

To Remember and Forget: Reconstructing the Imaginary Reality of the Nationalism of Former East Timorese Refugees in Sukabite, East Nusa Tenggara

Moh Soehadha^{1*}

¹Department of Sociology of Religion, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta – Indonesia

Abstract

The release of the Province of East Timor from Indonesia in 1999 resulted in the displacement of East Timorese from the East Timor region to several provinces in Indonesia. Some refugees remained in Indonesia and chose to become Indonesian citizens. As new citizens, the former East Timor refugees experienced a struggle to foster a sense of nationalism toward Indonesia. This article originates from the results of qualitative reflective research using literature data and archival notes from former East Timor refugees, which were analyzed using ethnographic content analysis and rhetorical analysis methods. The study concludes that memories of past life in East Timor and the present reality of life in ex-refugee settlements in Indonesia generate diverse imaginations about Indonesia. To build a sense of nationality, the former East Timorese refugees must reconstruct their imaginations about Indonesia based on the past and present realities they have experienced, which are not all imaginary.

Lepasnya Provinsi Timor Timur dari Indonesia pada tahun 1999 mengakibatkan perpindahan penduduk Timor Timur dari wilayah Timor Timur ke beberapa provinsi di Indonesia. Sebagian pengungsi tetap tinggal di Indonesia dan memilih untuk menjadi warga negara Indonesia. Sebagai warga negara baru, para mantan pengungsi Timor Timur mengalami perjuangan untuk menumbuhkan rasa nasionalisme terhadap Indonesia. Artikel ini berasal dari hasil penelitian reflektif kualitatif, dengan menggunakan data literatur dan catatan arsip dari para mantan pengungsi Timor Timur yang dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode analisis isi etnografi dan analisis retorika. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa ingatan akan kehidupan masa lalu di Timor Timur dan realitas kehidupan saat ini di pemukiman eks-pengungsi di Indonesia menghasilkan imajinasi yang beragam tentang Indonesia. Untuk membangun rasa kebangsaan, para mantan pengungsi Timor Timur harus merekonstruksi imajinasi mereka tentang Indonesia berdasarkan realitas masa lalu dan masa kini yang mereka alami, yang tidak semuanya imajiner.

Keywords: imaginary reality; nationalism; refugees; Timor Timur; Timor-Leste

*Corresponding Author: Moh Soehadha (moh.soehadha@uin-suka.ac.id), Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Jl. Laksda Adisucipto, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia.

Introduction

The voting events on 30 August 1999, which led to the release of East Timor Province from Indonesia, left stories about the lives of former refugees who did not want to return to East Timor and chose to stay in Indonesia. According to a UNHCR report (Dolan, Large, and Obi 2004), 94,388 people decided to change their nationality to become Indonesian citizens, and until 2008, around 70 thousand refugees remained in slum areas in the Indonesian region of West Timor (Dolan et al. 2004; Lake 2018; Lie 2019; Wassel 2014). Nationalism and affection toward Indonesia were their strongest motivation to stay and become Indonesian citizens (Lake 2018; Soehadha 2019). Although most live under adverse circumstances, a glimmer of hope remains in their hearts because of their loyalty to Indonesia.

Previous studies have tended to assume that the construction of Indonesian nationalism can be done using the concept of imagined community (Anderson 2001, 2016). Researchers have shown that the concept of imagined community can be a solution to building Indonesian nationalism based on national spirit, knowledge systems and local values (Ahmad 2017), a representation of micro-nationalism on social media (Karman and Arifianto 2021), solution to foreign cultural hegemony for gen Z (Murdani and Haqqi 2023) and problem solving of ethnic and religious plurality (Likumahwa et al. 2024). In various studies of the nationalism of former East Timorese refugees, the concept of national social imagination has also been applied by many researchers.

In particular, previous studies of former East Timorese refugees have shown that nationalism

was built on social imagination in the form of historical memory, namely when Indonesia entered Portuguese Timor with its military might in the Seroja operation towards the end of 1975 (Bertrand 2012; Syahnakri 2014; Ward 2019). East Timor was the pretext for the Soeharto government at that time to hinder the power of communism through the power of FRETILIN (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente*). The United States and Australia initially supported the military operation to integrate East Timor into Indonesian territory. Soeharto stated that East Timor's integration into Indonesia was the return of the "prodigal son." Culturally, genealogically, and geographically, West Timor and East Timor are "one umbilical cord" (Neonbasu 2017).

