a form of cultural domestication that "continuously admits potentially unruly practices only to enframe them as examples of 'traditional rituals'" (Pemberton 1994:193). This form of tradition amounts to representation made fully official: a practice that raises questions of authenticity, cultural property, and voice (cf. Coombe 1993; Handler 1991). Cultural representation at work in the New Order and expressed in these idealized forms are neatly displayed for public gaze in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah ("Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature"), near the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. This project, carried out in the early years of the regime, was an attempt by Suharto to construct a theme park that would house a select sampling of Indonesia's cultural diversity, according to state views, in monument form.

Taman Mini is a macrolevel act of cultural editing. For Errington (1998:201), the place is a "political text of nationalist self-representation" which, in Geertz's terms for culture, is more a "model for" than a "model of" Indonesia. According to Suharto, Taman Mini played a central role in the "grand framework contributing to the development and growth of a people who are building a *Pancasila* [the state ideology] society" (Ramadhan and Dwipayana 1989:316; my translation). What is most interesting about this Disney-like park is its flattening of both time and space. In the logic of the New Order, Taman Mini actually exceeds the real thing because it is less confusing, more ordered, and can be understood and experienced as a whole. Here even pembanguan, in the form of a series of graphic flow charts that geographically represent the course of New Order projects, including transmigration, is encapsulated as a complete, manageable experience.

Kipp's (1993) study of the politics of identity among the Karo of Sumatra reveals the means through which modern nation states "dependent upon capitalism protect their economic system through programs of cultural management" (Kipp 1993:67). This study is particularly informative in its detailed analysis of the New Order's ideology and specifically the policy regarding ethnic tradition. Kipp sees the New Order preoccupation with tradisi as a way of distracting attention from the possible formation of class-consciousness, which could awaken tendencies toward politik, threaten to disrupt national stability, and derail the progress of pembangunan. Following the demise of the Suharto government and the onset of prolonged and profound economic and social instability, this is precisely what happened. Kipp's position is that if ethnicity, as limited and expressed in local manifestations of state-sponsored upacara tradisional, sometimes disguises class interests, then, expectably, postcolonial states such as Indonesia would have nourished a prescribed ethnicity "as

self-preservation in much the way colonial states were said to protect themselves through divide-and-rule tactics" (Kipp 1993:71). State-endorsed ethnicity, in this sense, appears as performance and exhibition in carefully defined spaces and times deemed appropriate for their expression. As suggested by the statement of the election committee above, the same has been true for electoral politics in Indonesia. Elections in Indonesia only "channel the participation of the masses into safe expression and legitimate the regime as 'democracy'" (Kipp 1993:80; cf. Weatherbee 1985).

A book published in the early 1990s by the Department of Transmigration and coauthored by one of Suharto's biographers provides a valuable opportunity for understanding the role of transmigration in nation- and community-building. Entitled *Transmigration: Hopes and Challenges*, it is written from the perspective of the transmigration program as if the narrator of its own compelling story. It is a story of the history and future of transmigration and its place in the formation of Indonesian society. The text begins simply:

Imagine, what if the book that you are reading was a novel. Imagine too that I, together with all your relatives [i.e., your people, as in "brethren"], could be treated like characters in a novel that has as its background, this [our] Indonesia. So, imagine also, how best must I take up the process of introducing myself, together with all my various issues, to you oh reader? Perhaps it is best I just begin, without delay. . . . Transmigration, that is my name. (Ramadhan et al. 1993:3, my translation)

This passage invites seeing the process of establishing transmigration settlements as a kind of textual unfolding as well as having the same intentionality for creating purposive structure and identity that is found in the act of narration. For the person, narrative and self are inseparable as narrative arises simultaneously out of experience while also giving shape to that experience (cf. Ochs and Capps 1996; see also Jackson 1996; Sennett 1998; Steedly 1993). These narratives are as much about other stories as they are real or imagined events. So it is with human community. The philosopher-poet Wendell Berry (1990) speaks of how communities must collect fragments of stories and turn them into a lasting account particular to that place, thus creating memory of itself in a process akin to building soil.