Belu District in West Timor, the closest border area directly facing Timor-Leste, is the district that accommodates refugees who have chosen to remain in Indonesia. This border area is an ideal sanctuary because of the geographical proximity to their place of origin and the Tetum, a large group of Timorese people with whom they have strong ties. This choice shows the former East Timorese refugees' ethnic consideration, which is also closely related to their sense of nationalism (Eriksen 2019; Völkel 2014). They chose to stay in Indonesia because of their sense of nationality, but they still wanted to stay close to their relatives.

In Sukabite, former East Timorese refugees live and cultivate land owned by the residents and the government. They are generally economically impoverished. The unpleasant life living in settlements as new residents in Indonesia post-separation generates a comparison between the memories of their past life in East Timor and their current life in refugee

camps (Soehadha 2019). Something must be remembered, and something must be forgotten to build a new sense of nationality, according to the assumptions derived from the concept of nationalism, as stated by Anderson (2001, 2016).

This article examines the social imagination of former Timor-Leste refugees towards Indonesia after Timor-Leste became a sovereign country, separating from Indonesia. This research seeks to address the shortcomings of the concept of social imagination in understanding nationalism in various previous studies. This research aims to answer two questions: 1) What are the shortcomings of the concept of social imagination in understanding nationalism? 2) Why can nationalism, which is defined as an “imagined community” by Anderson (2016), not be applied to understand the nationalism of former East Timorese refugees in West Nusa Tenggara.

From the two questions above, this article provides a new argument that nationalism is not only built on historical memory but grows significantly when the state is present to provide welfare. Social imagination about the past is not necessarily the basis for building nationalism. However, real things that are enjoyable in the present can foster nationalism.

This research is a theoretical reflection study using a qualitative approach to answer questions regarding the sense of nationalism of former East Timorese refugees. Data collection has been carried out by studying literature and documentation related to the history of East Timor refugees from literature and notes from refugees, residents, NGO activists and government officials. Data analysis used ethnographic content and rhetorical analysis techniques (Krippendorff 2019). Rhetorical analysis and

ethnographic content analysis rely on identifying structural elements, figures of speech, argumentation style, speech acts, and socio-cultural context from literature and archival records of research data sources about former East Timorese refugees.

Nationalism as Social Imagination

The concept of social imagination as a basis for a sense of nationality has been studied since the 1980s (Calhoun 2016; Hun n.d.). The concept of nationalism developed by Ernest Renan (1995) states that it is the awareness to unite without coercion, guided by an obsession to create a collective, noble interest. This awareness then gave birth to national identity. Renan (1995) postulates an understanding of a nation as follows:

“A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”

There are three main aspects in Renan’s definition of a nation: the soul, the past and the present, and living together. The soul, in the sense of nationalism, means a sense of nationality. The past shows the existence of social memories passed down from the past to the next generation. The present can be understood as a concept that shows that memories of shared fate continue to bind to the present. The memory of the past, which shows shared history and fate, continues to be maintained so that people can live together and maintain togetherness.

From a political perspective, according to Ernest Gellner (1964:169), nationalism is not

awakening self-awareness as a nation but creating a state that did not exist before. Nationalism is a political principle where political and national units must be congruent. Gellner (2006:134) defines nationalism:

“Nationalism is primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment or as a movement can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A Nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.”

Nationalism as a sentiment or movement can be well defined based on these principles. A nationalist sentiment is a feeling of anger that results from a violation of a principle or a sense of satisfaction that results from its fulfillment. The nationalism movement is generated by such feelings (Eriksen 2019:99; Gellner 2006:134).

The assumptions developed by Renan and Gellner are fundamental in understanding the history, existence, and social dynamics of East Timorese refugees in the border area of East Nusa Tenggara Province. The New Order regime had developed a distinctive national principle for East Timorese since 1975 during the military operation to integrate East Timor into Indonesian sovereignty. The integration of East Timor was a political effort to create a new concept of state sovereignty, which extended beyond the former Dutch East Indies colony. It also aligns with Gellner’s assumption (2006:1) of nationalism, with political legitimacy requiring ethnic boundaries not to cross political boundaries (Eriksen 2019).

The territory of Indonesian sovereignty included East Timor between 1975 and 1998, which extended beyond the territory of the state’s sovereignty at the beginning of

independence in 1945. It entailed a development effort in all sectors of East Timor to be included in the concept of sustainable development of Indonesia.

The security approach was also taken to secure Indonesian sovereignty in East Timor by forming armed civilian militias to provoke “anger” as part of national sentiment when there were attempts to reject Indonesian integration. The internalization of values about Indonesian nationalism has persisted for a long time, especially among former members of the militia who have remained in Indonesia. When Timor-Leste became independent, the choice to remain Indonesian citizens showed the depth of the principles ingrained by the political movements.

Imagined Community: Constructions of Imaginary Reality

In another conceptualization, Anderson (2016) defines nationalism as imagined communities. According to Anderson, nationalism is a political community imagined as a limited unity and supreme power. The term “imagined,” as perceived by Anderson, depicts that members of a country or nation only know and can imagine their community (their country), but not all know each other and have met each other. In other words, nationalism is rooted in a cultural system that lives in a group of people who do not know each other. The togetherness between them emerges from the construction of the community through imagination. In this sense, nationalism emerges from a collective image or memory of the community that is always present and thought of by nation members as a reference for social identity.

In the context of the nationality of the former East Timorese refugees, the meaning of

nationalism, as defined by Anderson, can also be linked to the classic notion of nationalism in the history of Asian awakening as put forward by Snyder (1968). According to Snyder, nationalism is “a powerful feeling that controls a lot of political thought and actions of many people, until now it is a form of consciousness that expresses the highest loyalty to the nation” (Lohanda 1975:87). In this term, nationalism is built upon the imagination of equality of fate, history, religion, and other aspects that constitute a nation. For the refugees in East Timor, the powerful feeling of affection toward Indonesia drove their desire to leave East Timor and remain in Indonesia.

Anderson defines nationalism by starting from two mistakes in understanding it. First, nationalism is usually understood as a legacy of great ancestors, growing in each person from generation to generation so that it is ingrained in the people’s flesh. However, according to Anderson (1999:1), nationalism is still new and two centuries old. He gave an example of the United States Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776, which did not mention the ancestors of the American people.

Likewise, the proclamation of Indonesia’s independence on 17 August 1945 did not mention the ancestors of the Indonesian people. Because people and heroes before the proclamation did not recognize the concept of “nation” as Indonesia. The pre-colonial kingdom, Majapahit, only intended to unify the archipelago, not Indonesia. Therefore, nationalism as ancestors’ legacy is a different concept of nationality.

The second misconception is about nation and state. If they are not considered similar, at least their relationship is like that of a happy husband and wife. However, in reality, what

happened was just the opposite. Most nationalist movements began as an anti-state movement against the colonialist and absolutistic dynastic state structure. The concepts of nation and state have only “gotten married” recently, and the marriage may be far from happy. The nation, often perceived as “*buto*” or the evil giant in Javanese puppetry, is much older than the state.

Because nationalism is a collective memory, there are differences between one country and another in instilling this collective memory. In Indonesia, the collective memory of the nation-state arises from the feeling of the same fate instilled as an Indigenous nation (*bangsa pribumi*) that has experienced colonialism, which was then united in language, outlook on life, and shared ideals. This is certainly different from the collective memory that shapes the values of nationalism in European countries. For example, in Switzerland, the collective memory of nationalism works well even without a common language. Despite their cultural and linguistic differences, the Swiss have a strong sense of national loyalty. On the other hand, in France, collective memory emerged not only among natives but also among immigrants from countries experiencing conflicts due to the French conquest, who later became French citizens (Kymlicka 2002:17).

Different collectively imagined nationalist values engender different perspectives among the former East Timorese refugees who live in Sukabite, East Nusa Tenggara, and chose to become Indonesian citizens. The determination to become Indonesian and build a sense of Indonesian nationalism is linked to their image of the past and the present. What they remember and what must be forgotten about the past in East Timor affects how they view Indonesia today. In this case, the former East

Timorese refugees must reconstruct their imaginations about East Timor and Indonesia. What happened in the past when they lived in East Timor before the integration with Indonesia is in stark contrast to what happens today as they live in refugee camps in a country separate from East Timor.