In 1961, two years before the first resettlement, official government population estimates of the heavily forested Dumoga Valley were around 4,000 people, consisting largely of a single ethnic group, the Mongondow. A large portion of them engaged in shifting agriculture (Rodenberg et al. 1982; Tim Pelaksana Fakultas Pertanian 1982). Since turn-of-the-century colonial times, authorities had planned to develop the area through resettlement projects coupled with a massive irrigation scheme to serve as "development nuclei" (Rodenberg et al. 1982). No doubt much of this focus was to rein in shifting agriculturalists and engage them and others in "productive" activities. Much of the area would have been classified as state land, first by the Dutch and later by the Sukarno and Suharto governments. This designation follows from regulations set out in the Forest Laws of 1865 and the *Domeinverklaring* of 1870, which declared that all land for which ownership could

not be adequately proven would become the exclusive domain of the state (Departem-en Kehutanan 1986:30). After nearly 40 years of transmigration, a land area of approximately 1,280 square kilometers within the regency of Bolaang Mongondow, in the province of North Sulawesi, now contains over 69,000 people. Roughly, these are 34 per cent Mongondow (native to the area), 35 per cent Minahasan (mostly spontaneous migrants from the neighboring area), as well as transmigrated Balinese at 17 per cent and Javanese at 12 per cent (Simbaia 1996).

Among the four transmigration sites of my study, only the village of Werdhi Agung has a palpable sense of community. Older residents nod when I comment on it and recall with pride how they had to clear the jungle from the land they now inhabit. Unlike most transmigration settlements, where their final location is determined by government priorities, this one was ultimately chosen from a range of possible sites and made habitable by the settlers themselves. The approximately 300 households relocated here arrived following a devastating volcanic eruption on Bali in 1963 that took their homes and livelihoods. The government of Bolaang Mongondow wanted to encourage settlement in this area following the period of social unrest fomented by the Permésta separatist movement that took hold there in the late 1950s. Thus, Werdhi Agung began with haste and little advance planning.

Because these transmigrants were a completely random slice from the general population of the affected area of Bali thrown together in the immediacy of a natural disaster, they represented a range of professions, including teachers, engineers, and various civil servants. Most transmigration settlements have typically consisted of poor, landless laborers with little or no education who joined the program in order to relocate and try their luck on land that was, at least on paper, their own. It was for this reason that for most of its life, the transmigration program was essentially a homestead effort aimed at subsistence agriculture. Until nearly the end of World Bank support in the 1980s, transmigration followed a food-crop farm model that only later shifted to cash-crop cultivation (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1988). Unlike most other settlements, residents of Werdhi Agung recall how, with capable members of their own community able to solve many social and technical problems, they were largely left to their own designs. Early village leaders took advantage of shared suffering and a nascent sense of oneness in the relocated families, who initially resided in a large makeshift camp, to forge a sense of community. Because of the unusual nature of their relocation, they arrived together on a single ship. The story of their arrival has become a lasting symbol of shared history and village unity to which they continue to refer. Members of the so-called pioneer generation, as well as younger residents, relate stories of a shared "birth" as they disembarked from the "belly" of this ship into a new land. This essential narrative was frequently invoked by simply saying the words *Kelahiran Morotai* (Born of Morotai), referring to the name of the warship put into service to carry the transmigrants from Bali to Sulawesi.

After their relocation, residents of Werdhi Agung did not receive individual land or homes for over half a year, unlike residents in most other transmigration

settlements. For several months, they lived together in barracks fashioned from local timbers. A transmigration official repositioned from Sumatra to observe the early resettlement recalls how terrified many migrants were that there might have been remaining Permésta fighters in the area. With obvious humor, he described how the occasional loud pop of bamboo snapping in the fire would send people, including himself, diving into the bushes for fear they might have been shot at. Choosing not to be distracted by this, village leaders realized that they had an opportunity to take control of the emerging process of community-building. They felt that it was necessary to take action before people would be lost to what leaders believed would be an inevitable individuation after settlers began receiving their homes and working their land and thus focusing on their own interests.