At this point, nationalism as an imagined community cannot be applied to understand the nationalism of the former East Timorese refugees because they are faced with reality, and there is a possibility to choose to remain in Indonesia or return to East Timor following the repatriation program. The decision to remain in Indonesia because of the memory of the struggle for integration into Indonesia in 1975 is an act of patriotism, not a shared national identity, which is the basis of a sense of nationality (Kymlicka 2002:18). Therefore, those who remained in Indonesia have to reconstruct their imaginations about East Timor in the past by understanding the existing reality. They do so to build a sense of nationality as they have chosen Indonesia. East Timor is no longer a part of it. So, Nationalism is not static and given but must undergo constant reconstruction and dynamism (Purwanto 2001:244).

Memories of the Nationality of Ex-East Timor Refugees

Being a part of Indonesia for twenty-four years (1976-1999) and its separation from Indonesia's sovereignty, East Timor has had a different impact on its people. For example, it has brought different imaginations about Indonesian nationalism among former East Timorese refugees. After East Timor became independent, the Government of Indonesia announced the end of refugee status as of 31 December 2002. Likewise, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)

declared a "cessation of status" of the existing East Timorese refugees in Indonesia on 22 December 2002 (Fanggidae 2014:8). The population of the former province then changed their status from refugees to internally displaced persons (Phuong 2000). The Indonesian government followed up by issuing Presidential Decree No. 25 of 2003, which allowed them to become an Indonesian citizen or return to Timor-Leste. Those who chose to become Indonesian citizens were later referred to as "new Indonesian citizens."

Therefore, their imagination of Indonesia lies in the historical context of a different struggle to uphold Indonesia's dignity and sovereignty. Their imagination was influenced by the memory of the East Timor region in the past and the imagination about Indonesia after the referendum. Now, East Timor and Indonesia are different countries, and the independence of Timor-Leste makes the two regions new neighbors (Bertrand 2012; Syahnakri 2014; Wuryandari, Noor, and Pamungkas 2009), so the national perspectives of the members of the communities are also different.

The distinctive imagination about the nationalism of the former East Timor refugees can be a way to re-examine the notion of nationalism, which has always been interpreted as the people's single imagination about Indonesia as a nation due to the same historical fate. In reality, Indonesia is a nation born from various cultures and histories. Due to historical and socio-cultural differences, the perspective and meaning of nationalism differ between residents in one region and another.

The historical context and the value of the struggle that the Indonesian people understand outside East Timor differ from those of the East Timorese people who subscribe to the

integration. Therefore, the nationalist values embedded in the former East Timorese refugees differ from the values embedded in the Indonesian people. This brings an understanding that the imagination of Indonesia as a nation is not singular. When they imagine Indonesia as a nation, the meaning is generally focused on the value of the struggle for Indonesian independence against the Dutch colonialists. Yet, East Timor was not a former colony of the Dutch East Indies, so the former residents of East Timor generally did not know the history of independence in 1945. The historical context of the East Timor struggle was against the Portuguese colonialists for 450 years, civil war, and the integration into Indonesia in 1976.

Various Reconstructions of the Imaginations of Ex-East Timor Refugees in Indonesia

The distance and differences in past life praxis and current conditions in Indonesia can help us understand how the former East Timorese refugees interpret their nationality. After the separation in 1999, they must reconstruct a sense of nationality as part of Indonesia. There are various reasons why they chose to remain Indonesians, as described below.

Principles of Ideology

Nationalism must be understood as an ideological discourse, a “specific articulating principle,” instilling a sense of nationality (Finlayson 1998; Laclau 1979). In other words, articulating such a principle engenders a sense of nationality and attachment to a nation.

East Timorese refugees decided to remain in Indonesia and become Indonesian citizens

based on their principles or ideologies that East Timor should be part of Indonesia. This was reflected in the admission of one of the former members of a pro-integration political party in East Timor, namely APODETI (*Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor*).

APODETI’s political principle is to realize independence for the people of Timor Portuguese through integration with Indonesia to achieve the people’s welfare. For the founders and followers of APODETI, integrating with Indonesia was the best way to prosperity because, in addition to the desire to escape from the Portuguese shadow, integrating with Indonesia was to reunite the people on the island of Timor, which had been split in two during the colonization (Neonbasu 2017:359; Soares 1997:36). In this case, the choice to become an Indonesian citizen is non-negotiable. Memories from the past in East Timor allowed them to believe that the best future for East Timor was to join Indonesia. Former APODETI sympathizers, who once assumed positions as legislators, felt that only Indonesia thought about the welfare of the East Timorese people. The Portuguese were colonizers and left East Timor in a state of civil war. The people of East Timor were depressed during the 450 years of colonization by the Portuguese and then abandoned and never led a good life. According to them, the integration period was the best time for East Timor.

Choosing the Prosperous Indonesia

The sense of nationality is also related to welfare, meaning that the sense of belonging to the nation is determined by the welfare provided by the state to the citizens. The close relationship between nationalism and prosperity is shown by nations’ experiences in

the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway). In these countries, national identity is based on subsidies and welfare services for the people, including welfare for migrants. Demands for welfare services the state provides are necessary to foster a sense of nationality (Keskinen 2016; Kettunen 2011; Kuisma 2007).

Welfare as a way of fostering a sense of nationality is also in the memory of a former East Timorese refugee who, in the past, was an employee of the Indonesian government in East Timor and lived a relatively prosperous life. However, after the 1999 referendum, they lived under different conditions. Living in refugee camps and no longer being government employees changed their lives for the worse.

They have memories of a prosperous past in East Timor because they have a house and economic assets. Even though they live in refugee camps with worse conditions than their previous life in East Timor, they still choose Indonesia. They may falter as the Indonesian government pays little attention to their welfare. They may want to return to East Timor with the hope that they will be more prosperous because, in East Timor, they still have economic assets. However, the wish to stay in East Timor does not mean they want to change citizenship. This was the case with former East Timorese refugees participating in the repatriation program. This condition shows a real relationship between welfare and a sense of nationality, even though it is not the main factor.

Religious Nationalism

Religious nationalism in Indonesia is unique. Religion becomes the spirit that fosters a sense of nationality (Khamdan 2016). This link was manifested in the ideology of the Indonesian

state, especially in the first formulation of Pancasila, that “the state is based on one God.” The strong relationship between Islam and monotheist religions with a sense of nationality is supported by the composition of Indonesia’s population, with the majority of followers of Islam and Christianity as monotheistic religions.

Religious nationalism in Indonesia can be traced to the struggle against colonialism. The spirit of jihad inspired the spirit of seizing independence against Dutch colonialism. After colonialism’s influence spread worldwide, in the 1970s, religious nationalism emerged with a new spirit: against secular nationalism based on European enlightenment values (Juergensmeyer 2019).

The period of integration of East Timor into Indonesia (1975-1998) was when the Catholic church grew, which can be dated back to the Portuguese colonial period. However, the integration of East Timor into Indonesia has also introduced them to new religions: Islam and Protestantism (Neonbasu 2017). The integration period is when religious activities such as Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism flourish. When Indonesia invaded East Timor, previously, the majority of East Timorese only knew local beliefs, and some others were familiar with Catholicism. The church’s infrastructure developed rapidly after East Timor was integrated with Indonesia in 1975 (Mas’oed, Maksum, and Soehadha 2003).

As the majority belief in East Timor and West Timor, Catholicism has helped unite the new former East Timorese refugees with local residents. Catholics also strengthen their genealogical relationship because the new religion can unite the various ethnic groups and traditional rituals based on the local beliefs. The

issue of religion is intrinsic to them, and religion always affects culture. The religious values constitute “the umbilical cord,” and Catholicism unifies West Timor and East Timor.

According to the leader of the Catholic church in the former refugee community in East Tasifeto, Maxi Alo Bria (2018), the refugees are religious people. The defeat of the pro-integration citizens in the opinion polls left them displaced, forcing them to live in difficulty. Even so, they are still loyal to Indonesia. They were lost in the struggle to remain integrated into Indonesia, and living in refugee camps did not change their sense of belonging to Indonesia. The values of loyalty, patience, and hard work are part of religiosity, strengthening their imagination about themselves as part of Indonesia. If they do not have religious values, they may not stay in Indonesia and choose to return to East Timor as they still have land and a source of livelihood.

In contrast to the ex-East Timorese refugee community in other places where the majority is Catholic, in Kuanitas Hamlet, the former refugees are Muslims. They claim their love for Indonesia is also due to tolerance among the strong Catholic majority. They believe living in Indonesia provides ample opportunities to preach and practice their beliefs. Indeed, various support and assistance from fellow Muslims make them survive and continue to love Indonesia.