Among the first decisions was to wait until all homes had been built and land cleared before parcels were allocated to specific households. More significantly, relocated families came from several different areas of Bali, both within and beyond the area affected by the eruption. Although all Balinese, they represented important regional cultural differences within Bali. Rather than allowing people to align along these differences, village leaders pared down and standardized ritual practices and observances and fashioned a unique system peculiar to that village as a kind of cultural common ground. They refer to this system as *adat Werdhi Agung*.[5] According to one of the central leaders of the early village who played an essential role in establishing its social organization, "Although in Bali we came from many areas with different traditions, all it took was for us [as leaders] to decide we needed to formulate a kind of unity or common set of practices that we would apply here in Werdhi Agung. In this way, we deliberated so that we would not have a splitting up by practices that are in Bali but rather a tradition [particular] to Werdhi Agung." Werdhi Agung's present spiritual leader summed up the meaningful differences for community building that he felt existed between this village and Bali:

Here there is consciousness (*kesadaran*) about what we do. People feel at one together whereas in Bali everyone is different and on their own. The people here know more of religion (*agama*); they are better educated in this regard. It is true that in cultural matters (*kebudayaan*) we are lacking [when compared to Bali]; we could not preserve the arts. But in Bali you have everyday customs (*adat istiadat*) competing with religion. This is less a problem here. We have focused on the guidance (*pedoman*) of religion, not *adat*. Here we keep things close to the scriptures (*sastra*) so that we can all agree. It is religion that has become the base for carrying out *adat*. In Bali all faith is placed in the *Pendeta* (Hindu priest) to know how to do things, but here we discuss everything . . . nobody is left in the dark about the details.

Residents of Werdhi Agung felt they possessed a distinct history sharply contrasting with the other settlements established later. Residents in the more recent settlements acted according to their own customs, without the sense of oneness that was actively cultivated in Werdhi Agung. Of them Werdhi people said, "They act each in accordance to their own way of doing things." While other areas were categorized as having been planned (*berencana*), they described their own situation as a case of "transmigration that developed naturally" (*secara alam*). A transmigration official in

the district office agreed and also used the same expression for Werdhi Agung. He explained that Werdhi Agung's initial resettlement had preceded the New Order's top-down management programs defined in terms of five-year packages beginning in 1969 with Pelita I. The Pelita focused on planning for the "modern village." Mopuya and Mopugad were both established during that first phase in the New Order's campaign of pembangunan. As modern villages they were considered "complete, efficient, and consistent with the national scope [that would thus] develop more quickly."

Beyond a rational and formalized experiment in what amounts to deliberate cultural editing on a local level by early village leaders in their formation of a distinct village *adat,* many individuals there also spoke of how they used the relocation as an opportunity to leave behind what they came to consider bad habits on a personal level. Several informants spoke of how the relocation gave them a chance to reconsider (*lihat kembali*) taken-for-granted ways of doing things on both a personal and communal scale. Some more reflective individuals spoke of how culture in Werdhi continued to develop while in Bali much customary practice seemed to have "crystallized," making it harder to eliminate what might in current times be deemed potentially negative aspects because they had become more or less intractable convention. Asked about the prospects for continuing Balinese culture in Northern Sulawesi, one informant summarized the feelings of many residents and illustrated the undeniable influence of the New Order that focuses attention on performance aspects, as on the arts. He said, "It must be taught because this is in keeping with the desire of the [national] government that refined [or artistic] elements of regional culture (*seni-budaya daerah*) must be developed . . . especially through [celebration of] the holidays." It was also common to hear residents state that Balinese culture should only be taught to young people so far as it was beneficial (*bermanfaat*) and might help them succeed in a modern world.