During the conflict of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor in 1975-1998, the pro-integration struggle was mostly supported by militias, some of whom were Muslims. As is well known, the majority of Indonesia’s population is Muslim, while in East Timor, Islam is a minority. A pro-integration militia with Muslim members was the Ablay Militia, which was headquartered in Manufahi.

The Ablay militia has a special relationship with the Special Forces Command (Kopasus) of the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). Ablay was formed on 27 March 1999, led by Nazario Corte Real. East Timor militias, both pro-integration and pro-independence, emerged from the time of Integration with Indonesia in 1975. More militias blossomed from 1998 to 1999 (Komisi Penerimaan, Kebenaran 2010). The pro-integration militias were formed specifically with members, mainly young people. Tens of these militia groups were formed to counter the pro-independence movement that grew increasingly after the discourse of freedom in East Timor started in 1998 during the reformation era. These pro-integration militia groups include, among others, Jati Merah, Makikit, Saka, Sera, Mahidi, Ablai, Laksaur, *Aku Hidup untuk Indonesia* (I Live for Indonesia), Halilintar, Sakunar (Kalajengking), etc. The Muslim pro-integration militias are among the former East Timorese refugees who chose to remain in Indonesia and became Indonesian citizens.

From the narrative of one of the former Muslim militias, it was found that the choice not to return to East Timor was based, among other things, on religious beliefs that were different from the majority of the population in Timor-Leste. It is more comfortable to stay in Indonesia because of the trauma from the violence in East Timor, especially when Muslim houses of worship were the target of the violence by the pro-independence. By choosing Indonesia, there is an imagination about freedom to live as a Muslim because the majority of Indonesians are Muslims.

A Nation without Homeland

The former East Timorese refugees in Belu, East Nusa Tenggara, generally expressed

concern over the current conditions. They said, "We love the homeland of Indonesia, but we only have water, no land." The sentence is a satire that the former East Timorese refugees have fought to stay loyal to Indonesia, but the state does not ensure their welfare. The reality shows that after nearly twenty years of being ex-East Timorese refugees in Indonesia, as a result of the defeat in the referendum on East Timor's independence, the majority of them still live on the government's or residents' land with impoverished conditions.

While this may naturally erode their sense of national nationality, that is not the case. The results of this study indicate that the nationalism of the former East Timorese refugees remains high. However, their imagination in building a new and better life when they join Indonesia has disappointed them. Their past lives in East Timor are in stark contrast to the conditions they experience today. What is remembered in the past about East Timor is the "goodness" of Indonesia in developing East Timor and "dressing the wounds" from the civil war and the prolonged Portuguese occupation. Then, what they forget about life in East Timor are the relatives they left behind and the land, houses, and livestock that are their source of livelihood.

However, the reality is that after they took the risk of forgetting what they had in their homeland, all these sources of livelihood have not been replaced in Indonesia. It is natural and humane if the new residents demand pragmatic matters concerning sources of livelihood, including houses, land, and economic livelihoods. This reality can be related to the assumption put forward by Gellner (Eriksen 2010) that nationalism sentiment is a feeling of anger caused by a violation of principles or a feeling of satisfaction generated by its

fulfillment. Demands for a decent life from the state can be seen as a kind of nationalism in the form of "anger that is concluded by the violation of the principle" that the state must guarantee the welfare of its citizens.

Seeking the Common Thread (One Umbilical Cord): Ethnic Nationalism

Culturally speaking, it is imperative to induce nationalism in the ex-East Timorese refugees. After all, there is a cultural similarity between East and West Timorese (Neonbasu 2017). When these East Timorese refugees cross the border to West Timor (Nusa Tenggara Timur Province), they consider themselves as returning to the common root (one umbilical cord), as they used to be one. The East Timorese refugees have also been united with their Western neighbors with the blessing of the Catholic church, which enhances the religious ethic and the relation of both communities.

Timor, therefore, is geographically, culturally, and genealogically one place with similar characters between people who reside in the Eastern or Western parts. The division of Timor Island into Eastern and Western parts (Neonbasu 2017:358) occurred in 1777. The division was related to the way the Portuguese viewed the area: 1) the authority of Serviao, which includes Atoni Pah Meto, Oekusi, and Ambenu, and 2) the ruling of the eastern part of Timor Island by the Bel ethnic. The Dutch then colonized Serviao, while the Portuguese ruled the East.