Members of the minority Balinese Christian community in Werdhi were particularly conscious of the possibility and need for cultural editing. They felt they must be aware of the religious aspects of Balinese culture in order to effectively eliminate these aspects from their cultural repertoire. They noted that, for Hindu Balinese, cultural activity was already religious. They also felt that while in Bali culture "fully colored all aspects of daily life," in the transmigration settlement recognizable features of distinct Balinese culture were only performed periodically or seasonally (*musiman*), according to ritual calendars and obligation. As Christians, they did not develop what they referred to as ritual practice but rather only those practices that they felt had a purely public or secular nature (*bersifat umum*). According to one of the key figures in this small religious community in Werdhi Agung, "We continue to preserve the distinctive features of Balinese that include [those aspects of] culture outside the teachings of religion . . . but much of the cultural practices of Bali that we have brought here [as already pared down] are the same." It was common for Balinese Christians in the village to suggest that culture in Bali was something more or less routine (*rutin*) while, because they were not

immersed in Balinese society, people in Werdhi Agung needed to be much more conscious of what daily or ritual practices they chose to either preserve or let go.

In contrast to Werdhi Agung, whose residents were relocated as "natural disaster transmigration" (*Transmigrasi Bencana Alam*), other settlements in the area were part of basic transmigration (*Transmigrasi Umum*). When settled in the early 1970s, between eight and ten years after Werdhi Agung, the other settlements of Mopuya and Mopugad had a nearly complete infrastructure before prospective villagers even arrived as voluntary migrants looking to better their standard of living. Transmigration program workers cleared most fields for planting and built roads, schools, and markets in advance. Homes and places of worship stood essentially ready, at least in semipermanent form (Kantor Wilayah Direktorat Jendral Transmigrasi 1978). In what amounted to an act of state-mandated, interfaith co-operation, in the village of Mopuya a church, mosque, and Hindu temple were built on a single plot of land, so closely positioned that they very nearly shared walls.

In addition to the public temples shared by the community as a whole, the Hindu Balinese also have their own extended-family and household temples. In the settlements outside Werdhi Agung, the transmigration program provided all but family and household temples. Unlike Werdhi, nearly all families in these villages were immediately able to occupy their own homes and begin working the land. Because these transmigrants were mostly landless peasants, there were few capable of taking on leadership roles or questioning the status quo of the transmigration program's established order and procedures. Although Werdhi has strived to build impressive public temples shared by the entire Hindu community of the village, Mopuya and Mopugad's public temples have remained simple, functional spaces hardly changed over the years. Acceptance of the status quo on the communal level, however, is in sharp contrast to their desire to construct relatively elaborate extended-family temples as expressions of the prosperity of individual families.

While Werdhi has a strong sense of place and community, and residents speak of the village as a whole with an enduring sense of proprietorship, the other villages seem fragmented and lacking social cohesion. When population growth mandated dividing each village into separate administrative units in accordance with government plans, there was little argument or public debate. Although by 1998, Werdhi had for several years reached the required population level, being well in excess of 3,000 residents, its residents were still agonizing over the prospect of being split in two.

In an otherwise mostly harmonious state of village affairs, the issue of dividing Werdhi Agung was becoming a source of contention. Word choice alone was revealing. Generally speaking, those who were in favor of the proposal for establishing more than one village chose to use the less problematic word *pemekaran,* a term which connotes something developing in an organic manner, blossoming. But those who were opposed to the idea chose a term with more clearly negative connotations, *perpecahan.* This term is used to indicate a clear split or break-up of something complete and whole. The majority Hindu Balinese of Werdhi considered

the administrative or secular unit of the village (*desa dinas*) to be equivalent with the ritual or sacred village (*desa adat*).

In the other villages, fragmented to a greater degree from the very beginning with mostly Hindu Balinese and Muslim Javanese, the simultaneous and spatially coextensive identification was far less significant. In Mopuya and Mopugat, residents felt that the split had actually encouraged healthy competition between the new village units and that this would promote greater prosperity and achieve government objectives for village productivity tabulated annually at the local level. The Christian community in Werdhi Agung generally accepted the notion of healthy competition and thus favored the term pemekaran. From time to time in Bali, a number of *banjar* groups (a traditional neighborhood organization), once part of a single desa adat, may be separated by government action to become distinct villages. These banjar can then run their own religious activities, which may include the need to raise funds and complete their own desa adat (cf. Bali Sustainable Development Project 1991). The spatial boundaries of the traditional village, however, do not correspond with the arbitrarily established official village, which exists in an uncomfortable liminal state.

In villages like Mopuya and Mopugad, where government control was always greater than in Werdhi, there now is greater individual wealth when compared with Werdhi, but public spaces and civic engagement in village affairs are comparatively lacking. Hindu residents of Werdhi have striven to establish a strong traditional community firmly rooted in place. They fear the potentially dislocating and destructive consequences of separating. It is revealing that many older residents are ambivalent about accepting *swakarsa* (spontaneous) transmigrants, who move to their village on their own initiative from other areas, because many of them are wealthier than many longtime residents and therefore do not need to rely on the goodwill of the community to become established. Having not been socialized into their community's distinct history and practices, older residents feel that these newcomers are necessarily less concerned with the ways established by the pioneer generation that continue to nourish a sense of community in the village. The swakarsa bring their own ways of doing things that threaten to erode that collective sense of purpose and past. One of the original village leaders in early May of 1998, just days before President Suharto stepped down, revealed a profound unease with this ominous erosion, if not from spontaneous transmigrants then from the inexorable force of generational change. He spoke emphatically:

Some people do not impress on their children the importance of the story of Werdhi Agung. So that we remain one, the youth need to feel the struggle of their forebears . . . they too must know *Kelahiran Morotai* [the story of their arriving on a single ship from Bali]. Misunderstandings are normal but let this not become serious. The young people need to have their way but don't go so far as to have your own little groups. No! Don't let it happen that we each have our own little group (*kelompok*). This will ruin our sense of self as a community, our self-image (*citra kita*). Surely outsiders then will be brave enough to challenge us. We must remain one. We must be deliberate about this and not allow any fissures (*retak*) to develop. That will be our destruction.

Through the program's basic procedures and core messages, transmigration officials have encouraged Balinese in the villages settled after Werdhi to focus more on individual interests by way of intensive agriculture made easier both by the availability of an irrigation system and a paved road linked to the capital of the region and areas beyond. Neither of these existed when Werdhi Agung was established. Both were dedicated by President Suharto, acting as *Bapak Pembangunan* (literally, Father of Development) in two different trips to the region: first in 1976 and again in 1978. Although the elaborate extended-family temples are a private expression of wealth, status, and devotion, the New Order government actively discouraged so-called "wasteful" public traditional practices. But these have been essential in building community solidarity based on shared, locally rooted tradition in Werdhi Agung. Instead, the local government has favored more limited and officially sanctioned expressions of culture in the form of upacara tradisional, which includes Independence Day celebrations and periodic parades and ritual meals (*slametan*) for visiting dignitaries.

Transmigration officials encouraged a personal commitment by residents of Mopuya and Mopugad to the ideals of pembangunan through increased capital investment in agriculture, including the purchase of tractors, not only to replace the use of animals for plowing fields but also as outward expressions of progress, competitive position, and social status. Werdhi Agugng was clearly not immune to these forces. Residents there felt that pivotal aspects of life in Bali, such as the role of agricultural and ritual units (*subak*) which define functional groups of wet-rice farmers sharing a certain area or level within a complex irrigation system, were becoming less tied to traditional practice in their village. There was the sense that farmers were relaxing their reliance on ritual and convention to regulate their water, shifting away from a self-regulating system, and depending more on outside intervention by government authorities. Older farmers who remember the system in Bali felt that people there adhered to the idea of karma; i.e., that there were physical and spiritual repercussions to their actions. In the resettlement area, however, this was generally not the case. Many people referred to how things were too "liberal" (*bebas*) or lacking in discipline when compared with Bali, and that the "loyalty" (*ketaatan*) people expressed in the transmigration area was somehow increasingly misplaced. Traditional forms of determining right action and resolving disputes were giving way slowly to a reliance on codified laws delivered by irrigation officials. These laws encouraged people to think of themselves as independent agents in a greater system linked to national agendas and thus more distant from a collective of shared local interest and activity.