Conclusion

This study has concluded that the memory of life in past East Timor and the current state of East Timorese refugees in Indonesia has resulted in the imagination of many faces of

Indonesia. The study, therefore, revisits Anderson's theory on nationalism as an imagined community (Anderson 2016). There are many Imagined views of Indonesia, depending on individual historical context. Each individual did not have to imagine the same unified view of Indonesia to develop their nationalism.

Love or loyalty for Indonesia is politically motivated. This results from Soeharto's regime's policies since 1975, when East Timor was incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia. However, this may have been forced nationalism, as evidenced by the current government's resistance to providing benefits for the people. They then regard themselves as the victims of past political policies.

This study on the East Timorese refugees has shown that there is no such thing as voluntary nationalism. It will grow when the state provides prosperity to its subjects. Without such a concern for the people, the state will not "earn" it. This study has also criticized Anderson's view of nationalism as imagined communities constructed on an imagined reality. The East Timorese refugees who had chosen to be part of this country were not a hyper or imagined reality. It was based on the memory of the past and their current affair.[]

References

- Ahmad, Kamaruzzaman Bustaman. 2017. "Imajinasi Kebangsaan di Nusantara: Suatu Kajian Bibliografis." *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 13(2). doi: 10.18196/AIIJS.2017.0072.168-203.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2001. *Imagined Communities: Komunitas-komunitas Terbayang*. INSIST Press - Pustaka Pelajar.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 1999. "Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future." *Indonesia* 67:1. doi: 10.2307/3351374.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 2016. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bertrand, Jacques. 2012. *Nasionalisme dan Konflik Etnis di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.
- Bria, Maxi Alo. 2018. "Bahan Diskusi Terfokus Penelitian Nasionalisme Eks Pengungsi Timor Timur."
- Calhoun, Craig. 2016. "The Importance of Imagined Communities – and Benedict Anderson." *Annual Review. Debats. Revista de Cultura, Poder i Societat* 1:11–16. doi: 10.28939/iam.debats-en.2016-1.
- Dolan, Chris, Judith Large, and Naoko Obi. 2004. *Evaluation of UNHCR's Repatriation and Reintegration Programme in East Timor*.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2010. *Ethnicity and Nationalism Anthropological Approach*. 3rd ed. London: Pluto Press.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2019. "The Epistemological Status of the Concept of Ethnicity." *Anthropological Notebooks* 25(1):27–36.
- Fanggidae, Silvia. 2014. *Masalah Pendataan Warga Eks Timor-Timur yang Partisipatif dan Kolaboratif di Kabupaten Kupang*. Yogyakarta: Institute for Research and Empowerment (IRE).
- Finlayson, Alan. 1998. "Ideology, Discourse and Nationalism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 3(1):99–118. doi: 10.1080/13569319808420771.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1964. *Thought and Change*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Gellner, Ernest. 2006. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hun, Koh Young. n.d. "Nasionalisme dan Komunitas Terbayang dalam Karya-karya Novel Pramoedya Ananta Toer."

- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2019. "Religious Nationalism in a Global World." *Religions* 10(2):97. doi: 10.3390/rel10020097.
- Karman, Karman, and Somo Arifianto. 2021. "Representation of Micro Nationalism in Social Media: A Problem for Indonesia as 'Imagined Community.'" *Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi* 24(1):15–28. doi: 10.20422/jpk.v24i1.758.
- Keskinen, Sui. 2016. "From Welfare Nationalism to Welfare Chauvinism: Economic Rhetoric, the Welfare State and Changing Asylum Policies in Finland." *Critical Social Policy* 36(3):352–70. doi: 10.1177/0261018315624170.
- Kettunen, P. 2011. "Welfare Nationalism and Competitive Community." pp. 79–117 in *Welfare citizenship and welfare nationalism*, edited by A. Suszycki. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Khamdan, Muh. 2016. "Pengembangan Nasionalisme Keagamaan sebagai Strategi Penanganan Potensi Radikalisme Islam Transnasional." *Addin* 10(1):207–32. doi: 10.21043/addin.v10i1.1135.
- Komisi Penerimaan, Kebenaran, dan Rekonsiliasi di Timor-Leste. 2010. "Chega!, Laporan Komisi Penerimaan, Kebenaran dan Rekonsiliasi (CAVR) di Timor-Leste."
- Krippendorff, Klaus. 2019. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Kuisma, Mikko. 2007. "Social Democratic Internationalism and the Welfare State after the 'Golden Age.'" *Cooperation and Conflict* 42(1):9–26. doi: 10.1177/0010836707073474.
- Kymlicka, Will. 2002. *Kewargaan Multikultural*. edited by W. Widjanarko. Jakarta: Pustaka LP3ES Indonesia.
- Laclau, E. 1979. *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism-Fascism-Populism*. London: Verso.
- Lake, Silverius C. J. M. 2018. "Eks Pengungsi Timor Timur antara Keprihatinan dan Loyalitas Kewarganegaraan."
- Lie, Liana Maria Callista. 2019. "Fasilitas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Noelbaki di Kabupaten Kupang." *EDimensi Arsitektur Petra* 7(1):961–68.
- Likumahwa, George Marthen, Mus J. Huliselan, John A. Titaley, and Simon Pieter Soegijono. 2024. "Imajinasi Nasionalisme dalam Perspektif Teoritik Kebangsaan dan Agama." *Arumbae: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi dan Studi Agama* 6(1):132–52. doi: 10.37429/arumbae.v6i1.1258.
- Lohanda, Mona. 1975. "Nasionalisme Indonesia dan Pembentukan Nation." *Berita Antropologi*.
- Mas'ood, Mochtar, Mochammad Maksum, and Moh Soehadha. 2003. *Kekerasan Kolektif Kondisi dan Pemicu*. Yogyakarta: P3PK UGM.
- Murdani, Andika, and Halifa Haqqi. 2023. "Penguatan Nilai Nasionalisme Melalui Kearifan Lokal bagi Gen-Z sebagai Counter Hegemoni Asing." *Journal of Human and Education (JAHE)* 3(4):236–242. doi: 10.31004/jh.v3i4.366.
- Neonbasu, Gregor. 2017. *Citra Manusia Berbudaya Sebuah Monografi tentang Timor dalam Perspektif Melanesia*. Jakarta: Antara Publishing.
- Phuong, Catherine. 2000. "Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees: Conceptual Differences and Similarities." *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 18(2):215–29. doi: 10.1177/092405190001800204.
- Purwanto, Bambang. 2001. "Memahami Kembali Nasionalisme Indonesia." *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 4(3):243–64. doi: 10.22146/jsp.11111.
- Renan, Ernest. 1995. "What Is a Nation? (1882)." pp. 48–60 in *Nationalism in Europe: From 1815 to the Present*. London: Routledge.
- Snyder, Louis Leo. 1968. *The Meaning of Nationalism*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Soares, Octavio A. J. O. 1997. "Antara Fretilin dan Jose Manuel Ramos Horta (Sebuah Pandangan Umum)." in *Perjuangan*

- Kemerdekaan Rakyat Timor Loro Sa'e*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit East Student Movement.
- Soehadha, Moh. 2019. "Penguatan Identitas dan Segregasi Sosial Komunitas Eks Pengungsi Timor Timur di Sukabitetek, Nusa Tenggara Timur." *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 13(2):351-78. doi: 10.14421/jsr.v13i12.1563.
- Syahnakri, Kiki. 2014. *Timor Timur the Untold Story*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.
- Völkel, Bärbel. 2014. "Nationalism-Ethnicity-Racism. Thinking History in a World of Nations." *Review of History and Political Science* 2(1):29-50.
- Ward, Rowena. 2019. "'National' and 'Official' Languages Across the Independent Asia-Pacific." *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 16(1-2):82-100. doi: 10.5130/pjmis.v16i1-2.6510.
- Wassel, Todd. 2014. *Timor-Leste: Links between Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Durable Solutions to Displacement*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution.
- Wuryandari, Ganewati, Firman Noor, and Cahyo Pamungkas. 2009. *Keamanan di Perbatasan Indonesia-Timor Leste Sumber Ancaman dan Kebijakan Pengelolaannya*. Jakarta: Pustaka Pelajar dan P2P-LIPI.

This page has been intentionally left blank.