Many residents of the Dumoga Valley, especially those more tuned in to nationally televised messages available increasingly on shared satellite dishes, referred to the area as *Dumoga Indonesia Mini*. This term connects the government-engineered landscape of Taman Mini in Jakarta with Dumoga in the minds of residents. Transmigrants also spoke of the culture of the local ethnic group, *Mongondow*, as "lacking" (*kurang*), "low" (*rendah*), or "underdeveloped" (*kurang*

*berkembang*). When pressed for clarification of these characterizations, people reveal their criteria for assigning this unfavorable status to local culture by noting that neither had the government popularized any of the ritual practices of locals, in the form of upacara tradisional, nor could they be found on any television program.

The villages outside Werdhi project an ambiance suggestive of communities lacking any civic sense and inhabited by busy individuals, each fully engaged in his own affairs. While all these transmigration villages exhibit some kind of social engineering, Werdhi Agung showed a much greater degree of grass-roots, self-determined intentionality in cultural editing expressed and experienced as an abiding sense of community- and village-based tradition. In those villages established later, with early and persistent government intervention in village affairs, top-down engineering has resulted in a diminished sense of community and heightened individual interests more closely integrated with capitalist ideals of progress embedded in national development agendas.

Kipp's (1993) work in Sumatra revealed how the modern Indonesian state's bureaucratization of culture and religion encouraged a dissociation in people's identities. People who have been reified as individuals by the state and insulated through competing in capitalist relations and, in the case of transmigrants, by being physically relocated out of existing social relations and experience, are in some sense reunified through the process of constructing a greater imagined community.[6] Forging a national identity and fostering a climate for centralized development projects, Kipp (1993:73) notes, "often [rely] on claims of historical and cultural commonalties [as expressed in upacara tradisional] that unite the disparate subjects of the state [while providing] a place for ethnic differences as the fonts of a distinctive cultural heritage."

This is consistent with what I found in the transmigration settlements of Dumoga Valley. The cultural editing taking place at the local and national levels showed distinct but closely related means and ends. Werdhi Agung is a case of the desire to create unity out of diversity at the local level. Because of its unique history, the village is an example of community intentionally constructed largely from the inside. Its history has allowed members to preserve their own strong sense of tradition as a community in the face of national development agendas that have elsewhere left a shallow, impoverished sense of shared local history. At the same time, Werdhi Agung's fear of being split closely paralleled the New Order's existential anxiety that losing a sense of imagined community could lead to fragmentation realized in politik and thus to social and territorial disintegration.

The transmigration program is the story of an attempt to create an imagined community of an integrated Indonesian nation as part of the national metanarrative. It is also the story as a spatial and social practice that affects not only the physical landscape but also the connections among people and between people and the land, and their memories and identities. Thus the aforementioned suggestion of the book, *Transmigration: Hopes and Challenges,* that the transmigration program be visualized as author/narrator of its own ongoing story, is not as odd at it perhaps first appears.

The same is true for "heritage" as both the story of a nation's past, either real or imagined in a collective sense, and shaping the story that determines what constitutes a legitimate heritage.

## AFTERWORD

With the ouster of President Suharto in 1998, the New Order essentially collapsed and was replaced by a more decentralized, coalition-type government. This government has been forced by regional instability to attempt imparting greater autonomy to provinces within Indonesia. This in turn has had serious consequences for the transmigration program. Although for a time it appeared to be slated for termination, the program continues to relocate people in fits and starts. It has long been haunted by corruption, human-rights abuses, and ecological disaster, but it was the rise of greater regional autonomy and local resistance that dealt its most challenging blow. In the wake of these changes, local administrators have turned their backs on transmigrants in their districts as the flow of money from Jakarta to support them has gradually dried up in the severe political climate of a protracted economic crisis. Staggering ahead, the once ambitious program, dreamed up by colonial administrators and embraced as a pillar of the New Order's nationalist vision may be nearing its end. Already thousands of families have been forced to flee areas where transmigration settlements once served the central government's policy of forced integration. Clashes between transmigrants and local peoples began in contested areas of southern Kalimantan on the island of Borneo and in the Moluccas in 1998. Although an expression of a distinct history and conditions in that place, the Dumoga Valley was not invulnerable to the unrest as it emerged locally during that turbulent year.

As noted earlier, the concern over splitting Werdhi Agung among those characterizing it as a sharp break revealed a deep and historically grounded fear, especially for those who had lived through the early days of the village. Their resettlement was in the wake of the local separatist movement, Permésta, whom they continued to fear, feeling vulnerable as outsiders relocated by central government action. Their fear seemed justified.

In 1980, the discovery of gold in the Dumoga Valley did not go unnoticed by the local people. Although illegal gold mining took place sporadically thereafter, it was not until the second half of 1998 that the mining actually threatened regional stability. Official estimates at the time exceeded 6,000 miners staking claims. Local police in Dumoga volunteered a figure as much as 40 per cent higher. The head of the local office of the Indonesian police spoke about how gold mining had contributed to a dangerous rise in "group mentality" in the Dumoga Valley. Now individuals banded together within different villages to pool resources and open illegal mines. There were numerous stabbings in conflicts between groups of young people who defended their claims against threats of competing groups. Over time, these groups became associated with largely ethnically homogeneous villages from which the miners

originated or claimed kinship connections. As local evidence of central government authority diminished over the later half of 1998, these groups became increasingly emboldened to engage in *politik*. Many identified with defiant displays in massive demonstrations against the government by students in Jakarta and other large cities, which were shown on satellite television stations such as CNN-Asia. Eventually the example provided by these students was applied locally and adapted to their particular demands. Longstanding local disputes over access to land and compensation for land lost to transmigration settlements finally erupted. It was not long before *Reformasi!* (Reformation!), the battle cry of student demonstrators in Jakarta, became part of the local vernacular as caravans of trucks, filled mostly with local Mongondow as well as nearby Minahasan, streamed toward the local government offices to participate in what became known as *unjuk rasa* (a "display of feelings"). It was precisely these emotional demonstrations of difference that were feared and had been carefully controlled and suppressed in the days of the New Order.

## NOTES

1.   For overviews of intentional and planned communities see Berry (1992) and Pitzer (1997).
2.   This research was supported by a grant from the United States Department of Education through the Fulbright-Hays program (PR/Award #PO 22A 70055), the co-operation of Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI), the local sponsorship and assistance of the administration of Universitas Sam Ratulanggi in Manado, Indonesia, and the kind residents of the study area. Jonathon Andelson gave helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.
3.   The Indonesian word *tradisi,* derived from the English "tradition," conveys a distinctly modern conceptualization of the traditional. It is tradition packaged for today.
4.   This period was a year prior to the establishment of the Guidelines for Living and Experiencing *Pancasila* (the state ideology), also known as "P4" education, in 1978. These guidelines would serve in the "conditioning" referred to in the text. This manual for carrying out the state agenda of realizing a Pancasila society became a way of evaluating compliance with the New Order model of Indonesian citizenship.
5.   What is customary or traditional is referred to as *adat.* The term may also be used to limit consideration to what is more secular or social as opposed to things agama. It is not always easy to pull the two apart in common understanding. For example, Christian Balinese in Werdhi Agung felt that Balinese adat was necessarily entwined with agama.
5.   For a discussion of simultaneous isolation and integration in Madagascar see Feely-Harnik (1991), and for consideration of this process in the capitalist transformation of local production see Sider (1986).

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